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Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

To the world, the first Palestinian intifadah is a young man, arm bent back to throw a stone, his face masked in a black-and-white checkered kaffiyeh. He is one of the "children of the stones" described in a popular poem.[1] His image has been writ large into a generation rising in rebellion, a universal spirit carrying an entire people into a movement of protest. As Joost Hiltermann wrote of the first intifadah, "it was remarkable that the entire population could be mobilized simultaneously" (Hiltermann, 1993, 173). Yet most Palestinians did not, in fact, pick up stones or don the kaffiyeh. Most did not directly participate at all. Indeed, while participation was high relative to other uprisings, nonparticipation was still far more common: at the peak of the revolt, only 35 percent of Palestinians are estimated to have taken part.[2]

Who is the young man behind the kaffiyeh, and why does he, rather than his neighbor, take to the streets? Why do some individuals choose to participate in anti-regime resistance whereas other similar individuals do not? The answers to these questions bear on fundamental puzzles about collective action. Participants in the first Palestinian intifadah took part in demonstrations, sit-ins, and strikes at great personal risk, facing near-certain arrest or violence. Yet, the potential benefits of participation – an end to Israel's military occupation of the Palestinian Territories and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state – were far from certain.

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[1] Nizar Qabbani, reprinted in Lockman and Beinin (1989).

[2] This participation rate was calculated using the Nonviolent and Violent Outcomes (NAVCO) 1.1 dataset (Chenoweth, 2011).

Moreover, those benefits would be shared by all Palestinians, regardless of whether or not they bore the risk.

This book draws on an in-depth study of unarmed protest against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories to explain why individuals resist repressive regimes. Unarmed resistance against repressive regimes differs fundamentally from other kinds of contentious collective action. In contrast to social movement activism in liberal regimes, it takes place in a context of repression, media censorship, and lack of information. Information about anti-regime movements, protests, and the number of participants is not reported in the mass media or other sources, and even obtaining such information can be a dangerous act. Yet, unlike armed resistance that takes place within a similar environment, unarmed resistance requires mass participation to succeed. Tens of thousands of individuals must expect others to participate and choose to participate themselves. Prospective participants must obtain information about the occurrence, size, and strength of protests in the face of repression, censorship, and surveillance.

This book advances and tests a new theory that explains how and why some individuals are able to overcome these challenges. The book's main argument focuses on the facilitating role of *state-controlled mass institutions*: large heterogeneous organizations run or controlled by the state such as schools, prisons, and courts.[3] It argues that, when groups have strong anti-regime sentiment but lack the internal organizational strength often seen as necessary for protest, integration into state institutions paradoxically makes individuals more likely to resist the state. Integration into these institutions joins individuals in wider and more information-rich social networks, facilitates communication and coordination, and reduces the risks of participation in protest. Thus, all else equal, individuals who are integrated into these institutions have greater access to information about resistance and are better able to participate in protest than individuals who are not. As a result, the probability that they will begin to participate in protest is higher than that of similar individuals outside this institutional context, and this tendency to protest persists over time.

While integration into state institutions makes individuals more likely to participate in anti-regime resistance in lasting ways, there are also important limits on its impact. This book further argues that, while state institutions facilitate mass protests among organizationally weak groups without strong civil society organizations, such organizations are needed in order to *subsequently* link disparate protests into a nationwide campaign. As mentioned previously, individuals inside state institutions possess greater access to scarce political information about protest. However, without strong civil society organizations and networks, existing institutional and geographic divisions are still likely to circumscribe the content and flow of this information. News about anti-regime activities may not enter state institutional networks to begin with, and information that does enter may not travel far beyond neighboring and proximate institutions. Thus, in the absence of strong civic organizations and networks to connect them, state institutions may still give rise to mass protests, but these protests will tend to remain relatively localized and uncoordinated.

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[3] See Section 1.4 for a formal definition.

These arguments are based on diverse evidence collected over twelve months of field research in the Palestinian Territories. The centerpiece of this field research is an original, large-scale survey of former participants and nonparticipants in unarmed resistance to Israeli rule in the West Bank. The survey is the first large-scale poll of participants and nonparticipants in Palestinian resistance, as well as one of only a few systematic surveys of anti-regime resistance conducted worldwide. As such, it offers rare, fine-grained data on participation in resistance that are usually not available to scholars. In this book, I complement these survey data with insights drawn from over forty in-depth interviews with Palestinian political leaders and activists, teachers and students, former prisoners, and civil society members.

The book's findings explain how organizationally weak groups typically thought to lack the capacity for protest are able to mobilize against powerful regimes. According to canonical social movement theories, social movements emerge among groups with internal organizational strength: strong autonomous institutions, organizations, and networks of a group's own, which provide its members with the capacity for protest (McAdam, 2010; Tilly et al. 1975; Oberschall, 1973). For example, in the paradigmatic case of the American civil rights movement that helped shape this perspective, scholars trace the movement's emergence to the growing strength of the Southern black church and other "indigenous" institutions (McAdam, 2010; Morris, 1984). Similarly, as Zhao has noted, scholars also often invoke the rise of civil society to explain the Eastern European revolutions of 1989 (Di Palma, 1991; Ost, 1991), as well as the Chinese prodemocracy movement of the same year (Zhao, 1998, 1494). Yet, in contrast to these prominent cases, civil society

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organizations are often weak in the authoritarian environments in which anti-regime protest tends to take place. Increasingly, they are banned or harshly repressed and, therefore, have only limited size and influence. This book shows that, under these difficult conditions, integration into state institutions under the ruling regime's control paradoxically facilitates anti-regime resistance. Thus, while they do play a coordinating role, independent institutions and organizations of a group's own may not be as important for explaining the emergence of mass protest as many scholars have traditionally thought. In advancing our understanding of mass mobilization and participation among organizationally weak groups, the book also illuminates the sources of anti-regime protest in cases that are not fully explained by existing theories, including Palestine, South Africa, and Egypt.

1.2 CASE SELECTION

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict is one of the most intractable ongoing global conflicts.[4] Before his death, Nelson Mandela called a just solution to the conflict "the most important issue of our time" (quoted in Pilger 2007, 74.) Similarly, at the height of the Arab Spring protests, Jordan's King Abdullah declared, "[N]o matter what's happening in the Middle East – the Arab Spring . . . the economic challenges, high rates of unemployment – the emotional, critical issue is always the Israeli–Palestinian one."[5]

While the Israeli–Palestinian conflict did not originate with Israel's military occupation of the Palestinian Territories, the over fifty-year-old Israeli occupation underlies the modern dispute between Israel and the Palestinians. In 1967, during its second war with its Arab neighbors, Israel conquered the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and placed them under military rule. Claiming the eastern half of Jerusalem as part of Israel's undivided capital, it also annexed East Jerusalem and placed it under Israeli civil law. Since then, Israel has continued to exert effective control over these territories, even as it has ceded some sovereignty to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and withdrawn Israeli forces

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[4] The UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset lists an active civil conflict between Israel and Palestinian actors for nearly every year from 1949 to 2014.

[5] King Abdullah II. 2011, September 22. "King Abdullah: Jordan Needs 'Stable Middle Class' [Interview by D. Greene and S. Inskeep, Transcript]." NPR.org. www.npr.org/2011/09/22/140670554/king-abdullah-jordan-needs-stable-middle-class (accessed March 26, 2017).

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and settlers from the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, the mainstream Palestinian national movement – originally formed to "liberate" all of historic Palestine from Israeli sovereignty – has embraced ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories and establishing an independent Palestinian state in its place as its primary goal.

Broad-based participation is critical to the success or failure of anti-regime movements such as the Palestinian national movement. Recent research suggests that such movements are more successful in ending military occupations and other forms of non-democratic rule when they use unarmed resistance rather than armed violence. Unarmed resistance is also associated with more desirable post-campaign outcomes, including, importantly, a lower risk of conflict recurrence (see e.g. Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011). In order for unarmed campaigns to succeed, however, they must attract wide participation (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011; Pearlman, 2011). Identifying the conditions that support Palestinian participation in unarmed resistance can thus help to illuminate not only the trajectory of the ongoing Palestinian campaign against Israeli occupation but also the prospects for more comprehensive conflict resolution.

This book examines the determinants of participation in unarmed resistance against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories during more than a decade leading up to and culminating in the first Palestinian intifadah (1978–89). In addition to its geopolitical significance, the Palestinian case offers several advantages for studying the drivers of participation in unarmed resistance. As shown in Figure 1.1, Palestinians had ample opportunities to participate in unarmed resistance during the period from 1978 to 1989. Throughout this period, organized demonstrations, strikes, and other unarmed protests occurred with regular and increasing frequency throughout the Occupied Territories. By studying a case in which there were wide opportunities for participation over a sustained period of time, this book identifies why, given similar opportunities, some individuals participate whereas otherwise similar individuals do not. More generally, by focusing on a single case, this study is better able to hold constant country-level, contextual factors that may affect participation in resistance, such as colonial legacies. As a result, it can better isolate the individual-level characteristics and attributes that distinguish participants in resistance from nonparticipants and, therefore, explain their participation.

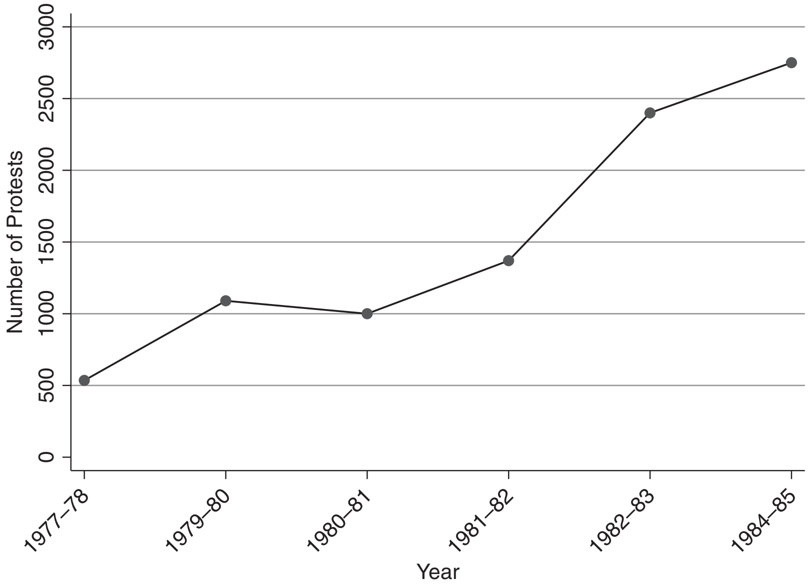

FIGURE 1.1 Unarmed protests in the Palestinian Territories, 1977–1985
Source: Israel Government Yearbooks, in Frisch 1996, 8.

In addition to these empirical advantages, a case study of the Palestinian Territories also offers advantages when it comes to theory-building. As Section 1.3 will describe, leading explanations for participation in political conflict and violence do not fully explain variation in participation in resistance among ordinary Palestinians. While nationalist grievances were strong in the Palestinian case, such grievances were pervasive while participation in resistance was relatively rare. Thus, while nationalist sentiment was an important contributing factor in the Palestinian case, it cannot explain why, given near-universal Palestinian support for the PLO-led nationalist movement, only a minority of Palestinians participated in resistance.[6] Similarly, the material incentives provided to motivate participation in many armed campaigns were also, generally, not offered to Palestinian participants in unarmed resistance. Finally, while civil society associations did help to coordinate participation in resistance, these

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[6] The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is an umbrella organization consisting of the main Palestinian nationalist factions, which claims to be "the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." For a comprehensive history of the Palestinian national movement and the PLO, see Sayigh (1997), Brand (1991).

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associations were still in their infancy as protest began to escalate in the late 1970s and generally too weak to support mass participation. Thus, existing theories of participation in political conflict do not fully account for participation in the Palestinian case. As such, a study of the Palestinian case offers a theoretical opportunity to identify new, causal variables that may better explain protest participation in this and other similar cases (see e.g. Seawright and Gerring, 2008).

Some readers may be wary of extrapolating from the Palestinian case to explain other cases of anti-regime resistance in this manner. Given the long duration of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the wide media coverage of its developments, and the high degree of international involvement throughout its many stages, it is reasonable to wonder whether the Palestinian case is an "outlier." Yet, while the larger context surrounding the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is indeed unusual, many of the dynamics underlying the political behavior of conflict actors are not. The basic problems that Palestinians had to overcome in order to participate in protest – repression, media censorship, and lack of information – are common to many autocratic regimes. And, while some nondemocratic regimes allow relatively greater space for civil society to develop, the weak, independent institutions and organizations present at the onset of Palestinian mobilization are hardly unique in nondemocratic societies. As such, this book joins the growing number of volumes focused on Palestine that seek to generalize from the Palestinian case and situate it in wider comparative perspective (see e.g. Ron 2003; Jamal 2007; Pearlman 2011; Krause 2017; Manekin, in press). Toward this goal, the book's conclusion discusses the relevance of its arguments for understanding participation in anti-apartheid protests in South Africa and labor strikes in prerevolutionary Egypt.

1.3 EXISTING EXPLANATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN UNARMED RESISTANCE

There is growing interest among political scientists in understanding why nonviolent resistance occurs and succeeds (see e.g. Pearlman, 2011; Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011; Nepstad, 2011; Cunningham, 2013). One pivotal condition for success is wide participation. Wide participation allows anti-regime movements to remain resilient in the face of repression, impose greater pressure on repressive regimes, and ultimately extract more meaningful concessions. In contrast, without broad-based participation, anti-regime movements often fail to achieve their goals and may not survive as political movements (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011).

Who participates in unarmed resistance against repressive regimes, and why? Under which conditions are anti-regime movements most likely to achieve broad participation? The voluminous interdisciplinary literature on political conflict and violence offers a number of compelling answers to these questions. These explanations can be grouped together into three broad schools of thought: grievances, selective incentives, and social structures.

1.3.1 Grievances

Classical explanations for participation in political conflict highlight the role of shared grievances among participants. In cases of anti-occupation, anti-colonial, or nationalist resistance, group grievances rooted in a shared ethnic identity offer perhaps the most common explanation for why individuals resist. A long and illustrious research tradition links ethnic grievances stemming from ethnic discrimination, dominance, and exclusion to group-based mobilization (see e.g. Horowitz, 1985; Gellner and Breuilly, 2008; Gurr, 1970; Petersen, 2002). More recently, Adria Lawrence has persuasively argued that, in French colonies, nationalist movements emerged in response to the political exclusion of colonial subjects (Lawrence, 2013). Similarly, Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleditsch find that "horizontal inequalities" between ethnic groups – that is, "inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups" (Stewart, 2008) – are associated with a higher probability of ethnonationalist conflict across a large sample of countries (Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleditsch, 2011, 480). While Cederman et al.'s analysis is restricted to civil war, its logic, which argues that inequalities between ethnic groups fuel resentment that promotes conflict, also applies to participation in unarmed resistance. Consistent with this logic, conventional accounts of the sources of the first Palestinian intifadah also often depict the uprising as an outpouring of simmering nationalist resentments and tensions.[7]

Economic grievances may also motivate participants in unarmed resistance, even in nationalist conflicts such as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. As several scholars have shown, there is often a disjuncture between

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[7] See e.g. Alimi (2007) for a critique of this perspective.

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macro-level grievances and micro-level motivations for participation in conflict (Kalyvas, 2006; Beissinger, 2013; Mueller, 2013). For example, Lisa Mueller finds that participants in Niger's recent prodemocracy movement were driven less by democratic fervor than by more mundane economic demands (2013). Economic dissatisfaction can also intensify political grievances, decreasing support for the ruling regime and increasing the popularity of opposition candidates who are more likely to organize protests (Brancati, 2016). Thus, while the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is fundamentally a conflict between two national groups, it is also possible that participants in the first Palestinian intifadah were driven as much by economic considerations as by national ones. In line with classical theories of revolution, participants could have been motivated by poverty, inequality, landlessness, or other objective economic conditions (Paige, 1978; Scott, 1976; Wickham-Crowley, 1992). Or, they may have been moved to protest by a more subjective sense of economic deprivation, stemming from the gap between individual expectations and economic realities (Gurr, 1970).[8] In keeping with both these perspectives, Israeli authorities have tended to see economic factors as the key to ensuring Palestinian quiescence (Hiltermann, 1993, 18; Khawaja, 1995).

Economic factors appear to have played a relatively minimal role in the Palestinian case, however. While Israeli economic policies in the Palestinian Territories undermined the development of an independent Palestinian national economy, they also initially sought to promote individual prosperity as a means toward social stability (Roy, 1995; Gordon, 2008). Toward this goal, during the first decade of occupation (1967–76), Israeli authorities introduced a number of economic development programs intended to increase Palestinians' economic productivity. Israeli officials established vocational training programs and New Deal–style relief programs, offered low interest-rate loans, and introduced programs to improve agricultural productivity. More importantly, as part of its wider policy of maintaining open borders with the Palestinian Territories (and, therefore, also erasing these borders), Israel permitted Palestinians in the Occupied Territories to work in Israel, where they could earn significantly higher wages. As a result, between 1968 and 1980 the Palestinian economy expanded rapidly, substantially raising standards of living for many Palestinian households (Gordon, 2008, 62–67).[9] Growth did eventually stall out in the early 1980s, causing economic distress and, according to some analysts, leading to the outbreak of the first intifadah in 1987 (Schiff and Yaari, 1991, 87–95). Yet, while hard economic times may have helped cause the intifadah, the Palestinian economy was strong as resistance to Israeli rule first intensified in the late 1970s. Thus, while economic grievances may also drive ethno-national protest, there was not an objective economic basis for such grievances until after protest was well underway.

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[8] More recently, influential work by Elisabeth Wood (2003) and Wendy Pearlman (2011) has also stressed the importance of subjective, psychological, and emotional factors arising from broader political, economic, or social conditions.

Nationalist grievances, in contrast, were much more important. Consistent with grievance theories, public opinion surveys show rising levels of nationalism and support for the PLO in the Palestinian Territories as early as 1973. For example, a survey conducted by Israel's *Ma'ariv* newspaper in the wake of the 1973 War found what it called an "extensive and alarming" shift in public support for the PLO and its goal of establishing an independent national Palestinian state (Gordon, 2008, 102). Three years later, in 1976, pro-PLO candidates swept to victory in local municipal elections held in the West Bank. By the early 1980s, polls showed nearly universal support for a Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO. For example, in a 1982 *Time* magazine poll, 98 percent of Palestinians surveyed favored a Palestinian state, and 86 percent believed that state should be governed by the PLO (Tessler, 1994, 567).

Public opinion surveys, local elections, and other barometers of public opinion thus showed strong support for the PLO-led nationalist movement preceding the rise in unarmed resistance in the late 1970s. Without this strong nationalist sentiment, many Palestinians would surely have been unwilling to incur the high risks and costs of participating in resistance against Israeli rule. Yet, as in other uprisings, this high level of support did not translate into universal participation. Despite wide participation in the first intifadah as compared to other uprisings, the majority of Palestinians did *not* participate in protest even at the revolt's height.[10] Thus, while national grievances may well be a necessary condition for participation, they are not, in and of themselves, sufficient to

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[9] Between 1968 and 1972, the gross national product (GNP) of the Palestinian Territories increased annually by a whopping 18 percent; between 1973 and 1980, economic growth continued at a slower but still impressive annual rate of over 7 percent (Gordon, 2008, 66).

[10] As mentioned earlier, 35 percent of Palestinians are estimated to have participated in protests at the peak of the first intifadah. Participation rate calculated using the NAVCO 1.1 dataset (Chenoweth, 2011).