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Feature Paper:

Refugees, Camps and the City

Interrogating the Thresholds of the Modern Nation-State

Jihan Fahmy Fayed

khamasin
Journal of the Department of Political Science
The American University in Cairo

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Message from the Chair

Khamasin is the wind that sweeps many Arab countries in the Spring of every year. Different countries in the region give it different names; its *hoboob* in Sudan, *ghibil* in Tunis, and *aajej* in Morocco. While the names vary, the phenomenon is shared among those countries. Given the sweeping political wind that has been engulfing our region and the world, there is no better time for the Department of Political Science to re-launch its own *Khamasin*. A platform for the young voices of our students, *Khamasin* is one of the ways through which we hope to understand, conceptualize, and bring about positive change. It is one of tools through which the department students and faculty work together to produce relevant and meaningful knowledge. For the past two years we have been, working through our annual conference, a number of research projects, and now *Khamasin*, to provide engaged scholarship that can enrich the otherwise mainstream debates in the discipline.

The journal is published by the Department of Political Science but, being advocates of transdisciplinary work in the social sciences and humanities, we encourage students from across the university to submit their manuscripts. The journal provides students with the rare opportunity to work closely with faculty on producing a publishable piece and to learn how to develop their work in such direction. At the same time, *Khamasin*, provides us –the readers- with an equally rare opportunity to look into the minds of our students and see; what interests them, their take on the most imminent challenges of our times, and how they perceive the past and look into the future.

I am very grateful for all our student contributors who brought *Khamasin* back to life, and to my colleague Shourideh Molavi for shouldering that enormous effort as Editor of the first issue. I hope that over the years, *Khamasin* will grow to become the home for students from across universities in Egypt, the region, and the world. In the meantime, we are very grateful for the readership, submissions, and critical feedback.

Rabab El-Mahdi
Chair, Department of Political Science

Message from the Editor

It is my great pleasure to have been appointed as Editor of *Khamasin*, the Journal of the Department of Political Science at the American University in Cairo.

This first issue is born out of a political and personal desire to showcase student intellectual and academic contributions in the Department of Political Science at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Pushing forward an interdisciplinary and critical research framework, my vision for *Khamasin* in this political and historical moment of the American University Cairo is one that links scholarly research with changes in the city, the country, and across the dividing borders of the region.

To this end, the selected papers in this Fall 2019 issue address a range of interrelated and timely topics in the present period, including border policing, political exclusion, the mobilization of space and nature as part of state formation, the politics of media and communication, and collective struggle in policed spaces. Together, and in their reproduction in *Khamasin*, the papers in this issue begin a discussion around the relationship between state policies, political resistance movements, and our scholarly work and responsibilities as members of academic institutions.

My sincere thanks to the Department of Political Science for their logistical and administrative support of the relaunch of *Khamasin*.

I hope you enjoy reading these contributions and continue with us to deepen the discussion in the university as a whole, on the critical topics to which they point.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shourideh C. Molavi
Editor, November 2019

Refugees, Camps and the City

Interrogating the Thresholds of the Modern Nation-State

By: Jihan Fahmy Fayed

On June 26, 2015, the experimental educational program "Campus in Camps" built the first concrete tent in the Dheisheh Refugee Camp located in Bethlehem, Palestine. The Concrete Tent is an unexpected structure: a refugee tent built out of solid concrete and soft mesh. Its creators inaugurated the tent as a "gathering space for communal learning" to overturn the dominant understanding of refugee camps as sites of poverty, passivity and marginalization (Petti 2015). With this, they sought to materialize the story of refugeehood which goes beyond ideas of victimization and the oversimplification of their positionality.

Over sixty years after the first establishment of Palestinian refugee camps, their structure and functionality has changed drastically: they are not a simple assembly of tents anymore, but structures of complex materiality. They underwent various stages of re-adaptation, meaning that they firstly were given "vertical walls" to secure their stability, later they were substituted by various forms of shelter and finally reconstructed into concrete houses (Petti

2015, 2). The Concrete Tent in Dheisheh therefore materializes this historical and architectural development, as it combines between two imageries: the mobile, flexible and fragile tent and simultaneously the solid, stiff and stagnant concrete house. It effectively represents the paradox of life in exile, a kind of 'permanent temporariness', stretched between stillness and movement, inclusion and exclusion. Residing in this paradox, the camp, on one hand, has become a site of political and social activity and organization, yet on the other hand, cannot be understood as a full-fledged city (ibid). Conventionally, the city is understood as the main source of organized life under public institutions, hence the camp and the refugee being forced to adapt and survive have created parallel social and bureaucratic institutions, to challenge their purely humanitarian organization.

It is this transformation in the understanding of life in exile and the architecture of exile, that the Concrete Tent was first met with resistance. Its new structure was considered to be an "ineffective" development of the camp, as the solidification through concrete inhibits the temporary nature of the tent, which is supposed to indicate the Palestinian 'right of return'. Nevertheless, the refugee community in Dheisheh began to consider the Concrete Tent as an opportunity to materialize the historical value of their over six decades of displacement, while simultaneously engaging with the present. Indeed, this initiative preserves the historical "tent structure" along with its cultural symbols and homage to *Al-Nakba,* while utilizing solid materials to acknowledge the present condition of life in exile (Petti 2015, 3). It merges the tent and the concrete house, permanence and temporariness, mobility and stillness. According to Alessandro Petti, this engagement with both past and present allows the refugee to "avoid the trap of being stuck either in the commemoration of the past or in a projection into an abstract messianic future that is constantly postponed and presented as salvation (ibid, 4)."

Importantly, the Concrete Tent is a microcosm of pressing political questions that arise of the modern nation-state's exclusionary constructs. Questions on the relation between the guest and the host, the citizen and the stateless, and the camp and the city, all surface from the tensions pointed to with this project. Building on these tensions, this paper mobilizes these questions and places the refugee and the camp at the center of modern politics to problematize the key units of modern statehood such as membership, political power and borders. In its approach, the paper seeks to shift the modern political emphasis on the "norm" and 'included' to that of the 'exception' or 'excluded.' This is not with the intention to distinguish them from one another as political states of being, but rather to point to their indistinguishability and moments of intersection. As such, taking seriously the invitation of Giorgio Agamben to place the 'exception' at the center of western politics, this paper argues that the inherent instabilities of the city are made visible through the structure of the camp, and that this dynamic is replicated in relation to the host and guest (Agamben 1998, 11). To this end, the refugee and the camp will be used in this paper as a lens through which the modern-nation state is problematized and understood as the primary source of violence. Here, the brief case study on the Palestinian refugee camp Al-Wehdat in Amman, Jordan will be mobilized as a heuristic device through which the tensions between the "central figure" and the 'peripheral figure' – or the core and the marginalized – will be understood. As the

forthcoming discussions reveal, while the applicability of Agamben's state of exception to the case of Al-Wehdat has been problematized by a number of scholars, it nevertheless remains a useful paradigm for analyzing the interrelated relationship between the inside and the outside and the city and the camp.

Camps as Cities, Cities as Camps?

The modern states' regulation mechanism of entry, exit, citizenship and residency are essential to its existence, as it cannot maintain its internal coherence without the active practice of border control. The moment separate sovereign states were created and space was demarcated and limited, is the moment displacement and refugee generation were initiated. The very fact that sovereign states have failed to provide adequate protection to its citizens and its desire to create a homogenous territory and nationality has led to the mobilization of those who are regarded as "alien", into the unidentifiable gaps between states (Haddad 2003, 297). As such, the refugee is the creation of an international system which has otherized him through the failure of positioning and assigning him to his nation-state, and ironically does not provide for a permanent solution for this displacement. Instead it mobilizes him into unidentifiable gaps between and within states, in the form of camps. Emma Haddad points to this failure by stating that "the creation of refugees is inevitable in the international states system, refugees highlight an inherent failure in the system, one way in which the system will always be bound to fail" (ibid). As this paper contends, the camp is the materialization of a states' crime and implication in the production of 'Others' and 'aliens'. This production of 'aliens' and creation

of camps therefore was never the result of separate nation-states breaking down, but they are an essential part of this system (Haddad 2003, 297). In other words, as long as the construct of the nation-state exists and as long as it continues to generate political borders which separate those who belong and those who do not belong, refugees and camps will exist.

Therefore, central to understanding the modern nation-state and its key units of statehood, is recognizing its fundamental politics of distinction, which materializes in the relationship of the citizen and the refugee, the guest and the host and most vividly in the relationship of the city and the camp. However, this is not to suggest that through these structures of inclusion and exclusion both figures and spaces are different from one another, but that they remain connected by virtue of the *sovereign ban* or process of exclusion itself as will be explained in the following. Taking this paradoxical relationship of the city and the camp into consideration one central question must be posed, namely: what happens to the nation-state when the 'exception' takes over the 'norm' and the city begins to act like a refugee camp? Put differently, we arrive at the beginning of an understanding of refugee camps as spaces that are not necessarily in opposition to or fundamentally set apart from the city. But they are spaces marked by their fluidity in maintaining a constant relation to the city, similar to the refugee sustaining his/her relation to the citizen. This conceptualization is primarily based on the idea of "refugee urbanization" which points to the fact that most refugees in the contemporary moment reside in cities or city-like camps rather than "conventional" refugee camps, leading to a confusion in urban planning, active citizenship and targeted distinction (Sanyal 2012, 633).

Traditionally understood, the city is the space of all political and social life and thereof 'meaningful life'. The city marks the tension between what lies on the inside and what is excluded to reside on the outside or on the *periphery,* through the use of borders. According to Étienne Balibar a simple definition given to the border is that "to mark out a border is precisely, to define a territory, to delimit it, and so to register the identity of that territory, or confer one upon it" (Balibar 2002, 76). Balibar however explains that there should not be a fixated and simple definition of a border, as this would disregard its inherent complexities. Even though borders are aimed at creating zones, lines and areas of passage/blockage or unification/distinction, borders never share the same function (Balibar 2002, 77).

However generally, the border is a space on which the state of exception is materialized and a space which systematically alienates and Otherizes those who cross it or attempt to cross it. They are one of the most violent tools employed by the nation-state to induce a state of anxiety and perplexity onto individuals, eventually turning them into "neurotic citizens"[1] as Engin Isin tells us (Isin 2004, 223). This is primarily because the border is crucial to the states' management of both its population of citizens and its alien refugees through mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. However, as Agamben

has explained, the inside and the outside, the included and the excluded remain attached to each other by virtue of the suspension of the exception, which is precisely what happens with the border. Balibar points out that borders are never just external realities, but they are very much intertwined with the internal affairs and identities of the nation. The once only external borders change and by time become "internal borders" which practically are nowhere and everywhere, in *non-places* (Balibar 2002, 78). The relationship between the nation and its subjects, or the citizen and the sovereign, is internalized by the subject and regarded as the primary marker of identity (ibid).

In other words, individuals come to understand their positionality through the internalization of the exclusionary nature of the border, or through the creation of an 'Other' against which s/he can identify. Therefore, it is safe to say, that the border is always overdetermined, as its function are never reduced to the demarcation between two states, but they underline distinctions in identity and positionality. Balibar tells us, that borders are "relativized, duplicated by other geopolitical divisions", they have a "world-configuring" function, namely to distinguish and exclude from the common identity (Balibar 2002, 79). They ensure the differentiation between individuals in terms of identity, social class and international class (Balibar 2002, 79). The nation-state typically instrumentalizes and mobilizes the border in its daily practices of control through differentiation and discrimination to reaffirm the positionality of its members. Balibar clarifies these modes of control through explaining:

> For a rich person...who tends towards the cosmopolitan (and whose passport increasingly signifies not

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1   In his work, Engin Isin coins the term "neurotic citizen" when referring to the modern nation states' ability to govern its population through neuropower or the 'state of neurosis'. By extension to biopower, neuropower focuses on measuring the actions of citizens through emotions of "tranquility, serenity and security" (Isin 2004,232). According to Isin, this neurotic subject wants to realize the impossible state of absolute security and the perfect body. Although such claims are impossible, the subject has been promised the impossible by the state and therefore cannot face its illusions. Simultaneously the subject develops "a highly sensitized sense of entitlement", when these however are not met, the neurotic citizens begins to channel its frustration and anxiety (ibid, 233). Realizing that their impossible claims will not be realized, but are simultaneously continuously perpetuated and promised, anger becomes "a permanent feature of being a neurotic citizen" (ibid). As a result, the only right which remains fundamental and realized, is the "right to angst" (ibid).

just mere national belonging, protection and a right of citizenship, but a surplus of rights…), the border has become an embarkation formality… For a poor person…however the border tends to be… an obstacle which is very difficult to surmount, but it is a place he runs up against repeatedly, passing and repassing through it as and when he is expelled or allowed to rejoin his family, so that it becomes, in the end, a place where he resides. It is an extraordinary vicious spatio-temporal zone, almost a home- a home in which to live a life which is waiting-to-live, a non-life (Balibar 2002, 83).

The Other, then not only has to cross or live on a permanent border but practically becomes the border itself and internalizes its exclusionary dynamic. The Other is confronted with a constant pendulum between being included and excluded, being subject to the law but never a subject of law and eventually settles in a permanent zone of indistinction and indifference (Agamben 1998, 12). Therefore, it becomes clear that borders are not just situated on the material periphery anymore, but they exist within us and are mobilized on our bodies under the framework of the nation-state. The border is a highly biopolitical phenomenon which seeks to regulate bodies and ascribe them with their meaning and positionality under the modern nation-state.

Finally, Balibar points out that the modern world has become a world of apartheid which runs through all societies and does not stop at "simple" differentiation between center and periphery or north and south. At the border the individual, regardless whether s/he is a citizen or refugee, is reduced to bare life, to a *homo*

sacer[2] who or to Engin Isin's "neurotic citizen". Now, Balibar's understanding and recognition of the border as a violent space, is essential to understanding the relation between the camp and the city. The border and its functionality are an essential "lens" through which one can understand the city through its exceptional Other, the camp.

The city and therefore the camp, typically arises from the creation of walls and borders which demarcate what resides on the inside and what is excluded on the outside. Giorgio Agamben refers to such spaces of exclusion and camps as the "place in which the most absolute *conditio inhumana* ever to appear on earth was realized" as the refugee camp is not a creation of ordinary law, but of the state of exception's martial law, which transforms space into a permanent state of exception (Agamben 2000, 36). Agamben clarifies that once the sovereign proclaims the state of exception, he is concurrently introducing a 'state of exclusion' (Agamben 1998, 20). What the state excludes from the norm becomes a marginal case residing in a permanent state of exception. However, it is important to point out that this exclusion does not mean that the subject stays without relation to the law, oppositely what is excluded in the state of exception stays attached to the law by virtue of its suspension. Therefore, the state of exception is not "chaos that precedes order"

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2   In his piece *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (1998)* Agamben introduces the distraught figure of Roman Law, the *homo sacer*. By definition, the homo sacer is a man who is considered sacred, however cannot be sacrificed and yet ironically may be killed without punishment. This figure is not recognized or included in the rule of law, nevertheless may be punished by it when s/he breaches the law and commits a crime. It becomes clear that this figure is systematically excluded from all forms of political life and is doomed to permanently reside on the periphery. According to Agamben, the *homo sacer* is torn between *zoē*, the naked form of existence and life, and *bios*, a politically endowed form of life. In other words, this figure is banned from all cultural and political life and is reduced to 'bare life' which is stripped of identity, meaning and dignity (Agamben 1998, 18). Stateless individuals then find themselves relating to the *homo sacer* the moment the sovereign decides to capture their bare life in the sovereign ban, by including them through their exclusion in a zone of in-distinction between the inside and the outside.

but a circumstance that arises from the rule's suspension, it applies in no longer applying (ibid., 18). When the juridical order withdraws and abandons the exception, it includes itself on the inside, meaning that the exception does not abandon the rule, rather the rule which decides to suspend itself brings about a state of exception (ibid).

This shows that, even though the sovereign creates a border between what is inside and what is outside, between chaos and organization, he does not distinguish between both as they continue to intersect. The line between both the inside and the outside is blurred to become a region of indistinction, making it not possible to pinpoint or localize the state of exception, as it now has no specific place it "resides" in (ibid., 12). In other words, the creation of the city and the contravention of its borders are bound together, they are two sides of the same coin, as there can be no law without infringement, and no norm without the exception (Diken and Lausten 2006, 443). This understanding of the city not only proposes their various intersections, but perhaps also the possibility of the camp becoming the organizing arrangement of the city (Ibid., 444). The camp, following the logic of Agamben's *homo sacer*, is not necessarily subject to the rule of law, but more precisely is included by virtue of its exclusion. The relationship which the camp maintains to the city is preserved as what is outside or what is the exception "is truly according to its etymological root, taken outside (*ex-capere*), and not simply excluded" (Agamben 1998, 18). Therefore, the camp is an instance of integrated extraterritoriality, meaning that it is "a piece of territory that is place outside the normal juridical order; for all that, however, it is not simply an external space" (Agamben 2000, 39).

Agamben tells us that the founding juro-political order of the nation state functions according to a structure "of an inclusion of what is simultaneously pushed outside" (Agamben, 1998, 18). Therefore, it must be questioned and reevaluated if the relation of suspension which exists between the city and the camp is indeed a relation of mutual exclusivity, as what is on the outside is not included by virtue of being banned, but through the suspension of the law. This is to say, that the juridical order decides to withdraw from the exception and in Agamben's words "the exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule" (ibid). In this case, the city and the camp, and by extension the refugee and the citizen understand their positionality and attain their identity from this relation of the 'sovereign ban', meaning that they cannot exists without one another. The creation of spaces of exception is essential to forming and upholding spaces of the 'norm' and cannot be differentiated.

This is precisely the cause of the extreme potentiality of the camp as a space for politics: it constantly operates in conditions of the state of exception, as it is a space which arises when the exception becomes the rule. Agamben does not identify the camp as an anomaly of the past but recognizes that it has become the *nomos of the modern* political space in which subjects reside (ibid., 44-5). Contrary to what has been argued by some scholars, Agamben is not neglecting the appearance of contemporary camps which are more than just fixated spaces of exception or sites of poverty. Instead, he is precisely addressing this liquidity and transcendent character of the camp in the modern day. He describes a space of temporal

suspension which is given a permanent spatial arrangement that resides outside the rule of law (ibid., 39). In other words, even though the state of exception is often thought to be temporary, it is able to manifest itself in an eternal spatial arrangement and therefore always operates outside the normal rule of law. Agamben explains that the camp is just as paradoxical as sovereignty itself, just like the sovereign exists both on the inside and outside, the camp is a space which exists outside the normal rule of law, however is not distinct from it meaning that it is not an external space (Ibid., 38-9). Agamben tells us that:

> What is outside is included not simply by means of an interdiction or an internment, but rather by means of the suspension of the juridical order's validity—by letting the juridical order, that is, withdraw from the exception and abandon it.

> The exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule. The particular 'force' of law consists in this capacity of law to maintain itself in relation to an exteriority (Agamben, 1998, p. 18).

Working from this, the camp does not subtract itself from the rest of the city but stays bound to it by virtue of its exclusion. The camp cannot be simplified into a space which is external to the law, on the contrary, the camp is captured under the rule through its status of 'exception', meaning that it maintains its relation to the city by virtue of its suspension. The sovereign who has decided on its exception, by virtue of banning it, establishes a relation between himself

and the camp or the refugee (Agamben 1998, 30). Both the refugee and the camp then acquire their meaning and positionality from the sovereign and the city, which practically makes them inseparable (ibid). Hence, following Carl Schmitt's understanding of sovereignty as exception, this would mean that the sovereign who decides on the exception through his decisions, materializes this exception in the form of a camp (Schmitt 2005, 13).[3] Both Agamben and Schmitt agree that the state of exception is a necessary tool for the state to have, as only through it is it able to permanently realize the temporary exception (Agamben 2000, 40).

In other words, the camp is 'captured on the inside' meaning that it is included by virtue of its exclusion, the same way the refugee is interiorized and included, precisely as the sovereign is only capable to rule over what s/he interiorizes (Ibid., 40). Hence, a 'zone of indistinction' between the inside and the outside, inclusion and exclusion, law and lawlessness is created, which makes the distinction between both unclear. This clarifies the inseparable relation between the norm and the exception and hence, the city and the camp, as it is the norm that allows for the existence of camps and for their manifestation as "everyday geographies" which are normalized and mostly operate "just next door to where we live" (Minca 2015, 75).

Nevertheless, Claudio Minca explains that

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3   The concept of exception is not an alien or "borderline concept" to sovereignty, on the contrary, it precisely is what makes sovereignty relevant (Schmitt 2005, 5). Also, it is important to point out that a borderline concept is not simultaneously a "vague" one, only through it can the nature of the state be understood, as the general norm lives off the exception (ibid., 5-6). However, rarely in the juridical field is the exception placed at the center of analysis or applied to understanding the construct of the state. the juridical order which is a function of the 'norm' cannot anticipate actions in the state of exception as it becomes incompetent, it can only decide who the sovereign is in that case. "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception" and it is precisely this decision that marks the sovereign's violent character and power over organizing life outside the juridical order in a 'non-place' (Schmitt 2005, 5). The modern state's sovereignty materializes and manifests itself in the fact that the sovereign simultaneously exists inside as well as outside the juridical order.

the mobilization of refugees into camps does not make them "invisible", therefore spatializing the "refugee problem" was never a solution for displaced people's hosting state. Instead, other forms of biopolitical control in and outside the camp have managed individuals through bio-surveillance techniques or population management strategies for instance (ibid). Complementing Minca's understanding of the spatialization of the camp, Bülent Diken explains that refugee camps are usually "demonstratively peripheral sites" of the city (Diken 2004, 84-6). Individuals residing in the camp are constrained by the camp's spatial and architectural structure, which actively hinders them from socialization/integration into the framework of larger society, restricts their access to mobility, and enforces securitization to minimize possible "threats" against citizens. It becomes clear that the camp is designed as an external space which does not follow the modern states' essential features of industrialized society (ibid). Through biopolitical mechanism of control, either modern "biometric and panoptic devices" or strategies of "violent inaction" the camp seeks to produce vulnerable bare life (Davies 2017, 1271).

When camps are constructed, they are destined to be demolished as there is no intention of making them spaces of historical or cultural value (Petti 2017). Alessandro Petti explains that camps are designed to be forgotten, meaning that their history is constantly dismissed by various organizations, erased and shaken in order to remain temporary. Following this logic, infrastructural developments and permanent cultural establishments in such camps would weaken the refugees' right of return and therefore must be dismissed regularly. As a result, the refugee camp is trapped between memories of the lost homeland and an unknown future which lies ahead of him/her (ibid). The only history known by refugees is one of violence, despair, degradation and suffering experienced in the camp (ibid). However, it is important to note that Petti's recognition of present bitter conditions is not an oversimplification and victimization of refugeehood, on the contrary it is an attempt to understand refugee activism and culture despite such conditions. In other words, the camp is designed with the intention to later be demolished, it is not permanent but transient, it erases the past and does not build a future. The camp hence transforms into an extratemporal and extraterritorial space which is organized according to structures that are specific to it and to no other place as Bauman explains:

> The space of the camp inevitably turns Refugee camps boast a new quality: a 'frozen transience', an on-going, lasting state of temporariness, a duration patched together of moments none of which is lived through as an element of, and a contribution to, perpetuity. For the inmates of a refugee camp, the prospect of long-term sequels and consequences is not part of the experience. The inmates of refugee camps live, literally, from day to day—and the contents of life are unaffected by the knowledge that days combine into months and years (Bauman 2000, 114–5).

In other words, the camp is destined to become a temporary space or a "waiting area" regardless of the number of years it has been standing, it is trapped in a condition of permanent temporariness. It's structure and history will always remain temporary, although its arrangement is practically permanent.

The repeated dismissal of history and rear-rangement of camp spaces underlines the fact that, the state comes to understand the population in terms of their site in space and according to whether this space must be controlled and restricted by borders or may be left accessible. According to Schmitt, the state and "the political is always spatialized along the lines of a 'concrete' division between inside and outside" as through the compartmentalization of space 'political space' is created (Minca 2007, 78). In his work, Schmitt stresses the inevitable relation between sovereignty and geographical ordering. In his *The Nomos of the Earth* he links the management of space to that of public order and establishes a relation between localization or *Ortung* and order *Ordnung,* explaining that one cannot be established without the other (Schmitt 1974, 78-9). For Schmitt all order in society is spatial order, whether social, political or legal order it is rooted in the *nomos*, the spatial ordering. His explanation shows that space was never a neutral concept as mentioned before, instead *nomos* has always been about the differentiation of peoples and space (ibid).

According to Bülent Diken and Carsten Lausten, Schmitt was never biologically or socially racist (in the context of the Weimar Republic) but "spatially racist" through assuming that territorialization was the beginning and source of society, culture and law. The moment walls and fences were constructed, is the moment that culture and law were created, namely through the separation and distinction of peoples, as seen in the camp (Diken and Lausten 2006, 444). However, this is not to suggest that figures of bare life have no agency and must dwell in passivity in camp spaces (Minca 2007, 79). On the contrary, as mentioned before, through several actions such as Engin

Isins's "acts as citizenship", which constitutes membership through civic engagement and productivity, refugees can become claimants, but also through the creation of informal economies, alternative communities and "institutions" can refugee's show their agency to defy their reduction to bare life and by the state.

With the intensification of the refugee crisis, refugee camps have expanded to become city-like constructions which hold "independent" social, economic and political structures to accommodate for the needs they were often denied. In this sense, one must ask to what extent these refugee camps have to potential to become, and in some instance already have become, urban states of exception and active metropoles which will be highlighted in the forthcoming discussion. Although refugee camps are based on the logic of temporality, dismissal and the desire to return, it most cases the displaced have resided in these camps for extremely long periods (Malkki 1995, 498). It seems more logical to then label such spaces as permanently temporary, or from Agamben's perspective, as zones of in-distinction between permanence and temporariness, inclusion and exclusion from the rest of society.

Refugee camps are spaces of exception and zones of indistinction precisely because they are part of a host state but concurrently operate outside it by creating structures and regulations that only apply to it as will become clear through the study on Al-Wehdat camp. This is what Zygmunt Bauman defines as "liquid modernity", namely that the camp leaks and transgresses definite borders and extends to the realm of the norm into the city (Bauman 2000, 6). Laws and norms are always defined and understood in a negative light, in opposition to its peripheral Other, therefore according to Bau-

man, law in its essence is transgressional, the norm is known through the exception, the citizen through the stateless and the city through the camp. In the following section the fluidity and elasticity of the camp and the creation of extraterritorial identities will be examined, through the case study of Palestinian refugee camp Al-Wehdat in Amman. The range of influence of the camp on its surrounding spaces will be observed to understand spaces in which the structure of the camp overlaps with that of the city and starts to function like it. Although the camp is thought to be excluded from the rest of society, it remains included by virtue of this relation of exclusion and actively extends beyond its border to melt with its surroundings as will be recognized in the case of Al-Wehdat. The difficulty of pinpointing the boundaries and limitations of the camp in some instances will show a new understanding of the camp which extends across the city and affirms Agamben's claim that the camp has become the *nomos of the modern*.

From Al-Wehdat to Camp-Cities

As pointed to above, our conventional understanding of the camp must be changed to accommodate for the fact that today the exceptionality of the camp has escaped its borders and dispersed into all social life in the nation state. The liquidity of the camp and its ability to transgress into the city has allowed for a "leakage" of the exception into the totality of the city. Palestinian refugee camp Al-Wehdat in Amman the capital of Jordan, has actively represented a situation in which the exception has attempted to transgress into the norm, nevertheless remains in a zone of indistinction between various state-imposed structures of inclusion and exclusion. As it stands, Al-Wehdat, and gen-

erally many other Palestinian refugee camps, display what may be called conflicting social, political and economic conditions. The 57,000 registered refugees residing in the camp live in absolute poverty under the Jordanian national poverty line at 814 Jordanian Dinars (Fafo-Report 2013, 245).

Furthermore, as the UNRWA's official report describes, the camp continues to be extremely overcrowded and suffers from bad sanitary conditions, yet the Jordanian government has refused to allocate money to the renovation of sanitary equipment and housing structures.[4] As for the general structure of the camp, it resembles a sprawling slum-like area marked by its housing structures which are mostly in need of repair. Despite the reformation of these housing structures from tents and huts to cement-blocks, which can be interpreted as an adjustment to the reality of permanent temporariness, they have remained fragile. The camp structure has served as an intermediate space between the desire of returning of historic Palestine and the enduring reality of displacement. Hence, the housing structures are often a combination of fragile flexible materials as well as hard, solid and permanent materials. Therefore, it must be highlighted that Al-Wehdat camp becomes the material representation of the situation of the refugee who is forced to reside in a zone of indistinction, between permanency and temporariness, stillness and fluidity. Although the UNRWA tries to alleviate Al-Wehdat's plight through providing schools, health care and employment and is considered as the primary responsible agency, the refugee population itself has largely engaged in creating new indepen-

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4   "Visiting the Al-Wihdat Refugee Camp." Liam in Palestine. Last modified June 10, 2012. https://liamabroad.wordpress.com/2012/06/10/visiting-the-al-wihdat-refugee-camp/

dent parallel bureaucratic, social and political state structures within the camp.

The camp has actively transformed into a space of social and economic activity with high urban and intellectual capacities. This is primarily due to the fact that Al-Wehdat is not a traditionally fenced or walled camp, but it practically melts with its surroundings and is indistinguishable from the rest of downtown Amman (Achilli 2015). Unlike many other camps in the Middle East it was never designed to separate or isolate the refugee population from the host population, as social distinctions were rather captured under violent inclusionary citizenship regulations which repress the Palestinian identity and instead require forced integration (Hamarneh 2002). Furthermore, Al-Wehdat's location has been chosen deliberately to simplify and enable the transportation of good and service both into and out of the camp to support the smaller towns of Amman (ibid). Al-Wehdat's reality actively challenges what Alessandro Petti defines as the "camp condition", namely the idea that the camp space is a space of suspension and detachment from its surrounding political, social and legal order. His conceptualization reconciles the imagery of the passive, unproductive camp and that of the active, city-like Palestinian neighborhood in Jordan. Not only does it have more than 2,000 shops and enterprises within the camp space, but together with the UNRWA fosters various educational and intellectual hubs accommodating the needs of the refugee population (Hamarneh 2002). Al-Wehdat's social and economic development went as far as to label and to an extent declare the camp Palestinian territory and raise the Palestinian flag to underline its distinctive feature of integrated extraterritoriality.

Al-Wehdat camp, among many other Pales-tinian camps which have followed a similar pattern of development and integration, has become a "hybrid organism" as refugee camps are rarely the product of "any socio-spatial form that already exists" (Agier 2008, 53). Instead they create new structures to accommodate the paradox of the 'permanent temporariness' in which the camp resides. Al-Wehdat has actively sought to appropriate and transform the camp into a space in which the Palestinians can thrive and develop in the face of the enduring reality of displacement. As Michel Agier explains, although the camp is originally conceived with no other task but survival, emplacement of refugees and control, the camp space has transformed into a "camp-city" resembling an open urban district rather than a clear-cut closed camp space (ibid). This camp-city is the manifestation of the tension between political/social life and depoliticized life in the form of an "authentic desert" as Arendt explains. She clarifies that the camp was initially created to be a desert, yet this "desert is growing" and extending beyond its original demarcations (Nietzsche Quoted in Agier 2002, 323).

The expansion of this desert meant the fading of margins between humans which Arendt, similar to Agamben, understands as a new space of the world in which political life is born. However, this desert again in itself is a tension, as on one hand it is created to distinguish between the forms of life, yet on the other hand manages to trespass its borders and bring together life (Arendt 1993, 181-2). So, when this desert grows it creates a new form of politicized life, but most importantly, it is its growth defines the existence of the city. The suspension and creation of such a desert is never distinct from the sovereign who has suspended it, but it defines him. Al-Wehdat has managed to transform the initially empty space of the

camp into a site of social and political life which hosted many political and national movements and has established independent bureaucratic structures and flourishing small businesses and shops, making it an external space of power.

While the camp has extended beyond its "borders" and has become intertwined in the social and economic relations of the city, the camp continues to be a "naked city" as Agier names it (Agier 2002, 336). It is true that Al-Wehdat has managed to create political and social life within the camp which makes it comparable to the essence of the city, nevertheless it can never reach it (ibid). The Palestinians have shown a desire and will to work, produce and create which "gives meaning to an originally desertic place" however in the context of state-imposed constraints "everything is potential but nothing develops" (ibid.) Nevertheless, it remains a structure which is permanently temporary and therefore resembles an unfinished or incomplete city or urbanity, because even when its infrastructure and housing develops it remains in a zone of indistinction. In Agier's words "the camp remains a stunted city-to-be-made, by definition naked" and explains that this leaves the question open as to why the camp does not fully transform into the city even though it has created structures of social urbanity (ibid). He answers this question by stating that the state has not abandoned the idea of camp management in the name of emergency but continues to ignore and marginalize the political life of refugees (ibid). Here it must be stated that the state has not only excluded refugees by reducing them to bare life in the sense of stripping them of their political value but acts such as granting citizenship has had the exact same exclusionary effect.

The Palestinian refugee population in Jordan

has transformed Al-Wehdat into a piece of conceptual Palestinian land and does not conform to Jordanian nationalism. The attempt of the Jordanian state to supposedly integrate refugees through granting them citizenship, while simultaneously marginalizing Palestinian identity, means that their socialization is practically coercive and exclusionary. Nevertheless, Agier is correct in calming that:

> … the city is in the camp but always only in the form of sketches that are perpetually aborted… It is the liminality of all situations of exodus that gives a frustrated, unfinished character to this type of 'urbanization'… It is the very foundation of both the camp as a waiting zone outside of society and the 'self-settled' sites of displaced persons and refugees, in the sense that they remain in peripheral zones… (Agier 2003, 337).

Therefore, it is safe to say that the identity of the refugee and the space in which s/he resides is never "complete", it is always a situation between two extremes, between completion and incompleteness in the sense of identity realization and the camp's development into a city. In such situations "incompleteness of the process of integration is consubstantial with them; quarantine is their horizon" (Agier 2002, 336). What we see is a camp which strongly resembles a city, and in the case of Al-Wehdat practically has become part of the city yet continues to be a state of exception or more precisely an integrated extraterritoriality. These tensions are by no means contradictions because as Agamben explains, what resides on the outside is included by virtue of the states' or sovereign's withdrawal from it. In other words, what is excluded in the state of exception remains included "in the form of the rule's suspension" (Agamben 1998, 18).

In the case of the individual or the *homo sacer*, who is stripped of his/her political life and reduced to natural life, this bare life still maintains its political relationship to the sovereign who excluded it in the first place (ibid). He explains:

> The fundamental categorial pair of Western politics is not that of friend/ enemy but that of bare life/political existence, zoē/bios, exclusion/inclusion. There is politics because man is the living being who, in language, separates and opposes himself to his own bare life and, at the same time, maintains himself in relation to that bare life in an inclusive exclusion (Agamben 1998, 12).

This biopolitical mechanism therefore does not exclude bare life from qualified political life, zoe from bios, but it includes it through its exclusion. Following the same line of thought, the camp is not simply an 'external place' but it continues to be bound to the sovereign by virtue of declaring it an exception. Agamben explains that "what is being excluded in the camp is captured outside, that is, is included by virtue of its very exclusion" which further explains Agier's labelling of refugee camps as structures which are "imprisoned outdoors" (Agamben 1998, 96 and Agier 2008, 52). As seen in Al-Wehdat, the camp is a space which fluctuates between the inside and the outside and resides in a zone of indistinction, therefore following the paradigm of biopolitics, the camp becomes the space in which bare life is politicized and enters a threshold of indistinction with the rule (Agamben 1998, 12). Agamben tells us:

> What characterizes modern politics is not so much the inclusion of zoē in the polis- which is, in itself, absolutely ancient- nor simply the fact that life as such becomes a principal object of the projections and calculations of State power. Instead the decisive fact is that, together with the process by which the exception everywhere becomes the rule, the realm of bare life- which is originally situated at the margins of the political order- gradually begins to coincide with the political realm, and exclusion and inclusion, outside and inside, bios and zoe…enter into a zone of irreducible indistinction (Agamben 1998, 12).

This is precisely the case of the Palestinian refugee in Al-Wehdat: the initial bare life of the refugee escapes the camp once the borders of the camp or the state of exception becomes blurred. Agamben explains that the bare life which resided in this state of exception then escapes and "frees itself in the city and becomes both subject and object of the conflicts of the political order" (Ibid). This means that through the exclusion from the realm of the qualified political life, bare life paradoxically becomes even more embedded and fixated in its relationship to the sovereign. All peripheral figures such as the refugee or the camp, which are mobilized into non-places and non-existence, continue to acquire their essence and definition through the relation which is maintained with the sovereign who decides on the exception (ibid., 30). The refugee is both defined by his/her relation of exception to the sovereign and simultaneously defines margins of political life; this politicization of the refugee's bare life hence is the core of sovereignty, it defines the city and the citizen. The inclusion of bare life "in the political realm constitutes the original- if concealed- nucleus of sovereign power" (ibid., 11).

Agamben continues to elucidate this complex relationship by explaining that biopolitics is not

necessarily a modern phenomenon as Michel Foucault argues, but it is at least as old as the sovereign ban, as the modern state has always placed biological bare life at the center of its control while "the modern state does nothing other than bring to light the secret tie uniting power and bare life" (ibid). What we see in Al-Wehdat is a structure which despite being deemed an exceptional space, remains included by virtue of its relation to the Jordanian state which has excluded it in the first place. It is clear that the camp has become somewhat extraterritorial as despite being left open and facilitating mobility, its people regard it as a piece of Palestinian land in exile. Its buildings are marked with graffities identifying this space as "Palestine" or "Jerusalem", while children are letting kites carrying the Palestinian flag fly.[5]

For this reason, Palestinians in Al-Wehdat camp ought not be regarded as simple bare life but rather be recognized as participating in a qualified political life in the Jordanian state. Indeed, it is precisely through them that the state can identify itself and form the margins of political life. Agamben concludes that "in this sense, no life, as exiles and bandits know well, is more "political" than his", which is why the Palestinian refugee's life is so closely connected to that of the sovereign as he has the control over his life and death (ibid., 103). Taken together, the city and the camp, the refugee and the citizen, and the exception and the example stand in a "symmetrical position" to form a "coherent" system (Agamben 1998, 20). The example is hence indistinguishable from the exception as they depend on each other in the definition of individuals and their relation to the sovereign.

However, it must be noted that while the exception is a form of inclusive exclusion, the example is founded on a mechanism of exclusive inclusion (ibid). The case of Al-Wehdat materializes this circular situation, in the sense that the camp indeed has been included through the national and ideological exclusion of Palestinians, but simultaneously has been excluded by virtue of the Jordanian states' attempt to include it through the citizenship regime. What is clear is that the inclusionary exclusion practices by the Jordanian state cannot be realized without the manifestation of a perpetual state of exception, as without it the state's threshold and margins would be blurred.

Camps as a Matrix of the Modern

This paper has worked from Agamben's challenge, encouraging the reader to place the camp and the instance of 'exception' at the center or western politics to reevaluate our understanding of the basic units of the modern nation-state. Taking up this challenge, the preceding sections have analyzed and examined the camp in order to understand the city and in order to unlock the contemporary situation of permanent temporariness. It has pointed to the indistinguishability of the city and the camp due to the blurring of the camps borders and its active extension into the city, both architecturally and socially. In line with Agamben's argumentation the modern state shares similar, if not identical, structure which make up the camp. This is to argue that the city cannot exist and maintain itself without the camp, as the nation-state is an active process shaped by structures of violence and exclusion which must be systematically perpetuated to delimit the inside. Hence, this paper posits that under the modern nation-state, both the city and the camp are two point on the same

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5   Einkarem1948. "Palestinian children building "Palestine" kite in Wihdat Refugee Camp." *Flickr*. 2009. https://www.flickr.com/photos/einkarem1948/3654870911/in/album-72157620424917444/.

continuum of exclusion in a sovereign realm of power. In other words, the state cannot function without the marginalization of the camp and the otherization of the refugee, and yet, this does not mean that they are different or distinct, but rather they always remain connected by virtue of the sovereign ban.

Mobilizing Al-Wehdat as an analytical lens, it becomes clear that the camp indeed is able to extend its traditional delimitation and melts with its surroundings, it is an instance of the exception piercing the norm. Situated in Agamben's 'zone of indistinction,' the camp and the city become increasingly intertwined and begin to overlap. It is precisely this overlap which proves the liquidity of the camp and its ability to transgress the modern, which explains Agamben's assertion that the camp has become the *nomos of the modern*.

Taken altogether, and as Agamben explains, the camp as a "dislocating localization is the hidden matrix of the politics in which we still live, and we must learn to recognize it in all of its metamorphoses" (Agamben 2000, 43). Put differently, the original political relation in the nation-state is the sovereign ban, as through it can spaces of exception, and hence zones of indistinction, exist to construct, perform and perpetuate the limits of the nation-state. The production of states of exception and refugee camps therefore can be regarded as structures created to serve as a threshold to the rest of society and city. The structure of the city and the camp cannot be distinguished and clarify that the modern city takes up the function of the camp and eventually becomes the primary source of biopolitical control of western sovereignty. It transforms itself in to a "lethal machine" which regulates life and decides on its meaning (ibid., 42). Going forward, Agam-

ben's claim that the social sciences have tried to "conceive and organize the public space of the world's cities without any clear awareness that at their very center lies the same bare life" appears as a kind of roadmap for future scholarship on this topic (Agamben 1998, 102).

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Hot Off the Pasha's Press

Assembling the High-Modernist Press in Nineteenth Century Egypt

By: Mariam El Ashmawy

In 1834, The British Consul-General in Egypt presents a Turkish manuscript of Machiavelli's *The Prince* to the *Wali* Mehmed Ali. Aware of the Pasha's growing fascination with printed books, Consul-General Salt presented the translated manuscript as a gift to be printed in the Pasha's own Bulaq printing press. The Consul-General believes this is how to ingratiate himself with the Albanian *Wali*, and in several audiences to come, Salt awaits Mehmed Ali's reaction—anything to signify that the governor of Egypt has appreciated this gift, and that it will soon be hot-off-the-press, but nothing is said. Simmering in impatience, the British Consul-General, finally brings up the book to one of his audiences. The Pasha turns to his guest and says that Machiavelli is "a mere babbler. We have in Turkish, two words worth more than his whole book".[1] Salt is so distraught at this affront that he leaves without asking what those two Turkish words are. The traveller, St. John, who relates this anecdote, speculates

1- James Augustus St. John. *Egypt and Mohammed Ali, Or, Travels in the Valley of the Nile*. (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman, 1834), 454.

that these two words would probably have been 'plunder' and 'kill'.[2]

According to St. John's speculative guess, one can infer that the Pasha is seen to have embodied the ways of the premodern state—violent activities, such as plundering and murdering, that largely contributed to the accumulation of wealth and power for the sovereign.[3] This research attempts to prove otherwise. The presence of authoritarian means of governance and control over the population of Egypt does not negate the high-modernist approach of Mehmed Ali Pasha in making his new society legible for ruling. By looking at the trajectory of establishing the Bulaq printing press, this research addresses how the adoption of the technology served to create a social order that is engineered according to the "most advanced technical standards of the new moral sciences",[4] as well as illustrate the high-modernist hegemonic planning set by Mehmed Ali.

Ottoman Isolation or Disinterest?

The scope of this paper is more inclined towards the print revolution within the Middle East, therefore, the aim is to shift the focus of printing's effect on cultural and political history from the Western experience, into a focus on the Middle Eastern experience. It is essential first to question the construction of the Middle East. James A. Miller's "Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept", presents us with the rationales on the existence of the Middle East and how it is perceived. One of the interpretations that he addresses, within the book he reviews, concerns itself with charting out the historical aspect of the Middle East,

explaining how by the creation of a new world order, the European imagination of their new colonial conquests at different outposts, demanded concrete terms to define the regions before them, thus to the colonists "Everything was 'East'".[5] The construction of the geographical and cultural category of the Middle East has not only lumped together a region, but also created a holistic binary of West and Middle East–– where the Western experience had asserted itself as the harbinger of scientific knowledge and modernity, assuming that the paradigm it produces from such an affair is one that has shaped and provided answers for all inquiries.[6]

Consequently, the printing press phenomenon in Europe is considered to be the reference point, for both––later printing phenomenon, and an example of the emergent modernity. However, there is a considerable gap in timing between the two areas–– for although printing had flourished in Europe in the 15th century, it had only been slowly on the rise around the early 18th century in the Ottoman empire.[7] Such a discrepancy between the two instances posed questions for scholars such as why had the Ottoman Empire withheld the adoption of printing in its own part of the world?

Middle Eastern scholars such as Ami Ayalon problematized such a question, by questioning the possibility of conducting a comparative study to contrast Ottoman printing with the European case. However, he reached the conclusion that it would be ahistorical as a method of analysis. For by applying criteria modeled by one historic case to another, it would produce a

2- Ibid, 454.

3- Scott. *Seeing Like a State*, 91.

4- Ibid, 92.

5- James A. Miller. "Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept", *The AAG Review of Books*, (2013): 184-186.

6- Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. (Routledge, 2015), 40.

7- Kathryn A. Schwartz. "Did Ottoman Sultans Ban Print?" *Book History* 20, no. 1 (2017): 5.

distorted understanding of such a transformative phenomenon. Consequently, he relied on studying the emergence of Ottoman and Arab printing in the context of Middle Eastern history from within, without contrasting the two models with each other.[8]

Ayalon criticized Western scholarship's biased analysis of explaining the late advent of printing in the Ottoman empire, as they attributed the late adoption to a general lack of progress, absence of mechanisms of modernity, and as an evidence of general backwardness.[9] Schwartz and Ayalon, as pioneers in this budding field, pinpoint the reasons to three main causes. Firstly, they identify a political dimension manifested in the Ottoman government's objection to printing as it could potentially weaken the islamic order on which their power was based. Secondly, there is the religious dimension where the religious elite scholars, the *ulama*, disapproved on conservative religious grounds to the printing press as an objectionable innovation, *bid'a*, and finally, there is the economic dimension within the guilds of scribes and *waraqeen*, book copyists, whose capital would fall into ruins if a more technological textual medium would be introduced.

By 1727, a *firman*, imperial decree, was issued by Ottoman sultan Ahmet III sanctioning the practice of printing with movable type in Arabic script. Ibrahim Müteferrika, a christian convert to Islam, was given an imperial clearance to launch moveable type press in the Ottoman capital.[10]Nonetheless, Muteferrika's enterprise and the sultan's decree did not spurr a massive market for printing presses, nor did it mark any historic turning point in the region.[11] On the other hand, there was an independent initiative arising in an Ottoman province by a newly appointed governor in 1821, who seemed to realize the value of establishing a printing press to serve his ambitious purposes of maintaining his rule and curbing the Ottoman influence.[12]

A considerable gap in literature is centered around the time period of the Bulaq printing press under Mehmed Ali in the early 19th century— where concern in scholarship instead swayed towards two instances of printing in both the 18th and 20th century. Napoloean's occupation of Egypt (1798–1801) introduced a movable-type print, utilized by the French to circulate leaflets and decrees to the occupied masses in order to instate colonial rule.[13] Furthermore, the significant effect of printing on the Arab Renaissance, *Al-Nahda*, during the 20th century, is another instance that interests scholars, for there is a preoccupation with analyzing the literary developments and its effect on society relations within the 20th century.[14]

The literature discussed above is important as a frame to foreground this research with illustrating the assembly of a printing press in nineteenth century Egypt. The bulk of the scholarship is more interested in understanding *why* it took so long for the Middle East to embrace the printing press, and what were the literary developments surfacing from its effect on the *Nahda*. Therefore, this leaves a lot of space for speculation over how has the printing press affected

8- Ami Ayalon. *The Arabic Print Revolution*. (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 4.

9- Ibid, 4.

10- Ami Ayalon. *The Arabic Print Revolution*, 1.

11- Kathryn A. Schwartz. "Did Ottoman Sultans Ban Print?" *Book History* 20, no. 1 (2017): 6.

12- J. Heyworth-Dunne. "Printing and Translations Under Muhammad 'Ali of Egypt. the Foundation of Modern Arabic." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1940): 327.

13- On Barak. *On Time: Technology and Temporality in Modern Egypt*. 1st;1; ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 10.

14- J. R. Osborn. *Letters of Light: Arabic Script in Calligraphy, Print, and Digital Design*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 8.

power relations in Middle Eastern society and statehood in the early nineteenth century.

This research aims to frame the technological transformation of printing as the strategy employed by Mehmed Ali's state, by utilizing James Scott's *Seeing Like a State* as a theoretical framework in order to address how the state got a handle on its subjects through organizing the social terrain into an administratively more convenient format to enhance state capacity.[15] Talking about advanced technology provides leeway to bring in the intersection, as this research proposes, between the presence of a high modernist ideology in Mehmed Ali Pasha to change the Egyptian society, and the aspiration to introduce the Bulaq printing press as the advanced technology to realise these hegemonic planning designs.

This paper is divided into two sections to track the trajectory of the plan of establishing the Bulaq press. The first section highlights the political context and considerations that necessitated the enhancement of Mehmed Ali's state apparatus with the aid of a technological scheme. The second section contrasts two primary sources, an imperial decree by Sultan Ahmet III in 1727, and a letter by Mehmed Ali in 1820, to create a distinction between the two instances of adopting printing in the Middle East, and highlight how the process of assembling the printing press displayed the authoritarian high-modernist designs being imposed by the Pasha.

Sultan Lying in Wait

After becoming Governor in 1805,[16] there lay before Mehmed Ali a long road to establish his new state apparatus, and address the immi-

nent threat from the malcontent Ottoman Sultan, Selim III, because of his increasing power in Egypt.[17] This research posits that the means through which the new *Wali*, governor, consolidated his powers were done by adopting a technological scheme.

In 1811, Mehmed Ali decisively massacres the remaining Mamluks. This inevitably relieves him from internal challenges to his rule, however, it does not simply erase pressures from Istanbul.[18] The infamous massacre of the Mamluks is not only significant because of its bloodiness in history, but for the fact that Mehmed Ali has managed to accomplish what the Ottoman sultans have been unable to do for some time— that is, to end Mamluk rule in Egypt.[19] From the very beginning Mehmed Ali has been trying to surpass Ottoman achievements, therefore, the Pasha's ambitious plans to create a modern Egypt that does what the Ottomans are unable to do is not a far-fetched assumption.

The succeeding Ottoman sultan, Mahmud, follows his predecessor's steps and looks upon his *Wali* with envy and unease, and although the Pasha tries to placate the sultan "by sending the annual tribute, by using his name in the Friday prayer, by minting coins bearing his name, and by naming the newly dug *Mahmudiyya* canal after him, the sultan was not fooled".[20] Mehmed Ali rose to power, and inevitably conceptualized Egypt as a powerful state in itself with potential to take on the role of the aging Ottoman Empire's inheritor.[21]

15- Scott. *Seeing Like a State*, 5.

16- Fahmī. *All the Pasha's Men*, 9.

17- Khaled Fahmī, "The Era of Mehmed Ali" *The Cambridge History of Egypt*. Volume Two. (Cambridge;New York;: Cambridge University Press, 1998),146

18- Ibid, 147

19- Ibid, 147.

20- Ibid,157.

21- Raḍwān. *Tārīkh Matḥaʿat Būlāq Wa-lamḥaḥ Fī tārīkh Al-ṭibāʿ, 57*; Heyworth-Dunne."Printing and Translations Under Muḥammad ʿAlī of Egypt: The Foundation of Modern Arabic." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* no. 3 (1940): 328.

James Scott's conceptualization of state schemes is called into this line of reasoning to bring into view how it functions as Mehmed Ali's state engine for making the subjects of his new rule legible for ruling. The need to arrange populations in a way that facilitated state functions was argued by Scott to be a response to the inefficiencies of the pre-modern state. This pre-modern apparatus was not able to "see" its subjects; not their wealth, nor their location, nor their identity. Therefore, the pre-modern state's society was illegible and inefficiently governed to the point where any interventions to enhance it were both—crude and self-defeating. Scott argues that during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century state officials/rulers developed the aspirations for certain "consistent and coercive" power such as a fine-grained administrative grid, or detailed knowledge that would allow for developed projects in social engineering.[22]

For a social engineering project to be initiated, Scott lays out four elements that need to be present.[23] Firstly, a manifestation of the administrative ordering of nature and society as a means to solve the inefficiencies of the pre-modern state. Secondly, there needs to be an inherent faith within the state in borrowing the legitimacy of science and technology in order to realise this project— this is what Scott calls a high modernist ideology. With a high modernist ideology, the state has confidence in the would-be progress initiated through science and technology. Thirdly, in order bring these high modernist designs into being, an authoritarian state needs to be willing to use all of its coercive powers to make it happen. Finally, there needs to exist a prostrate and accepting society that would not resist vertically imposed plans.

Scholars have continuously debated over the reasoning for establishing the Bulaq printing press, the arguments range from a need to emulate the European experience to reviving lost manuscripts. Jurji Zaydan argues that the Bulaq press was established from the remains of the French Expedition's Al-Ahliya Press of 1799, however, Al Jabarti's account would counter such an argument. For in the treaty of the withdrawal of French forces, condition eleven stipulated that all machinery and documentation of French origin must be taken along with the withdrawing expedition.[24] Other scholars believed that Mehmed Ali fell under the spell of European modernity, and had wanted to embrace its' light.[25] Furthermore, printing was reasoned as a means to preserve books, however Abu al-Futuh Radwan argues that Mehmed Ali Pasha was not interested in reforming society to create a reading public, but was more concerned with addressing the value that can come from adopting such an initiative.[26]

In order to understand the reasoning behind a project like the Bulaq press, it is important to highlight the context of the time. Although the army under the Pasha's guidance triumphed at crushing the Wahhabi uprising in 1818, Mehmed Ali knew that the Ottoman sultan will keep throwing challenges at the new *Wali* until he is unable to keep up with Imperial demands[27]. Mehmed Ali found the need to develop his army by enhancing the new Egyptian recruits through training and education,[28] as a means to not succumb to the sultan's awaiting trap of

22- Scott. *Seeing Like a State*, 88

23- Ibid, 4-5.

24- ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jabartī, Ḥasan Muḥammad Jawhar, ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Sirnajāwī, and al-Sayid Ibrahīm Sālim. *ʿAjāʾib Al-āthār Fī Al-tarājim Wa-Al-akhbār: Li-ʿAbd Al-Rahmān Al-Jabartī ; tahqia-Sharh Ḥasan Muḥammad Jawhar, ʿAbd Al-Fattāh ạl-Saranjāwī, Al-Sayyid Ibrāhīm Sālim*. al-Ṭabʿah 1. ed.(al-Qāhirah: Lajnat al-Bayān al-ʿArabī, 1958), 29.

25- ʿAzab and Mansur. *al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī Al-matbū*, 32.

26- Raḍwān. *Tārīkh Matbaʿat Būlāq Wa-lamhạh Fī tārīkh Al-tibāʿah,* 34.

27- Ibid, 38

28- Fahmī. *All the Pasha's Men*, 12.

failure, and establish a secure stronghold in his own province. Consequently, there came a need to instill rules into the new recruits— training, decorum, military stratagem all depended on the printing press to circulate technical texts into the military educational institutions.[29]

In the eighteenth century, the Ottoman empire under sultan Ahmet III had similarly sought to restructure its traditional system in relation to the military, political, and cultural projects, and printing posed as a potential device for the Ottoman administration to update itself.[30] However as pointed out before, Ibrahim Muteferrika's endeavor stood as a lone project unable to materialize hopes of reformation or cultural change. On the other hand, Mehmed Ali in acknowledging the value of printing elaborated in Sultan Ahmet's *firman*,[31] set out to "collecting [European] books with the keenness of a bibliomaniac".[32] In the coming section, the process of establishing the printing press is highlighted by juxtaposing Sultan Ahmet's imperial decree with Mehmed Ali's letter—showing the High-Modernist planning of the Pasha.

His Word is Law

As the idea of the printing press began to develop in the Pasha's mind, he ordered material from Istanbul to be inspected along with his procured European books.[33] This begs the question of whether the Pasha was aware of Ibrahim Muteferrika's printing initiative in 1727 or not. In 1843, M. A. Perron, a physician at Kasr El Aini in Egypt, claims that the Bulaq press was

influenced by Constantinople, and had later overshadowed Ottoman printing once it had taken off.[34] Moreover, Albert Geiss publishes an article on the history of printing in Egypt during 1908 where he corroborates Perron's assumption. Geiss claims that Mehmed Ali had based his project along the same lines of Constantinople's.[35] Are the two men referring to Sultan Ahmet III's initiative of 1727 specifically? It is unclear. However, by looking at the Ottoman sultan's imperial decree it is possible to contrast the political considerations and actions undertaken by the two rulers.

Contextual Firman

Sultan Ahmet III's imperial decree did not arrive in a vacuum, but rather came as a response to the Hungarian-born convert, Ibrahim Müteferrika's pamphlet. In the two paged Imperial decree, it is noticeable that the Ottoman sultan had not only read Muteferrika's pamphlet, but showed an intelligent awareness of the ongoing discourse of the advantages and disadvantages of printing circulating in his empire. He begins by showcasing scribal manuscripts vis-a-vis the changes in the intellectual scene:

> With the passing of days and with the years going by as the Chingizids, created chaotic disturbances and Hulagu rose to power, and with resplendent Andalusia in the hands of the Europeans, and with the convulsions of wars, killing, and destruction, most literary works have disappeared with their authors. Therefore, today in the Muslim lands the dictionaries of Cevheri and Van Kulu in the Arabic lan-

29- Raḍwān. *Tārīkh Matḥaʿat Būlāq Wa-lamḥaḥ Fī tārīkh Al-ṭibāʿah*, 38.

30- Atiyeh. *The Book in the Islamic World*, 235.

31- Ayalon. *The Arabic Print Revolution*, 22.

32 Heyworth-Dunne."Printing and Translations Under Muḥammad ʿAlī of Egypt: The Foundation of Modern Arabic." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* no. 3 (1940): 328.

33- Ibid, 328.

34- M. A. Perron, "Sur les écoles et l'imprimerie du pacha d'Égypté", Journal Asiatique. Quatrième Série, Tome II, 1843, 25.

35- Albert Geiss, "L'Establissement Typographque du Paca – Le Débuts de L'Imperimerie de Boulac" Bulletin de L'Institut Egyptien. Tome II, 1908, 197.

guage, and books of history and, copies of scientific works which were burned are rare.[36]

Sultan Ahmet shrewdly builds momentum to his proclamation, not by dismissing scribal manuscripts as a thing of the past, but rather by claiming that there is an external challenge to the survival of important manuscripts. Hence, he continues to address the need to print through equating the official printed word with "coining money and impressing paper with a signet ring",[37] as something that is both—durable and formal. He calls on "the educated select servant of the palace, Ibrahim, may his nobility increase" as an expert to take on full responsibility and begin plans for establishing a printing press.

It is interesting to note that the *firman* does not end there. The Ottoman sultan is revealed through his words to have been aware of how the dethronement of manuscripts by the printed book could inevitably create opposition from the *Ulama*, the prominent religious scholars, and accordingly, he addresses their concerns:

> Excepting books of religious law, Koranic exegesis, the traditions of the Prophet, and theology, you [Muteferrika] asked the Padishah›s permission in the aforementioned tract to print dictionaries, history books, medical books, astronomy and geography books, travelogues, and books about logic.[38]

The sanctioning of Arabic texts is thus circumscribed to secular books, addressing the concerns of the religious scholars' apprehension towards textual errors in printing that would be "blasphemous".[39]

Sultan Ahmet III's proclamation of adopting printing is important for three considerations. Firstly, note the celebratory and respectful language used to highlight the importance of Ibrahim Muteferrika to the Ottoman Porte. Secondly, in addressing the concerns and fears of the *ulama*, the Sultan is aiming to include them in the new process of their own volition, and not coerce them into following orders. Thirdly, there is no apparent objective towards ending the strong efforts of the ulama in the intellectual scene vis-a-vis the circulation of words and books— as the Sultan reiterates in the end of his decree that Muteferrika must "depend on the noble learned men [*ulama*] for this".[40] The Egyptian proclamation, as shown in the coming section, is a jarring foil to this imperial decree in several aspects— proving that it is very telling of the shift in governance under Mehmed Ali Pasha.

'High-Modernist' Letter

As addressed above, neither the considerations of adopting print in Egypt nor how the idea was formulated in Mehmed Ali Pasha's mind have been clearly agreed upon by scholars. However, it is seen that the development of new nations in terms of socio-economic factors demanded the establishment of institutions that "unlocked the doors to modernization".[41] As a governor of a new province, Mehmed Ali Pasha must've found the need to initiate state-led schemes to both improve society's condition, as well as consolidate his rule. Analyzing

36- Sultan Ahmet III. "Firman, 1727" in The Book in the Islamic World. George Nicholas Atiyeh (SUNY Press, 1995), 284.

37- Ibid, 284.

38- Sultan Ahmet III. "*Firman*, 1727" in The Book in the Islamic World. George Nicholas Atiyeh (SUNY Press, 1995), 285.

39- Osborn. *Letters of Light*, 83.

40- Sultan Ahmet III. "Firman, 1727" in The Book in the Islamic World. George Nicholas Atiyeh (SUNY Press, 1995), 285.

41- M. A. Faksh. "An Historical Survey of the Educational System in Egypt." *International Review of Education* 22, no. 2 (1976): 234.

the Pasha's letter to his governor of Cairo, illustrates the presence of the four elements for state-initiated social engineering projects as per Scott's conceptualization: an administrative ordering of society, a high-modernist ideology, the state willing and able to use all of its coercive powers to bring this ideology into being, and finally, a prostrate society that lacks the capacity to resist such plans.[42]

Five years before sending his proclamatory letter, Mehmed Ali Pasha had instructed the Syrian-convert Niqula Al-Masabki to embark on a student mission to Milan in order to learn the craft of printing.[43] A few years preceding Al-Masabki's mission, Uthman Nooreldin had also been assigned the task of gathering printed books from Europe for the Pasha's perusal. Once the two men had returned to Egypt in 1820, word had reached the Pasha whilst he was abroad on another military campaign on behalf of the Ottoman sultan. Being abroad himself did not quell the Pasha's fervor to begin assembling the machinery at once.[44] The aforementioned actions show an initiative and a willingness for an administrative ordering of nature and society— an evident transformations from premodern state activities of utilizing violence to maintain order, to a shift to modern statecraft of administrative ordering and disciplining.[45]

In the letter, Mehmed Ali relates to the governor of Cairo of the mission he had sent five years before, informing him that these technicians and intellectuals, the *atfal* or "children" have finally returned.[46] The pasha notifies the reader that these "children" have been in Mi-

lan learning the "venerable craft of printing in foreign and Arabic type"— the animated and hurried tone of the letter is apparent in how Mehmed Ali orders his *Katikhda*, the governor of Cairo, to quickly give them all that they need to set up the machineries, and prepare salaries for their work. The Pasha's initiative for seeing the printing press as the means to enhance his state apparatus, as well as provide the means for institutionalising education into his army and schools, showcases him having embraced the high-modernist ideology of the modern statecraft. The printing press, as a scientific and technological innovation, is viewed by the Pasha as the means for progress— for the expansion of production, as a mastery of both nature and society, and a rational design of social order.[47]

What is noteworthy in Mehmed Ali's letter is not only what is present, but also the lack of flowery, oratory, and informative language previously acknowledged in Sultan Ahmet III's *firman*. Unlike the Ottoman sultan, Mehmed Ali does not issue an imperial decree, nor does he await a *fatwa,* a legal opinion, by a religious scholar – in order to legitimize printing as in accordance with the Islamic teachings – as Sheikh Al-Islam did in 1727 following the imperial decree.[48] The informal and flippant tone of his letter shows a level of pragmatism that is not interested in rhetorical discourse nor is it trying to win over possible contenders.

In Perron's letter, he clearly notes the condemnation and evident despise the *ulama* harbored towards the printed innovation[49]— nevertheless, they are unable to challenge the Pasha's plans. In 1808 the Pasha had

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42- Scott. *Seeing Like a State*, 4-6.

43- Raḍwān. *Tārīkh Matḇaʿat Būlāq Wa-lamḥaḥ Fī tārīkh Al-ṭibāʿ*, 48.

44- Ibid, 49-50.

45- Scott. *Seeing Like a State*, 4.

46- Raḍwān. *Tārīkh Matḇaʿat Būlāq Wa-lamḥaḥ Fī tārīkh Al-ṭibāʿ*, 359.

47- Scott. *Seeing Like a State*, 4.

48- Osborn. *Letters of Light*, 112.

49- M. A. Perron, "Sur les écoles et l'imprimerie du pacha d'Égypté", Journal Asiatique. Quatrième Série, Tome II, 1843, 9.

forced Al-Azhar students to learn Turkish in order to be sent along with Al-Masabki to learn the craft,[50] and later when they had returned they were commanded to assist both Al-Masabki and Nooreldin with the creation of printed works and the running of the Bulaq press. Geiss supplies us with the names of the known Azhar students who were forced into responsibility: Sheikh Abdel-Baki, Sheikh Mohammed Abou Abdallah, Sheikh Youssef Al-Sanafi, and Sheikh Mohammed Chehat.[51]

As 'men of the pen', these religious scholars of Al-Azhar maintained their secure position as the intellectual elite so long as the illiterate community was kept insulated from "Western influences", embodied in the printing press.[52] Consequently, with the adoption of printing and the circulation of state-sanctioned texts, this was translated in the relative diminution of the *ulama*'s control on all intellectual activity in Egypt, as well as challenged the *ulama*, and their educational and social influence in society.[53] Mehmed Ali's challenge to the position of the *ulama* manifested in his coercive means of including them in running the Bulaq press is a jarring opposite to the inclusive and pacifying tone in Sultan Ahmet's decree. Furthermore, the *ulama*'s overpowered position lent itself unable to challenge the ableness and willingness of Mehmed Ali to turn his high-modernist ideology into reality.

'High Modernist' Success?

Overall, to draw upon St. John's anecdote once more, this paper challenged the simplistic assumption that Mehmed Ali Pasha had depended explicitly on "killing" and "plundering" to instate his rule. Additionally, juxtaposing Sultan Ahmet's imperial decree with Mehmed Ali's letter, illustrated the High-Modernist planning of the Pasha. This paper held that the Egyptian proclamation by Mehmed Ali, in contrast to the Sultan's decree, is a jarring foil, proving that it is very telling of the shift in governance under Mehmed Ali Pasha— showing a level of pragmatism that is not interested in rhetorical discourse nor in trying to win over possible contenders. Importantly, through this contrast, the four elements of the modern statecraft social engineering projects have been highlighted by conducting a close reading of the Egyptian proclamation's wording, as well as situating it in the historical context of Mehmed Ali's coercive and pragmatic policies. This paper has showcased the translation of the Pasha's highly ambitious designs into actions such as assembling the high-modernist press of his modern state of Egypt— highlighting the importance of the printing press, as a state scheme, in manifesting the Pasha's power.

This paper's analysis of the Pasha's enterprise has presented Mehmed Ali as having embraced the high-modernist ideology of the modern statecraft, as conceptualized by Scott— shifting from violent means of acquiring powers, to schemes of social engineering. Consequently, the printing press, as a scientific and technological innovation, is viewed by the Pasha as the means for progress— for the expansion of production, as a mastery of both nature and society, and a rational design of social order.

50- Azab and Mansur. *al-Kitāb Al-'Arabī Al-matbū*, 123.

51- Albert Geiss, 'L'Establissement Typographque du Paca – Le Débuts de L'Imperimerie de Boulac' Bulletin de L'Institut Egyptien. Tome II, 1908, 199.

52- M. A. Faksh. "An Historical Survey of the Educational System in Egypt.", 235.

53 M. A. Faksh. "An Historical Survey of the Educational System in Egypt.", 235.

In the end, talking about advanced technology, especially communicative in this case, had provided leeway to bring in the intersection, as this paper has proposed, between the presence of a High Modernist ideology in Mehmed Ali Pasha to change the Egyptian society, and the aspiration to introduce the Bulaq printing press. This research was interested in extracting the elements of Scott's state schemes in order to utilize them in framing Mehmed Ali's printing initiative within the cast of a progressive state, with aspirations for initiating a grand social engineering project— utilizing the most advanced technology to set about making its society legible for governance. Although Scott provides the framework to allow us to recognize the Bulaq printing press as a state scheme, his view that state schemes are a failure seem to be inapt once placed within the conclusions reached in this paper. The Pasha's state schemes, as analyzed within a high modernist framework, has been proven as a success— it was through his confidence in technological initiatives as the means to reorder society and amass power that had shown him to be a success. The presence of authoritarian means of governance and control over the population of Egypt, such as forced conscription and an autocratic apparatus, does not negate the high modernist approach of Mehmed Ali Pasha in making his new society legible for ruling.

Unlike in *Seeing Like A State*, the Pasha's schemes of institutionalizing state-controlled printing presses were successful— not because they aimed to better the human condition through creating a reading public and encouraging a cultural renaissance, but rather because they functioned as a medium to deploy and institutionalise power. Mehmed Ali's high-modernist approach towards the role of

technology is one that is rooted in a conscious awareness of the value that can come from adopting such an initiative— one that is translated into an authoritarian apparatus.

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New Media and Protest Movements

From Iran's Green Movement to Egypt's Arab Spring

By: Kaitlin Junod

The widespread accessibility of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones, social media, and other internet platforms, have led scholars to question what role they play in civil society. The widespread accessibility of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones, social media, and other internet platforms, have led scholars to question what role they play in civil society. It has been argued that under authoritarian regimes, ICTs can facilitate "wired citizenship" in which citizens can take part in political discourse that would not be otherwise possible.[1] Though some scholars argue that the internet is a crucial tool for opposition groups to organize and communicate,[2] others have countered that in the absence of a strong conventional civil society, a virtual civil society will actually reinforce weak political organization and make long-term opposition organization more difficult.[3]

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1   Philip Howard, *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Information Technology and Political Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 152.

2   Ibid., 132.

3   Mark Beissinger, ""Conventional and "Virtual" Civil Societies in Autocratic Regimes," *Comparative Politics* (April 2017): 352.

To gain a better understanding of the role ICTs play in civil society under authoritarian regimes and what implications that has for protest movements, this paper will analyze the Green Movement in Iran and the Arab Spring uprisings in Egypt. Popular discourse and media representations have presented the Green Movement of 2009 as a "Twitter revolution"[4] while the Egyptian uprisings were similarly believed to be propelled by new communications technologies.[5] A closer look will demonstrate that these interpretations were too simplified and didn't account for regime repression and conditions on the ground that restricted protesters' access to ICTs. Despite this, new communications technologies have had a broader influence on the informal networks of activism that have characterized regime opposition in both countries.

This paper will begin by outlining the current literature on the role of ICTs in civil society, particularly under authoritarian regimes. After that, the paper will move on to the two case studies: first, Iran's Green Movement in 2009, and second, Egypt's Arab Spring uprising in 2011. First, the paper will explore the extent to which ICTs were or were not a tool for protesters in each case. After that, the broader patterns of activism leading up to the Green Movement and Arab Spring will be examined, demonstrating how informal networks and loose organizing played a key role in regime opposition. The implications of these types of networking and organizing will be briefly discussed for each case and will be expanded upon and compared in the concluding section.

ICTs, Cyber-activism and Authoritarian Control

As internet usage has vastly expanded and new ICTs proliferated, political scientists have researched their impact on political movements and democratization, noting both their advantages and drawbacks for facilitating social change. Larry Diamond discusses the many possible uses of new "liberation technology," which he defines as any ICT that can "expand political, social, and economic freedom."[6] According to Diamond, the internet has led to the immense growth of two-way and multiway communication channels, which can enable citizens to mobilize for democracy, widen the public sphere and promote transparency and accountability in authoritarian regimes through the documentation of human rights abuses and corruption.

Similarly, in Howard's study of countries with significant Muslim populations, he notes that ICTs have had a positive impact on civil society and political communication.[7] He argues that under regimes that censor speech and monitor real-life social communities, the very existence of virtual communities in itself is political. Outlining ICTs' impact on civil society, he says it is instrumental in introducing new values and ideas, organizing collective action, and serving as a symbolic sign of modernity. Specific web applications such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube can also foster the growth of "mobile society," in which Nourredine Miladi says people from different social strata can participate, creating counter-hegemonic spheres of debate.[8] However Miladi, Howard and Diamond

4   Philip Mueller and Sophie van Huellen, "A Revolution in 140 Characters? Reflecting on the Role of Social Networking Technologies in Iranian Post-Election Protests," *Policy and Internet* 4, no. 3-4 (2012): 184.

5   Noureddine Miladi, "Social Media and Social Change," *Digest of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 10 (2016): 37.

6   Larry Diamond, "Liberation Technology," *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 3 (2010): 70.

7   Howard, *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy,* 133.

8   Miladi, "Social Media and Social Change," 37.

are all are cautious against cyber-optimism. Technology can be a tool that is "both noble and nefarious."[9] While authoritarian regimes will promote initial internet openness for economic growth and modernization, they will clamp down in times of international security crises, elections, and protest movements.[10]

Saeid Golkar also argues that authoritarian regimes will seek to control cyberspace once they understand the threat it poses.[11] He says that regimes can employ both proactive and reactive strategies for reigning in the freedoms associated with ICTs, the former including filtering content and blocking websites, and the latter including the dissemination of propaganda. Diamond compares the advent of the internet to the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, which also revolutionized information distribution and led to the Renaissance and Enlightenment.[12] However, despotic rulers of the time adapted to the threat, centralizing control and adopting harsh censorship policies. As an example, he notes how China has one of the most repressive internet policies, citing its "great firewall" and its extensive cyber-police force, which employs 50,000 individuals to monitor the web for "harmful" content to remove. Miladi also steers away from "technological determinism," claiming there is no direct causal relation between ICTs and social change. She notes that Facebook penetration was high in the UAE (45%), Qatar (34%), Lebanon (23%), and Kuwait (21%), yet none of these countries experienced protest movements during the 2011 Arab uprising that spread across the region.[13]

Furthermore, while ICTs may provide a route for people to partake in unconventional political participation, they may actually hinder the development of civil society under authoritarian regimes in the long-term. Mark Beissinger argues that while a strong "virtual civil society" presents autocratic regimes with more challenges for control over the street, when paired with a weak conventional civil society it can reinforce weak political organization, create a false sense of representativeness, dilute oppositional collective identities, and make oppositional organization more difficult in the long-term.[14] Similarly, in Nadine Sika's study of five countries in the Middle East and North Africa after the Arab uprisings, she found an overall rise in "unconventional participation" among informally networked youth, which she defines as protest movements or issue-oriented campaigns that are not part of a formal organization within their polities.[15] Though there has been a rise in such unconventional participation, Sika found that it does not result in more democracy or liberalization; instead, it leads to fragmented civil society and more resilient forms of authoritarianism.[16]

Taken alone, virtual action is not enough to translate into real-world consequences. In 2009, Iran saw a wave of huge protests following the Ahmadinejad's victory in the presidential election, which was widely perceived to be rigged in his favor. Hailed as the "Twitter revolution," it was met with repression and the movement failed to annul the results and wrest control of the government from Ahmadinejad and his faction of conservative hard-liners. Egypt's 2011 uprising, where technology also seems

9   Diamond, "Liberation Technology," *Journal of Democracy,* 71.

10 Howard, *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy.*

11 Saeid Golkar, "Liberation or Suppression Technologies? The Internet, the Green Movement and the Regime in Iran," *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society* 9, no. 1 (2011), 57.

12 Diamond, "Liberation Technologies," *Journal of Democracy,* 71.

13 Miladi, "Social Media and Social Change," *Digest of Middle East Studies,* 37.

14 Beissinger, ""Conventional and "Virtual" Civil Societies in Autocratic Regimes," 352.

15 Nadine Sika, "Civil Society and the Rise of Unconventional Modes of Youth Participation in the MENA," *Middle East Law and Governance* 10, (2018): 241.

16 Ibid., 239.

to have played an important role, succeeded in removing Mubarak after three decades in power. However, the subsequent political transition failed to realize the democratic goals of the revolution. This paper will argue that ICTs did not play a decisive role in the Green Movement nor the 2011 uprisings. The role of social media and mobile phones in aiding the protesters has been over-emphasized, while the respective regimes have used such technologies for further repression. However, ICTs do help foster informal networks of activism. This type of loose organization has been essential to challenging authoritarianism in both countries, though its decentralized form has made it difficult to make institutional changes that would secure democratization.

The Green Movement: Challenging the "Twitter revolution"

The Green Movement developed its momentum within the system of Iran's competitive authoritarianism, and against the backdrop of social movements that had been spurred by informal activism since the 1990s. Iran's competitive authoritarianism is characterized by the co-existence of democratic rules such as regular elections, along with autocratic methods such as screening candidates by the Guardian Council.[17] Since the 1979 Revolution, the representativeness of the Islamic Republic has been heavily emphasized, meaning appointed bodies, mainly the Guardian Council, have resorted to manipulation of elections rather than outright oppression.[18] Though conservative

forces have manipulated rules to keep their faction in power, Farideh Farhi notes how reformist activists have worked within this system to increase voter turnout and elect reformist president Khatami in 1997 and a reformist majority the 2000 parliamentary elections.[19] In this context, the Green Movement was not "revolutionary" because it was not seeking to overthrow the entire political system. Instead, by disputing the Ahmadinejad's electoral victory, protesters were calling for greater recognition of democratic principles that were guaranteed to them in the constitution.

The Green Movement was widely considered a "Twitter revolution" because of the social media platform's supposed role in the movement's reach and impact, though much empirical evidence calls into question the actual importance of the social media platform. In 2009 the number of Twitter users in Iran was only 10,000, with 93 percent of users registered as located in Tehran, according to Mueller and van Huellen.[20] They speculate that these numbers could also be inflated because during the revolution, protesters encouraged people abroad to change their location settings to Tehran in order to confuse the regime's attempts to track down opposition through social media. To further support their hypothesis that a large portion of relevant Twitter activity during the protests was generated from outside Iran, Mueller and van Huellen also found that before the election, 51 percent of tweets using #Iranelection originated inside the country, and 23 percent from outside.[21] After the elections, only 27 percent of #Iranelection tweets came from inside the country, with 40 percent being tweeted from abroad. Thus, they argue that #Iranelection tweets includ-

17 Farideh Farhi, "The Tenth Presidential Elections and Their Aftermath," in *Iran: From Theocracy to the Green Movement* ed. Negin Nabavi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 7.

18 Alex Grinberg, "Iranian Reformists: Between Moderation and Revolution," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2016), 15.

19 Farhi, "The Tenth Presidential Elections," 8.

20 Mueller and van Huellen, "A Revolution in 140 Characters?" 193.

21 Ibid., 193.

ed Western coverage and perceptions of the Green Movement more than they played a role within Iran during the uprising.

Though Twitter was not a major force propelling the Green Movement, the movement did benefit from previous social movements that relied on informal activist networks organized around issues such as rights for women, minorities and students, which formed during the reformist president Khatami.[22] Babak Rahimi notes how the internet was a powerful (though limited) tool of grassroots activists during the student protests of 1999, where Iranian students used chat rooms to mobilize against hardliner conservatives in the government.[23] In 2003, activists used similar measures to organize and communicate via chatrooms and weblogs.[24] Notably, in 2006 the One Million Signatures campaign against gender discrimination used informal networks, new technology, and face-to-face advocacy to protest gender discrimination. The campaign set forth a framework of protest that sought to enact change within the legal framework of the Iranian constitution.[25] Similarly, the Green Movement was not questioning the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic, but was demanding greater recognition to the democratic principles outlined within its constitution.

During the 2009 presidential campaigns, the electoral committees of Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karoubi provided a valuable space where activists from various issues of focus could network, form alliances, and build friendships with each other.[26] In this way, activism took on a more individualized and fragmented nature, though it did not preclude formal participation in formal institutions like the electoral committees and political parties.[27] It was from these electoral committees and informal networks that activists were able to draw support for the Green Movement. However, though many people united behind the movement and mobilized from the bottom-up, its diffuse character prevented activists from being able to create a strong center of power that was able to effect change in the arena of institutionalized politics.[28] Though Mousavi was a focal point around which to organize in the direct aftermath of the elections, John Rahagi argues that the overarching goal of the protest became less clear as the months stretched on.[29] As the protests progressed and the demands expanded beyond support for Mousavi, it was difficult for the movement to "substantiate its demands into policies."[30]

Though the "Twitter revolution" was not classically 'revolutionary' in the sense that it was not calling for an overthrow of the government and did not actually involve the widespread use of Twitter, it was nevertheless a significant display of opposition to authoritarianism that demonstrated the power of loose organizing and informal networks of activists. Leading up to the 2009 protests, and even afterwards, social media has been an inclusive platform for Iranians to voice their opinions and connect with each other.[31] As the constitution guarantees the state sole ownership over the country's radio and TV media,

22 Paola Rivetti, "Political activism in Iran: Strategies for survival, possibilities for resistance and authoritarianism," *Democratization* 24, no. 6 (2017): 1184.

23 Babak Rahimi, "Cyberdissent: The Internet in Revolutionary Iran," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 7, no. 3 (2003): 8.

24 Ibid.

25 Fariba Adelkhah, "The Political Economy of the Green Movement: Contestation and Political Mobilization in Iran," in *Iran: From Theocracy to the Green Movement* ed. Negin Nabavi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 22.

26 Rivetti, "Political activism in Iran," 1184.

27 Ibid., 1185.

28 Ibid., 1184.

29 John Rahaghi, "New Tools, Old Goals: Comparing the Role of Technology in the 1979 Revolution and the 2009 Green Movement," *Journal of Information Policy* 2 (2012): 166.

30 Rivetti, "Political activism in Iran," 1185.

31 Naser Ghobadzadeh, "Elections in the Islamic Republic of Iran: A source of democratic learning and moderation," *Journal of Arab and Muslim Media Research* 11, no. 2 (2018): 169.

"weblogistan" was also a crucial alternative to traditional journalism.[32] The Green Movement did not succeed in annulling Ahmadinejad's victory, but its lasting impact is, as Hooman Majd argues, that it has made clear that "Iranians are no longer resigned to undemocratic aspects of a political system" that denies citizens' rights guaranteed under the constitution.[33]

In contrast, protesters in Egypt's Arab Spring uprisings were calling for the overthrow of the ruling regime. As will be explained in the following section, the Egyptian uprisings shared similarities with the Green Movement in many respects. Both mobilized opposition by building on informal networks of activists and loose coordination. Due to its decentralized character, Egyptian activists also faced challenges in institutionalizing democratic change.

Egypt's "Leaderless Revolution"

Egyptians took to the streets in January 2011 to protest the rule of Hosni Mubarak, who had been in power for three decades. Hailed as a "leaderless revolution," the mass uprisings ultimately resulted in the fall of his regime, with many crediting the protests' success to use of internet, social media and mobile phones.[34] Though leading up to the Arab Spring, Egypt had experienced many movements that had, in part, been facilitated by cyber-activism, the role of ICTs during the 2011 uprisings themselves is not as clear. In response to the widespread upheavals, Mubarak launched his most holistic attack on the media. The regime decided to entirely block social media sites, shut

down SMS services, and blackout most of the internet on January 27, leading up to the Day of Rage.[35] Because of this, the uprisings were not powered by ICTs, although they did rely on the informal networking and unconventional modes of participating that had characterized Egyptian civil society for the past several years leading up to the 2011 protests.

Due to the history of regime repression, Egyptian reformists had come to rely heavily on informal networks, as demonstrated by movements such as 'We Are All Khaled Said', and the April 6 Youth Movement.[36] These movements tended to be horizontally organized, with activists using ICTs such as Facebook and mobile phones to connect with friends and acquaintances in their informal networks.[37] Building on this mode of organizing, the Arab Spring uprisings were also horizontally organized, though as noted above, regime repression hindered the efficacy of using ICTs. Though this loose coordination was an advantage for protesters to mobilize vast numbers, the pitfalls of a "leaderless revolution" became clear in the aftermath of the 2011 uprisings.[38] Reformists' lack of centralized institutions and weak organization meant they were not able to secure democratic gains after Mubarak fell, especially when faced with the highly organized military on the one hand and the Muslim Brotherhood on the other.

Though the Muslim Brotherhood eventually came out to protest with secular activists, it pursued its own agenda after Mubarak vacated power, which was seen as contrary to the democratic aims of the uprisings.[39] The military

32 Elizabeth Bucar and Roja Fazaeli, "Free Speech in Weblogistan? The Offline Consequences of Online Communication," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 3 (2008): 412.

33 Hoomad Majd, "Think Again: Iran's Green Movement," *Foreign Policy*, last modified January 6, 2010, https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/01/06/think-again-irans-green-movement/.

34 Paolo Gerbaudo, "The Impermanent Revolution: The Organizational Fragility of the Egyptian Prodemocracy Movement in the Troubled Transition," *Social Justice* 39, no. 1 (2013): 8.

35 Alexandra Dunn, "Unplugging a Nation: State Media Strategy During Egypt's January 25th Uprising," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 35, no. 2 (2011): 19.

36 Gerbaudo, "The Impermanent Revolution," 17.

37 Nivien Saleh, "Egypt's Digital Activism and the Dictator's Dilemma: An Evaluation," *Telecommunications Policy* 36, (2012): 480.

38 Gerbaudo, "The Impermanent Revolution," 9.

39 Ibid., 15.

also sided with protesters but had no intention of giving up its special economic and political privileges.[40] Because the secular reformists could not form centralized organizations in the transition period, the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Justice and Development Party, won over 50 percent of the parliamentary seats in the 2011 election, shortly followed by their candidate's victory in the presidential election in 2012.[41] After the military coup led by General al-Sisi took power from Morsi and the Brotherhood, repression and authoritarianism intensified, seeming to end any hope for democratization. Indeed, similar to the Green Movement, the Egyptian uprisings were characterized by their loose organization and reliance on informal networks that had been built up over several years leading to the respective protest movements.

Political Change and ICTs

In both the Green Movement and Egypt's uprisings, ICTs did not play as important a role in the protests themselves as was popularly thought. In Iran's "Twitter revolution" the majority of Twitter activity actually originated from outside of the country during the protests, meaning the platform was likely more useful for informing the outside world about events unfolding in Iran rather than as a tool for protesters to communicate with each other.[42] In Egypt, Mubarak's quick repressive response to the protests meant that protesters did not have access to SMS services, social media platforms and other online tools.[43] In addition, it is important to note how regimes can use their power to control the digital sphere and exploit it for their own

use. In Iran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was able to arrest many activist bloggers through advanced surveillance technology, and expanded the online presence of the Basij by creating 10,000 new blogs promoting Islamist content.[44] These two cases support Howard's assertion that communication technologies are not "good or bad or even neutral," in that they can be used by both democracy movements and authoritarian regimes for both good or evil.[45] As Howard argues, ICTs must be analyzed through the communities they support, not just based on their technological capabilities.[46]

Though activists did not rely on ICTs during the protests themselves, the Green Movement and Egyptian uprisings did build on a history of loose organizing by informal activist networks that had used new communication technologies to connect with each other and to voice their opposition. Student movements in Iran in the late nineties and early 2000s used chatrooms to help coordinate protests, while "weblogistan" provided a place for activists to voice their own opinions, relatively free of the constraints placed on traditional journalism.[47] Various movements in Egypt in the decade leading up to the 2011 uprisings were also coordinated with the help of ICTs. As Howard argued, the existence of virtual communities is political in and of itself in countries where the regime seeks to control speech and monitor offline communities.[48] As demonstrated by activism in Iran and Egypt, these "virtual communities" are not just virtual; they are comprised of real-world people who take to the streets to protest. Even though social media and mobile phones were not as

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40 Ibid., 13.

41 Ibid., 15.

42 Rahaghi, "New Tools, Old Goals," 168.

43 Dunn, "Unplugging a Nation," 19.

44 Golkar, "Liberation or Suppression Technologies?" 61-62.

45 Howard, *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy,* 16.

46 Ibid., 11.

47 Bucar and Fazaeli, "Free Speech in Weblogistan?" 412.

48 Howard, *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy,* 133.

instrumental in the Green Movement and Arab uprisings as they were unfolding on the street, the longer-term impact of activists' access to and use of ICTs should not be overlooked.

 The Green Movement and the Egyptian uprisings also demonstrate that while this loose organizing has been effective at mobilizing and voicing dissent, it nonetheless has faced challenges institutionalizing democratic changes due to its diffuse nature and lack of strong central leadership. In Egypt, the "leaderless revolution" could not compete with the highly organized structures of the military and the Muslim Brotherhood. Meanwhile, at the beginning of the Green Movement, protesters seemed to be in support of Mousavi and against corrupted elections, though as the protests stretched on for months, the overarching goal of the movement became less clear.[49] In the end, in both cases, protesters were not able to translate the mas mobilizations into democratic change at the institutional level. A point of difference, however, is that Iran's unique system of competitive authoritarianism still offers some opportunity for reformists to advance their interests by winning over elected institutions. Naser Ghobadzadeh notes that even though elections have not been free and fair, they have led to profound shifts in power over the course of the Republic's history.[50] Thus in Iran, where activists did not widely call for the abolishment of the entire system, they do have an institutional pathway to make reforms, though this is still limited by the power of conservatives that tend to dominate appointed institutions.[51] Taken together, this further demonstrates that while the Green Movement and Arab uprisings brought vast

numbers to the street, to realize their goals movements must be able to make change at the institutional level.

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49 Rahaghi, "New Tools, Old Goals," 166.
50 Ghobadzadeh, "Elections in the Islamic Republic of Iran," 159.
51 Ibid., 164-165.

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Military Defection in Syria after the Eruption of the Arab Spring

By: Mariam Abdelaty

In March 2011, Syria witnessed protests that started with largely peaceful demonstrators against Bashar Al-Assad's regime. At first, the uprising started as a series of localized, unconnected insurgencies in response to the extensive repression carried out by the security forces and then it turned into a civil war.[1] In the beginning, the police units and elite military were deployed against the protests. Afterwards, the regime increased its militarization strategies to deal with the instability and protests, which ended up with the deployment of heavy airstrikes and artillery against the protestors. Consequently, the heavy-handed strategy adopted by the regime not only led to escalating the conflict but also to increasing the unrest within the military rank,[2] and many soldiers began to consider insubordination which turned into desertion and multisided bloody civil war.[3] In this paper, I argue that praetorian authoritar-

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1   Kevin Koehler, Dorothy Ohl, and Holger Albrecht, "From Disaffection to Desertion: How Networks Facilitate Military Insubordination in Civil Conflict," *Comparative Politics* 48, no. 4 (2016): 439-457, p. 440.

2   Ibid.

3   Aurel Croissant, David Kuehn, and Tanja Eschenauer, "Mass Protests and the Military," *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 3 (2018): 141-155, p. 143.

ian regimes could still survive despite of military defections. This paper will examine why the military defects in praetorian authoritarian regimes by analyzing the Syrian civil war that resulted after the uprising. The paper starts by giving an overview of the Syrian uprising in 2011 and how it became militarized and developed into violence and civil war. Then, the paper analyzes the military defection during the uprising, in an effort to examine the factors behind military defection and loyalty in praetorian authoritarian regimes. The paper examines the survival of Al-Assad regime despite the defection and unrest within the military.

Eruption of the Syrian Uprising

Despite of the modernization process carried out by Bashar Al-Assad; Syria has not been immunized from the Arab Spring uprisings.[4] The modernization process seems to have marginalized the regime's "peripheries"[5] which triggered the eruption of the Syrian uprising.

The main reasons for the eruption of the Syrian uprising were generally fueled by the regime's entitlement, corruption, repression, and inequality.[6] Therefore, the protestors' demands were not mainly sectarian but on calls for political, social, and economic genuine change.[7] At the beginning, the uprising started as a non-sectarian and non-violent upheaval with the aim of democratizing the Syrian regime.[8] However, the contention's dynamics between the social movements and the Syrian regime have been reshaped by the regime's use of violence against the protestors, and "the trap of an all-out sectarian conflict",[9] resulting in the militarization of the uprising which led to a violent, bloody, and multisided civil war.

At first, the uprising turned into a series of localized, unconnected insurgencies in response to the extensive repression carried out by the security forces and then it turned into a civil war. In the beginning, the police units and elite military were deployed against the protests. Afterwards, the regime increased its militarization strategies to deal with the instability and protests, which ended up with the deployment of heavy airstrikes, artillery, snipers, and tanks to kill the protestors. Al-Assad's military deployed unprecedent use of violence against the protestors.[10] Consequently, the heavy-handed strategy adopted by the regime not only led to escalating the conflict but also to increasing the unrest within the military rank, and many soldiers began to consider insubordination which turned into desertion and multisided bloody civil war. Due to the absence of institutionalized channels that would facilitate negotiations, trust, and compromise among the opponents, Syria fell into civil war.[11]

Before 2011, the Syrian regime tended to be immune to challenges that occurred internally. Many observers claimed that the Syrian regime would be safe and resistible to any attempts to domestic uprisings, especially after those of Egypt and Tunisia.[12] However, these claims

4   Raymond Hinnebusch, "Syria: From 'Authoritarian Upgrading' to Revolution?" *International Affairs* 88, no. 1 (2012): 95-113, p. 106.

5   Philippe Droz-Vincent, "State of Barbary" (Take Two): From the Arab Spring to the Return of Violence in Syria," *The Middle East Journal* (Middle East Institute) 68, no. 1 (2014): 33-58, p. 33.

6   Benedetta Berti and Jonathan Paris, "Beyond Sectarianism: Geopolitics, Fragmentation, and the Syrian Civil War," *Strategic Assessment* 16, no. 4 (2014): 21-34, p. 23.

7   Ibid., 23.

8   Ibid., 24.; Droz-Vincent, "State of Barbary," 33.

9   Ibid., 34.

10 Croissant, Kuehn, and Eschenauer, "Mass Protests and the Military," 143.; Droz-Vincent, "State of Barbary," 33.; Holger Albrecht, "Does Coup-Proofing Work? Political–Military Relations in Authoritarian Regimes amid the Arab Uprisings," *Mediterranean Politics* 20, no. 1 (2015): 36-54, p. 42.; Koehler, Ohl, and Albrecht, «From Disaffection to Desertion,» 440.; Sharon Erickson Nepstad, «Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring Military Defections and Loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria,» *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3 (2013): 337–349, p. 344.

11 Sharan Grewal, "Explaining Military Defection and Loyalty in the Mediterranean," *Mediterranean Politics* 23, no. 3 (2018): 427-432, p. 432.

12 Droz-Vincent, "State of Barbary," 33.

proved false. Despite of the weak organizational capacity of the opposition that lasted for years due to authoritarian repression, the number of protestors magnified quickly after March 2011. Consequently, the Syrian regime did not prove unique or exceptional as it was immersed in the Arab Spring's wave of protests.[13]

At the beginning, Al-Assad regime worked on restoring its governing ability and wanted to maintain "some form of normality in public life".[14] Authoritarian regimes usually survive mass protests by infusing a "sense of normality" throughout their ruling period.[15] During the Syrian uprising's first six months, the regime mobilized mass protests to support Al-Assad's regime, which aimed at showing that the majority of Syrians preferred stability to the expected unrest of regime breakdown and political transition. Protests spread and continued despite the harsh reaction and uncompromising use of force by the security forces and military of Al-Assad's regime towards the uprising.[16]

Role of Repression, the Military and Security Services under Al-Assad's Regime

In the 2000s, Al-Assad's regime main features were modernization, reforms, and persistent repressive rule. Repression involved durable and persistent brutalization and securitization of the public life through different forms, which encompassed extortion and bullying by policemen and civil servants, as well as predation by security services and local administration, along with continuous threat of repression for those opposing implicit allegiance and the au-

thoritarian regime's emergency laws.[17]

The strategies and elites of the Syrian military neither have an autonomy from the regime nor organizational coherence.[18] The repressive capacity of the Syrian regime has been dependent on the degree of loyalty of its troops.[19] The Syrian regime has worked on "social engineering"[20] within the corps of the officers in order to ensure the position of Alawi officers in the most strategic units that are linked to the president. The Syrian military, as the case in most of the authoritarian regimes, is highly politicized. Elite army units and security forces responded to Al-Assad's call and repressed mass protests in 2011 since the chain of command in Syria has been based on trust and loyalty to the regime more than professional experience.[21] Furthermore, Al-Assad's regime permits high-positioned officers from the Alawites in the security apparatus an extensive degree of economic involvement in order to guarantee their loyalty by offering substantial defense expenditures as well as personal financial opportunities and gains.[22] Therefore, Al-Assad regime worked on ensuring the domination of Alawites within the security apparatus to be used in preserving a repressive and unjust political system and thus, sectarian divisions within the military and security apparatus ensure Alawite loyalty to the regime and curtail the risk of coups and wide desertions.[23]

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13 Ibid., 33.
14 Ibid., 37.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.
18 Droz-Vincent, "State of Barbary," 39.; Michael Makara, "Rethinking Military Behavior during the Arab Spring," *Defense & Security Analysis* 32, no. 3 (2016): 209-223, p. 211.
19 Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 337.
20 Droz-Vincent, "State of Barbary," 39.
21 Zoltan Barany, "Comparing the Arab Revolts: The Role of the Military." Journal of Democracy 22, no. 4 (2011): 24-35, p. 32.
22 Albrecht, "Does Coup Proofing Work," 39.; Barany, "Comparing the Arab Revolts," 32.; Michael Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring." *Democracy and Security* 9, no. 4 (2013): 334-359, p. 348.
23 Albrecht, "Does Coup Proofing Work," 39, 43.; Barany, "Comparing the Arab Revolts," 32.; Droz-Vincent, "State of Barbary," 39.; Grewal, "Explaining Military Defection," 428.; Isabell Schierenbeck and Gustav Rudd, "Defected Civilian Civil Servants: Perceptions of Regime Strength in Syria," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 20, no. 1 (2018): 1-14, p. 4.; Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," 349.

During the Syrian conflict, the security apparatus and the military have been responsible for huge number of deaths, while Alawite forces who are loyal to Al-Assad have tortured detainees, and committed inhumane crimes such as sexual crimes as well as violence against women and children.[24] Consequently, these actions resulted in severe societal frustration and resentment against the regime's security apparatus. Moreover, the identification gap between the Sunni population and the Alawite armed forces has been reified due to the regime's affirmation of negative stereotypes against anti-Alawites.[25]

Militarization of the Syrian Uprising

From the beginning of the Syrian uprising, protests resorted to non-violence in order to give legitimacy to their demonstrations. Armed groups and violent conflict emerged after several months of the eruption of the uprising. Military personnel who retired earlier started to join self-defense units with people who perceived the protests to be too hazardous. Moreover, it is worth noting that in Syria, many young men have military background and are trained on how to use weapons since military service is mandatory.[26]

During the second half of year 2011, Syria started to experience increased defections within the military. At the beginning of the uprising, Al-Assad's regime deployed loyal Alawi elite units. However, due to the regime's mounting deployment of regular units to the mass protests, the army became overstretched. The majority of the Syrian army is from the Sunni

soldiers who are mainly from the rural areas, while the officer corps is mainly staffed with Alawites who fill the security chiefs and commanders ranks.[27] Frustrations and potential defections were mainly led by Sunni soldiers.[28] The potential defection within the military grew with the extensive deployment of regular military in repressive acts which resulted in creating "pockets of military resistance".[29]

Consequently, after the summer of 2011, the Syrian Free Officers' movement emerged followed by the Free Syrian Army which was established from the defection of some of the low-ranking officers with the aim of overthrowing Al-Assad's regime.[30] The conflict and violence have further escalated after the formation of the Free Syrian Army which Al-Assad used to justify his intensive repression.[31] The higher ranks of officers did not witness much defections except for isolated incidents.[32] Defections within the Syrian military were mainly triggered by systematic discrimination against Sunni soldiers and officers in the military and security apparatus. Defections were further fueled by the under-representation of Sunnis at officer corps levels and especially in intelligence and operational position in favor of Alawites who constituted the praetorian units, the alienation of Sunni officers by ignoring the military's corporate interests as an institution, and the refusal of Sunni soldiers to kill protestors to maintain the status quo.[33]

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24 Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," 349.

25 Ibid.

26 Droz-Vincent, "State of Barbary," 50.

27 Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 344.

28 Grewal, "Explaining Military Defection," 428.

29 Albrecht, "Does Coup Proofing Work," 43.

30 Droz-Vincent, "State of Barbary," 50.; Holger Albrecht and Kevin Koehler, "Going on the Run: What Drives Military Desertion in Civil War?" *Security Studies* 27, no. 2 (2018): 179-203, p. 180.

31 Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 345.

32 Albrecht, "Does Coup Proofing Work," 43.

33 Hicham Bou Nassif, "'Second-Class': The Grievances of Sunni Officers in the Syrian Armed Forces," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 5 (2015): 626-649, p. 631,33,34.

The Syrian governmental forces started to face armed operations, which increased after the regime waged a fierce military attack in Homs between February and March 2012. During the second half of year 2012, limits to the extent of use of violence were abolished and militarization has minimized the uprising's nature which was initially peaceful nonviolent protests against Al-Assad's authoritarian regime. Nevertheless, this violent response that the opposition resorted to should not be perceived only "as a creeping endogenous militarization of the Syrian uprising", but also as a deliberate regime's strategy product.[34] The regime worked on creating two opposing camps deliberately by legitimizing the use of violence and invoking the opposition to use arms. At this point, Al-Assad's regime could undoubtedly justify the use of extensive violence and force against armed protestors of the opposition, in comparison to use of force against unarmed civilians.[35] Due to increased violence and militarization, the essence of the peaceful opposition uprising was overshadowed, and the risks of enduring a sectarian civil war erupted.[36] Therefore, militarization of the Syrian uprising gave Al-Assad broader alternatives in dealing with the protestors since usually, authoritarian regimes are better equipped to encounter violent opposition rather than to endure a protracted non-violent struggle.[37]

The Syrian prolonged civil war is not only a product of the regime's repression and military defection, but it is also a product of several factors. The civil war has protracted due to the external support from Hezbollah, Iran, and Russia for Al-Assad's regime, as well as the external support from Qatar and Saudi Arabia for the foreign fighters, opposition, and civilian militias who have all played a significant role in the Syrian conflict.[38]

Military Desertion during the Syrian Conflict

Military desertion is usually defined as "a form of insubordination" which could result in "risks for the potential deserter".[39] Defections within the military and security apparatus are essential for the success of a mass uprising and the fall of authoritarian regimes.[40] In democratic states, deserters could be legally prosecuted in times of peace if they defect to another military group or evade orders. The expected result would be imprisonment or dismissal from position. On the other hand, when authoritarian regimes witness unrest and instability, soldiers who defect and do not show loyalty to the regime experience extreme forms of torture and punishment that could reach to imprisonment, getting fired from service and death if they do not implement the leader's orders.[41]

Military defections can either occur in softer or harder forms. A shift in loyalty is considered a softer form of military defection or desertion, however, leading a coup constitutes the harder form. Repression is considered as an alternative to soft or hard forms of military defections; which means the organized deployment of mass force and violence by the military against non-violent protestors with the aim to put down the instability and unrest. The defection deci-

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34 Droz-Vincent, "State of Barbary," 51.

35 Ibid.

36 Mohja Kahf, "The Syrian Revolution, Then and Now," *Peace Review* 26, no. 4 (2014): 556-563, p. 556.

37 Berti and Paris, "Beyond Sectarianism," 24.

38 Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," 350.; Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 345.

39 Koehler, Ohl, and Albrecht, "From Disaffection to Desertion," 442.

40 Schierenbeck, and Rudd, "Defected Civilian Civil Servants," 1.

41 Koehler, Ohl, and Albrecht, "From Disaffection to Desertion," 442.; Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 338.

sion is made "on the institutional level".[42] Moreover, military defections are usually triggered by facing competition from institutions of the rival regime or by political marginalization.[43] Military defections that may occur after soldiers have engaged the demonstrators are usually morally or politically motivated by individual officers or soldiers.[44] Regarding the Syrian case, Al-Assad gave his orders to the military to react violently against the peaceful protestors, which latterly triggered a substantial number of defections.[45] The rate of desertions increased as the regime's military use of violence and attacks increased viciously. Approximately 60,000 soldiers defected from the military by 2012, which is around "one fifth of the 300,000 members of the Syrian military".[46]

Al-Assad's regime witnessed defections within its military and security apparatus to the opposition during the Arab Spring uprising in 2011.[47] Almost, the entire Syrian deserters who joined the opposition and the Free Syrian Army come from the Sunni file and rank of the military who are not communally tied to Al-Assad's regime, unlike the Alawite personnel.[48] According to the interviews conducted by Koehler et al. (2016) with Syrian deserters, approximately half of the interviewed deserters left their army and joint rebel groups to fight against Al-Assad's regime, while others deserted for other reasons such as to escape the conflict, hide, or seek refuge or asylum, and therefore, there is no sole cause for

military subordination or desertion.[49] Nevertheless, some argue that defection took place due to the "perceived illegitimate rule by the regime"[50] and extensive use of violence against civilians which a number of defectors refused to do due to its "moral costs".[51] Koehler et al. argue that in the case of Syria, disaffected soldiers take the decision to desert collectively as they are highly affected by their family ties and societal networks who persuade them to defect and therefore social networks could have a significant impact on defection during periods of unrest.[52]

Resentment among a lot of armed forces personnel has also been fostered due to the unwillingness and inability of the Syrian regime to equally distribute the material benefits among the security apparatus. Despite of the privileges and benefits across the high-ranked officers, the regular military is still marginalized politically, underfunded, and weak. After the death of Hafez Al-Assad in 2000, his son, Bashar Al-Assad, diminished the personal gain and economic opportunities within the military ranks as he preferred to depend on the intelligence services and Republican Guard for maintaining security more than its regular military. Moreover, this gap has been made worse since a lot of officers believe that the anti-corruption campaign that has been adopted by President Bashar Al-Assad has disproportionately and unfairly targeted the military.[53]

Consequently, many soldiers within the Syrian security apparatus have been frustrated and defected from the military to the opposition. Therefore, while Bashar Al-Assad has used material incentives to guarantee the security

42 Croissant, Kuehn, and Eschenauer, "Mass Protests and the Military," 144.

43 Kevin Koehler, "Political Militaries in Popular Uprisings: A Comparative Perspective on the Arab Spring," *International Political Science Review* 38, no. 3 (2017): 363–377, p. 364.

44 Croissant, Kuehn, and Eschenauer, "Mass Protests and the Military," 144.

45 Ibid., 144.; Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 344.

46 Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 344.

47 Schierenbeck, and Rudd, "Defected Civilian Civil Servants," 1.

48 Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," 350.; Makara, "Rethinking Military Behavior," 220.

49 Koehler, Ohl, and Albrecht, "From Disaffection to Desertion," 443.

50 Schierenbeck, and Rudd, "Defected Civilian Civil Servants," 10.

51 Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 345.

52 Koehler, Ohl, and Albrecht, "From Disaffection to Desertion," 444.

53 Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," 348.; Makara, "Rethinking Military Behavior," 217.; Schierenbeck, and Rudd, "Defected Civilian Civil Servants," 4.

apparatus personnel's loyalty, "this strategy has created both winners and losers among the armed forces".[54] Moreover, it has been reported that the vast majority of soldiers who defected to the opposition sympathize with the protestors and the uprising against Al-Assad's repressive ruling regime.

Military desertion in Syria did not come in the form of collective action through coup d'état, mutiny, or military rebellion. However, the military desertion in Syria is an atomized form of individual defections of officers and soldiers. Nevertheless, the military has managed to maintain its fighting capacities and organizational order despite of individual mass desertions that has occurred.[55] In response to the military defection, the Syrian regime has taken extreme action against soldiers who defected and some of them were executed publicly.[56]

Survival of Al-Assad's Regime Despite of Military Defection

Despite of the desertion and resentment that took place within the Syrian military during the Syrian conflict, it has been highly doubtful that the military would turn against Al-Assad's regime for a number of reasons. Despite being a minority, most of the Alawite commanders perceive Al-Assad's rule and the Baath Party legitimate, and Alawites are privileged in the Syrian societal and political life. Nevertheless, it is highly unlikely to witness improvement in the Syrian military with the weak, fragmented and disorganized opposition. Thus, Al-Assad's military has continued to obey the dictatorship orders during the Syrian conflict, which is the

reason why the regime is still there and has not fell yet.[57]

Moreover, the Syrian security apparatus has maintained its loyalty and cohesion throughout the uprising despite of the divisions among the lower ranks from and motivation to desert the ruling regime and defect to the opposition.[58] It was even able to repress the civilian protestors of the opposition and resulted in the death of almost 100,000 civilians, and has permitted Al-Assad's regime to maintain its power. This is also a result of the regime's dependence on "a communal coup-proofing strategy"[59] which aimed to tie military officers to the status quo which could further explain why the majority of the regime's military and security apparatus has not deserted.[60] The Syrian regime does not perfectly implement a communal coup-proofing strategy due to the Alawite community's size and the majority of Sunnis who are conscripted in the army. However, the regime has been able to maintain and minimize the size and influence of the Sunnis by ensuring the domination of Alawites in key logistical and leadership positions in the military.

Although a huge number of officers in the military feel that their corporate interests have been violated, the regime's communal coup-proofing strategy has managed to maintain the loyalty of the security apparatus by mounting the costs of desertion and managing to guarantee the military's institutional survival, which is the most essential corporate interest, through its defense of the regime and Syria's status quo. The Alawites have also backed the

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54 Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," 348.

55 Albrecht and Koehler, "Going on the Run," 180.

56 Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 344.

57 Barany, "Comparing the Arab Revolts," 32.

58 Albrecht, "Does Coup Proofing Work," 43.; Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," 348.; Schierenbeck, and Rudd, "Defected Civilian Civil Servants," 1.

59 Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," 348.

60 Koehler, "Political Militaries in Popular Uprisings," 371.; Makara, "Rethinking Military Behavior," 219.

regime because Al-Assad has worked on spreading rumors and fear among the Alawite population regarding the eruption of sectarian violence, Sunni attacks, and existential threat to the minorities in case of victory of the opposition.[61]

Some scholars argue that the scale of military desertion should not be exaggerated despite of the media attention that have targeted the Free Syrian Army. Although the security apparatus has suffered from frustration and resentment among its Sunni soldiers, the majority of the military and security apparatus still remain loyal to Al-Assad's regime. Most of the FSA's estimates suggest that defections within the military have not occurred beyond a minor segment.[62]

Promoting Military Loyalty and Deterring Defection

Despite of the strategies implemented by authoritarian regimes to ensure loyalty of their militaries and security apparatus, defections still occur. As in most states, the military in most Arab societies is politicized and co-opted into the authoritarian regimes in order to ensure loyalty to that regime in exchange for material gains and benefits, privileges in the political, public, and economic spheres, and also by repression and communal coup-proofing strategy.[63] Militaries that are divided internally whether along tribal or ethnic lines, among several overlapping security forces, or between high ranks and lower ones, are not expected to unify in times of conflicts and uprisings.[64]

The loyalty of Alawite officers who have not defected could be explained by their degree of eco-

nomic involvement, fear of losing economic privileges, as well as the "communal"[65] and personal ties to the core of Al-Assad's regime through structures of "patron-client dependency".[66] Some of the Sunni soldiers who took the decision to defect were motivated by acute moral grievances.[67] However, desertion among individual soldiers in the army forces was highly motivated by personal concerns and fear of risk accompanied by the continuity in military service and obeying repressive regime's orders and violence.[68]

As the above analysis points to, sectarian identities are core factors of disaffection towards the regime.[69] Sectarianism could play a significant role in explaining the Alawites loyalty to the regime although it has been argued that sectarianism has not been a significant motivation behind defections among Sunni military soldiers.[70] When an autocratic leader symbolizes communal identity held by the regime's military officers, they are less likely to defect to the opposition and threaten the autocrat's rule. Members of an ethnic or sectarian group will remain loyal to the regime if they feel that their political, economic, and sectarian privileges and dominance will fade if the regime falls.[71] However, the Sunni soldiers who defect do not have political, economic, social, or sectarian privileges at stake and thus they have no incentive to be loyal to the regime since they would continue to experience social, economic, and political discrimination if Al-Assad persists in power.[72]

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61 Berti and Paris, "Beyond Sectarianism," 24.; Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," 349.; Makara, "Rethinking Military Behavior," 220.

62 Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," 350.

63 Makara, "Rethinking Military Behavior," 212.; Schierenbeck, and Rudd, "Defected Civilian Civil Servants," 2.

64 Grewal, "Explaining Military Defection," 428.

65 Makara, "Rethinking Military Behavior," 211.

66 Albrecht, "Does Coup Proofing Work," 47.

67 Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 345.

68 Albrecht and Koehler, "Going on the Run," 181.

69 Koehler, Ohl, and Albrecht, "From Disaffection to Desertion," 444.

70 Makara, "Rethinking Military Behavior," 220.

71 Nassif, "'Second-Class': The Grievances of Sunni Officers," 629.; Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 344.

72 Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 345.

As it stands, Al-Assad's regime has yet to break down despite military desertion, and this is due to reasons that reveal how the regime promotes the military's loyalty and deters defection in times of crisis. Some scholars argue that the regime's sectarian nature could protect it from mass military defections if high levels of patronage exists, which is the case with Al-Assad's regime and the Alawi high-rank officers in the military and security apparatus.[73] That said, it is not only sectarianism and patronage that matters but also the degree of punishment and threat used by the regime against deserters.

Moreover, authoritarian rulers in general use economic incentives to ensure their military's loyalty. In the case of Syria, Al-Assad granted the high-rank Alawites in the military and security apparatus economic and political privileges. Furthermore, the Syrian regime worked on staffing the most crucial positions in the military and security forces with Alawites who share the ruler's ethnic and religious affiliation in order to guarantee their loyalty in times of crisis.[74] Hence, authoritarian regimes that suffer from exclusion based on ethnicity and religion in their militaries and armed forces which are not highly institutionalized are more likely to witness protracted and prolonged conflicts and defections, since regime change will threaten their organizational survival.[75] However, as the Syrian case has revealed, military defections in praetorian authoritarian regimes could lead to unrest and instability, but do not necessarily lead to regime breakdown.

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73 Joshua Landis, "The Syrian Uprising of 2011: Why the Asad Regime is Likely to Survive to 2013," *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 1 (2012): 72-84, p. 74.

74 Nepstad, "Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring," 338.

75 Theodore McLauchlin, "The Loyalty Trap: Regime Ethnic Exclusion, Commitment Problems, and Civil War Duration in Syria and Beyond," *Security Studies* 27, no. 2 (2018): 296-317, p. 298.; Makara, "Rethinking Military Behavior," 211.

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Makara, Michael. 2016. "Rethinking military behavior during the Arab Spring." *Defense & Security Analysis* 32 (3): 209-223.

McLauchlin, Theodore. 2018. "The Loyalty Trap: Regime Ethnic Exclusion, Commitment Problems, and Civil War Duration in Syria and Beyond." *Security Studies* 27 (2): 296-317.

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Beyond Hydropower and Nationalism Discourses

The Case of Egypt and Ethiopia

By: Yasmine Hafez

Water is inextricably linked to the development of all societies and cultures. Due to the need for economic development, and as countries seek to maximize their access to water, considerable pressure is put on water resources management. As a result, securing water becomes a necessity to fulfill a multidimensional network of reasons. Mark Zeitoun explains that a *'global web of national water security'* encompasses food security, national security, economic security, energy security, climate security, and human security.[1] Correspondingly, water's importance far surpasses the need for drinking or getting food since states have been using water for years as part of their national security.

Egypt and Ethiopia share the Nile River. Egypt, the downstream country, depends entirely on the Nile for 95% of its water consumption, while the Nile gets more than 80% of its rainfall from Ethiopia.[2] By the end of 2010, Ethiopia decided to build GERD on its section of the river, called

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1   Zeitoun, M., 2011. The global web of national water security. Global Policy 2, no. 3: 286-296.

2   Schwartzstein, P., 2017. Death Of The Nile. BBC News. [online] Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/death_of_the_nile> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

the Blue Nile. With an unclear completion date, the dam will have an expected capacity of 6,000 megawatt (MW) and will store 74 billion cubic meters of water.[3] This has been alarming for the Egyptian state whose water, and hence the country's national security, depends entirely on the Nile, fearing the impact of the dam on the supply quantity.

This paper examines the GERD from Ethiopia political discourse analysis, combining both the results generated from fieldwork in Addis Ababa in June 2018 with secondary data analysis.[4] Far from seeking to either support or oppose the GERD, this paper aims to ask critical questions about the discourses associated with the dam construction process and transboundary management of the Nile Basin through shedding the light on this specific dam.

Dams, and The Grievances Framework

One way of nationalizing water, which became predominant from the 1930s to the 1970s, was building dams.[5] Since then, the construction of large dams had become an idealization of development and economic progress. However, there is another significance for nationalizing water and building dams. Large-scale technological projects, especially dams, perceived as symbols of modernization and economic advancement, also manifest the role of the state and the government by highlighting their capacities and potentials.[6] As Jeremy Allouche discuses in his PhD thesis "Water Nationalism: an explanation of the past and present conflicts in Central Asia, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent", water projects are conducive to state building and nation building.[7] Jeremy Allouche challenges the water scarcity argument, arguing that that water problems need to be understood in the *'broad political and economic contexts within which they emerge'*.[8] This is to say that water scarcity is a social/political construction aimed to justify the asymmetry of power relations in the hydrosocial cycle.[9] He used the framework of state- building and nation building as important explanatory factors for the origins of these conflicts, and here state building is defined as the state ability to accumulate power:

> Large-scale technological projects demonstrate the capabilities and achievements of the state and the regime, legitimizing or enhancing the image of both. They also provide high visibility to a political order, thus highlighting the role of the state and the government. (Zeitoun and Allouche)[10]

While on the other hand, nation building is emotionally constructed, to attach the nation to the territory, or the state's boundary. It was important to examine literature that refutes the water scarcity argument, as it would otherwise frame the GERD and resulting tensions between Egypt (downstream country) and Ethiopia

3   Tawfik, R. 2015. Water And Development In Shared Rivers: Sustainable Development For All. German Development Institute. [online] Available at: <https://www.die-gdi.de/en/the-current-column/article/water-and-development-in-shared-rivers-sustainable-development-for-all/> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

4   The fieldwork was structured as 13 semi-formal interviews with four main groups: officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity. Moreover, representatives from international organizations such as the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO), professors at University of Addis Ababa, and independent journalists and other experts on the issue were also interviewed.

5   Zeitoun, Mark, and Jeremy Allouche. "Nationalism, Beliefs And Hegemonic Power In Transboundary Water Relations". Unpublished.

6   Zeitoun & Allouche, op. cit.

7   Allouche, Jeremy. (2005). Water nationalism: an explanation of the past and present conflicts in Central Asia, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent?

8   Allouche, op. cit.

9   Swyngedouw, E., 2013. UN water report 2012: Depoliticizing water. Development and Change, 44(3), pp.823-835.

10 Zeitoun, Mark, and Jeremy Allouche. "Nationalism, Beliefs And Hegemonic Power In Transboundary Water Relations". Unpublished.

(upstream country) in a way, which would prevent critical engagement. Allouche in his work used a conceptual framework, that of "water nationalism," which provides alternative lenses through which we understand the existence of conflicts over water sources through three main pillars: (1) water resources made territorial by the nation-states; (2) the link between state-making processes and water resources development; and (3) the role of water resource development in nation-building processes.[11] This section discusses nations as the products of ethnic regrouping;[12] hence nationality is formulated/constructed through the deliberate and constructed effort of nation-making.[13] Nation-building is an emotionally constructed process deliberately made by the state's willingness and ability to control its sovereign territory and natural resources, of which include water.[14] This process of nation making induces collective appropriation of water flows, resulting in people speaking of the illusion of owning *'their (or my) water.'*[15] As Zeitoun and Allouche argue, governments use nationalist sentiment *'both to shore-up support for policy on domestic water issues, and to galvanise support for their approach on international transboundary issues.'*[16]

In this paper, I focus on the latter, and examine the role played by water in nation-building and identity formation in the case of Ethiopia. I argue that historical moments and economic failures had been constructed as constituents of national identity by the state apparatus that fueled nationalism and regional grievances. The griev-

ances framework offers opportunities to highlight the relation between water and Ethiopian identity construction through different lenses (historical, economic and national), and thus allows us to dig deeper in understanding the importance of the GERD. As hitherto discussed, national identities are constructed on the basis of common descent or shared experiences and cultural traits[17] that can change across time and space.[18] Moreover, this ethnic identity could/has been shaped by a variety of political, economic, and social factors.[19] Grievances, following the constructivist school of thought, have mainly been used in the literature on civil wars. They trace back conflicts to inequalities and justice-seeking behavior motivated by perceptions of (real or supposed) disadvantages some groups experience in comparison to others.[20] The grievances framework has two main approaches. The first is relative deprivation theory. Based in political psychology, this explains conflicts, a product of one or more groups' grievances about their non-fulfillment of societal value markers (e.g. access to benefits other groups have access to), and joins social movements as a means of correcting them. The second is horizontal inequalities. This frames conflicts as generated by privileged groups seeking to maintain their privileges.[21]

Taken together, I opted to begin by refuting the scarcity of electricity argument as the main motive behind building the project, and then engaging with hydro-nationalism and grievances' approach in understanding the dam. There was a gap in the grievances approach since it is usu-

11 Conker, A., 2018. Understanding Turkish water nationalism and its role in the historical hydraulic development of Turkey. Nationalities Papers, pp.1-15.

12 Macartney, C.A., 2002. National states and national minorities. In Nationalism in Europe (pp. 108-129). Routledge.

13 Allouche, Op. cit.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid. p.134.

16 Zeitoun & Allouche, Op. cit., p.5.

17 Gurr, T.R., op. cit.

18 Demmers, J., op. cit.

19 Demmers, J., 2016. Theories of violent conflict: An introduction. Routledge. See also Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 'Violence and the social construction of ethnic identity.' International organization 54, no. 4 (2000): 845-877.

20 Demmers, J., Op. cit. p.12.

21 Stewart, F., 2008. Horizontal inequalities and conflict: An introduction and some hypotheses. In Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict (pp. 3-24). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

ally used to explain the ethnic conflicts within the same country. However, it was important to read from that body of literature because it applies to the context of transboundary management and the role of justice and fairness in sharing water. A grievance as a word has seeming political connotations can stem from a position of victimhood it was therefore chosen to express the roots of the problems and the need for action from the Ethiopian side. In contrast to most literatures on the GERD, which focus which the international dimension, I sought to focus on the internal politics, as these grievances towards the transboundary management and an understanding of what the dam represents for Ethiopia may allow us to then comprehend what a post-dam stage for both Ethiopia and the Nile Basin as a whole may involve. Respectively, the GERD had been seen as a victory for these grievances and was consequently afforded a key symbolic importance. Accordingly, we need to understand three aspects – historical, economic, and national grievances – in order to be able to critically analyze the implications of building the dam on the study of water security and transboundary management. Taken together, I argue that the economic grievances of relative deprivation (famine, poverty and electricity deficiency) compared to the downstream country namely (Egypt) sustained by historical grievances of power asymmetries in the Nile Basin agreements had induced feelings of national shame and defeat.

Historical Grievances

Scholar John Waterbury identifies both history and topography as the core determinants of bargaining positions among states sharing an international river basin.[22] This section highlight the events that paved the road to the GERD dam as a catalyst of change for the shift away from Egypt's hydro-hegemony, and as a direct outcome of the lack of cooperation from the state.[23]

1. 1929 Agreement & 1959 Agreement

Terje Tvedt in his book: The River Nile in the age of the British: Political Ecology & The Quest For Economic Power reinterprets the dynamics of the role of the British Colonization in the Nile Basin to ultimately illustrate how the high-level water politics influenced the ordinary citizens living on the longest river in the world.[24] One of the reasons for the British Government to occupy Egypt in 1882 had been the development of the Nile.[25] Not only did the British realize the necessity of water for the economic development of Egypt, but they also realized the need to control the upstream countries in order to silence the Egyptian opposition.[26] The British had helped in establishing Egypt's hegemony on the Nile Basin through revolutionizing the irrigation system.[27] They also guaranteed Egypt 'historical rights' over the Nile through the Nile Water Agreement of 1929[28] and the Agreement between the United Arab Republic (Egypt) and the Republic of the Sudan for the Full Utilization of the Nile Waters of 1959. Hence, Egypt was able to escape the devas-

22 Waterbury, J., 1994. Transboundary water and the challenge of international cooperation in the Middle East. Water in the Arab world: Perspectives and prognoses, pp.39-64.

23 Cascão, A.E., 2008. Ethiopia–challenges to Egyptian hegemony in the Nile Basin. Water Policy, 10(S2), pp.13-28.

24 See (1) Tvedt, T., 2004. The River Nile in the Age of the British: Political ecology and the quest for economic power. IB Tauris.; and (2) Tafesse, T., 2001. The hydropolitical assessment of the Nile question: an Ethiopian perspective. Water international, 26(4), pp.1-11; and 1-11.

25 Tvedt, T., op. cit.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 The Nile Waters Agreement consisted of an Exchange of Notes in May 1929 between the British High Commissioner in Egypt and the Egyptian Government due the low flow in 1928. The agreement guaranteed that no work would be executed on the Nile Basin without the approval of Egypt (see Tvedt, T., op. cit. For the full access of the agreement see Arsano, Y., 2007. Ethiopia and the Nile: Dilemmas of national and regional hydropolitics. ETH Zurich.

tating repercussions of the 1970s and 1980s droughts.[29] These agreements had been characterized as being 'solely for the benefit of Egypt.'[30]

The key informants repeatedly referred to these agreements as an example of the exclusion in the Nile Basin agreements. One of the policymakers interviewed repeatedly asserted that although most Egyptians are proud of the 1959 agreement in the constitution till our current moment, Ethiopians only think of it as a matter of colonialism that should not be codified.[31]

2. The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI)

Throughout the years, Egypt had been dealing with the Nile Basin on the basis of Herodotus saying: 'Egypt is the Nile, and the Nile is Egypt'.[32] Indeed, Egypt 'is' the Nile – but the Nile is also the Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.[33] Accordingly, the economic development of the upstream countries, their relative peace, and stability, and the involvement of international organizations had led to the establishment of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI)[34] in 1999. Egypt had been the most opposite to the NBI, especially with the presence of Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), which had been signed and ratified by six countries so far. In the agreement article 4 (2), which is based on the Helsinki

rules[35], called for the establishment of the equitable and reasonable utilization of the Nile waters based on several factors that include: the social and economic need of the state. This in return negates the historical rights claimed by Egypt and Sudan. One of the milestones of the relation between the riparian countries after the establishment of the NBI had been the Joint Multipurpose Project (JMP).[36] JMP scoping study concluded that the Blue Nile sub-basin in Ethiopia provided the best potential for new water storage facilities that would generate large amounts of hydropower for the use of the three countries namely (Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt).[37]

However, in 2010 disagreements boiled, and the project came to an end in 2012. At that time, there were negotiations on CFA; hence one of the key informants during the interview linked it with the JMP as the reason for its discontinuity. He used this incident as an example for the repercussions of hydrologists in being politicized. He then highlighted the need to have scientific/intellectual community who talk freely without being politicized.

3. Historical grievances in relation to the GERD

It comes with no surprise after understanding some of the milestones in the historic relations between the riparian countries, mainly Egypt and Ethiopia, to understand the significance of the decision of the GERD was a 'game changer' as stated by Tawfik, Cascão and Nicol, a 'new legal order' as expressed by Salman, and a 'fair system' as defined by Yihdego and Rieu-Clarke

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29 Tvedt, T., op. cit.

30 Ibid.

31 Ethiopians takes pride of having never being successfully colonized. This increases the antagonism against the agreements made by Egypt with the facilitation of British Colonization.

32 Peel, S., 1905. British Administration and Irrigation in Egypt. Political Science Quarterly, 20(3), pp.513-534.

33 Cascão, A.E., 2009. Political economy of water resources management and allocation in the Eastern Nile River Basin. (Doctoral dissertation, University of London).

34 Cascão, A.E., 2008. Ambiguity as strategy in transboundary river negotiations: The case of the Nile River Basin.' Nile Basin Development Forum, pp. 17-19.

35 The rules had been adopted by the International Law Association at its Helsinki session of 1966, which is perceived "as a framework instrument codifies the basic rules for the utilisation, development, conservation, management and protection of international watercourses" (Allouche, J., 2005. Water nationalism: An explanation of the past and present conflicts in Central Asia, the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent?. Doctoral Dissertation., Institutuniversitaire de hautes études internationals).

36 Cascão, A.E. and Nicol, A., 2016. GERD: new norms of cooperation in the Nile Basin?. Water International, 41(4), pp.550-573.

37 Ibid.

in the Nile Basin management.[38] Perhaps, what Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said on the commencement of the GERD had changed:

> Indeed, one might expect these countries to be prepared to share the cost in proportion to the gains that each state will derive. On this calculation, Sudan might offer to cover 30 per cent and Egypt 20 per cent of the costs of the entire project. Unfortunately, the necessary climate for engagement, based on equitable and constructive self-interest, does not exist at the moment.39

Economic Grievances

The historical grievances of Ethiopia and the deprivation of the Nile fruits for years had affected deeply the economic situation of Ethiopia in facing famine, poverty, and electricity deficiency. This section will portray these three pillars of economic grievances (i.e. famine, poverty, and electricity deficiency), which had been repeatedly discussed by the key informants and the secondary research. Hence, the GERD came to be seen as cornerstone in the economic developmental goals. The current project scheme is also perceived as the savior by the Ethiopian state to solve the economic pitfalls.

1. Famine

When the executive director of the ENTRO was asked what the dam meant for Ethiopia, he narrated the roots of the story back to 1974, 1984, and 1994 famines causing millions of casualties. There were reports by the government at that time warning that five million people were at risk from starvation because the country could produce only 6.2 million tones of grain a year.[40] Agriculture in Ethiopia depends on the rainfall, and although the rainfall should be enough, there is a major issue of uneven distribution.[41] Ethiopians are ashamed of the starvation and famine, as it had led them to 'beg' for aid by the international community. The same key informant expressed that Ethiopia should not be a humanitarian case of the West due to poverty and famine. He continued by saying that the famine had caused national instability and disparity causing some areas including Eritrea to call for cession.[42] He stated that the *'history of Ethiopia is a history of war'* since Ethiopia did not have a single 10 consecutive years without being in international or national wars. The memory of the national shame haunts the Ethiopians to avoid going back to it. Hence, the government had to change their economic development policies.

2. Poverty

A key issue in Ethiopia is poverty. As such, and according to the Ministry of Finance, Ethiopia's federal administrative structure with power devolution to regional states had been working on achieving the main goal of 'poverty reduction'.[43] Those poor conditions of the country have been seen as a shame in comparison to the downstream countries, whose GDPs are relatively better. As Meles Zenawi, the former Ethiopian Prime Minister in the eve of the country's election, had expressed in an interview with Aljazeera in 2010:

38 Yihdego et al, op. cit.

39 Speech made by Meles Zenawi, April 2 2011.

40 BBC, 2000. Flashback 1984: Portrait of a famine. BBC News. [online] Available at: <news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/703958.stm> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

41 Tafesse, T., 2001. The hydropolitical assessment of the Nile question: an Ethiopian perspective. Water international, 26(4), pp.1-11.It was also discussed during the interview with high ranking official at the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO) in Addis Ababa and a previous advisor for the boundary and transboundary rivers affairs in the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy of Ethiopia.

42 Stewart, F., 2004. Development and security. Conflict, Security & Development, 4(3), pp.261-288.

43 The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2002. Ethiopia: Sustainable Development and
Poverty Reduction Program'.

> I know that some people in Egypt have old fashion ideas that…the upper riparian countries are unable to use the Nile water because they are unstable and poor; however, these circumstances have changed, and changed forever. Ethiopia is not unstable, it is still poor, but it is able to cover the necessary resources to build whatever infrastructure and dams it wants on the water.[44]

In his report 'Doing Well out of War', Paul Collier wrote: 'Grievance might refer either to unequal incomes or to unequal ownership of assets.'[45] This had been evident in discourses around the key informants explaining the economic reasons for building the dam, and the unequal ownership of assets, namely the water of the Nile running through the countries of the Nile basin. The Head of the Social Development and Communication at ENTRO explained that the country had been facing a lot of pressure (whether demographic, food insecurity, energy insecurity, or water insecurity), which are the main insecurities that encompass the country. The GDP is low in the absence of the energy necessary for industrial development/expansion especially with the great hydropower potential of the country; food is also another source of insecurity despite the availability of lots of water sources that goes into the agricultural expansion needed for the country. Hence, according to him, Ethiopia's big challenges had been: water, food, and energy, which he claimed would be all resolved after the building of the GERD. Relatedly, Belachew Mekuria, head of the Ethiopian Investment Commission, stated that "[t] his project signifies a lot because it means say-

ing no to Ethiopia's characterization as a land of famine, as a land of poor people." As reported by CNN, he said that the dam's success would 'symbolize' Ethiopia's future.[46]

3. Economic grievances (electricity deficiency) in relation to the GERD

The Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) (2015/16-2019/20) had prioritized the goals of '*reducing poverty and generating employment for the expanding labour force'.*[47] According to the document, Ethiopia is currently focusing on '*eradicating poverty through accelerating broad based, inclusive, pro-poor and sustained growth'.*[48] Meeting the GERD advisor at the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, he stated that there had been good economic growth so far by the GTP II. However, in his opinion, the main constraint had been the shortage of electricity. The only indigenous source for generating energy is water since Ethiopia does not have oil; therefore, it was essential to develop the hydropower resources of the country. In his opinion, small hydropower projects are not sufficient, since the rainfall season lasts only for 3 months; medium hydropower projects on the other hand are still not applicable; hence, large ones are the only option for the sustainability of water storage and power generation, with their huge margin of profitability as well. Large hydropower projects have constraint of requiring large demands, but this is no longer a problem because there is a great demand. Moreover, according to Assistant professor in transboundary water management in Addis Ababa University, the GERD would in-

44 Aljazeera, 2010. Meles Zenawi |Talk to Jazeera. Aljazeera. 23 May 2010. [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9S83SVAumsQ> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

45 Collier, P., 1999, April. Doing well out of war. In conference on economic agendas in civil wars, London (Vol. 26, p. 27).

46 Marsh, J., 2018. Police fire tear gas at protesters during state funeral for Ethiopia's Grand Dam engineer. CNN. [online] Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/07/29/africa/bekele-funeral-protest-ethiopia/index.html> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

47 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2015. Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II). [online] Available at: <dagethiopia.org/new/images/DAG_DOCS/GTP2_English_Translation_Final_June_21_2016.pdf> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

48 Ibid.

crease the interconnectivity of the nation and fortify the process of nation-building. The GERD aims to reframe Ethiopia as a key player in the region and exporter of power,[49] and it had promised to prevent famine, eradicate poverty by creating jobs, and solve electricity deficiency by fulfilling the local demand and exporting to the outside. This section had established the GERD as the final arm for the state to expand its economic capacity by utilizing water as their capital to solve problems of poverty, famine and electricity deficiency. In the following section, I will highlight the mirroring effects of these historical and economic grievances in drawing the relation between Ethiopians and the Nile.

Social Identity

The final section of grievances before moving to the analysis is the national grievances and their impact on shaping people's relation to the Nile and the GERD in return. The historical grievances, the economic grievances (the relative deprivation compared to the downstream countries, mainly Egypt) fueled the sense of perceiving the Nile as a source of national shame and fragmentation of the society, and making the GERD a national project that serves the national interests and refute the past feelings with a sense of pride and victory. This, in a nutshell, gives the GERD the halo importance.

1. National shame

As discussed in the nation-making framework, water is not only an important element for the survival of human beings; there is also a deeper ideological, psychological, and nationalistic bond attached between human beings and water.[50] Hence, the breaking of any international water conflict sparks off strong national reac-

tions between the parties.[51] The historical grievances and economic grievances and become a burden on the society. This gets mirrored in the whole culture of the society, e.g. the popular songs, media, and narratives about their perception of the Nile. In the previous sections, it was explained through the grievances lenses, the unjustness and the unfairness that Ethiopia had been dealing with in regard to its hydropolitics. Moreover, due to the economic grievances mainly famine and poverty, the Nile had been seen as the cause of instability and the eruption of ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. The Nile in Ethiopia breaks people apart due to geographic reasons, it halts the country literally into two parts, the borderline between the Ahmara and Oromia regions.

As mentioned, songs often reveal 'the emotions, the sense of unpredictability, and the politics as understood by people experiencing historical events'.[52] The following is an excerpt from Issatwoi Abeba, by Tsegaye Gebre Medhin (Poet-Laureate), who illustrates the emotions of defeat, wasted dreams and opportunities as follows:

You were glorious in the past,
Which becomes the news of the book of the dead,
Today that is all, it is far far back, the world has
forgotten your fame,
Forgotten your goodness and history,
We live in misery,
Yesterday, by outcries of aliens,
And today, by ignorant violence,
...If this persists unresolved,
Your dream about Abbay[53] is far far away[54]

2. National grievances in relation to the GERD

We had established throughout the previous sections that the dam is more than an infrastructural project; it is a symbol, which also con-

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49 Marsh, op. cit.

50 Allouche, op. cit.

51 Ibid.

52 Mossallam, op. cit.

53 The Nile River in Ethiopia is called: 'Abbay/The Father' as it is the father of all rivers and a symbol of the nation.

54 Arsano, op. cit.

fers legitimacy, as it slowly becomes part of the accepted 'natural' order of things. The GERD presented itself as an iconic nation building, a triumph for the previous grievances, hence it has a symbolic value for unifying Ethiopians and eradicating poverty even for expats who were expelled from the political field, as expressed by a former journalist for The Reporter.

Indeed, communication medium in Ethiopia had been used to gather the people around the projected common idea of development and the future of Ethiopia, while suppresses any kind of alternative voices.[55] The discussions of the Nile had shifted from the national shame to pride, and the pictures of the Nile had shifted from the Blue Nile pictures to the blue helmets of engineers surrounding the GERD. The GERD had been framed as a multi-million project financed by its people, which contributed in galvanizing the sense of Ethiopians' pride. As mentioned by the executive director at ENTRO; Addis Ababa University students are a peculiar case for their involvement and their support. Although government provides accommodation and food, they skip lunch for a month, so the money can be transferred for the building of the dam. In his opinion, communication was very important and strong, and they played a big role in aligning/raising people's support to the dam. Everyone has the memory of the history of the national shame. 'If you don't want to go back, you will have to contribute'. This was expressed in the song, Ejigayehu Shibabaw:

Abay Abay
Anger, regret and fear will end today
Get up my fellow countrymen and women
Renew your strength
Let's build it (the dam) together

And do a work that passes down to generations
Gives the mind a special relief
Let the darkness vanish and let's see light
Let's build it together in peace.[56]

On this, Rawiah Tawfik argues that the national level seems to have a consensus on the dam. The International Panel of Experts (IPoE) on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam produced its final report on the 31st of May in 2013. On one hand, the report (conducted by a committee of experts from Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan to review the design documents of the GERD and to provide a cost/benefit analysis of the GERD) highlights the social impact through the additional Environmental Social Impact assessment (ESIA) report. Yet, on the other hand, it outlines the GERD's impacts on the local population, their livelihood, and the social services. Hence, domestically, the dam 'is perceived as a unifying force across ethnically diverse and divided Ethiopians."[57]

As expressed by a former journalist for the Reporter, when Egyptian objected to the establishment of the dam with 'an unfounded sense of superiority",[58] even the opposition figures standing on the opposite end of the spectrum against the government endorsed the project. In the end, the GERD had filled the void of the social grievances and altered the perception of the Nile as a source of fragmentation and shame. In contrast, the Nile, and more particularly the GERD, has become a symbol of change, development, and a better future for all Ethiopians. Therefore, it is crucial to stress the importance of the dam historically, econom-

55 Nile Water Lab, 2018. Podcast: the Sources of the Nile, Episode 2 - An emotional dam? Nile Water Lab. Broadcast January 2018. [online] Available at: <https://nilewaterlab.org/podcast-the-sources-of-the-nile/page/2/> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

56 Translated during the fieldwork with the help of Ethiopians.

57 Veilleux, J.C., 2013. The human security dimensions of dam development: the grand Ethiopian renaissance dam. Global Dialogue, 15(2), pp.1-15.

58 Soliman, A., 2018. Egypt, Ethiopia approach negotiations over filling Renaissance Dam reservoir. Mada. 21 June 2018. [online] Available at: <https://www.madamasr.com/en/2018/06/21/feature/politics/egypt-ethiopia-approach-negotiations-over-filling-renaissance-dam-reservoir/> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

ically and nationally before embarking on the analysis of this mega project.

Romanticized grievances?

This paper sought to establish the importance of the dam by examining the range of historical, economic and national grievances mobilized by the populations. The core of the relative deprivation (RD) within the grievances framework entail the conduct of action by people based on their belief of right entitlement to an extent where 'they become angry and are motivated to redress the perceived inequity.[59] Moreover, the awareness of this RD had 'stimulated upward counterfactual thoughts about how outcomes could have been better.[60] The process of building the GERD and the national discourse used by the key informants had referred to the previously discussed grievances. As put by the head of the Social Development and Communication at ENTRO, both the objective grievances (economic) and the subjective grievances (political/historical) have driven the discourses of buildings dams. They referred to the GERD as a triumph for the loss rights, and for its ability to change the trajectory of Ethiopia future. However, the findings also show that the grievances stories had been romanticized, and there had been a constant attempt to remove the grievances from their political mold.

As we have seen above, the story of the dam has been narrated by the key informants in Ethiopia and delivered to the public. The Dam-building process has been subject to political considerations by the Ethiopian elites and not just technical ones. Under capitalistic processes and dynamics, hegemonic economic and political elites seize water as capital by using hydraulic technologies in order consolidate their grip on power over time.[61] Indeed, as Harvey observed, '[t]he capitalist operates in continuous space and time, whereas the politician operates in a territorialized space and, at least in democracies, in a temporality dictated by an electoral cycle' (Harvey, 2003: 26)[62]. In this context, we can begin to analyze the role played by Meles Zenawi, the Ethiopian leader who was able to translate the previously discussed grievances into action, and reproduce water as capital by deciding to build the GERD. Drawing on Horkheimer's (1974) *Eclipse of Reason*, Worster in The Hoover Dam: A study in domination. The Social and Environmental Effects of Large Dams, argued that 'dominating nature also implies dominating men, since only few powerful individuals manage to concentrate significant social, economic, and political power through the construction of a dam.'[63] In Zenawi's case, the leader has been credited with the rebirth of Nile Hydropolitics, by announcing the inauguration of the GERD for the securitization of water (i.e. they are the processes in which governments transform water issues into a matter of top politics and even national security agenda.[64]

In fact, Zenawi's name and pictures were celebrated alongside the project, as shown below in a billboard located in the heart of Addis Ababa, and remain connected to the dam's construction:

59 Walker, I. and Smith, H.J. eds., 2002. Relative deprivation: Specification, development, and integration. Cambridge University Press. p.288.

60 Olson, James M., and Neal J. Roese. 'Relative deprivation and counterfactual thinking.' Relative deprivation: Specification, development, and integration (2002): 265-287. P.272

61 Menga, F. and Swyngedouw, E., 2018. States of water. In Water, Technology and the Nation-State (pp. 17-34). Routledge.

62 Ibid.

63 Worster, D., 1984. The Hoover Dam: A study in domination. The Social and Environmental Effects of Large Dams, 2, pp.17-24. See also Menga, F. and Swyngedouw, E., 2018. States of water. In Water, Technology and the Nation-State (pp. 17-34). Routledge.

64 Zeitoun, M. and Warner, J., 2006. Hydro-hegemony–a framework for analysis of trans-boundary water conflicts. Water policy, 8(5), pp.435-460.

A billboard in Meskel Square, Addis Ababa showing Meles Zenawi guiding his mega projects of modern Ethiopia, including, on the right, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. According to Filippo Menga, the writing on the billboard (in Amharic) reads: 'The vision and the mission that you started is near. By working hard we will get it/hold it!'. (Photo courtesy of Ane Hess-Nielsen, 2012).

Interesting to note, Zenawi's poster is almost identical to a picture of Gamal Abdel Nasser shown below and found in the archives of the Egyptian government-owned newspaper, Al Ahram. Both figures therefore appear to have been glorified and saluted in history for building a grand dam:

This page is extracted from the archives of Al-Ahram edition on the 9th of January 1960 accessed in the American University in Cairo. It reads: 'When Nasser-El-Arab (the Arabs' champion) decided with persistence and determination to build us the dam up high, the pillar of glory for industrialization, a pulsing vein for agriculture and business. Today, Aswan welcomes Gamal Abdel Nasser -the glory maker- to announce the start of the work for achieving one of the largest projects in the 20th Century. We are taking this opportunity not only to congratulate our heroic leader, but to congratulate ourselves for having a strongman. Praying God for the dam to be a successful opening for a more good and blessings'.

Overall, although the dam is painted entirely by Ethiopia's previous regime with the grievances' brush, this does not conceal the populist narratives to align the people into believing in a constructed identity fueled by taking the rights back. As Mark Zeitoun and Jeremy Allouche, in 'Nationalism, Beliefs and Hegemonic Power in Transboundary Water Relations,' argues:

> A form of 'territorialisation of identity' arises as knowledge of landscape is constructed through maps and cartography. A citizen's awareness of this imagined community is created, enabling individuals to visualize themselves as part of a limited community with defined territorial boundaries separating 'us' from 'the others'.[65] This was also evident in Zenawi's speech for the dam inauguration, when he said: 'The second message we want to send is that the intention to exercise our rights to use 'our own' rivers is in order to fight poverty in our own country. It shows no malice to any of our neighbors.[66]

This discourse illustrates the view of ownership and illusion of control over the flowing river. Margreet Zwarteveen argues that water scarcity has been presented to the public sphere as a *natural* problem in order to avoid critical questions and debates on the *political* distribution of water and its concealed social relations of power.[67] Thus, when the discourse of "water scarcity becomes something natu-

ralized and decontextualized from human experience….[it serves as] a meta-narrative to legitimize a politically contested large dam project."[68]

Another level to unpack the grievance is to note the magnitude message that the 'Grand' dam sent by being Africa's largest hydroelectric power plant.[69] Interviewing two of the three engineers involved in the IPoE, they declared that the larger the dam, the better. One of the engineers even stated, 'A dam is always beneficial.' Whereas the second engineer stated that things got improved much since 2012 through public diplomacy to understand the concerns and the needs of the other countries on the Nile Basin. He always discussed that the negotiations are passed the dam idea or the size; it had been shifted to the operation and the filling. However, the emphasis on the mega project had been mentioned on Meles Zenawi inauguration speech when he said:

> It is rightly called the Millennium Dam. It is the largest dam we could build at any point along the Nile, or indeed any other river. More importantly the project takes the pride of place, representing an incomparable addition to our national plan for expanding power production.[70]

This emphasis 'Grand'/'Largest project in Africa' for the large dam had been defined as 'the disease of gigantism.'[71] In his book, Patrick McCully actually argued that smaller dams are better since they are cheaper, less risky for investors and the greater its impact on the

65 Zeitoun and Allouche, op. cit.

66 GCAO, 2018. Speech About GERD (Meles Zenawi speech). [online] Available at: <www.gcao.gov.et/web/guest/about-gerd?p_p_id=56_IN-STANCE_rDGOJvbX5isq&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-4&p_p_col_count=1&_56_INSTANCE_rDGOJvbX5isq_page=3> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

67 Joy, K.J., Kulkarni, S., Roth, D. and Zwarteveen, M., 2014. Re-politicising water governance: exploring water re-allocations in terms of justice. Local Environment, 19(9), pp.954-973. See also Zeitoun, M. and Warner, J., 2006. Hydro-hegemony–a framework for analysis of trans-boundary water conflicts. Water policy, 8(5), pp.435-460.

68 Mehta, L., 2007. Whose scarcity? Whose property? The case of water in western India. Land Use Policy, 24(4), pp.654-663.

69 Manek, N., 2017. Africa's Biggest Hydropower Plant to Supply Power to Sudan. Bloomberg. 5 April 2017. [online] Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-04-05/africa-s-biggest-hydropower-dam-to-supply-electricity-to-sudan> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

70 GCAO, op. cit.

71 McCully, op. cit. p.20

locals rather than the outside world.[72] The dam is political by its leader and its size, and negating this 'political' character would be misleading for the future of the region.

De-politicised grievances?

Although it was established throughout the paper, and especially in the previous section, that the dam is a political project, the key informants in Ethiopia had rejected this claim, explaining a technical project as managed by the relevant experts. During most of the key interviews in Ethiopia, there had been an emphasis on the objectives of the dam away from the supposedly Egyptian claim of a political dam.

As explained in the previous section, the process of building the dam masked by political and nationalistic grievances under Zenawi regime, makes the process of building dams political and not only technical. Hence, looking at dams as only technical infrastructure would be reductive and flawed as "technology itself is embedded in and is an expression of a wider political discourse and practice, which then become de facto built into the steel and concrete of the technological engineering structure."[73] In the 'Anti-Politics Machine in India,' Vasudha Chhotray argues that development had been promoted as the "a robotic machine expediently flicking off a button called politics."[74] Hence, the technical/scientific projects are political in themselves, complicating as Vasudha mentioned the current discourse of a 'rational' and 'neutral' developmental plans. This discourse in itself that towers the interests of politics[75] is

in itself a political discourse that masks power, interests and asymmetric relations. Hence, dams as hydraulic infrastructures are political as they emerge in a way by which the state actualizes power over its territory,[76] sending international messages and local ones to magnify the relationship between the water source—the river—and its people. Overall, as Hewood puts it "politics is therefore a struggle over scarce resources, and power is the means through which this struggle is conducted.'[77]

Going forward: Nation-building and the environment

The findings of this paper are not limited to the case of the GERD in Ethiopia. Through working on the project and while exploring Ethiopia, I discovered that the story does not seem to start with the dam. The dam had drawn bolder lines for the grievances within a highly politicized river, or a "hydropolitical deadlock."[78] This axiom of dams should not be guiding our transboundary management and our narratives to the future generations on the Nile Basin. Framing water and the dam solely as a matter of "'national security' closes off public debate and may even exacerbate international tensions."[79] The GERD had been an eye opener for changing our perspective on the positionality of hydropolitics and water security in the Nile Basin for the coming decades.

Although this project cannot answer/expect the results of the dam, by understanding the

72 Ibid.

73 Swyngedouw, E. and Swyngedouw, E., 2004. Social power and the urbanization of water: flows of power. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.176.

74 Chhotray, V., 2011. The anti-politics machine in India: state, decentralization, and participatory watershed development. Anthem Press.

75 Ibid.

76 Menga and Swyngedouw, op. cit.

77 Heywood, A., 2002. Politics. Palgrave MacMillan.

78 Abebe, Z., 2018. "The Cooperative Framework Agreement And The Future Of The Nile Politics: The Scenarios". Accessed August 13. https://www.academia.edu/3697103/The_CFA_and_the_Future_of_the_Nile_politics_the_Scenarios?auto=download.

79 entitlecollective, 2018. Why are water wars back on the agenda? And why we think it's a bad idea!. entitlecollective. 22 March 2018. [online] Available at: <entitleblog.org/2018/03/22/why-are-water-wars-back-on-the-agenda-and-why-we-think-its-a-bad-idea/> (Accessed 24 August 2018)

importance of the dam for Ethiopians, this project aspired to push for a paradigm shift in our thinking about the nationalistic charged project in a politicized river. It also aspires to push for more research on the role of national politics intersecting with intra-state politics to shape transboundary management analysis. By using the conflict studies literature on grievances and the water security literature on mega-projects, the project attempted to fill the literature gap on the distinctive hydropolitics of the Nile Basin and its fluctuations. The local perspective should be understood by engaging in debates in the different aspects (historical, economic and social).

In the end, this means looking closely in the historical milestones, economic pitfalls and social narratives in the popular songs and media. Yi-Fu has emphasized that "our society tends to discount the psychological," and that this is the case "even though we know from common experience that changes in perception and attitude can seem to alter an environment more markedly than if had been physically changed."[80] Indeed, the latter is often ignored or dismissed by overlooking the micro-level of analysis. In this case, the dam is not the only part of the story, it is the means to understand the history and political dynamics of the Nile Basin and the changes that the region has underwent due to changes water infrastructure on the Nile. In this paper, we have tried to narrate the story of the GERD by providing an overview of the historical, economic and national milestones in the road to the GERD. And when we take steps on this road, we can make sense of the present and put expectations around potential cooperation the future of the region.

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80 Tuan, Y.F., 1991. Language and the making of place: A narrative-descriptive approach. Annals of the Association of American geographers, 81(4), pp.684-696.p.689.

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Journal of the Department of Political Science
The American University in Cairo

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Author Biography

Jihan Fahmy Fayed

Undergraduate student, Honors Program in Political Science, Graduating 2020, AUC

Mariam Hussein El Ashmawy

Graduate student, Arabic Studies and Middle East History, AUC

Kaitlyn Junod

Graduate student, Political Science, Graduating 2020, AUC

Mariam Sherif Abdelaty

Graduate student, Middle East Politics and Society, AUC

Yasmine Ahmed Hafez

Former AUC graduate, MA in Conflict, Governance, and International Development, University of East Anglia