Introduction

During the wave of Arab uprisings in 2010 and 2011, nine regimes were confronted by major demonstrations and contentious events. Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen were the four whose long-standing dictators fell, precipitating a regime breakdown of some sort. Syria's Bashar al-Asad held on to power, moving the country into civil war, while the regimes in Algeria, Morocco, Bahrain, and Jordan proved to be more resilient when faced with mass demonstrations. Five years later, we can trace some similarities and differences between these countries. Tunisia is moving toward an uncertain democratization; Egypt returned to authoritarianism; and Libya and Yemen have descended into civil war. The regimes in Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, and Bahrain have remained resistant to political change.

What took place during these five years has required new analytical approaches to understand the dynamics of youth contention in authoritarian regimes. While social movement theories acknowledge the importance of youth movements in advancing political change from below, they do not develop substantive tools for analyzing youth contention under authoritarianism. On the other hand, with the post-democratization approach, mainly authoritarian resilience theories add insight into the reasons beyond authoritarian persistence through focusing on politics from above, while neglecting contentious politics from below.

What are the mechanisms and processes of youth mobilization in authoritarian regimes? Why do these mechanisms and processes sometimes result in authoritarian breakdown and at other times in authoritarian resilience? Taking Egypt as a case study, and combining research tools from social movement theories and authoritarian resilience theories, this book demonstrates how the (internal) youth movements initiated contestation and how the regime reacted in a display of authoritarian resilience. The relationship is thus interdependent, with authoritarian institutions influencing the way in which social

movements shape their mobilizational and networking strategies, and the repertoires of the social movements influencing the authoritarian strategies of the regime and causing it to hone authoritarian tools.[1]

The context of mobilization, for instance, is influenced by authoritarian strategies of legitimation and cooptation, which present obstacles to the development of social movements. At the same time, the use of force is a threat to the movements' development within a polity. The networking process is also influenced by authoritarian strategies, because cooptation of the opposition constrains the establishment of new networks, and coercion hinders the functioning of formal networks and redirects activities into informal networking instead. Conversely, the political repertoires of movements influence the authoritarian regime, causing it to adapt, upgrade, or sometimes downgrade its authoritarian measures. When faced with large mass protestations in 2010–2011, Arab regimes resorted to a series of authoritarian measures, some relying heavily on the use of violence, others on cooptation and legitimation, and others utilizing all three strategies intermittently.[2]

The mobilization of various movements, especially youth movements, was essential in bringing about street contention against the regimes, while on the other hand, the regimes' reaction to these contentious events was a key determinant of the outcome: breakdown of authority, civil war, autocratization, a hybrid regime, or resilience.

The Arab World in Transition

When the uprisings began, optimism about democratization was widespread in all the Arab countries experiencing contention. Since then, however, political developments have led instead to an "Arab world in a transition to *somewhere*."[3] Taking into account the interaction between a regime and the youth movements, the primary objective of this book is to understand (1) the dynamics of youth

[1] Charles Tilly brought up this idea in *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). It was later elaborated on by Xi Chen, *Social Protest and Contentious Authoritarianism in China* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[2] See, e.g., Johannes Gerschewski, "The Three Pillars of Stability: Legitimation, Repression, and Cooptation in Autocratic Regimes," *Democratization* vol. 20, no. 1 (2013), pp. 13–38.

[3] Morthen Valbjorn, "Upgrading Post-democratization Studies: Examining a Re-politicized Arab World in a Transition to Somewhere," *Middle East Critique* vol. 21, no. 1 (2012), pp. 25–35.

mobilization within the confines of authoritarianism and (2) why the regime's responses precipitated political change and/or continuity after the Arab uprisings.

In assessing the dynamics of regime change and resilience in Egypt, it is clear that the toppling of President Hosni Mubarak did not precipitate democratization. Nevertheless, political dynamics from below have become increasingly important. In criticizing Middle East studies scholars for their overemphasis on politics from above, and on the dynamics of authoritarian resilience prior to the Arab uprisings, Marc Howard and Meir Walter have proposed "taking popular mobilization seriously"[4] even if it does not lead to democratization. Scholars like Joel Beinin and Frederic Vairel were among the first to analyze popular contestation from below and to argue that social transformations on the ground can affect the structural processes of a regime.[5] Lina Khatib and Ellen Lust, in addition to Amr el Shobaky, have also examined the role of Arab activism and social movements in various Arab countries from the perspective of politics from below.[6]

Nevertheless, these analyses do not address how activists and social movements are influenced by their authoritarian regimes and how these regimes respond differently to activism in an attempt to hold on to power. The present book adds to the analysis of politics from below. I argue that youth activism in authoritarian regimes cannot be understood through theories of contentious politics alone but rather by combining theories of contentious politics with theories of authoritarian resilience. This highlights the relational process between activists and the authoritarian regimes in which they live. On the one hand, activists' political attitudes, mobilization, and networking strategies are all influenced by the surrounding authoritarian structure. On the other hand, the regime adapts and changes its strategies when faced with the threats posed by activists' repertoires of contention.

[4] Marc M. Howard and Meir Walters, "Explaining the Unexpected: Political Science and the Surprises of 1989 and 2011," *Perspectives on Politics* vol. 12, no. 2 (2014), pp. 394–408, p. 340.

[5] Joel Beinin and Vairel Frederic (eds.), *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

[6] Lina Khatib and Ellen Lust, eds., *Taking to the Streets: The Transformation of Arab Activism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014); Amr Shobaky, ed. *Al-'harakat al-ihtijajiyya fy al-watan al-'araby: Misr, al-Maghrib al-Bahrain* [Protest movements in the Arab World: Egypt, Morocco and Bahrain] (Beirut: CAUS, 2010).

Why Youth Movements?

Karl Mannheim took a social rather than a biological perspective on different generations. He argued that members of any generation are not a homogenous group; they belong to different social classes and have different ideologies and gender backgrounds. However, he asserted that members of a particular generation are like members of a single social class and, through common interests, are able to form group solidarity and develop their own collective power.[7] Mannheim and Parsons identified the critical difference between youth's common way of life and shared ideas, culture, and life chances vis-à-vis the adult society. This becomes a possible basis for exploring generational conflict and tensions. With the increasing pace of globalization, youth today are more conscious of their identity as youth than previous generations.[8] Bayat argues that young people living in modern cities turn into "youth" through experiencing and establishing their own consciousness about being young. He adds,

> When young persons develop an awareness about themselves as youth and begin to defend or extend their youthfulness in a collective fashion, a youth movement can be said to have developed . . . The power of Muslim youth movements in the Middle East lies precisely in the ability of their atomized agents to challenge the political and moral authorities by the persistence of their merely alternative presence.[9]

Youth movements arise when the state prevents young people from living out their own youthfulness.[10] Young people in the Arab world developed an awareness of their common social and political grievances and formed a youth consciousness through the help of

[7] Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," in Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: RKP, 1952). This part is based on Linda Herrera (ed.), *Wired Citizenship: Youth Learning and Activism in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2014).

[8] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991); Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations"; Talcott Parsons, "Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States," *American Sociological Review* vol. 7 (1942), pp. 605–616. For more elaboration, see Mark Cieslik and Donald Simpson, *Key Concepts in Youth Studies* (London: Sage, 2013).

[9] Asef Bayat, "Muslim Youth and the Claim of Youthfulness," in Linda Herrera and Asef Bayat (eds.), *Being Young and Muslim: New Cultural Politics in the Global South and North* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 27–48, 31–32.

[10] Ibid., p. 32.

mobile and digital communication tools. For instance, according to Linda Herrera, the labels "Facebook and Twitter Revolutions" were created in the Western media in reference to Egypt in 2008, after two young people used Facebook as a mobilizational tool for solidarity demonstrations with textile workers in the industrial city of al-Mahala al-Kubra,[11] which later developed into the April 6 movement. Egyptian youth developed a specific youth identity through their interaction in various activities in cyberspace, such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. These cyberforums facilitated new political learning processes for youth activists.

Activists interacting in cyberspace developed an identity of solidarity among themselves, irrespective of their political and ideological backgrounds. This identity was constructed in cyberspace, through the ability of the youth to interact and develop their political ideals in social networking sites and on blogs that operated far beyond the security constraints of the state and adult political life. Youth activists have developed a space for contention against the regime and against older generations in cyberspace as well as developing their own identities, their contention, and their mobilization strategies against the regime. For them, this was an important forum differentiating this youth generation from older generations.[12]

Youth in the Arab Uprisings

From Iran in 2009 to the Arab uprisings in 2010, the youthfulness of the protests was noticeable.[13] However, recent Arab Barometer[14]

[11] Linda Herrera, "Youth and Citizenship in the Digital Age: A View from Egypt," *Harvard Educational Review* vol. 82, no. 3 (2012), pp. 333–352.

[12] Amr Abdel Rahman, "al-internet w'al thawra al-misriyya, al-dimuqratiyya wa re'hlat al-ba'ht 'an makan fy hatha al-'alam" [The Internet and the Egyptian Revolution: Democracy and the journey towards finding a place in this world], in Mohamed el Agaty (ed.), *al-anmaat ghayr al-taqlidiyya l'al-musharaqa al-siyassiya l'al-shabab fy misr: qabl wa 'athnaa wa ba'd al-thawra* [Unconventional means of youth political participation in Egypt: Before, during and after the Revolution] (Cairo: Rawafead Publishers, 2012), pp. 145–171.

[13] Paola Rivetti and Francesco Cavatorta, "Iranian Student Activism between Authoritarianism and Democratization: Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation between the Office for the Strengthening of Unity and the Regime," *Democratization* vol. 21, no. 2 (2014), pp. 289–310.

[14] The Arab Barometer was developed in 2005 by scholars in the Arab world and the USA with the aim of producing reliable data on the political attitudes of ordinary citizens.

findings, for the years 2012–2014, undermine the role of youth in the Egyptian uprising, as Beissinger, Jamal, and Mazur point out. They found that in Tunisia, 60 percent of the demonstrators were younger than the average population age. But in Egypt, youth under the age of thirty-five amounted to only 44 percent of demonstrators, and the thirty-five- to forty-four-year-olds had the highest rates of participation.[15] However, "youth" is a relational concept that mobilizes individuals (young and not so young) to act and behave in various ways. Thus, a study on youth provides us with an understanding of the wider society in which they live and not only of the youth cohorts.[16] In addition, empirical observations established the significance of young people's ability to mobilize and express their grievances in a way that influenced other age groups to join them in contesting authoritarian power.

Many scholars, like M. Kent Jennings, believe that activism is highest among youth. Youth are believed to hold more radical beliefs and to be more likely to engage in movements that challenge the status quo.[17] Activists normally mobilize against social, economic, and political grievances either by joining a movement or a group or by nonconventional means, such as cyberactivism or video activism, like the Syrian activists in 2011 who posted videos on YouTube to draw attention to their cause.[18]

Empirical Evidence

To understand the dynamics of contention in authoritarian regimes and the outcome for the regime, this book draws on empirical evidence gathered during the two years between the ousting of Mubarak in 2011

[15] Mark Beissinger, Amaney Jamal, and Kevin Mazur, "Who Participates in Democratic Revolutions? A Comparison of the Egyptian and Tunisian Revolutions," paper presented to the American Political Science Association Meetings, August 29–September 2, 2012, New Orleans. Online at: www.aihr-resourcescenter.org/administrator/&/SSRN-id2108773.pdf Retrieved September 9, 2014.

[16] Mayssoun Sukarieh and Stuart Tannock, *Youth Rising? The Politics of Youth in the Global Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[17] See, e.g., M. Kent Jennings, "Residues of a Movement: The Aging of the American Protest Generation," *American Political Science Review* vol. 81 (1987), pp. 365–382.

[18] Lina Khatib and Ellen Lust (eds.), *Taking to the Streets: The Transformation of Arab Activism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

and the ousting of Mohamed Mursi in 2013. During this period, and within the framework of a larger research project titled "Arab Youth: From Engagement to Inclusion?,"[19] the research for this book was conducted. It focuses only on the fieldwork in Egypt, in which quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. Survey data were gathered from seven hundred students at four universities during November and December 2012.[20] Because random sampling of the whole Egyptian population was beyond the project's budgetary scope, a purposive, nonprobabilistic sampling method was used.[21]

This was guided by two basic assumptions about the Arab uprisings: first, that the people who protested during the height of the uprisings were the educated middle class. This was supported by recent Arab Barometer findings showing that protestors in Egypt and Tunisia were significantly better educated than nonprotestors.[22] The second assumption was that youth aged eighteen to thirty-five were the main age cohorts to protest during the uprisings. The Arab Barometer shows that this was the case in Tunisia, but not in Egypt. Yet, as argued above, the importance of studying youth lies in the fact that such an analysis provides us with a deeper understanding of society as a whole. In addition, the importance of youth participation lies as much in their capacity to mobilize other citizens to demonstrate as in protesting themselves. With these two assumptions in mind, the research team decided to focus on "young" educated Egyptians, and universities were an obvious location. The quantitative data had a twofold strategy: first, the

[19] The data were provided to the researchers through the "Arab Youth: From Engagement to Inclusion?" research project, which was funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and coordinated by Oliver Schlumberger, from Tuebingen University. Saloua Zerhouni, Mohamed V University, led the Moroccan team of researchers for the qualitative and quantitative analysis of Moroccan youth, while I led the Egyptian research data-gathering team in Egypt.

[20] The return number for the questionnaires was 656, and the research was conducted at Cairo University, Ain Shams University, Menoufeya University, and Helwan University. Respondents are all from public universities in Egypt, and their age varied from eighteen to twenty-five years old. Chapter 3 explains the sampling and survey methods in more detail.

[21] Chapter 3 discusses the pros and cons of the nonprobabilistic sampling methods in detail.

[22] See, for instance, Marc Beissinger, Amaney Jamal, and Kevin Mazur, "The Anatomy of Protest in Egypt and Tunisia," *Foreign Policy: Middle East Channel* (April 15, 2013) online at: http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/04/15/the-anatomy-of-protest-in-egypt-and-tunisia/.

findings highlight which youth are more likely to protest against the regime, providing a microcosm of the characteristics of young, educated, middle-class activists. Second, the data reflect an ambiguous relationship between the authoritarian regime and the activists, in which the regime influences the political attitudes of the young activists seeking political change.

To complement the quantitative data, the research team in Egypt conducted fifty-two semistructured interviews with youth activists from various political backgrounds between November 2012 and June 2013.[23] The qualitative analysis of these showed why youth activists engage in social movements, network among themselves, and disseminate their ideas to the wider society. Other factors were how they influenced the Mubarak and Mursi regimes and how they perceived their influence at the end of this period. Was their networking primarily formal or informal, or an amalgam of both, and to what extent did youth activists function as brokers of different networks?

Outline of the Book

The book is composed of six chapters, an Introduction, and a Conclusion. Chapter 1 provides a theoretical background and an analytical framework for the study. Chapter 2 analyzes youth mobilization through the contexts of mobilization within the authoritarian regimes of President Mubarak, the interim rule by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and the rule of President Muhammed Mursi. The institutional impediments to regime change in the Arab world in general, and in Egypt in particular, and how these institutional barriers represented an opportunity, a constraint, and a threat to the nascent youth movement are examined. The focus is mainly on the regime structure and its influence on the rise of youth movements.

Chapter 3 examines the repertoires of contention of youth movements that they developed through their earlier "learned cultural creations"[24] in the first decade of the 2000s. It also looks at the agency

[23] The original research includes ninety semistructured, in-depth interviews with different youth, not all of whom were youth activists. For the purpose of this book, only interviews with the fifty-two activists have been included. I interviewed two other activists in February 2015, to provide some missing information for this study.

[24] Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain: 1758–1834* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 42.

of youth movements and their influence on the regime's authoritarian upgrading and downgrading strategies.

Chapter 4 analyzes the survey data from the universities, which demonstrate the relationship between an authoritarian regime and youth activists. The results may be self-evident – that youth think and act politically. However, the data highlight an ambiguous relationship between activists' political participation and the influence of the authoritarian regime on their political attitudes, especially concerning equality, freedom, and tolerance.

Chapter 5 is based on a qualitative analysis of the fifty-two semi-structured interviews conducted with youth activists between eighteen and thirty years of age.[25] First, the mobilization networks, and how these operated in the Egyptian public sphere in the early 2000s, are discussed. Second, I discuss how these networks mobilized for public protest within the constraints of an authoritarian regime and the regime's extensive measures to control them.

Chapter 6 examines contentious politics in four other Arab countries that underwent major demonstrations but whose regimes have endured – Bahrain, Algeria, Jordan, and Morocco. It shows that the main political opportunity for their youth movements developed from the diffusion of protests from one country to another in the region. Their repertoires of contention were largely influenced by those utilized in Tunisia and Egypt, whose protest movements were inspirational to other youth movements in the region. The movements' weakness and fragmentation, in addition to the regimes' reliance on authoritarian upgrading measures, especially legitimation and cooptation, were the main reason for the regimes' resilience.

Although the outcomes of the Arab uprisings were different from what many hoped or anticipated, this book goes some way toward explaining the complex political and social processes that influence and constrain youth movements in the Arab world.

[25] The research team that conducted the semistructured interviews consisted of myself and four research assistants from the American University in Cairo and Cairo University: Nadeen Hafez, Alaa al-Mahrakawy, Ahmed Mohamed, and Somaia Metwalli.