

A high-angle, wide shot of a massive crowd of people, likely in a public square or stadium. The crowd is dense, filling the entire frame. Many individuals have their hands raised, some with fingers spread, creating a rhythmic pattern of light and dark across the image. The people are dressed in casual, everyday clothing, with some wearing head coverings like headscarves or keffiyehs. The overall atmosphere is one of collective action and protest.

OXFORD

CIVIL RESISTANCE IN THE ARAB SPRING

Triumphs and Disasters

Edited by ADAM ROBERTS,
MICHAEL J. WILLIS, RORY MCCARTHY
& TIMOTHY GARTON ASH

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Preface

The Editors

This book provides an account and analysis of the role of civil resistance in the dramatic series of events that began at the end of 2010, leading to the fall of governments from Tunisia to Yemen. It covers not only the early months and years, when civil resistance predominated and was the hallmark of the Arab Spring, but also the prolonged crises that ensued in many countries—for example, the military intervention in Bahrain, the wars in Libya and Syria leading to huge refugee flows both to countries in the region and beyond, and the reversion to authoritarian rule in Egypt. It explores why it was Tunisia, the country where the Arab Spring began, that experienced the most political change for the lowest cost in bloodshed. Tunisia is the only country where a popular uprising was followed by a relatively liberal, democratic constitutional order—albeit one that faces many challenges and threats, both internal and external.

Why did so much go wrong in so many countries? Did the problem lie more with the methods, leadership, and aims of the popular movements, or in the conditions of the societies that they were attempting to change? Our authors provide expert, detailed accounts of developments in each country. They place them in their historical, social, and political contexts, and relate them to the wider story of civil resistance. They take note of specific characteristics both of the postcolonial history of the Arab world and of political Islam in the early twenty-first century. They look at domestic forces and at external ones, including the highly controversial policies and actions of the United States and Europe. They emphasize the vital part played by ordinary men and women, and look at the complex interplay of social media, television, and the physical organization and courage of protesters on the streets. They show the wide variety of forms that civil resistance can take—including protests on the streets but also political action in a constitutional framework, strikes, and flight as refugees. They describe the widely differing ways in which those in power responded to popular protests: how, for example, Arab monarchies in Jordan and Morocco undertook to introduce reforms to avert revolution, while President Bashar al-Assad in Syria abandoned tentative reform in favour of violent repression. They also ask why the Arab Spring failed to spark a Palestinian one. Above all, they show how civil resistance aiming at regime change is not enough: building the institutions and trust necessary for a stable, pluralist constitutional order is a more difficult but also crucial task.

A word about the terms used in the title of the present work may be useful. First, ‘civil resistance’. This present work is a companion to the first book produced under the auspices of the Oxford University research project on Civil Resistance and Power Politics. That book, entitled *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*, edited by Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash, was published by Oxford University Press in 2009. ‘Civil resistance’ is defined in it as a type of political action that relies on the use of non-violent methods. It is largely synonymous with certain other terms, including ‘non-violent action’, ‘non-violent resistance’, and ‘people power’. It involves a range of widespread and sustained activities that challenge a particular power, force, policy, or regime—hence the term ‘resistance’. A fuller version of this definition, including a brief outline of the mechanisms of change involved, and an indication of the variety of reasons for the avoidance of violence, can be found in the introduction to *Civil Resistance and Power Politics*. From its initiation, the Oxford research project has been predicated on the recognition that the relationships between civil resistance and other forms of power and struggle are highly complex: the Arab Spring confirms this.

And why ‘Arab Spring’? As discussed by Adam Roberts in the concluding chapter of this book, many other terms have been advanced, including Arab Awakening and Arab Uprisings. We opt for ‘Arab Spring’ because it is succinct, widely understood, and captures some of the special features of these events—not least the fact that spring was in so many countries followed by fall.

Our first volume looked at nineteen major cases of the use of civil resistance across nearly a century, from Gandhi in India to the ‘moment of the monks’ in Burma in 2007. Like this one, it asked systematic, comparative questions about the relationships between historical agency and structure, ends and means, analysis and advocacy, external and internal forces, and, not least, failure and success. Many of those nineteen cases could by then be said to have ended in success. That cannot, at this writing, be claimed for most of the countries covered here. But we can learn from failure as well as from success. Moreover, as some of those earlier cases show, one decade’s failure can ultimately contribute to another decade’s success, especially if people are ready to learn from the history that they have experienced and helped to shape.

The chapters in the book, and the electronic addresses (URLs) mentioned in the footnotes, were finalized and checked in March–May 2015.

A.R., M.J.W., R.M., T.G.A.

Oxford
May 2015

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As regards the shape and content of the book, we owe thanks to the numerous friends and colleagues—in Oxford and elsewhere—who provided us with information, advice, and helpful feedback on draft chapters. It would be problematic to name them all individually, and we cannot name the anonymous reviewers of our proposal to Oxford University Press, who were notably constructive. We thank you all.

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1

The Background to Civil Resistance in the Middle East

Chibli Mallat and Edward Mortimer

The Arab Spring that began in Tunisia in December 2010 was widely viewed, in much public and political discourse, as a striking phenomenon using methods of action that were new—at least in the countries concerned. This view is wrong. It had deep roots in the countries of North Africa and the broader Middle East.

In this chapter we look critically at the ‘myth of Arab exceptionalism’—the idea that deep cultural factors made the Arab world predisposed to accept dictatorial rule. We show that non-violent forms of resistance have long been used in political action and in political debate. We then look at social changes—especially those relating to demography, unemployment, and the new media—that created strong pressures for change. We examine throughout the chapter dilemmas proper to the massive earthquake unfolding in the Middle East since 2011, including its specific religious and sectarian dimensions.

THE MYTH OF ARAB EXCEPTIONALISM

The fact that dictatorships in the Middle East were long lived in the period 1950–2010 compared to some other regions of the world can be explained by various historical and geopolitical contingencies, not by any deep cultural predisposition of Arabs or Muslims to accept despotism. Any such theory is simply a late version of orientalism, comparable to similar reifications of Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and ‘Asian (or Confucian) values’ in earlier periods. In a seminal book published in 1978 by the late Edward Said, orientalism as an academic discipline was criticized as an expression of colonial power.¹ While

¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

the criticism may have been excessive, it does underscore the dangers of apparent academic impartiality and 'science', of which the latest version is that Arabs/Muslims are intrinsically/culturally incapable of, or adverse to, democracy and human rights.² The number of journalists, lawyers, professors, human-rights activists, and political leaders who have been imprisoned, assaulted, or killed is probably larger in the modern Middle East than in any other part of the world in recent decades. Opposition to Middle Eastern dictatorships was constant, but wilfully ignored by the rest of the planet. Hence the false narrative of 'surprise' in 2011.

The model of dictatorship that dominated the region for more than half a century arose from the military coups, which the Middle East shared with several countries of the postcolonial world: in Latin America, Africa, and large important South-East Asian countries such as Myanmar and Indonesia. Already in the 1920s the military takeover in Iran by Reza Khan (who made himself Shah and took the family name Pahlavi) and the growing authoritarianism of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) in Turkey had foreshadowed later putsches in the Middle East. Both purported to carry a modernizing agenda as well as a social revolution. The theme of order, social redress, and reform would endure as the justification of the 'strong man' seizing and retaining power.

In countries under foreign rule, colonial governments devalued the rule of law they otherwise proclaimed (and in varying degrees established) by denying proper self-government to the local populations. They systematically undermined mass parties that demanded full independence (such as the Wafd in Egypt), jailed their leaders, and yielded little or no ground to the deafening call for self-determination. During two decades of struggle in the interwar period, moderate nationalist leaders and movements that shunned violence were

² On Islam (or previously 'the Arab mind', as in the title of a notorious book by Raphael Patai published in 1973) being incompatible with democracy, it may be sufficient here to point out the exceptional nature of the question itself, which recurs time and again in the media and has seeped into 'silver bullet' scholarship about Islam. 'Is Christianity or Hinduism compatible with democracy?' would mostly be frowned upon as a leading and overbearing question.

Academia is responsible for its own version of the wrong question, when it (a) presents Islamic law as the exclusive or dominant normative reference in Arab-Muslim societies, a norm that is 'frozen' in time and therefore 'incompatible with democracy', or (b), more subtly but equally wrongly, when it purports to provide in a single essay the key to Muslim/Arab societies progressing, regressing, or stagnating through the lens of Islamic law. Examples in recent scholarship of Islamic law as the fulcrum of Muslim/Arab societies include Timur Kuran, *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), suggesting that all economic progress was undermined by Islamic law principles on commercial partnerships and property, Noah Feldman, *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), suggesting that Islamic law and its legal scholars were a good countervailing balance to power that was lost in the modern world, and Wael Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), considering classical Islamic governance and the modern state at deep odds for producing two different types of subjectivities/human beings.

weakened and discredited. The sense of failure in jettisoning Western dominance made societies more fragile, and soon more willing to embrace 'strong men' who seized the helm through military coups. And so, to the profound frustration caused by a cynical colonial divide-and-rule policy was added the sense of a regional destiny shaped only by war and violence.

Within a complex set of debilitating factors, some local and regional, others international, several stand out as particularly Middle Eastern. One is economic: the region was plagued by oil, which acted as an explicit focus of national security in industrialized countries from the First World War onwards.³ In a meeting aboard the USS *Quincy* on 14 February 1945, while the Second World War was still raging, the president of the United States confirmed his country's commitment to support the rule of the Saudi royal family so long as oil was sold with the help of American companies at an affordable price, and the lines of supply to the West secured. Even the massacres committed by mostly Saudi nationals in the heart of Manhattan and Washington in September 2001 would not shake the USA's commitment to absolute Saudi rule. The alternative thought by some of the Iraq War architects, that a pro-American Iraq would enable the USA to dispense with the support of the Saudi regime, floundered; and the initial unease across the USA at the fact that fifteen out of the nineteen young men who carried out the massacres on 9/11 were Saudi nationals has all but dissipated. Democracy and human rights continue to be sacrificed on the altar of oil.

What the Saudi rulers did with oil revenues for domestic repression and the support of extreme movements worldwide was never seriously called into question. Structurally, oil transformed the whole region into a system of direct or indirect rentier states with no healthy connection between citizen and government. Governments in Algeria, Libya, Iran, and Saudi Arabia belong to the first category of direct rentier states. No taxation is required. No representation is granted. In other countries with less or no oil, such as Jordan, Morocco, or Egypt, baksheesh governments live off a halting tax system and the subsidies of the oil countries. In the early 2000s a series of Arab Human Development Reports, prepared by Arab intellectuals under the aegis of the UN Development Programme, highlighted important deficits in Arab countries as compared with other parts of the world: a deficit of knowledge (more books were being translated in Spain alone than in the whole Arab world); a deficit of women's education and empowerment; and a deficit of freedom, democracy, and human rights.

³ This is elegantly described through the career of the young Winston Churchill by David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace* (New York: Avon Books, 1990). On the shaping of the Middle East by oil, see also Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991).

A second Middle Eastern factor is the continuous, massive violence of a hundred-year-long civil and regional war over Palestine, starting with Zionism's colonial project in the late nineteenth century. In the heart of the Arab-Muslim world, the shock occasioned by the establishment of Israel in four-fifths of Palestine west of the Jordan in 1948, and the expulsion/flight of 90 per cent of that area's non-Jewish population, undermined any remaining trust in regimes created by or aligned with the West. Syria started its own series of coups immediately after its government's conspicuously helpless performance in the war of 1948, and Egypt followed suit in 1952, with General Neguib's Free Officers easily removing the monarchy, then quarrelling with each other until the 'strong man' emerged in the person of Gamal Abdel Nasser—a 1954 coup within the 1952 coup. This would be replicated in similar terms in countries such as Iraq, with Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr's coup in 1968 and Saddam Hussein's takeover in 1979, and Syria, with Salah Jadid's coup in 1966 followed by Hafiz al-Assad's one-man leadership from 1970 to his death in 2000.

The form of the military junta takeover was invariably a 'Declaration Number One' ('*balagh raqm wahed*'), which decreed the death of the *ancien régime* and empowered a group of obscure army officers to exercise all powers taken over from the previous autocrat.⁴ Constitutionally, the Revolutionary Command Council was put in charge. In law, subsequent constitutions that followed the Nasser model were tailored accordingly: self-designated enlightened groups, each propelling a leader in its midst to be president-for-life, would dominate Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Mauritania, Algeria, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the better part of the second half of the twentieth century (see Figure 1.1).⁵

Where emirs and monarchs survived the attempted coups in their countries, they aligned themselves on the model of the sole and absolute ruler with a similar fog of constitutionalism. The king/emir/sultan was invariably established constitutionally as the absolute wielder of executive and legislative powers, and the judiciary formally marginalized and made insignificant.

There is also the evident weight of religion in politics, Islam in particular, because of the wide majority of Muslims among the population of the Middle East. Religion creates a vector of identity that often stands in conflict with citizenship within a given nation state to the detriment of followers of other religions and non-observant or atheist compatriots. It also opens the door to medieval practices that are flaunted as 'authentic' by zealot groups, rendering

⁴ Note the ominously similar *balaghs* issued by Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) after the first declaration on 10 February 2011, the day before Mubarak was forced to resign. The most expansive such declaration was issued on 18 June 2011 'constitutionally' to empower the junta: 'English Text of SCAF Amended Egypt Constitutional Declaration', *Ahram Online*, 18 June 2012 <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/45350.aspx>.

⁵ See Roger Owen, *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).



Figure 1.1. Self-confident rulers on the eve of the Arab Spring. On 10 October 2010, two months before the protests began, there was laughter and joking as the Afro-Arab summit met in Sirte, Libya. In the front row from left are Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Within 16 months all four were overthrown following popular protests.

© AP Photo/Amr Nabil

mainstream those Muslim apostates who need to be brought into the fold of ‘authenticity’ by force.

More subtle is the sectarian, as opposed to the religious, factor. In both Iraq and Syria, long dominated by opposing branches of a secular Arab nationalist Ba‘ath party characterized by the ruthlessness with which its leaders cracked down on even the slightest hint of opposition, a key explanation is offered by the fact that the respective dictators were drawn from religious minorities—Sunni in Iraq and ‘Alawi (a local version of Shi‘ism) in Syria. They had every reason to fear the outcome of majority rule, and made sure that that fear was widely shared by their co-religionists as well as by other minorities.

In the Middle East, sect trumps religion, and the main divide is Sunni/Shi‘i. This is part of the sectarian ‘overdetermination’ of the region, where the three monotheistic religions command an overt political expression in Judaism (Israel), Christianity (Lebanon, for part of the population), and Islam (in all the other countries of the region). Because of sheer numbers, the Muslim factor has played an important role in both government and dissent through

the Middle East revolutions. As in all religions, such expression is protean. In government, the rulers in Saudi Arabia or Iran portray Islam as a central definer of their respective states despite their evident differences. In dissent, the revolutionary tide of 2011 has included non-violent expressions by the dominant Tunisian, Egyptian, or Jordanian Islamic parties. Some of the dissident Islamic movements espouse democracy as their 'natural' choice of government. But there are also openly violent movements, of which ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or more recently SIC, the State of the Islamic Caliphate, a name it uses to distinguish itself from al-Qaeda and other extremist groups) is the latest expression. The menu is therefore vast and unruly. Practice is the ultimate test for the propensity of a self-styled Islamist movement in its relation to the use of violence for advancing its political interests, in government or in opposition.

Similar sectarian dynamics prevailed in Bahrain, Lebanon, and the eastern province of Saudi Arabia, where Sunni elites feared lest a combination of demography and democracy should bring about Shi'i dominance. And on the regional level the same Sunni elites feared the influence of Shi'i Iran, especially after the revolution of 1979, and even more so after the 2003 invasion moved Iraq into the Shi'i camp. Since 2011 these sectarian tensions have fed into, but have also been exacerbated by, the Syrian revolution turned civil war.

Long before that, however, people were resisting oppression across the region, as in other parts of the world. A serious study has yet to be written on the multi-formatted shape of civil resistance, which ranged from everyday gestures of impatience by individual citizens subjected to the brutal activities of the regime's apparatus of repression to more collective action through civil society: pressure groups, labour unions, bar associations, women and the disenfranchised, clerical circles, and political parties. Action ranged from civil resistance from within the system, including honest civil servants and the judiciary, to separatist movements eventually taking up arms against central power. There is no such work covering the whole Middle East,⁶ but the late Hanna Batatu (d. 2000) brought all the social movements in twentieth-century Iraq together in a model book.⁷ Kanan Makiya, writing under the pseudonym Samir al-Khalil, provides an impressive account of the brutality of the Ba'ath regime under Saddam Hussein in *The Republic of Fear*, but fails to take into account the amount of resistance that Batatu illustrated.⁸ In the midst of domestic and regional violence of sometimes epic proportions, as in the Iran–Iraq War of 1980–8, the logic of non-violent resistance was always there, battling for its place against the

⁶ However, see Charles Tripp's remarkable book on the 2011 revolution in its wider historical context, including in the struggle of women and in artistic expressions of dissent: *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁷ Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (London: Saqi Books, 2004; original Princeton, 1978).

⁸ Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998; original by 'Samir al-Khalil', 1989).

logic of force. Already in the 1950s, with the hope of a third way inspired by the Bandung Conference, the figure of Gandhi towered high in the Middle East.⁹ As elsewhere, it was undermined by civil and regional wars. Cicero's 'inter arma silent leges' (often rendered simplistically as 'In war laws are silent') had its enhanced equivalent in the Arab adage 'la ya'lu sawtun fawqa sawt al-ma'raka' ('No voice rises above the sound of battle') and in the Nasser regime's pedestrian motto: 'What is taken by force can only be taken back by force.'

Amid the sounds of battle, there always was a different logic at play. In the case of Nasser, the symbol of civil society resistance appears in the picture of the most respected jurist of Egypt, and of the Arab world, 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Sanhuri (d. 1971). On 29 March 1954, he was mobbed, beaten, and bludgeoned by Nasser's thugs in his courtroom.¹⁰ From 1954 onwards, the judiciary would time and again rise against the three military rulers in Egypt, from Nasser's 'socialist' dictatorship through Sadat's idiosyncratic *infitah* ('opening'—to the market, to the West, and to reactionary, oil-funded Islam) to Mubarak's ever-increasing corruption and nepotism.¹¹ Other countries had their similar hero-judges, none though more successful than the embattled Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry of Pakistan and the lawyers who supported him, who eventually achieved the removal of military dictator Pervez Musharraf in 2008.¹²

⁹ See Elias Khoury's novel *Rahlat ghandi al-saghir* ('The Journey of Little Gandhi') (Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 1989). Gandhi and Nehru have long been icons of Middle Eastern societies, in Gandhi's case seeping, as in Khoury's novel, into the first names given to children. Nehru's books were translated into Arabic and widely read. The Lebanese leader Kamal Jumblatt, who was assassinated in 1977, most likely on the orders of Syrian dictator Hafiz al-Assad, was a prominent advocate of Gandhi's lifestyle and non-violence, which he put into effect in his leadership of what may be considered as a proto-non-violent revolution in 1951 against the extended presidency of first Lebanese president Bishara al-Khouri (it was called 'al-thawra al-bayda', the white revolution, as opposed to blood-shedding 'red' revolutions current then). On Jumblatt's contradictions and appeal, see Chibli Mallat, 'Fi sirr iqbal bidayat al-qarn 'ala kamal junblat: al-tariq al-thaleth wa dinamiiyyat al-la'unf' ('On the Allure of Kamal Jumblatt for the Century: The Third Way and the Dynamism of Non-Violence'), *An-Nahar*, Beirut, 14 April 2001.

¹⁰ Photo of beaten-up Sanhuri at his office in Majlis al-Dawla on 29 March 1954, courtesy of Tarek al-Bishri http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/747/_bo3.htm. Tarek el-Bishri is a leading Egyptian jurist who was tasked with removing the authoritarian, anti-democratic clauses of the Egyptian Constitution in the early days after Mubarak's resignation, a task that he accomplished with remarkable effectiveness. (For this effort, accompanied and mirrored by a team of researchers at Harvard Law School, see Chibli Mallat, 'Revising Egypt's Constitution: A Contribution to the Constitutional Amendment Debate', *Harvard International Law Journal*, 22 February 2011, pp. 182–203 http://www.harvardilj.org/2011/02/online_52_mallat/.) Unfortunately, this purposeful amendment to the Constitution, which was confirmed by referendum, was undermined by SCAF's constitutional declaration mentioned at n. 4. Bishri, a 'moderate Islamist', is described as 'a staunch supporter of non-violent resistance to Mubarak's regime' (Jean-Pierre Filiu, *The Arab Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 27).

¹¹ Tamir Moustafa, *The Struggle for Constitutional Power: Law, Politics, and Economic Development in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹² Daud Munir, 'Struggling for the Rule of Law: The Pakistani Lawyers' Movement', *Middle East Report*, 251 (2009), 37–43; 'The Pakistani Lawyers' Movement and the Popular Currency of

Judges and lawyers were not alone. Non-violence took many other forms, but was crowded out by the violence of the government, combined with that of covertly state-sponsored groups, or mobs, which governments tolerated, encouraged, and sometimes even conjured into existence for ulterior reasons: Islamists and others against communism in the early days, various groups against Islamism since the late 1970s. These were both threats that Western governments were ready to believe in, and against which they were generally happy to condone the use of violent repression, sometimes by silence, sometimes with explicit support. Since the 1980s, most remarkable was the violence by the rulers against Islamic factions. In Syria, Hafiz al-Assad had the centre of the city of Hama levelled to the ground in 1982. In Algeria, the military engaged in a long battle against Islamic groups after the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had won a lead in the first round of parliamentary elections in December 1991 and the army had then cancelled the electoral process. In Saudi Arabia, the violence of the Saud family against the Islamic opposition, especially in the first decade of the twenty-first century, was relentless. Extreme regime violence fed on extreme religious factions waging armed insurrection against the state, with the massive majority of non-violent civil resistance caught in between.¹³

This made the non-violent route even more difficult: the source of violence against people was not solely the apparatus of repression of the state. It also came from groups, mostly sectarian, capturing the political high ground through violence. Nor were those groups exclusively Muslim: unimpeded Jewish extremism in Israel has driven the colonization of the West Bank since 1967, and undermined the two-state solution, long the most reachable formula of peace between Israel and the Arabs; while the Christian militias of Lebanon were the first in 1975 to practise wide-ranging ethnic cleansing of Muslims living in their midst.¹⁴ Still, a strong non-violent thread was there throughout, even when stifled by the battle between a violent government and activist violent factions, or military adventures against neighbours. This history of silent resistance and pain tends to be less well written than the one that

Judicial Power', *Harvard Law Review*, 123 (2010), 1705–26; Ran Hirschl, *Constitutional Theocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 99.

¹³ For an account of the extent of non-violent Saudi dissent, see Human Rights Watch, *Challenging the Red Lines: Stories of Rights Activists in Saudi Arabia* (New York: HRW, December 2013) (detailing the contributions of eleven non-violent dissenters). The most scholarly accounts of violent and non-violent dissent can be found in the works of Madawi al-Rasheed, including *A Most Masculine State: Gender, Politics, and Religion in Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University 2013), which she augments by activism partly expressed in her tweets at @MadawiDr.

¹⁴ The best book on the early period of Christian fascism in the Lebanese wars remains Jonathan Randal, *The Tragedy of Lebanon: Christian Warlords, Israeli Adventurers and American Bunglers* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1984). Wide-ranging ethnic cleansing of Christians followed at various points, especially by the Druze in the Shuf mountains in September 1983.

derives from the fracas of arms. In one of Bertolt Brecht's poems, a worker, reading in history that 'Philip of Spain wept when his fleet went under', asks: 'Did no one else weep?'¹⁵ The question is even more pertinent for those who have suffered the violence of their rulers, and resisted without shedding their torturers' blood, in what is expressively described as 'unviolent' activity.¹⁶

All this long history of civil (and violent) resistance, and the corresponding entrenchment of regimes across the Middle East into ever more brutal and uncompromising rule, makes the 'surprise' expressed, as the revolutions started to break out across the Middle East in late December 2010 and January 2011, itself somewhat surprising.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MIDDLE EASTERN NON-VIOLENCE

In so far as a regional context is useful, events in countries such as Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen are better understood as part of a broader Middle East including Iran, Israel, and Turkey than as exclusively Arab phenomena. This region had witnessed many developments regarding the idea and practice of non-violence.¹⁷

There was a long stream of imperfect precedents. Although it may be questioned whether the overwhelming majority of demonstrators was *self-consciously* non-violent, Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan remind us that the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1978–9 shunned armed resistance.¹⁸ Mary King makes the same point about the First Palestinian Intifada in Gaza and the West Bank, which began in December 1987.¹⁹ At the beginning of the Arab

¹⁵ 'Phillip von Spanien weinte, als seine Flotte Untergegangen war. Weinte sonst niemand?' from Bertolt Brecht, *Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters* ('Questions of a Reading Worker') (1935).

¹⁶ Timothy Garton Ash (quoting Kenneth Boulding), 'A Century of Civil Resistance: Some Lessons and Questions', in Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash (eds), *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 371.

¹⁷ 'Non-violence' can refer both to a general principle, and to a mode of action—and the two can be very different. Here the focus is mainly on the second. For a more comprehensive view of non-violence, see Chibli Mallat, *Philosophy of Nonviolence: Revolution, Constitutionalism, and Justice beyond the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹⁸ Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). But see the criticism in Mallat, *Philosophy of Nonviolence*, 53.

¹⁹ Mary Elizabeth King, *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada* (New York: Nation Books, 2007). In fact, this was not strictly a non-violent movement—the use of stones, which echoes David and the killing of Goliath, is still violent—but the main 'fighters' on the Palestinian side were young people throwing stones at heavily armed Israeli troops and police. In purely military terms the Israelis had overwhelmingly superior force, but politically the first intifada was much more successful than the second, which began in September 2000, and in which the

Spring, Sadiq Jalal al-Azm noted the 2000–1 precedent—the Damascus Spring—foreshadowing the term that was so quickly and widely adopted for the revolution.²⁰ The Damascus Spring started with a relaxation by the new president, who literally inherited power from his father and had the constitution changed overnight just for this purpose.²¹ Whether this relaxation was a ploy or reflected a genuine intention to open up, he changed his mind soon after people tried to take him at his word and test the limits of the new tolerance. Repression was back, but there was continued civil resistance, and Syrians spoke up more openly, especially after the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon in 2005 had forced Syrian troops out of the country, after almost four decades of continued military dominance (1976–2005).

It was during the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon that the concept of revolutionary non-violence was massively demonstrated on the streets of Beirut. When former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri was murdered in a car bomb explosion that took the lives of another twenty-one innocent victims in downtown Beirut, the street reaction against the Lebanese–Syrian security order spiralled quickly, culminating in the largest demonstration in Lebanese history on 14 March 2005. The revolution was remarkable for its rejection of violence from the very first day. The response of Syria and its supporters, in contrast, was extremely violent: more than 100 people, including many leaders of the revolution, were assassinated or injured in the following two years, and the revolution was finally derailed when Hezbollah launched a violent attack against Israel in July 2006 (see Figure 1.2).

The impact of the Cedar Revolution was tangible. Street power was asserted, and yielded results, in the shape of the formal withdrawal of Syria's troops. A Special Tribunal for Lebanon, intended to find and try Hariri's killers, was established by the UN against strong opposition from the Assad government and its allies. However, these achievements were incomplete. The revolution failed to get its leaders into effective positions of power.²² Moreover, the

unarmed demonstrations of the first few days were quickly overtaken by suicide bombings and other violent attacks on Israel's civilian population. Mubarak Awad has led the non-violent movement in Palestine, but was repeatedly stifled by the authoritarianism of the Fatah and Hamas leadership, and by the Israeli government. See, e.g., Mubarak Awad, 'Nonviolent Resistance: A Strategy for the Occupied Territories', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 13/4 (Summer 1984), 22–36. See also Wendy Pearlman, Chapter 10, this volume.

²⁰ Sadiq Jalal al-Azm said in July 2011 in Berlin that the Damascus Spring of 2001 was a dress rehearsal for the Arab Spring of 2011. See, e.g., Carsten Wieland, 'A Decade of Lost Chances: Past and Present Dynamics of Bashar al-Asad's Syria', *Ortadoğu Etütleri*, 4/2 (January 2013), 9–29. This was also variously expressed by al-Azm in Arabic interviews and articles from the early days of the Middle East revolution.

²¹ The Syrian constitution mentioned at Article 83 that the president must be at least 40 years old. It was amended to 34, the age of the young Assad. See Article 83, Constitution of Syria http://www.law.yale.edu/rcw/rcw/jurisdictions/asw/syrianarabrep/syria_constitution.htm.

²² One of those leaders, Saad Hariri (son of Rafiq), eventually became prime minister for a time, but there is no real power in Lebanon without control of the presidency. The revolution failed because (a) Hariri's murderers have still not been brought to justice, although the Special



Figure 1.2. Civil resistance had a long history in the region before the Arab Spring. On 21 February 2005 thousands of Lebanese gathered in central Beirut to protest the assassination a week earlier of former prime minister Rafiq Hariri, who was killed in a car bomb in front of the St George Hotel, which stands in the background. The crowds chanted 'Syria out' and Damascus withdrew its troops two months later, ending a 29-year occupation.

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Special Tribunal has been a signal disappointment for those who believe in justice. Still, two important characteristics of the Cedar Revolution would endure and spread in the region: the potential of the people to use non-violent action to bring about a change in a deeply oppressive situation, and the call for judicial retribution.²³

A similar movement took to the streets in Tehran in July 2009. There, too, the electoral manipulations of the incumbent president, supported by the ruling dictator in Iran, 'Supreme Leader' Ali Khamenei, led to a series of spontaneous non-violent street demonstrations. Repression was immense: dozens were killed and hundreds arrested, and the two opposition contenders for the presidency,

Tribunal for Lebanon has charged five Hezbollah operatives and is conducting their trial in absentia; (b) Hezbollah continues to act as a Syrian/Iranian surrogate, with support from the Shi'a community, so that Lebanon can still not be considered a truly independent country, while the Hariri camp held diminishing autonomy vis-à-vis the Saudi rulers; (c) the pro-Syrian president Émile Lahoud served out his full (illegally extended) term, from 1998 to 2007, and the Lebanese political system remains fundamentally unchanged.

²³ See, generally, Chibli Mallat, *March 2221: Lebanon's Cedar Revolution: An Essay on Non-Violence and Justice* (Beirut: LiR, 2007).

Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, themselves old pillars of the Islamic regime, have remained under house arrest since. Iran is a central factor in the Middle East non-violent revolution and remains one of its greatest hopes.

Meanwhile, in Bahrain, the mainly Shi'a opposition had long established itself as a strong non-violent movement seeking to hold the king to his many promises of power sharing. In 2010, the movement grew significantly across the full political spectrum of Bahraini political forces. Thus, when more populous and less wealthy Arab countries erupted, Bahrain quickly joined in with its Pearl Revolution in February 2011. Caught off balance, the regime at first sought to preserve itself through compromise, and its reformist wing, led by the Crown Prince, was about to start formal discussion with the opposition on 'constitutional options', under the aegis of the US State Department.²⁴ On 14 March 2011 it abruptly changed tack and resorted to a vicious crack-down, evidently encouraged, if not imposed by, neighbouring Saudi Arabia, which sent in a large force, including contingents from other Gulf states.²⁵

Since the 1980s, protests in the street took several forms, including localized and widespread strikes by workers. In Egypt, a precedent was established with the strikes of al-Mahalla al-Kubra on 6 April 2008, the best-known workers' strike of many examples in Egypt and elsewhere.²⁶ It led to the April 6 Youth Movement, one of the most active non-violent groups in Egypt. In the Arab world generally, in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 and the removal of Saddam Hussein by the US-led Iraqi invasion in 2003, a considerable fault line between the people and their governments was exposed. Hundreds of meetings of reformists and activists underlined the yearning for reform, but the grip of dictators was such that any reform short of removing the president/king/ayatollah looked insignificant. The dictators' grip on power remained steadfast, raising the difficult question of where civil resistance should set the bar of its demands, and how flexible it should remain, even when it turns into massive non-violent street protests.

Before Tunisia's revolution in 2010–11, civil resistance was not all expressed in the street. Nor were all street protests directed at the removal of the regime.

²⁴ See Caryle Murphy, 'Bahrain Becomes Flashpoint in Relations between US and Saudi Arabia', *Global Post*, 13 April 2011; Chibli Mallat and Jason Gelbort, 'Constitutional Options for Bahrain', *Virginia Journal of International Law*, 12 April 2011, pp. 1–16 <http://www.vjil.org/articles/constitutional-options-for-bahrain>.

²⁵ Martin Chulov, 'Saudi Arabian Troops Enter Bahrain as Regime Asks for Help to Quell Uprising', *Guardian*, 14 March 2011. See further details in Elham Fakhro, Chapter 4, this volume.

²⁶ For an early history of the Egyptian revolution, see Robert Solé, *Le Pharaon renversé: 18 jours qui ont changé l'Égypte* (Paris: Les Arènes, 2011). In North Africa, Michael Willis has documented dissent in various forms, including violent action, notably among Islamists. See his *Politics and Power in the Maghreb: Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco from Independence to the Arab Spring* (London: Hurst, 2012). See also M. Cherif Bassiouni, Chapter 3, this volume, and Mallat, *Philosophy of Nonviolence*, index entries for revolution (Nile); Kefaya; and other early non-violent Egyptian resisters of Mubarak.

But the governments actively anticipated any form of expressed dissent, and cracked down severely. Typically, prominent figures commanding national, sometimes worldwide, respect and a strong domestic following would be targeted by the government. The name that stands out in Syria is Riad al-Turk, probably the closest equivalent in the Middle East to Nelson Mandela. Turk was jailed by Assad the elder for two decades. When he was released by Assad the younger, he was rocklike in his refusal to compromise. As a leading figure in the Damascus Spring of 2000–1, he soon found himself in prison again, with several others. In total, he spent some twenty-four years in the Assads' jails. His article, 'The Time of Silence is Gone', published two days before the revolution broke out in Damascus (quickly followed by Dar'a) in March 2011, is testimony to his stature.²⁷ Aged over 80, Riad Turk has been living underground in Syria since, actively participating in civil resistance.

There are many such stories in the region, of leaders jailed for their opinion and courage. In Egypt, Saad Eddin Ibrahim and Ayman Nour are the two prime examples of resistance to Mubarak's autocracy. In 2000, Ibrahim wrote a mocking column about the passage of Syria's rule from father to son, coining the word 'monarblic' (*jumlukiyya*, from *mamlaka*, monarchy, and *jumhuriyya*, republic). He was jailed that night by Mubarak, who at the time was grooming his own son Gamal for the succession, and saw where Ibrahim's criticism was leading. Ibrahim spent three years in jail before being cleared by Egypt's highest court in 2003, and then from 2007 had to live in exile to avoid being imprisoned again (in 2008 he was given a two-year sentence *in absentia* for 'defaming Egypt'). Meanwhile in 2005, fearing that Lebanon's Cedar Revolution might spread to Egypt, Mubarak changed Article 76 of the Constitution to allow for a more competitive presidential contest. Ayman Nour, former MP and outspoken activist, took up the challenge. He was hounded by Mubarak, his party destroyed, and he too was jailed for three years.

Two major figures in the struggle against Muammar Gaddafi stand out. In 1978, Lebanese Shi'a leader Musa al-Sadr, invited officially to Libya, was 'disappeared' by Gaddafi. Apart from one brief acknowledgement by Gaddafi in 2002, no hard news about him has yet surfaced in Libya.²⁸ The abduction

²⁷ Riad Turk, 'Laqad walla zaman al-sukut: lan tabqa suria mamlakat al-samt' ('The Time of Silence is Gone: Syria will No Longer Remain the Mute Kingdom'), published on the Syrian *al-Ra'i* website <http://www.arrae.com/portal>, 12 March 2011, but no longer available there.

²⁸ On 31 August 2002, two years after a case had been lodged against Gaddafi by the family of Musa al-Sadr before the Lebanese courts, Gaddafi admitted in halting Libyan vernacular how great the imam was, what a loss his disappearance was, and what a pity it was that he 'disappeared here in Libya... we don't know how'. See, e.g., Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2003: Libya* (London: AI, 28 May 2003) <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3edb47da4.html>, which notes: 'In his annual speech on 1 September Colonel Mu'ammār al-Gaddāfi gave an official acknowledgement that Imam Musa al-Sadr, a prominent Iranian-born Shi'a cleric living in Lebanon, "disappeared in Libya" during a visit in 1978.' (In fact Gaddafi mentioned the disappearance on Libyan television a day earlier.) This went against a quarter of a

and disappearance triggered a continuous, massive protest in Lebanon. In 2000, the families of Sadr and the two companions who were with him on the visit sued Gaddafi in a Lebanese court. An indictment followed, and Gaddafi found himself under a persistent judicial sword of Damocles, making it impossible for him to visit Lebanon and a number of other Middle Eastern countries for fear of arrest.²⁹

Another less judicially successful case was that of Mansur Kekhia, a distinguished former foreign minister of Libya who was abducted in Cairo in December 1993. His remains were identified in 2012 after the regime had fallen, but question marks persisted, including over the outrageous fine and dismissal of a case his wife had brought before an Egyptian court. Even more than Assad, who had been feted at the 14 July celebrations of the French president in 2008, Gaddafi was shamelessly courted by presidents and prime ministers in the last years of his reign: the British prime minister, the president of France, the latter's former wife on a separate trip, the chancellor of Germany, and sundry senior US officials visited Gaddafi's Tripoli in search of oil contracts or other concessions. Most egregious in Europe was the case of former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, under whom a new investigation was started to whitewash Gaddafi over the disappearance of Sadr. While it did not change the reality of Gaddafi's own acknowledgement, it shows how the judiciary, in at least some Western countries, can be manipulated by the executive on such important international human-rights cases.

It also illustrates, on a more positive note, how the families of victims carry heroic battles, and are increasingly vindicated. Ariel Sharon was defeated before the Supreme Court of Belgium by the victims of the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, before the law was changed retroactively to stop the proceedings. Saddam Hussein was tried and hanged (admittedly in a flawed and inhumane manner). Some of the alleged killers of Rafiq Hariri are under indictment before the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Gaddafi was brutally murdered, unfortunately depriving his victims of his crucial testimony, while, as of May 2015, his son and chief security man were both in jail awaiting trial. Ben Ali in Tunisia has been tried *in absentia* and hides in Saudi Arabia. There is continuing pressure for Syria's Assad and Yemen's Saleh to be pursued for crimes against humanity. And Mubarak sat in the same orange jail where both Ibrahim and Nour had been incarcerated.³⁰ Justice operates in fits and starts.

century of systematic denial by the Libyan government that the imam and his companions had disappeared in Libya upon their visit, and an elaborate ploy to suggest that they disappeared in Rome.

²⁹ Notably he was obliged to miss the Arab Summit in Beirut in March 2002.

³⁰ Tora Prison, located south of Cairo. See Mallat, 'Al-zanzana al-burtuqaliyya tantazir mubarak' ('The Orange Cell Awaits Mubarak'), *al-Hayat*, London, 8 August 2011 (relating that the same cell where Ayman Nour was jailed had been painted in his party's orange colour to receive Mubarak; his two sons were reportedly held in the cell where Saad Eddin Ibrahim had

The last episodes in Gaddafi and Saddam's lives are not glorious moments in the history of non-violent resistance, but at least many of their opponents and victims could be heard calling loudly for their lives to be spared. In all these instances, the silver lining of accountability appears in the midst of setbacks and disappointments. Mubarak and his sons were released from jail a year after Sisi had taken over the presidency; Libya's collapse into chaos and Gaddafi's death made it much harder to find out what happened to Sadr and the hundreds of Libyan and non-Libyan killed and 'disappeared'; and the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon has yet to see the accused behind bars, let alone those on whose orders they probably acted. Massacres in Syria and repression in Bahrain and the Gulf proceed without any form of domestic or international accountability. Even in Tunisia, the protection provided by the Saudi Government to Ben Ali and his family have prevented their proper trial in Tunis or elsewhere. These are just a few examples of the ongoing battle between crime and punishment.

Despite the setbacks, many histories of civil resistance are available across the Middle East for those who wish to avoid being 'surprised' again as they were in 2011. For every Saad Eddin Ibrahim or Riad Turk, there are hundreds whose names are unknown. Many of the leaders of civil resistance are women, repressed both by the government and by the Islamist extremes. Such is the case of Razan Zaituneh, who was an iconic resistant to Assad's rule in Duma, near Damascus, and 'disappeared' in December 2013 together with three of her close companions, under the watch of Zahran Allush, a local Islamist thug.

Even in a country such as Saudi Arabia, where resistance is generally associated with brutal, extreme, groups, the forest is missed for the trees. Particularly significant is the number of women who have been jailed, denied their passports, and harassed. The repression can take the basest of forms: attacks on husbands and fathers (who are supposed to keep their wives and daughters in line); confiscation of property; and threats, even abroad. All are common. Their stories occasionally surface thanks to groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, or when protest takes an apparently newsworthy form, such as women driving in downtown Riyadh, or a particularly egregious decapitation, but none of this affects the standing of the Saudis with Western (and other) governments.

A warning has come since 2011, however. In the following two years there were more demonstrations than in the whole history of Saudi Arabia, since King Abdulaziz Ibn Saud occupied the cosmopolitan Hijaz in 1924 and subjected it to an increasingly puritan version of Islamic rule. On 9 March

lived months of solitary confinement). The transfer of Mubarak to house arrest in August 2013 did not prevent him from being brought to court a month later, but the relaxation of his detention conditions was a clear sign of the extent of the counter-revolution orchestrated by the army.

2013 the co-founders of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), Mohammad bin Fahad al-Qahtani and Abu Bilal Abdullah al-Hamid, were sentenced to long prison terms. Women's challenge to the driving ban has become a recurrent staple of their leadership in resisting social oppression by males. On 9 January 2015, blogger Raif Badawi, who had earlier been sentenced to 10 years in jail and 1,000 lashes, turned into a world symbol of resistance when 50 lashes were publicly administered as a first instalment. The battle for non-violence is joined in Saudi society, but the persistence of impunity for an egregious style of governance effectively sends the message that there is no room for reform from within the margin allowed by the regime, pushing future opposition groups to adopt more radical objectives and methods. Considering the precedent of the early 2000s, however, and the Syrian turn of events, the Saudi people may well conclude that non-violent action is the far better route for change.

DEMOGRAPHY, UNEMPLOYMENT, NEW MEDIA

Saudi Arabia, the Middle Eastern country with by far the largest oil revenues (92 per cent of its \$330 billion national income in 2012, according to official figures), is a useful example of the difficulty of subduing one's population for ever, even in highly liquid oil-rentier countries. There are not enough positions in government to satisfy all members of the ruling family, which is generally put at some 6,000 individuals;³¹ and the financial demands of the Al Saud on the budget are increasingly heavy. More important, there has been a rapid and unplanned increase in the Saudi population, from around 9 million in 1980 to 27 million in 2010.³² This has resulted in high unemployment.³³ With higher numbers come also higher demands for food, shelter,

³¹ Opposition groups say closer to 20,000.

³² Some have seen this population increase as in itself a form of civil resistance, though more probably it reflects the limited access of Saudi women—especially among Saudi tribes—to education and employment. Meanwhile, there has also been an enormous increase in the number of expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia.

³³ In 2006 the Saudi Minister of Labour announced that there were 120,000 unemployed on the basis that 120,000 people had applied for work at job centres. Sceptics observed that, since there is no unemployment benefit in Saudi Arabia and job centres rarely find people jobs, this figure was probably an underestimate. It was later revised to 440,000 unemployed, or about 9% of the workforce. Three million women were also described by the government as 'housewives' not seeking work, even though many are unmarried and some as young as 15. Interior Ministry documents obtained by opposition groups based in London suggest the real figure is much higher. According to the government's own figures in 2004, the total number of people in the workforce was 9,929,358, of whom 2,237,529 were students, 435,511 were retirees, 850,000 worked in the public sector, 750,000 worked in the private sector, and 266,910 were disabled or otherwise ineligible to work, leaving 5,389,408 men and women in the workforce unaccounted

and—most important—education. Educated youth, even if the education leaves much to be desired, carry expectations, not least that of finding a job that corresponds to their years of work at school and university. There are few jobs available, since rentier states dependent on oil revenue produce little of anything except oil and oil derivatives, and most of the work that needs doing is done by expatriates—a much more biddable and exploitable workforce than Saudi citizens would be. How many Saudis can be put to work in an oil industry dominated in its middle management by foreign experts, in the oilfields kept going by imported labour from South Asia, and in domestic service where workers come from the Philippines?

Middle Eastern governments are also kleptocratic nepotisms, with theft and corruption starting at the top: what correspondence was there between Saleh's or Mubarak's official salaries as presidents and their actual wealth? Nepotism is inherent in monarchies, and has successfully been cloned in self-styled republics, whether they are 'socialist' or 'Islamic'. The gulf between educated expectations and backward-looking government grows.

It gets worse for governments. The more people are educated, the more attuned they are to other models—popular music (rap in Yemen and Harlem, shake in Tunis and Cairo) is one small sign of resistance, in this case using Western symbolism—and the more they are technology savvy, the more they are likely to be critical of their governments. The revolutions in the Middle East are not merely Twitter or Facebook revolutions. Technological tools are just that: tools. For revolutionary change, it is the street that matters. But the street will be moved by information, and the technology of the 2010s is one where the citizen-journalist-witness is a click away from reporting an event, expressing his disagreement, and connecting with soul-mates. As a rule of thumb, educated citizens are ahead of their governments in grasping new technology and its potential. In 1978, Khomeini's sermons and fatwas were brought into Iran through cassette tapes. The BBC World Service, carried by shortwave radio, was accepted as a source of accurate news long before satellite TV channels proliferated in the region. In 2011, national dissent was carried by the Internet, with the latest applications being Twitter and Facebook, and by satellite television. Text-messaging is second nature to adolescents the world over. In a report commissioned

for, presumed unemployed. However, according to leaked confidential government census documents, the total number of Saudi males in 2004 was approximately 16.5 million, of whom almost 10 million were adults (aged over 15). The total number of men in the workforce in 2004 was 5,012,223, of whom 124,030 were students, 418,076 were retirees, approximately 700,000 were employed in the public sector, 600,000 worked in the private sector, and 168,446 were disabled or otherwise 'not fit for work'. This suggests that in 2004, out of a total male workforce of just over 5 million, approximately 60% were unemployed. (Note kindly contributed by Hugh Miles, March 2013.)

by the BBC, Edward Mortimer summarized the development of ‘user-generated content’:

For several years before the Arab Spring, the role of the ‘citizen journalist’ had been widely debated among media professionals and scholars. It had become clear that, at a time when fewer and fewer ‘traditional’ news organizations could afford to maintain extensive networks of professional journalists and cameramen around the world, technology had placed in the hands of ‘ordinary’ people the capacity to film and record events as they were happening, and transmit them around the world in a matter of minutes, or even seconds. The iconic example of this was the photograph of the dying student, shot (in both senses) during the demonstrations that followed the 2009 election in Iran, which is said to have been on President Obama’s desk within 15 minutes. Yet nothing had quite prepared us for the sheer volume of footage of street protests, and of violence used to repress them, combined with the inaccessibility of much of the action for independent professional media, which has characterized the Arab Spring.

Indeed one might say that, combined with the existence of satellite TV channels able and willing to transmit these images, it has *made* the Arab Spring.³⁴ Without those endlessly repeated jumpy images of crowds marching, crowds chanting, people running, falling, bleeding, and smoke rising from buildings, how many Arabs would have known that there was an Arab Spring, and felt emboldened to take part in it? If that question is unanswerable, another admits of only one answer: can we, the outside world, imagine the Arab Spring without those images? Surely not. UGC [user-generated content] has not simply made the story more vivid, more exciting, more telegenic. It has *been* the story, or at very least has transformed its nature.³⁵

Governments panic when the mass of critical views multiplies across the population. They learn quickly how to crack down, enlisting the help of unconscionable foreign high-tech companies, and pooling together their repressive resources. The Gulf is typical, as too is the symbiosis of repression between the Syrian and Iranian governments, with some governments looking as far as China (and vice versa) to respond to the technological threat. There are also unintended consequences: when Mubarak shut down the Internet and the mobile phone networks in the early days of the then relatively limited

³⁴ Among many testimonies to the importance of satellite TV, here is that of Ian Pannell, whom the BBC deployed in practically every arena of protest and struggle in the Middle East during 2011: ‘Most important [in spreading the protests from one country to another], rather than social media, was Al Jazeera Arabic—people were glued to the screen watching events that took place elsewhere’ (telephone interview, 12 April 2012). Al Jazeera Arabic (in contrast with the moderate tone carefully honed for its far less impactful English channel) was also peddling its own, biased, and often vociferous Islamist world view, which rendered immense disservice to the unity that characterized the initial moment of the Middle East non-violent revolutions.

³⁵ Edward Mortimer, ‘Independent Assessment for the BBC Trust’, in *A BBC Trust Report on the Impartiality and Accuracy of the BBC’s Coverage of the Events Known as the ‘Arab Spring’* (London: BBC, June 2012), 68 http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/news/press_releases/2012/arab_spring.html.

demonstrations, worried parents went down in massive numbers into the streets to look for their children, swelling the numbers of demonstrators.³⁶ But some regimes—notably the Syrian—have been catching up, learning for instance how to infiltrate and manipulate the email accounts, blogs, and tweets of some of their opponents. In Sudan, the government was quicker on the uptake, and succeeded in nipping an incipient Arab Spring protest movement in the bud. As one news report put it: ‘Pro-government agents infiltrated anti-government sites, spreading disinformation and looking to triangulate the identities of the chief organizers. They’d barrage Facebook pages with pornography, then report the pages to Facebook for violating the rules.’³⁷ It is notable that, of five ‘state enemies of the internet’ identified by Reporters Without Borders in its 2013 report, three—Bahrain, Iran, and Syria—are in the Middle East.³⁸

There is much to say about the mass media technological factor in the 2011 revolution. Some is evident; some requires better research and more solid figures. What is certain is that cheap new media and educated (and unemployed) youth have at their fingertips an extraordinary, versatile, immediate, and always creative tool that can be used to support non-violent action.

A DEEPER CULTURAL HISTORY OF NON-VIOLENCE

There is also a deeper culture and longer history of non-violence in the Middle East. To be Braudelian is easy: all three great monotheistic (Abrahamic) religions were born in the heart of the region, and, whatever their subsequent terrible slips into conquest and cruelty, their message of peace remained throughout three millennia or so unperturbed in its core. All three have a strong message of non-violence. It has been an irony well underlined by the great philosophers Baruch Spinoza (d. 1677) and Abul ‘Ala al-Ma‘arri (d. 1058) that each religion is so perceived by its adherents, but not usually by those of the other two.³⁹ Yet Islam is by definition ‘entering into peace’,

³⁶ On the main Internet and mobile phone shutdown on the night of Thursday, 27–Friday, 28 January 2011, see Christopher Rhoads and Geoffrey A. Fowler, ‘Egypt Shuts down Internet, Cellphone’, *Wall Street Journal*, 29 January 2011 <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703956604576110453371369740>. The shut-down lasted until about 2 February.

³⁷ Alan Boswell, ‘How Sudan Used the Internet to Crush Protest Movement’, McClatchyDC, Washington, 6 April 2011 <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/04/06/111637/sudans-government-crushed-protests.html>.

³⁸ Reporters Without Borders, *Enemies of the Internet: 2013 Report (Special Edition: Surveillance)* (Paris: Reporters Without Borders, 12 March 2013) <http://surveillance.rsf.org/en>.

³⁹ Spinoza’s excommunication in 1656, at the age of 24, remains shrouded in uncertainty as to the exact particulars, but there is little doubt that his critique of the biblical canon and the refusal