All clouds are clocks-
even the most cloudy
of clouds.

-Karl Popper

# CLOCKS AND CLOUDS

# CLOCKS
### AND
# CLOUDS

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# INTRODUCTION

There is much to dispute in today's political landscape, from the most common tropes in American politics to a seemingly novel and extraordinary disconnect between fact and opinion. At an international level, the plot thickens and uncertainty roils at what may seem like perilous instability to some and a long-overdue change to others. However, at a time in which we can debate with each other ad nauseum, what is not uncertain is that we live in interesting times. In this issue of *Clocks and Clouds*, we are proud to present the reader with five articles authored by five American University students grappling with some of the toughest contemporary issues in national and global affairs.

Taking the Arab Spring as her point of departure, Stephanie Maravankin seeks to analyze the key thematic elements of Arab feminist activism, arguing that the movement's use of collective action frames helped shape the way it played out in real life. Next, Flávia Bedicks' analysis of recent events in Brazil attempts to show how corruption scandals and the impeachment of former president Dilma Rousseff fomented adverse economic conditions for the rising power. Nikko Bilitza then guides us through a nuanced discussion of electoral systems, showing how the impact of party fragmentation on voter turnout and satisfaction differs between majoritarian and proportional representative systems. Interestingly, Bilitza finds that increasing party system fragmentation increases voter turnout in proportional elections while decreasing voter turnout in majoritarian elections. Following Bilitza, Maria Islam conducts three multivariate linear regressions on survey data responses in order to understand the effects of race and religion on respondents' levels of patriotism. Finally, Frank Mariscal argues that the dominant discourse of suicide terrorism as a function of "Islamic fundamentalism" contributes to a racialized and oppressive portrayal of Muslims and Muslim Americans—surely all deeply relevant and insightful topics.

While we have good reason to comment on the current state of politics, as social scientists, we ought to take this as an opportunity to reexamine our own assumptions, ideals, and thoughts about the nature of politics and international relations. We certainly live in interesting times, but we must also make a concerted effort to understand why. It has been one of the greatest joys of our times as Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor to serve the American University community. With pride, we invite the reader to share in this endeavor and hope to engage in a spirited and fruitful academic dialogue.

Bill Kakenmaster, SIS/CAS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Paul Jeffries, SIS/CAS
MANAGING EDITOR

# CLOCKS AND CLOUDS FALL 2016 STAFF

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# ARAB FEMINISM IN THE ARAB SPRING: DISCOURSES ON SOLIDARITY, THE SOCIO-CULTURAL REVOLUTION, AND THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION IN EGYPT, TUNISIA, AND YEMEN

*Stephanie Maravankin*

## Abstract

Over the last couple of decades, women-spearheaded social movements have mobilized to leave a lasting impression on civil societies across the globe. The Arab Spring challenged old ideas of oppressive regimes and signaled possibilities for change, originating in Tunisia and spreading to Arab countries throughout the Middle East. This paper explores the existing literature on political opportunity structure, resource mobilization theory, and framing theory as a means to understand the question: How did collective action frames during the Arab Spring shape the discourses on Arab feminism? My research relies on the arguments put forth by the theoretical frameworks to shape the analysis of Arab feminism in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen during the Arab Spring. The analysis breaks down into three different themes: solidarity, the socio-cultural revolution, and the political revolution. These discourses uniquely feed into my methodology by providing the contextual foundation for what drives the revolution, referred to as the Arab Spring. After analyzing the statements made by Arab activists and organizers between December 2010 and December 2013 in media sources, my findings shed light on the scholarly literature I reviewed; each discourse is a representation of a theory in practice. Moreover, I find that collective action frames during the Arab Spring shaped the discourses on Arab feminism in three ways: (1) furthered the movement of Arab feminism; (2) redefined what the Arab world meant for Arab feminists; (3) challenged singular-identity definitions of Arab feminists.

STEPHANIE MARAVANKIN is a student of International Relations. She graduates in December of 2017.
School of International Service (SIS), American University
Email: stephanie.maravankin@student.american.edu

## Introduction

Social movements have been a means for change across the globe for centuries. Women's social movements in particular have been a leading force in shaping social movement outcomes given their strong collective action advocacy strategies; one example is the increase in the presence of women in political spheres. Social movements are "organized set(s) of constituents pursuing a common political agenda of change through collective action" (Batliwala 2012, 3). More specifically, women's movements do three things: bring women into political activities, empower women to challenge the roles they serve, and create networks among women that heighten women's ability to recognize that gender relations are in dire need of change (Ferree and McClurg Mueller 2004, 577). The Arab Spring provides a context within which scholars can examine the "authenticity of local knowledge" that stemmed as a result of political and social activism on behalf of Arab women (Newsom and Lengel 2012). Originating in Tunisia and spreading to Arab countries throughout the Middle East, the Arab Spring challenged old ideas of oppressive regimes and signaled possibilities for change. This paper explores the theories of political opportunity structure, resource mobilization theory, and framing theory as a means to understand the question: How did collective action frames during the Arab Spring shape the discourses on Arab feminism?

Focusing on the discourses of solidarity, socio-cultural revolution, and political revolution, I analyze the official and media sources from Arab feminists and United States Congressional members on the involvement and role of women in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen during the Arab Spring. The three discourses discussed in this paper reflect how Arab feminists portrayed themselves and changed the manifestation of Arab feminism from December 2010- December 2013. In this interpretive discourse analysis, I find how the collective action frames examined furthered the movement of Arab feminism, redefined what the Arab world meant for Arab feminists, and challenged the singular-identity definitions of Arab feminists. The paper examines existing scholarly literature to lay the foundation for the research process and assesses the methodological considerations and historical context. Importantly, the following analysis of Arab feminism in the Arab Spring illuminates several core themes—inclusivity, mobilization, equality, symbolism, and transformation—that shaped the conception of the empty signifier: Arab Spring. Lastly, the paper identifies the key implications of the research and the main findings with suggestions for future research.

**Literature Review**

There are three particular schools of thought that dominate the existing literature: political opportunity structure, resource mobilization theory, and framing theory. The interdependence of these three perspectives reflects the many components that guide social movements; however, the evolving literature of political opportunity structure and framing in a modern historical context better pertains to this research. These schools of thought will help unveil what techniques appear to have broader implications, while keeping in mind that movements differ based on context.

*Political Opportunity Structure*

Political opportunity structure promises a means to "predict variance in the periodicity, style, and content of activist claims over time and variance across institutional contexts" (Meyer 2004, 1458). The framework that this structure provides is focused on the principle that context influences the choice of protest strategies and the effect of social movements on their environment (Kitschelt 1986, 58). There arethree foundational pillars that ground this concept. First is "the degree of openness or closure of formal political access," which addresses the political climate in which the social movement is occurring (Eisinger 1973, 27). Second is "the degree of stability or instability of political alignments," which refers to the societal institutions in place (Fox Pivenand Cloward 1979, 28). Lastly is the "availability and strategic posture of potential alliance partners," that is in regards to the collective action component of the social movement taking form (Tarrow 1988, 429). It is observed in all three of these structures that context is at the forefront of activists' efforts. The political opportunity structure has been shown to resonate in women's movements. In addition to aiding in the creation of different movements within a political structure, the discourse has been used to illustrate social movement theory throughout different cultures (Katzenstein 1987, 3-17).

There is a direct relationship between political grievances and protest (Wolfsfeld, Segev, and Sheafer 2013). This sheds light on what inspired Arab women to "create online spaces for political engagement and agency" (Newsom and Lengel). Arab activists and organizers found in the Middle East engage in social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, as well as other discussion forums (Ibid). Bayat examines "concepts of solidarity-building in such closed political settings as the contemporary Muslim Middle East" (Bayat 2005). Discourses in the context of Bayat's research focus on the unity found

within Islamic ideologies understood as the construction of political and social movements through a solidarity collective action frame (Ibid). In my own research, I analyze how the Arab Spring solidarity discourses served as a manifestation of Arab feminism and how Arab feminists practiced solidarity during the Arab Spring in protest spaces.

With the rise of other schools of thought, there is a "shift in the research focus from why movements emerge, to how" (Meyer 2004, 127). Political opportunity structure establishes that political opportunities heavily influence the success or failure of a social movement. Scholars explain how the political opportunities of the Arab Spring ignited a series of women's social movements. The research presented here furthers the examination of the political opportunities that Arab feminist created for themselves during the Arab Spring, as a result of the political turmoil taking place in places like Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen. Such a discussion helps to better explain some of the many collective action frames that were used to shape Arab feminism, like the discourse of solidarity that is focused on advocating for equality.

*Resource Mobilization Theory*

The resource mobilization theory has led scholars to focus their attention on how collective actors function and how they obtain resources and mobilize support, while keeping in mind those within and outside of their supporters' group (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 15). The resource mobilization theory is based on three premises. First, there are a wide array of resources that need to be mobilized; second, the social movement must have links to other groups; and third, the social movement's success will depend on external support (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1213). Moreover, the infrastructure that social movements rely on is similar to the infrastructure utilized by industries in a particular society (Ibid, 1217). These aspects include but are not limited to, "communication media and expense, levels of affluence, degree of access to institutional centers, pre-existing networks, and occupational structure and growth" (Ibid). The emphasis placed on agency and collective action is best explained by the use of multi-faceted resources, put in motion by activists. This paper looks at two different modern resources that women's social movements employ: cultural and technological.

Cultural resources are distinctive; they are perceived as "artifacts" and "conceptual tools of specialized knowledge" (Edwards and McCarthy 2004, 126). Depending on the society in which a social movement is rising, cultural resources will be relative and not typically universalized (Ibid). Concrete resources ranging from magazines and newspapers, to films and videos, to music and literature are

referred to as forms of cultural resources, also known as "tactical repertoire" which in many ways "facilitate recruitment and socialization of new adherents" (Ibid). The ability of activists to reach and mobilize groups through cultural resources highlights the importance of the social movements' targeted audience being pinpointed. Activists must define in a cultural context what the best way to approach a group is in order to be remembered and inspire further forms of support.

Technological resources are the second area of focus in this analysis of the resource mobilization theory. This category of resources depicts the social-organizational aspect of mobility. Different from cultural resources, technological resources are a contemporary form of organization (Eltantawy and Wiest 2011, 1207). Social movements have made tremendous strides through social media in recent years. In the many forms of its existence, social media provides opportunities for "political expression, symbolic identification for collective actors, and information exchange" (Ibid, 1208). For example, social network outlets and Arab satellite channels greatly influenced the political revolutions of countries like Tunisia and Egypt (Harb 2011). Thus, while cultural resources enable the social movement to grasp the attention of adherents, technological resources put adherents into conversation with one another.

The facilitation of these mobility conversations can be observed. Research done about feminist networks of collective action explains The Action Committee of Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML), established as a response to the many laws put in place in the Middle East that violated women's human rights. WLUML has led to an "international network of information, solidarity, and support" (Moghadam 2000, 72). WLUML was found to be a catalyst in the initiation of the mobilization of women's movements throughout the Middle East for getting into contact, adopting principles of defense and protest, and fighting for their human rights. Access to this knowledge reflects how people can be inspired through cultural resources and engage in dialogue through technological resources. The following research draws on the socio-cultural revolution discourse that was employed by Arab feminists through cultural resources that empowered women to unite and challenge traditions of Islam. I examine the socio-cultural revolution discourses of Arab feminists found in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen in order to understand how Arab women came together to challenge the role of a woman, as seen by traditional Islam. Furthermore, through the distinct mobilization techniques employed during the Arab Spring by Arab feminists, I study the manifestations of the social mobility discourse founded in the theory of resource mobilization.

*Framing Theory*

Framing theory brings together agency and context. Collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings which are intended to inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of social movements (Benford and Snow 2000, 611-639). Equally, it is important to understand that frames are not simply the result of individual opinions; rather they are more so the outcome of "negotiating shared meaning" (Ibid). The discursive processes, resulting from a degree of dissatisfaction with the political opportunity structure, are action-oriented and interactive. Framing as a theoretical framework supports the third collective action frame I analyze later in this paper, political revolution.

The framing theory outlines three types of frames – diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational. Diagnostic frames refer to those that focus on the sources of blame and responsibility (Ibid). Diagnostic frames are constructed around the causes of whatever social issue a movement is addressing. An example of a diagnostic frame is a women's social movement fighting against the gender equality laws of a patriarchal structure of society which defines a woman's role as inferior to that of a man. Prognostic frames refer to the expression of potential solutions to the problem that a social movement is advocating for (Ibid). Prognostic frames are best illustrated by the women's social movements that oppose similar public policy issues, but confront the fight from opposing perspectives. Finally, motivational frames are a "call to arms." Motivational frames provide rationale to current and potential social movement adherents for engaging in collective action. Through the construction of vocabularies that are advocacy oriented, motivational frames are what sustain participation in social movements.

But it is not the type of frame alone that shapes a social movement; the degree of resonance that the frame provides is a critical feature. A collective action frame is referred to by scholars as a "protest paradigm" (Harlow and Johnson 2011). A protest paradigm serves as a means of categorization and concept formation. The framing process allows a group of people to develop a certain conceptualization of an issue that then enables them to "reorient their thinking" about said issue (Ibid).

The resonance of frames is explained by two factors: empirics and commensurability (Ibid). More relevant to the discussion is that of experiential commensurability. Commensurability draws attention to the everyday experiences and lives of the targets of mobilization. Frames cannot be abstract and distant; there must be a clear fit between the framings and current events shaping the world. Scholars explain that narrative fidelity translates into cultural resonance (Ibid). Salient frames imply greater prospects of mobilization. The political revolution

discourse is the frame within which Arab feminists strive to obtain greater representation in politics by challenging the status quo in their surrounding environments. The following research examines women's social movements in the Arab Spring where women sought to gain access to the decision-making process and power in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen.

The nature of social institutions and gendered politics creates a status quo that is exclusionary and unequal for Arab women. These struggles have led Arab feminist to act out in revolutionary ways that were unheard of prior to the Arab Spring. The mobilization and collective action came in the form of protest, confrontation, and speaking out against injustices. Understanding the political opportunities that gave rise to the Arab Spring and the mobilization techniques employed by Arab feminists through the framing theory informs my research question by allowing me to reflect on how Arab feminists portrayed themselves and how the Arab Spring changed the manifestation of Arab feminism.

My research looks at the solidarity, the socio-cultural revolution, and the political revolution collective action frames employed by women's social movements as a means of advocacy. These frames help us to understand how Arab women utilized the discourses of the Arab Spring to further the platform of Arab feminism, beginning in late 2010 continuing through the end of 2013. The goal of this research is to have a better grasp of the ability of a women's social movement to resonate, both locally and globally. The following methods and analysis build upon the existing literature. Each discourse, also understood as a collective action frame, has an implication that further explains how Arab women influence the existing literature that explains social movements.

**Methodological Considerations and Historical Context**

I rely on the arguments put forth by the theoretical frameworks discussed above to shape my analysis of Arab feminism in the Arab Spring. My analysis breaks down into three different discourses: solidarity, the socio-cultural revolution, and the political revolution. These schools of thought uniquely feed into my methodology by providing the contextual foundation for what drives the revolution, referred to as the Arab Spring. By analyzing the articulation of my derived meanings, the discourses, the manifestations of the movements vision, the advocacy, and the practices that defined Arab feminists' participation in the Arab Spring, I am able to better understand my research question: How did collective action frames during the Arab Spring shape the discourses on Arab feminism?

I analyze the official government and media discourses from Arab feminists and United States Congressional members on the involvement and role of women in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen during the Arab Spring. Through primary source material found in international news sources, I have identified prominent Arab feminists in the countries I analyze (Marquand 2011; Gregory 2011; The Economist 2011). I selected the women based on the media coverage that they received throughout the Arab Spring and shortly thereafter. Understanding how these women represent a broader constituency within their respective country will aid in my analysis of the themes manifested in the discourses of the Arab Spring activists' and their influences on Arab feminism. Analyzing themes of inclusivity, mobilization, equality, symbolism and transformation will reveal power relationships among actors and ideas in the Arab Spring context.

This research focuses on the modern historical context of Arab feminism during the Arab Spring. I have applied the key concept of *contextuality* by homing in on the specific research context in which I study (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 45). I examine the discourses of Arab feminists in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen throughout the Arab Spring, from December 2010 through December 2013. The selection of the time period is significant because when a man in Tunisia burned himself alive in response to his mistreatment by the police in December 2010, the world saw a series of uprisings breakout throughout the region (Blight, Pulham, and Torpey 2012). I chose to only analyze discourses through December 2013 because by that moment in the Arab Spring there was substantial documentation of the events transpiring; I fully recognize that December 2013 does not mark the end of the Arab Spring. For the purposes of my research, 2013 was the peak of the movement and a useful stopping point for documentation purposes.

The selection of the three countries was guided by my conceptualization of the history of Arab feminism rooted in the politics of these states. Egypt is the Arab world's most populous country and during the revolution women took to the streets in protest of political change (Bagnall 2011). In Tunisia, women's rights were at the forefront of the founding father's agenda, Habib Bourguiba, and continue to be a top priority (The Economist 2011). In Yemen, the situation is unique given that the Arab women have had to "confront directly the discourse of patriarchy" (Fielding-Smith 2011). The role that prominent Yemini Arab activist, Tawakul Karman, played in inspiring the youth wing of the powerful Islamist opposition party Islah "echoed bravery across the Middle East" (Ibid). The context selected informs my research in two unique ways.

First, in order to understand how Arab women portrayed themselves during the Arab Spring, I found international news sources that quote women both in private and public spaces expressing their positions on the social and

political events in their respective homeland (The Economist 2011; Bagnall 2011; Fielding-Smith 2011; Gregory 2011; Marquand 2011). Second, with regard to how the Arab Spring changed the manifestation of Arab feminism, I study the Joint Hearing record of Women and the Arab Spring as well as a documentary of interviews regarding the history of Arab feminism (*Women and the Arab Spring* 2011; Mahmoud 2014). A note should be made about the interviews extracted from the documentary; these interviews cannot be treated as unbiased documents of discourse, but rather as snippets of what a director felt was strategic to include. Of the international news sources that I found, there are a myriad of articles that reference the women and discourses I study. In order to gain *exposure*, I work through international news sources, which gather data straight from the Middle East, in order to help me understand overlapping contexts, both in the realm of the socio-cultural and political revolutions, as well as the solidarity of Arab feminists within the protest spaces (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 85). My data selection analyzes for *intertextuality* among the collective action frames employed by Arab feminists across the region given the recurring themes and contexts that appear in the primary and secondary sources—culture, politics, equality (Ibid, 86). In selecting sources with overlapping contexts, I focused on the key terms used to search for the newspaper articles and grouped my research by the category each discourse fell into. I pinpointed data sources that fit into the frames I was interested in analyzing to ensure that the discourses mapped my identified representations appropriately.

Perhaps most importantly, I consider my role in the research process. As a Western-educated woman with no experience living in an Arab country or an understanding of the Arabic language, I acknowledge the *cultural competence* which leaves some distance between myself and the actors associated with my research. I am biased by my knowledge about the Arab Spring going into the research process. Nonetheless, knowing this, my methodological basis for *reflexivity* and passions for understanding the experiences that women underwent has provided me with many opportunities to take risks and work tirelessly to understand something quite foreign (Ibid, 101). My newly constructed knowledge about this subject allows me to evaluate the trustworthiness of my work. The concrete steps I took in order to ensure trustworthiness are three-fold. I ensured that I sufficiently mapped for exposure and intertextuality, that I had a continual development of thinking when generating new understandings, and that there were revisions throughout the entire research process (Ibid). This grounded my research and allowed me to carry out a thorough analysis on three discourses of Arab

feminism in the Arab Spring.

**Arab Feminism Discourses in the Arab Spring**

My analysis section is organized by theme: solidarity, socio-cultural revolution, and political opportunity. By unpacking three discourses of Arab feminism during the Arab Spring, I discuss how each collective action frame shaped the self-portrayal of Arab women. I chose to organize my analysis in this fashion given that the key actors in each of my areas of analysis are women. The variations in self-portrayal and manifestation explains the three discourses I will examine: solidarity, the socio-cultural revolution and the political revolution. The solidarity discourse focuses on the significance of protest spaces and women speaking out individually as part of a larger movement advocating for equality (Bagnall 2011). The socio-cultural revolution discourse focuses on the traditional Islamic customs and roles of women prior to the Arab Spring versus those observed as more modern throughout the Arab Spring (Fielding-Smith 2011). The political revolution discourse focuses on the demands made by women for greater representation in politics and a reformation of the electoral process (Rice 2011). In this discourse analysis, I aim to better understand my research question: How did collective action frames during the Arab Spring shape the discourses on Arab feminism?

**Figure 1: Adapted from (Aradau 2004).**
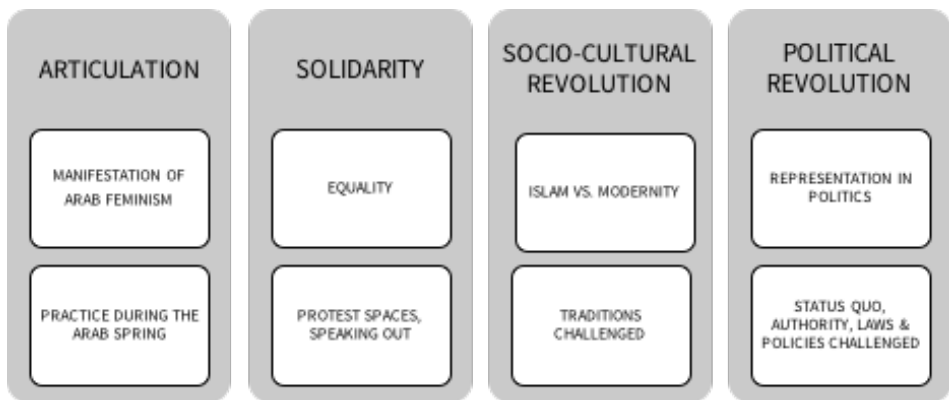


*Solidarity*

I claim that the solidarity collective action frame became dominant because of the Arab feminist push for equality among all women involved in the

fight for freedom during the Arab Spring. Founded on the theoretical premise of the political opportunity structure and the framing theory, the solidarity frame inspires and legitimizes the activities and campaigns of Arab women. The agency that sustained participation throughout the Arab Spring is based on solidarity. Encompassing "the youth of the Arab Spring, women and the Arab Spring, and the women of the Arab revolutions," a prominent Yemeni feminist, Tawakul Karman, describes the solidarity among the women of the Arab Spring as a means of "staking their claim to the public sphere in societies which have often sought to keep them out of it" (Fielding-Smith 2011). This led many Arab feminists to build inclusive alliances with one another because of their collective desire for equality. Despite the challenges that faced Arab women, "when the revolution came, no one asked about anyone's background, religious affiliation, political affiliation, regional affiliation, and ethnicity" (Ibid). During this time, it is most interesting to observe how women describe the transitions that took place regarding the solidarity that bonded the women because it did not always look as promising as it did well into the movement. What started as an "age of innocence" for Arab feminists in the Arab Spring, later shifted to an "age of wisdom" as women gained more and more momentum in the public sphere (Bagnall 2011).

As these transitions happened, equal rights, for both men and women, was center stage. Arab activists and organizers no longer accepted having their rights violated by the regimes in power in their respective countries. Slowly as Arab feminist stopped fearing their governments, they more confidently took to the streets as a means of achieving their dream—freedom (Bagnall 2011). On International Women's Day in 2011 women took to the streets in Tahrir Square, Egypt "calling for democratic reforms and making sure that equality is part of the new Egypt" (Ibid). Across the region whether it be Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen or any other Arab state, one thing was fundamentally clear: women do not want to be like men, instead women want "choice and equal protection under the law" (Rice 2011). The solidarity discourse's manifestation of Arab feminism in the form of equality allows me to understand that women are calling for the rights of everyone because their demands are similar to those of men (Ibid). This is based on principles of basic human rights: freedom, equal citizenship, and a greater role in society (Ibid). Even the men involved in the revolution of the Arab Spring allowed "women [to] be what they want" and participate in the practices of the Arab Spring because they too believe in the plight of the Arab feminists (Ibid).  Hand in hand these women proved to be unstoppable, transcending borders, inspiring women to engage in movements of solidarity across the Middle East.

*Socio-Cultural Revolution*

I claim that the socio-cultural revolution collective action frame became dominant because of the shift in the role of traditional Islamic values in Arab society. Arab feminism, during the Arab Spring, challenged socio-cultural norms rooted in Islamic foundations. Founded in the theoretical premise of the resource mobilization theory, this claim is based on the strategies employed by Arab women throughout the Arab Spring—from marching beside men, something known to be "un-Islamic," to staging sit-ins, hunger strikes and even dying (Rice et al. 2011). The problems that face Arab feminist are not with their religion, but rather with the "undemocratic and patriarchal culture" (Ghafour 2012). Arab feminism for many Arab women is a "quest for justice" (Ibid). Islam, the faith practiced by many Arab feminists, is also about justice (Ibid). Thus, the Arab Spring was a symbolic time for women to push their feminist agenda forward and challenge historically engrained socio-cultural norms within their Islamic societies.

Arab feminists redefined the role of women during the Arab Spring because they were more than just women with a lower status than their male counterparts. This is based on a newspaper headline published during the Arab Spring that reads, "She is the Muslim, the mother, the soldier, the protester, the journalist, the volunteer, the citizen" (Rice 2011). For example, in Yemen, when women were told by their President that it was "un-Islamic for male and female protesters to march side by side," women took to the streets just to prove him wrong and challenge cultural traditional Islamic norms (Ibid). This had an impact on the women of Libya, who gathered late at night beside the men to "act as human shields, many beautifully made up beneath their headscarves as if out for a night on the town" (Ibid). The tension between traditional and modern practices of Islam became apparent in socio-cultural norms of marriage because "while Sharia law does not explicitly state the minimum age of marriage, attitudes vary greatly" (Ghafour 2012) Marriage at a young age has become common in Arab society so much so that young girls are being referred to as "brides of death" (Ibid). Arab feminists, such as Tawakul Karman, challenged this by campaigning to raise the minimum age of marriage (Ibid). Despite being defeated by ultraconservatives in Parliament, her spirit among the other Arab feminists of the Arab uprisings influenced the socio-cultural revolution taking place.

The socio-cultural revolution discourse does two things. First, the confrontational aspect of Arab feminists' challenging of Islamic traditions "shakes the foundations of fundamentalism" in political Islamist parties (Fielding-Smith 2011). Second, the Arab feminist battle in the Middle East is symbolic because it

allows the reformation movement in Islam to take rise "after a thousand years of suppression of innovation and persecution of whoever dares to think outside ancient and rigid religious constructions and dogma" (Weekly Blitz 2011). The progress made by Arab feminists is ongoing as each woman seeks to overcome the socio-cultural norms of her community. The conflict leading up to the Arab Spring was one of culture and tradition; some argued that "tradition will win out over the law," but Arab feminists proved differently by working hard to be active and contributing members of society (Bagnall 2011).

*Political Revolution*

I claim that the political revolution collective action frame became dominant because of the Arab feminists' desire for greater representation in politics. Founded in the theoretical premise of the political opportunity structure and the framing theory, this claim is based on the documented representations of women standing in solidarity and fighting for democracy and equal representation throughout state elections in Tunisia, at protests at Tahrir Square in Egypt and Change Square in Yemen (Ibid; Fielding-Smith 2011). The possibility of these elections became a reality following the Arab Spring because it allowed feminists to view the significance and meaning of elections in a certain way. The change in mindset was shaped by the grievances the women faced that led them to challenge the status quo, authority, and laws and policies. Going into the political revolution Arab feminists understood that getting women into politics was the first battle. Different states approached their transitions to democracy differently. The goal, however, was the same – to ignite a political revolution that would resonate locally and globally.

The political revolution discourse is about the Arab feminist portrayal of politics, as a solution to discrimination, in an election cycle about freedom of religious expression. The role of women in the revolution was immense, so now women wanted that to be translated into political representation. In Tunisia, The Personal Status Code of 1956 is sacred for many women (Bagnall 2011). The Personal Status Code outlawed polygamy in Tunisia, the first country in the Arab world to set such a precedent. It made divorce legal, and included that a marriage agreement required the consent of both parties, and had an amendment regarding the prosecution of domestic violence (*Women and the Arab Spring* 2011). Arab women in Tunisia, at the time of the Arab Spring, questioned the commitment of their government to their rights. The women did this by presenting a more "accessible model of 'Islamist feminism'" to many rural and socially conservative Tunisian women, through the socio-cultural

revolution (Marks 2011). In Egypt, personal laws were introduced, but during the Arab Spring and even before were referred to as "Suzanne's laws," a derogatory reference to the first lady of Egypt, Suzanne Mubarak (Fielding-Smith 2011). Arab women in Egypt engaged in protests in Tahrir Square to fight for their status as women despite being fought and cleared out by army officers (Ibid). In Yemen, women attended demonstrations at Change Square "chanting that their honor was not cheap" (Ibid). These protest spaces proved to be revolutionary because Arab women acted out in unexpected ways. This is based on Yemeni women who "took to the streets to burn their veils in a sign of defiance" (*Women and the Arab Spring* 2011). United through collective action, Arab feminists revolutionized the political structures in their states.

In summary, the Arab feminist discourses of the Arab Spring—the solidarity, the socio-cultural revolution, and the political revolution—reflect two things. First is the portrayal of Arab feminist during the Arab Spring. Second is the influence of the Arab Spring on the manifestation of Arab feminism. The solidarity discourse aids in understanding the unity that women's social movements of the Arab Spring had given their vision of equality. The socio-cultural revolution discourse represents the challenges that Arab women made to the ways in which they were being socially and culturally portrayed. Lastly, the political revolution discourse is a means by which the women questioned the political structures in place to further advocate for their agenda of equal social status and political representation. Together these three discourses led me to understand the key implications of my research: How did collective action frames during the Arab Spring shape the discourses on Arab Feminism?

**Table 1: Empty Signifiers, Nodes, and Key Quotes**

| Empty signifier | Arab Spring | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Node | Inclusivity | Mobilization | Equality | Symbolic | Transformative |
| Key Quotes | "I belong to the revolution, and when the revolution came, no one asked about anyone's background, religious affiliation, political affiliation, regional affiliation, and ethnicity." | "…females gathered late at night to act as human shields, many beautifully made up beneath their headscarves as if out for a night on the town." | "…staking their claim to the public sphere in societies which have often sought to keep them out of it." | "… women stunned the world when they took to the streets alongside men…" | "But the first battle is women in politics." |
| | "People, no matter how illiterate, are not stupid." | "…one thing is clear: for all their organising, marching, rabble-rousing, blogging, hunger-striking, and, yes, dying…" | "…presenting a potentially more accessible model of 'Islamist feminism'." | "If she decides to go face-to-face with them she could shake the foundations of fundamentalism in Islah." | "Now many people think 'things will never go back'; we need to be aware that it could, and not let that happen, and not be excluded from any political process." |
| | "Women are not calling for their own rights but those of everyone." | "…thousands of women marched in protest, chanting that their honour was not cheap." | "There's a propaganda campaign against us, saying now is not the time for women's rights. I'm concerned about that." | "…burning their veils in protest against the government's refusal to change." | "Look at us; we're doctors, teachers, wives, mothers – sometimes our husbands agree with our politics, sometimes they don't. But we're here and we're active." |

# Appendix

## Table 1A: Coding Key and News Sources

| | |
|---|---|
| Inclusivity: **Bold** | Can Islamism and Feminism Mix? |
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**Can Islamism and Feminism Mix?**
By Monica Marks
October 26, 2011
*The New York Times*

TINY Tunisia, where a fruit seller's suicide sparked the Arab Spring, held its first free elections on Sunday. Over 90 percent of registered voters turned out, far exceeding expectations. Lines of beaming blue-fingered voters poured out of polling places, proudly posting photos of their freshly inked hands on Facebook.

Yet despite Tunisia's election day success story, many observers fear that democracy could unleash an Islamist tidal wave. The Islamist party Ennahda, banned as a terrorist group under the dictator Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, won approximately 40 percent of votes — a resounding plurality.

A small but increasingly vocal minority of secular Tunisians are predicting that an Islamist-dominated national assembly will reverse key pieces of civil rights legislation, including those recognizing the right to abortion and prohibiting polygamy.

Tunisia's secular feminists, many of whom are urban admirers of French-style secularism, see Ennahda women as unwitting agents of their own domination. Although Ennahda openly supports Tunisia's 1956 Code of Personal Status — arguably the most progressive piece of women's rights legislation in the Arab world — its critics accuse the party as a whole of purveying a "double discourse," adopting a soft, tolerant line when speaking to francophone secularists but preaching a rabidly conservative message when addressing its rural base.

Rather than developing strong platforms of their own, secular opposition parties like Ettajdid have focused their campaign efforts almost exclusively on fear mongering, raising the specter of an Iranian-style Islamist takeover and the imposition of Shariah, the legal code of Islam. Daniel Pipes and other Western commentators have joined the fray, urging Washington to stand against the "blight" of Ennahda and labeling Islamism "the civilized world's greatest enemy."

But it is far too early to sound such alarms. As a result of their active participation in party politics, Ennahda women actually stand to gain more from Sunday's election than any other group.

In May, Tunisia passed an extremely progressive parity law, resembling France's, which required all political parties to make women at least half of their candidates. As a long-repressed party, Ennahda enjoyed more credibility than other groups. It also had a greater number of female candidates to run

than any other party, and strongly supported the parity law as a result.

Many Tunisian women developed a political consciousness in reaction to Mr. Ben Ali's severe oppression of Ennahda in the 1990s. While their husbands, brothers and sons were in jail — often for reasons as simple as attending dawn prayers — these women discovered that they had a personal stake in politics and the strength to stand alone as heads of families. When the party was legalized in March, it found a widespread base of public sympathy and grass-roots support.

As the big winner in Sunday's elections, Ennahda will send the largest single bloc of female lawmakers to the 217-member constituent assembly. The question now is how Ennahda women will govern. Are they unwitting dupes of Islamic patriarchy, or are they merely feminist activists who happen to wear head scarves?

After interviewing 46 female activists and candidates from Ennahda, I found that many turned to politics after experiencing job discrimination, arrests, or years in prison merely because they chose to wear the head scarf or because their families were suspected of Ennahda sympathies. For some of them, this election is as much about freedom of religious expression as anything else.

"I have a master's degree in physics but I wasn't allowed to teach for years because of this," said a 43-year-old woman named Nesrine, tugging the corner of her floral-print hijab, a veil banned under Mr. Ben Ali but legalized since his departure. According to Mounia Brahim and Farida Labidi, 2 of the 13 members of Ennahda's Executive Council, the party welcomes strong, critical women in its ranks. ***"Look at us," Ms. Brahim said. "We're doctors, teachers, wives, mothers — sometimes our husbands agree with our politics, sometimes they don't. But we're here and we're active."***

These women are not likely to oppose women's rights legislation. Ennahda women are, first and foremost, Tunisians. They are well educated, and their brand of Islamism, like Tunisian society as a whole, is relaxed and comparatively progressive. Since the 1950s, Tunisian women have enjoyed greater legal protections than their counterparts in other Arab states.

Tunisians are currently seeking to reconcile this legacy of largely French-inspired civil rights policies with the aspirations of a devout public. Ennahda's challenge lies in striking the right balance.

To do so, the party has explicitly declared that it will emulate Turkey's governing Justice and Development Party, known as the A.K.P., which has cracked down on corruption, involved women as equal political partners, and delivered stunning economic growth rates.

Replicating this model of moderation and pious prosperity will be hard work in Tunisia, a country with staggering levels of unemployment and 25 percent illiteracy. Turkish-style democracy may look less progressive in Tunis — where angry protests recently broke out at a screening of the film "Persepolis" — than in Istanbul, where bars and dance clubs dot the city's streets.

And there is a chance, of course, that democratic gains for women could be reversed. As history has shown in America, France, Algeria and Iran, revolutionary movements don't always lead to greater gender equality or more inclusive politics. Women often fight fearlessly in such liberation struggles only to be sidelined when new national governments form.

Tunisian women, however, are well poised to avoid this fate. Tunisia has done an excellent job of including women in its transitional institutions thus far. This is especially true when viewed in comparison with Egypt, where the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces recently banned women from heading any party lists.

Ennahda has thus far used its newfound political heft to stimulate rather than stifle women's participation in Tunisian politics. Its activists are presenting a potentially more accessible model of "Islamist feminism" to many rural and socially conservative Tunisian women than that of secularist parties.

Vocal, active, and often veiled, they are comfortable with the language of piety and politics. Despite the fear mongering of secular skeptics and Western pundits, their actions and aspirations are far more reminiscent of Turkey's A.K.P. than Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.

*Monica Marks is a doctoral student in Middle Eastern Studies at Oxford University.*

**Arab Spring's Silver Lining: A Search for the Soul of Arab Islam**
December 9, 2011
*Weekly Blitz*

Dhaka, Dec. 9 -- Non-Arab Muslims in predominantly Sunni Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey, representing two thirds of world Muslims, have a moderate and modern attitude towards Islamic dogma and Sharia laws. They conduct democratic parliamentary elections and have had female prime ministers and presidents.

By contrast, Sunni Arab countries treat women like chattel. For decades, Arab states have been ruled by non-representative dictators. Until the Arab Spring in 2011, the Arab peoples never had a democratic election, save for those farcical presidential referendums.

Why the difference between the Sunni way of life of Arab and non-Arab Muslims? The answer may be found in the fact that Arab rulers and their palace ulama exploit those parts of the Islamic creed that help prolong their control over their people. Arabs consider themselves as the guardians of the "true" Islam of seventh century Arabia. That the Prophet, his companions, the Quran, and the sanctuaries in Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem are all Arabic cement that belief. The Quran describes Arabs as the "best people evolved to mankind" (3:110).

*The Arab Spring might reform Arab Islam*

The Arab Spring has triggered big conflicts between Arab rulers and their palace ulama, on one hand, and the anti-ruler ulama and the masses, on the other. The palace ulama have been for decades actively protecting the excesses of their benefactor kings and presidents. They preach that blind obedience to the Muslim ruler is a form of Islamic piety, citing God's word in the Quran (4:59): "Obey God and obey God's messenger and obey those of authority among you". The palace ulama teach that the Prophet Muhammad had reportedly said, according to canonical Hadith collection of al-Bukhari and of Muslim: "He who obeys me obeys God; he who disobeys me, disobeys God. He who obeys the ruler, obeys me; he who disobeys the ruler, disobeys me".

The anti-ruler ulama believe rebelling against an impious or unjust Muslim ruler to be an Islamic duty. To justify their belief, anti-ruler ulama invoke the words of the Prophet, quoted in Abi Dawood, Muslim, and al-Nasai: "Whoever of you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart".

The anti-ruler ulama helped to remove from office in 2011 the rulers of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. Anti-ruler Islamic groups performed impressively in all of the democratically held parliamentary elections during the last quarter of the year. In Tunisia, al-Nahda Party achieved 41% of the vote. In Morocco, the Justice and Development Party achieved 27% of the votes, more than any other party. In Tunisia and Morocco, the leaders of the winning parties became prime ministers. In Egypt, Islamic politicians will undoubtedly form the next cabinet when parliamentary elections are completed in

early 2012. Already, in the first round, the Freedom and Justice Party, a reincarnation of the Muslim Brothers organization, achieved 37% of the votes and the fundamentalist al-Nour party achieved 24%. Likewise, anti-ruler ulama and Islamic parties are most likely to perform well in the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Yemen and Libya, and in Syria, too, whenever the Asad family finally falls.

The victorious anti-ruler ulama in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen will undoubtedly provide the intellectual vigor and inspiration to the anti-ruler ulama in other Arab republics and monarchies to rise against their own unjust and corrupt presidents and kings.

Within the ranks of the winning Islamic groups there are shades of moderation and extremism. The moderates; like Morocco's Justice and Development, Tunisia's al-Nahda, and Egypt's Freedom and Justice might prove to be akin to Turkey's Justice and Development Party, if they translate their electioneering pledges into action-time will tell. Fundamentalist parties like Egypt's al-Nour, are Islamist salafis who find their guidance in Wahhabi extremism. Their members aspire to emulate the Prophet's seventh century way of life in the Arabian Desert. Some salafis, for example, refrain from using spoons or forks because such implements did not exist during the Prophet's life. Islamist salafis choose to focus on the intolerant and the violent parts of the Quran and the Sunna, to the exclusion of the tolerant and peaceful parts on the same issues.

Wahhabism is influenced by the teaching of Ahmad Bin Hanbal (d. 855), founder of the most orthodox among the four surviving Sunni Schools of Jurisprudence. Less than 5% of world's Sunnis today follow Wahhabi tenets, mainly in Saudi Arabia plus those among the millions of expatriate workers who became indoctrinated in the Wahhabi creed as a result of working in Saudi Arabia over the past 35 years.

*The search for the soul of Arab Islam*

During the struggle against their tormentors, Islamic and Islamist parties were united. However, now that the dictators are gone from a few Arab capitals and leaders of moderate Islamic political parties took their place the next confrontation will be between the new religiously moderate rulers and the Islamist salafis. The Islamist salafis will attack the policies and laws of the new rulers as insufficiently Islamic, even heretical (kuffar) deserving death. The new rulers will defend their policies and laws as perfectly Islamic, supported by legitimating reasoning drawn from the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet.

The coming battle will engulf the moderates and the Islamists over the soul of Islam. The battle will be fought over whether Islam is going to be the intolerant violent religion of the Bin Laden Wahhabi type; or, the enlightened moderate and modern Islam of the Recep Tayyip Erdogan Turkish type?

In the ensuing fight, the Islamist salafis will most likely be sidelined. The results of the recent parliamentary elections in Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt point in the direction of a victory for the moderates.

Most importantly, however, **_this battle might finally give birth to a reformation movement in Islam after a thousand years of suppression of innovation and persecution of whoever dares to think outside ancient and rigid religious constructions and dogma._** The battle might very well produce an Islamic reformation movement similar to Martin Luther's sixteenth century reformation of Christianity. If that happens, the world will become a safer place.

*Policy implications*

Should Washington and the West fear moderate Arab Islamic regimes? The answer is no. Why? Because to be Islamic need not be anti-America or anti-West. Wahhabi Saudi Arabia, the world's most Islamist regime has been obsequious to U.S. policies and interests.

Islamic rule will not necessarily be more Islamic than the current Arab regimes. Already, in all Arab countries, Islam is the religion of the state (in Syria, Islam is the religion of the president) and Shari'a is either the source of law or a main source of law.

Consider, for example, the so-called "secular" regime in Damascus. Although the Asad clan, apologists, and propagandists constantly propagate that theirs is a "secular" regime, evidence shows otherwise. In fact, the Syria of 2011 is more Islamic than the Syria of 1963, when Hafiz Asad and his five compatriots put an end to the rule of Syria's last legitimate parliament and President Nazem al-Qudsi's cabinet.

In Mr. Asad's "secular" Syria today seventh century Shari'a laws and courts control personal status, family, and inheritance affairs (Christians follow their own archaic religious courts). Shari'a law is the antithesis of the liberal laws of the modern age. It denies women human and legal rights compared with Muslim men. Shari'a law reduces the status of women to that of chattel-a Muslim man can marry four wives, divorce any one of them without giving reason, with limited child custody rights, housing, or alimony; a Muslim woman is prohibited from marrying a non-Muslim man while the Muslim man is allowed to marry non-Muslim women; a woman cannot pass her nationality on to her foreign husband and children while the man can; "honour killing" of a woman by a male relative results in a light sentence for murder; and two women equal one man in legal testimony, witness, and inheritance. Such maltreatment of one half of society is in spite of the regime's energetic attempts to project an image of secularism, modernity, and equality between the genders.

The Islamic curriculum in Syria's elementary, middle, and high schools teaches Muslim Sunni Islam regardless of the Islamic sect to which they belong. The textbooks are discriminatory, divisive, and intolerant of non-Muslims.

More mosques, bigger congregations, and more veiled women than ever before have become the order of the day in Syrian cities. To flaunt his Islamic credentials, Mr. Asad even ordered a special rain prayer throughout Syria's mosques performed on December 10, 2010 to ask God to send rain.

With such credentials, it is difficult to see how a moderate Muslim Brothers rule in Syria would be more Islamic than the Asad regime.

*Published by HT Syndication with permission from Weekly Blitz.*

**The Face of Freedom; Stories**
By Abigail Fielding-Smith
December 10, 2011
*Financial Times*

This year, the women of the Arab spring have marched and fallen, challenging their position in society as they do so. Now Abigail Fielding-Smith talks to the Yemeni activist who won the Nobel Peace Prize for her extraordinary courage Abigail Fielding-Smith

When, in October, Tawakul Karman heard she had become the first Arab woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize, she was sitting in her tent in a miles-wide protest encampment in Sana'a, the Yemeni capital. She had been prevented from leaving it for the previous eight months by death threats.

"I learnt about it through the media," she recalls over mobile phone en route to a meeting in New York. Since the award, which she shared with two other women, catapulted her to international fame, she

has put down the microphone - through which she exhorted Yemen's rag-tag revolutionaries to bring an end to the 33-year rule of President Ali Abdullah Saleh (at the time of going to press, he had promised to step down at elections early next year) - and started lobbying international policymakers instead.

The United Nations in New York is a long way from the whirr of tribal headdresses, vegetable sellers, army uniforms and, increasingly, shrapnel in the Sana'a protest encampment, but Karman's incandescent rhetoric appears to have survived the transition intact. "The international community cannot just stay and watch," she says. "They will be partners with Saleh and the crimes if they continue."

At 32, Karman is still young, and there have been many who interpreted the Nobel committee's decision as a partly symbolic recognition of the hundreds of thousands of women who have marched, fallen, shouted, sewed and bandaged for freedom during the Arab spring, staking their claim to the public sphere in societies which have often sought to keep them out of it.

The laureate herself dedicates the award to "the youth of the Arab spring, women and the Arab spring, and the women of the Arab revolutions." Political theatre may be of limited value to those seeking gender equality in the Middle East, complicated as their struggle is by a backdrop of violent instability and thorny questions about power, imperialism and the role of Islam in society. But it has its uses, and few are better equipped to occupy centre stage than the dauntless Karman.

Yemen's public sphere was more exclusively male than that of any of the other Arab spring countries when protests started in February this year. It consistently ranks at the bottom of the World Economic Forum's annual gender gap index. In much of the country, women wear the niqab - a veil covering everything except their eyes - in public. More than 60 per cent are illiterate. Even the majority of educated women end up submitting to the system, abandoning youthful ambitions and taking up the role society has accorded them, as mothers and wives. Like their allocated seating areas in restaurants, women are on the margins, a system of exclusion reinforced by the Islamist hardliners with whom Saleh enjoys an on/off relationship.

Women began attending demonstrations in a segregated area at the youth protest encampment that started around Sana'a University, known locally as "Change Square". Those from less conservative cities in the former socialist republic in the south showed up and began directing things purposefully without wearing a niqab. And though the segregated area is now more clearly defined than ever, women began to mix beyond it. They started running workshops and female literacy classes. In April, when Saleh (who, according to Wikileaks, once joked that he didn't mind whisky being smuggled in to the country "provided it's good") condemned the mixing of men and women in Change Square as un-Islamic, *thousands of women marched in protest, chanting that their honour was not cheap.*

"The cultural revolution is done," says Farea al-Muslimi matter-of-factly. A Change Square activist, he points to the fact that the opposition group's spokesperson, Hooria Mashoor, is a woman - something unthinkable before the uprising.

Karman, who removed her own niqab years ago, has been at the centre of this transformation. A mother of three from a political family, she founded the NGO Women Journalists Without Chains in 2005, and campaigned for the rights of marginalised groups. Her arrest, at a pro-democracy protest in January, sparked outrage across the country, helping generate momentum for the grassroots uprising that broke out after the fall of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak the following month.

A controversial figure even within the protest movement in Yemen, Karman's pre-eminence is ascribed by some to her talent for generating publicity. "Other activists around her were doing

similar things, but she attracted more media attention," says one observer of the Yemeni political scene. "She networked very well. Journalists Without Chains had everyone on its mailing lists... other activists did not have that elaborate system of communication."

More problematically for some, she is a member of the powerful Islamist opposition party Islah. Many in the grassroots of the uprising see the party as part of the problem, not the solution. But in spite of her links to the elite political system, even her critics don't deny the extraordinary determination and bravery Karman has displayed in crossing its red lines, speaking out against the regime even before the uprising started (against the advice of some in her inner circle and party).

"Tawakul's courage is at a different level," declares Abdul-Ghani al-Iryani, a Sana'a-based political analyst. "In one march, thugs twice tried to stab her and she kept walking."

Karman has clashed frequently with the conservative wing of her own party, such as when it opposed a proposed law to set a minimum matrimonial age in Yemen (where a quarter of girls under the age of 15 are married). She has also been accused by hardliners of not being a proper Muslim, an incendiary accusation in a deeply pious society such as Yemen's. When asked how she copes with such charges, she shrugs them off with the insouciance of one inured to confrontation. "Those people who say we are not true Muslims, they say they are men of religion... I believe they are in an unholy partnership with the ruler based on mutual interests."

Al-Iryani says that because of the leadership Karman has shown to the youth wing of Islah during Yemen's uprising, the party cannot afford to kick her out, however much she antagonises them. ***"If she decides to go face-to-face with them she could shake the foundations of fundamentalism in Islah,"*** he says.

Although Yemen is unusual in Arab spring countries, in that women confronting the regime have had to confront directly the discourse of patriarchy, there are echoes of Karman's bravery across the Middle East.

In Syria, where two of the most high-profile activists inside the country - dissident Suhair Attassi and human rights lawyer Razan Zeitouneh - are women (they are both in hiding), feminism does not appear to be on the agenda. "In general, people are now focusing on the political issue and even the opposition did not speak directly about this subject," says a female activist inside the country. In contrast to Egypt and Tunisia, women are rarely seen in the YouTube videos of Syrian demonstrations smuggled out to the west, but *activists say they are supporting the revolution in other ways - treating injured protesters in underground hospitals, making masks for demonstrators to wear to protect their anonymity and, crucially, pushing for the release of husbands and sons who have been arrested.*

According to Wissam Tarif, a human rights activist who was in the south-eastern province of Deraa when Syria's uprising first erupted there, grieving women played a critical role at an early stage. When protests first broke out against corruption and the unaccountable behaviour of security forces, no one was openly calling for President Bashar al-Assad to go. When 16 people were shot dead at a demonstration in late March, Tarif says tribal elders made a deal with the authorities to allow the funeral procession, so long as it stayed within certain lines.

They hadn't reckoned on the women, however. Tarif says he saw the female relatives of the victims stop the pallbearers in the street so that they could read poetry to their dead. "Then the men put the bodies where the women were, and then the mothers started to say, 'Shame on our men, shame on Deraa,'" he recalls. "All of a sudden all the young men of Deraa were there chanting 'I am your son.'" Then the guys took the bodies to the ceremony, and started to chant for the fall of the regime."

In Bahrain, Alaa Shehabi, a female academic and activist, says that gender stereotypes have been "put on the backburner" as women play an increasingly prominent role in the underground movement, with

so many of the men arrested. "It wasn't a social decision, it was out of need - women maintained the struggle, women maintained the resistance," she says. "Now you see her [the Bahraini woman] leading the protests. She's still got her abaya [a loose over-garment] on - the abaya has become like a military uniform."

But as people in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya have found, the biggest challenge for women is not participating in the uprising, but securing their rights in the transition period.

In Libya, the relatively educated women who helped organise and publicise the revolution and, later, provided support to the rebels, have had to mobilise rapidly to stake a claim in the post-Gaddafi state-building process. Things got off to a bad start when the head of the interim government, Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, mentioned polygamy and sharia law in a speech about the future of Libya in October.

In Tunisia, women may appear to be in the strongest position, with parties obliged to field 50 per cent female candidates in the recent elections. However, after decades of a state-led equality agenda, enshrined in personal status laws, they also have the most to lose. Although the Islamist party that swept to power last month did so on a platform of explicit support for women's rights, some fear backsliding may occur.

Similarly in Egypt, the feminist agenda is seen as having been co-opted by the Mubarak regime, which introduced a degree of progressive legislation on gender issues. Some fear the new, mainly Islamist political forces will cite this association in the future. According to an interview with the Egyptian academic Hoda Elsadda on the Opendemocracy website, changes to personal status laws introduced in the past decade are sometimes referred to derogatorily as "Suzanne's laws" after the first lady, Suzanne Mubarak. The precariousness of women's status in the new Egypt was highlighted in March when army officers clearing a protest in Tahrir Square detained 17 women and forced them to submit to "virginity tests," according to Amnesty International.

"I see a backlash across the region," says Nadje al-Ali, professor of gender studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, pointing to the lessons learned in previous revolutions in the Middle East, such as Iran's. "In the context of political change women are very much involved, but in the aftermath they're being told 'we have to focus on wider issues'."

Women in the "unfinished revolutions" are aware of the challenges ahead. ***"Now many people think 'things will never go back'," says Atiaf al-Wazir, a female activist in Yemen. "We need to be aware that it could, and not let that happen, and not be excluded from any political process."***

In this context, the savvy of a Tawakul Karman comes into its own. For years she has worked around the clock, assiduously building alliances with those of all stripes who she thinks can further her causes. **"I belong to the revolution," she says when probed on her membership of Islah, "and when the revolution came, no one asked about anyone's background, religious affiliation, political affiliation, regional affiliation and ethnicity."**

It was this kind of drive and political acumen that brought her to the notice of the Nobel prize committee. Since winning the award her unveiled face now looks back at conservative tribesmen in ubiquitous images across Change Square. "She is a political animal," says one observer of Yemeni politics. "But how else will you win the war?"

**Was the Arab Spring a step backward for women?**
By Hamida Ghafour
April 13, 2012

*The Globe and Mail*

A year ago, women were front and centre in the Arab Spring uprisings – acting as advocates, smuggling ammunition to rebels, being beaten by police alongside men and caring for the wounded. But now they are in danger of being shunted aside by conservative male leaders such as the Muslim Brotherhood, who threaten to roll back the few rights women enjoy.

Some believe that the new Islamists can reconcile themselves with equal rights for women, under liberal interpretations of sharia law. "Democracy is a process and it can't happen overnight," says Ziba Mir-Hosseini, an Islamic-law scholar and prominent Iranian-born activist, speaking from London. "But feminism is a quest for justice, and Islam is also about justice."

Others are more skeptical: In a recent speech in Washington, former Kuwaiti member of parliament Rola Dashti said the Islamists' claims of moderation are "nothing more than a hidden agenda of radical and extremist ideologies when it comes to social issues and citizens' rights, especially as it concerns women."

The old despotic regimes were more secular, and often passed some progressive laws in such areas as marriage, divorce and inheritance, at least partly to appease Western governments. Those measures are now tainted by association, linked to both loose morals and Western colonialism.

"The problem is not with Islam," Dr. Mir-Hosseini says. "It is with an undemocratic and patriarchal culture."

*PERSONAL STATUS*

*Divorce*

In Egypt, a woman can seek a divorce without her husband's permission. Today, that is often called "Suzanne Mubarak's law," in reference to the former president's wife, who pushed for reforms. At least one newly elected MP has promised to repeal it.

*Polygamy*

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Libya and Morocco are some of the countries that allow men to marry up to four wives, sometimes more. Tunisia and Egypt are among those who banned it long ago. In Libya, polygamy was rarely practised under Moammar Gadhafi, but the new interim Libyan leader, Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, announced in October that polygamy would be allowed, dismaying women's groups but perhaps trying to appeal to the pious fighters who helped to oust the Gadhafi regime.

*Marriage*

In Yemen, they are sometimes called the "brides of death": girls as young as 10, forced to marry men twice their age or older. Nearly half the girls in the country are married before they turn 18, the highest rate in the Arab world, according to United Nations figures. Tawakul Karman, the 2011 co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, has campaigned to raise the minimum age of marriage to 17, but ultraconservatives have blocked a bill in Parliament.

Ms. Karman, 33, embodies the reforming spirit of the Arab uprisings – she led the first student protests calling for the resignation of Yemen's president and her arrest triggered mass demonstrations – but also their complexities, as she is a member of a religiously based party, Islah. One of its members, Abdul Majeed al-Zindani, is a former Osama bin Laden adviser.

Because sharia law does not explicitly state a minimum age of marriage, attitudes vary widely: Moroccan

women fought for 18 and won in 2004; meanwhile, the Islamist party in Bahrain opposed an effort to set the minimum age at 15.

*EDUCATION*

The number of women going to college or university in Arab nations is growing. Perhaps surprisingly, the Gulf states head the pack: In Saudi Arabia, which generally imposes harsh restrictions on women's lives, 60 per cent of all college graduates are women. Sheika Moza bint Nasser, the wife of the ruling emir of Qatar, promotes education, and about 70 per cent of university students there are women. In Tunisia, women account for 62 per cent of university-degree holders.

However, this pattern of younger women being much more highly educated than their mothers' generation is not translating into careers: According to UN figures, only 25 per cent of Arab women work outside the home.

*POLITICS*

*Political Representation*

In Egypt, 28-year-old Asmaa Mahfouz helped to spark the demonstrations last year by posting videos on YouTube challenging the public to march on the streets. But the military rulers who followed made clear their view of women in the public sphere by abandoning the quotas that had guaranteed women 10 per cent of the seats in Parliament. After the elections this winter, only nine women now sit in the new, 498-seat lower house of Egypt's Parliament.

Over all, the proportion of female representatives in parliaments is just 10 per cent in all Arab countries, according to the UN, but in many countries women are pushing for reserved places in the legislatures.
Kuwait no longer has any female MPs – all four lost their seats in February when religious conservatives came to dominate Parliament. But Tunisia presents a brighter, more complicated picture: A new law requires that women and men must feature equally on party candidate lists, which led to 49 women being elected to the 217-member constituent assembly. Most were from al-Nahda, the moderate Islamist party.

*Constitutional Reform*

Many reformers are concerned that new national constitutions in the Arab world will be used to push narrow interpretations of sharia law. In Egypt, no women have been appointed to the council drafting the constitution. Meanwhile in Libya, a women's alliance has lobbied successfully to guarantee women at least 10 per cent of the seats in the assembly that will draft a constitution later this year – but it has already been decided that it will be based on sharia.

In Tunisia, hard-line Salafists took to the streets to demand that sharia be the sole basis of the new constitution, but the moderate-Islamist government ruled it out last month.

The possibility is still worrying, Tunisia-based activist Omezzine Khelifa says. "Today, more than one year after the revolution, lots of women's hopes of equality have disappeared," she says. "Debates taking place on whether sharia should be the unique source of Tunisian law, or one among many, showed how far we could be from comprehensive and true equality between men and women."

*Hamida Ghafour is a Canadian author and journalist born in Afghanistan.*

**Women have emerged as key players in the Arab Spring**
By Xan Rice in Benghazi, Katherine Marsh in Damascus, Tom Finn in Sana'a, Harriet Sherwood in Tripoli, Angelique Chrisafis and Robert Booth
April 22, 2011
*The Guardian*

In a small room in Benghazi some young men and women are putting out a new opposition newspaper. "The role of the female in Libya," reads one headline. "She is the Muslim, the mother, the soldier, the protester, the journalist, the volunteer, the citizen", it adds.

Arab women can claim to have been all these things and more during the three months of tumult that have shaken the region. Some of the most striking images of this season of revolt have been of women: black-robed and angry, a sea of female faces in the capitals of north Africa, the Arabian peninsula, the Syrian hinterland, marching for regime change, an end to repression, the release of loved ones. Or else delivering speeches to the crowds, treating the injured, feeding the sit-ins of Cairo and Manama and the makeshift army of eastern Libya.

But as revolt turns into hiatus and stalemate from Yemen to Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, Bahrain and Syria, one thing is clear: *for all their organising, marching, rabble-rousing, blogging, hunger-striking, and, yes, dying, Arab women are barely one small step forwards on the road to greater equality with their menfolk.* Women may have sustained the Arab spring, but it remains to be seen if the Arab spring will sustain women.

*The first protests*

From the earliest rumblings of discontent in Tunisia at the turn of the year, it was clear that old images of Arab women as deferential, subservient and generally indoors would have to be revised. From the highly-educated Tunisian female elite of doctors, barristers and university professors to the huge numbers of unemployed female graduates, women were key players in the uprising that launched the Arab spring.

In Cairo, they were instrumental not just in protests but in much of the nitty-gritty organisation that turned Tahrir Square from a moment into a movement. Women were involved in arranging food deliveries, blankets, the stage and medical help. In Yemen, it was a young woman, Tawakul Karman, who first led demonstrations on a university campus against the long rule of Ali Abdullah Saleh. Karman emerged as one of the leaders of a revolution still yet to run its course.

In Bahrain, women were among the first wave that descended on Pearl Square in the capital – some with their children – to demand change. And the Bahraini movement has latterly found a figurehead in Zainab al-Khawaja, the woman who went on hunger strike in protest at the beating and arrest of her father, husband and brother-in-law. "Women have played a hugely influential role this time and put themselves in danger," said Nabeel Rajab, president of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. "They treated the injured in the streets and nursed them in their homes when they were too afraid to go to hospital."

In Libya, women were at the vanguard too, when mothers, sisters and widows of men killed in a prison massacre in 1996 protested outside a courthouse in Benghazi after their lawyer was arrested.

"Someone gave me a placard and I was not even sure what to do with it because we had never done anything like this before," said Muna Sahli, a literature lecturer at Garyounis University in Benghazi, whose brother-in-law was killed in the prison slaughter. "I even forgot to cover my face so I wouldn't be identified."

In Syria and Yemen, more conservative societies, it took longer for women to join the movement en masse. In both countries, it took leadership blunders by the authorities to draw them in. In Syria, hundreds of women marched through the town of Beida to deplore the indiscriminate detention of many of their menfolk. In Yemen, when president Saleh said it was un-Islamic for male and female protesters to march side by side, thousands of women poured on to the streets just to prove him wrong. Women continue to support the demonstrations, working as nurses in makeshift hospitals and in ambulances, cooking food, delivering speeches and singing songs at the demonstrations. To the right of the main stage in Tagheer (meaning "change") Square, there is a large cordoned-off area filled with hundreds of women, most of them wearing black abayas, and small children.

*On the frontline*

Women have not escaped the human cost of this uprising. During the police repression of the Tunisian revolution, they were beaten by security thugs, and in rural areas around Kasserine some were raped by police after demonstrations. There were several reports of rape in Egypt amid the hurly burly, and a South African reporter for the US network CBS was sexually assaulted. In a notorious case in Tripoli, a woman, Iman al-Obeidi said she was raped by about 15 pro-Gaddafi militia.

Scores of women across the region have also been detained or disappeared. A number of Bahraini women have been seized by the authorities, including at least nine doctors and four nurses. In Yemen, Karman was detained for 48 hours, though the outrage caused was largely a function of the "shame" of male soldiers seizing a woman from her car in the night.

But in some cases there was evidence that women were able to protest with relative impunity – and even used this to their advantage. "Since the beginning the riot police acted very brutally but the women stood their ground and waved their flags in their faces," said the Bahraini human rights activist Maryam al-Khawaja. "They were targeting the men, so the women kept coming out. Women have always had a presence [in public demonstrations in Bahrain] but this time it was very strong."

In Syria, the reverse was true: women retreated in the face of the violence. On 16 March, a peaceful protest at the ministry of the interior by the families of political prisoners in Damascus ended in the arrests and beatings of many, including women and children. "I was hit several times but managed to get away," said the daughter of a prominent political prisoner who asked not to be named.

Another young woman in Damascus, who asked not to be named, said that men were afraid for the safety of their women. "Since the start there has been live fire and men are afraid their mothers and sisters may be injured, as well as some of the women fearing this themselves," she said. She added that a lot of protests came out of the mosques, which are still largely male preserves. "Many younger women are going out, like at the university protest, but I think some women don't yet realise how crucial their participation is."

*Women of the regime*

Not every woman is for regime change. Yemeni women have staged vocal protests in favour of Saleh. And in western Libya, while women were largely absent from initial street protests that were suppressed by the regime, they have been conspicuous in more recent displays of loyalty to the Brother Leader, as Muammar Gaddafi is known. They chant, sing and ululate their praise – usually segregated from male supporters.

At Gaddafi's Tripoli compound last week, hundreds of his female fans gathered late at night to act as human shields, many beautifully made up beneath their headscarves as if out for a night on the

town. Which, in a way, it was.

When Aisha Gaddafi, the leader's 34-year-old daughter, appeared on the balcony of a shelled building to address the crowd, they went wild. Aisha is an icon among many young Libyan women: smart, savvy, blonde and with a penchant for designer clothes, she is known as Libya's Claudia Schiffer.

The only daughter among Gaddafi's seven children, Aisha is the most high-profile woman in Libya. There is also a minister for women's and children's affairs, but few others in the regime. Among the phalanx of government officials dealing with the foreign media, only one is female. Women serve in the Libyan army, but do not take part in fighting. Gaddafi himself is famous for favouring female guards in his personal protection team.

In common with many Arab countries, middle-class women in Libya tend to be highly-educated and prevalent in professions such as medicine and law. But their poorer sisters are confined largely to the home and the shadow of their menfolk.

*Legality, sorority, equality*

The Arab spring was not about gender equality. Women in all countries involved say that. But many are alarmed that their efforts risk going unrewarded, and that men who were keen to have them on the streets crying freedom may not be so happy to have them in parliament, government and business boardrooms. As one Egyptian protester told Catherine Ashton, the EU foreign policy supremo, during a recent visit to Tahrir Square: "The men were keen for me to be here when we were demanding that Mubarak should go. But now he has gone, they want me to go home."

Egyptian women express concern that when the dust settles on their revolution and a new parliament is elected in November, there may be just as few female MPs as there were in the Mubarak era. The gender gap is gaping in Egypt. There were no references to equality in the new Egyptian constitution passed last month. Rebecca Chiao, founder of a women's rights group called Harassmap, said that there was already a backlash against gender equality. "There's a propaganda campaign against us, saying now is not the time for women's rights. I'm concerned about that," she said.

"If you ask someone if they want gender equality, that's a loaded term here. Do you mean all women should be like men? Most would say no. If you mean women have choice and equal protection under the law, most would say yes."

Tunisia's feminist lobby argues that the real battle is only beginning now, post-revolution. Of the country's young, well-educated unemployed – whose grievances sparked the uprising – two thirds are women. There is still gross inequality in pay and in inheritance laws favouring sons. But the first battle is women in politics. Earlier this month, the commission reforming Tunisia's electoral landscape for the July elections voted that there must be 50% parity between men and women on electoral lists – and not just women on the bottom rung: they must alternate with male candidates from the top of each party selection and share the most important roles.

One of the biggest opposition parties, the leftwing PDP, already has a female leader, the feminist biologist Maya Jribi. Campaigners hope others will follow.

Leila Hamrouni, a secondary school teacher from a poor suburb of Tunis, is likely to run as a candidate for the party Ettajdid. She said: "We've got to really fight for 50% equality in the elections. I'm worried it won't be properly enforced. The smaller parties say it's great in principle but in practice there aren't enough 'competent' women. What rubbish! Even the rural areas have women lawyers, teachers and doctors.

"Under Ben Ali, there were an awful lot of men who were far from brilliant, yet as soon as we talk of

women in politics, everyone's asking about competence. Ben Ali used the issue of women's rights as propaganda for the west while stifling liberties and denying democracy. Some men might say to us now, 'Look what you've got. What more do you want?' It's difficult to explain that behind the orchestrated propaganda there is still so much to fight for."

Khadija Cherif, a sociologist and university professor, is a member of the influential Association of Women Democrats and sits on the commission currently drawing up political rules for the July elections. Around 20% of the commission is female.

"The women's role has been huge, not just in the revolution, but for years before it, from supporting the miners' strikes to staging sit-ins in textile factories. That role must now be recognised through gender equality on the political landscape."

One concern on the secular left is that the return of Tunisia's Islamist parties could roll back the country's secular women's rights. The once outlawed Islamist party, Ennahda, denies it plans to limit women's rights, joining other parties in voting through the 50% gender equality rules for the election. Cherif said: "We're working with the Islamist parties. They supported us on parity. And they know we are staying vigilant."

But elsewhere, women are adamant: this revolution was about regimes, not gender. "Men and women, we are all working for the same thing in this revolution," said Mervet el-Zuki, a Benghazi resident. "We want to be able to speak our minds, to be ourselves, to be Libyans. We want freedom in all sectors: psychologically, socially, economically. We want a happy ending, to be rid of this maniac family that controlled everything we did."

Bahraini Noor Jilal added: **"Women are not calling for their own rights but those of everyone."**

But Faizah Sulimani, 29, a protest leader in Yemen, hints that even though they are not calling for equality, women in Yemen have found themselves being taken much more seriously by men because of the impressive way they have contributed to the protest movement.

**"Our demands are somehow similar to men, starting with freedom, equal citizenship, and giving women a greater role in society," she says. "Women smell freedom at Change Square where they feel more welcomed than ever before. Their fellow [male] freedom fighters are showing unconventional acceptance to their participation and they are actually for the first time letting women be, and say, what they really want."**

**Arab Spring: Women in the line of fire**
By Janet Bagnall
December 16, 2011
*The Montreal Gazette and Postmedia News*

In January, Egyptian ***women stunned the world when they took to the streets alongside men*** to topple the corrupt Mubarak regime. With their designer sunglasses and flowered scarves, they won the hearts of people around the world. They braved gunfire and withstood army-sanctioned "virginity tests." From everywhere, people urged them on, hoping they would win freedom for themselves and democracy for their country.

Nearly a year later, the brilliant future for women the Arab Spring revolutions that swept across North Africa and the Middle East appeared to promise seems more mirage than miracle. In violence-torn Syria, women's rights activists are said to be in hiding. In October, ***hundreds of Yemeni women marched into San'a, the capital, burning their veils in protest***

***against the government's refusal to change.*** Women in Libya, which has not had a civil government in four decades, are struggling to get organized. Tunisian women, with more legal rights than any of their Arab sisters, are watching warily as an Islamist party takes over power. Already, there have been reports that unveiled students were refused entry into class.

In Egypt, with almost 82 million people, the Arab world's most populous country, men and women lined up this month for hours to vote in the country's first free elections since a military overthrow in 1952. Yet despite the fact that 376 women ran for election - a third of all candidates - by the time voting is over in January there is a distinct possibility that no women will be elected. Under Egypt's dauntingly complex voting system, where a candidate's name is placed on closed voting lists pretty much guarantees either defeat or victory. The higher up on a list the candidate's name appears the greater his - or more rarely her - chances of success. In this election, the names of female candidates are uniformly very low down on the lists. Women's rights activists argue that this means the deck has been deliberately stacked against women candidates.

Egypt's first-round election results earlier this month pointed to a government dominated by Islamists. The majority of them are described as moderate, but a smaller ultraconservative faction, the Salafists, are anything but and they won 25 per cent of the vote. They do not want women in public office. They have called for the implementation of Sharia law, segregation of the sexes and for women to cover up.

The second round of voting, on Wednesday, in more rural and conservative regions, is reinforcing the trend to an Islamist government. The three-phase election process will elect a lower house of parliament, whose members will appoint a 100-member committee charged with drafting a new constitution. If, as expected, there are no women in parliament, there won't be any women on the drafting committee, making it extremely unlikely that women's rights will be part of the constitution.

Covered up and pushed aside, is this what awaits the women from Bahrain to Yemen who defied authority, withstanding physical and sexual abuse to demand their rights?

"No," said Egyptian writer Sahar El Mougy, who stood in solidarity with thousands of fellow Cairo residents on Jan. 28 in Tahrir Square when the army fired rubber bullets at demonstrators and flooded the square with tear gas. "Taking part in the revolution is a statement that no political Islam can take away. Never. Not in this lifetime."

El Mougy said she is "not one of those people who is getting panicked" by the election results, even though the winners are not "very amiable toward women." El Mougy is optimistic that however hard the two Islamist parties pretend to be democratic and talk about health care, education, women's rights and the need to eradicate poverty, their true nature will come out.

"Because it's fake," she said, "because it's not true, I don't think they can sustain the illusion. They'll go back to their old patterns." The old patterns include denying women their personal and professional freedom, choking off artistic freedom, imposing censorship and rejecting democratic reforms.

El Mougy said she would love the "Muslim blocs" to revert to type, since by showing their true colours they would lose the supporters they have now. **"People, no matter how illiterate, are not stupid."**

El Mougy said there was a "tragic flaw" in the transition from the early days of the revolution in Egypt - from, in her words, the "age of innocence" to today's "age of wisdom."

"In the delirium of toppling (former Egyptian president Hosni) Mubarak, we handed power to the SCAF (Supreme Council of the Armed Forces)."

At that point in the transition of power, women's rights should have been part of the equation, said Nadya Khalife, Beirut-based researcher with the Women's Rights Division for Human Rights Watch.

"I was there in Tahrir Square at the International Women's Day protest," said Khalife. "Thousands of women were there. They must have felt safe enough. They must have felt vocal enough to go out and protest. Women weren't really doing anything but calling for democratic reforms and making sure that equality is part of the next Egypt. But they were attacked, they were sexually assaulted and they were slandered.

"As soon as a new government takes over, women's participation in bringing down a government is basically over. You're told to go back to your traditional role and unfortunately, that's what we've seen in Egypt."

Far away from the scene of action, Ottawa-based Alia Hogben, executive director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, admitted to being "cynical about what lies ahead.

"But," she said, "I still think it's remarkable that the women came forward. But I'm also old enough to remember that when Algeria was fighting for its independence (1954-62), a lot of women came forward, spectacular women. They were tortured by the French. They were heroines and everybody loved them and as soon as independence came along, they were pushed back into the kitchen and home."

For her part, Maysoun Faouri, director of a multi-lingual, multi-cultural Montreal support group, Concertation Femme, said it is unrealistic to expect that the patriarchal countries swept up in the Arab revolutions can change overnight. "I was an engineer-architect in Syria," she said. "All the women of my generation - I am 53 – were university graduates. We had access to education and also to jobs, but no political power.

"Where the conflict happened was with culture and tradition. Tradition will win out over the law, especially if there are people who are above the law."

Faouri thinks the economic downturn will ultimately benefit women. "Women have to work. Families can't survive without their income. Men want their wives to work. This means the conditions are there to ensure that women continue to be active in society.

"These governments should realize that once people have stopped being afraid, they won't stand for their rights being violated. If people don't achieve their dream of freedom, they will be back in the streets."

In Egypt, women and men were already back in the streets in mid-November, to protest against the army's
continued hold over the country's governing powers. But with clashes even more violent than they were in
January, women's rights have been pushed farther to the margins. Even joining an international protest proved too dangerous this fall. A coalition of women's rights organizations in Egypt pulled out of the international campaign 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. In a statement, the women said an orchestrated campaign of violence against them by the military and police forced them out.

"It is very difficult to push anything forward with regards to women's rights at the moment," said Khalife.
"Everything has been put on hold in Egypt. Everyone is focused on the political process, on what the next
parliament will look like and on what the new constitution will say."

Nearly a year after the Arab Spring uprisings, there is little to point to in the way of achievements

for women's rights, said Khalife. "I can't think of anything on the spur of the moment."

Tunisia, where the Arab revolution started, is the one country where women have made inroads into political power. In the October election, 49 women were elected to the constituent assembly, taking 22 per cent of the 217 seats. The newly elected president, longtime rights activist Moncef Marzouki, this week promised Tunisians the right to education, health care and employment, and equal rights for women.

Tunisia has long been different from other Arab countries, Khalife said. Women are protected by personal status laws, which first came into effect in 1956. Polygamy was outlawed; divorce made legal; marriage could be entered into only with the agreement of both parties. The law was further strengthened in 1993, with the institution of alimony payments and their strict enforcement. Rigorous prosecution of domestic violence was also part of the amendment.

"For Tunisian women, the personal status law is really something like their bible. They didn't want anyone to touch it. It gave them gender parity. The prospect of losing it galvanized women into action."

Other countries, like Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, are still "at a formative stage" when it comes to women's rights, said Khalife. "They are still putting the building blocks together. They don't have the advantage of the Tunisian women."

Inside Egypt, Sahar El Mougy refuses to yield to pessimism. "I know the revolution is being cornered, stabbed and beaten," she said, "but still, it's making the 10 to 15 per cent of Egyptians who participated in the revolution tougher. When the time is right - when people have realized how stupid the people who are running the country are - (the revolutionaries) will be back on the streets."

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# HOW HAVE CORRUPTION SCANDALS AND PRESIDENT ROUSSEFF'S IMPEACHMENT IN BRAZIL IMPACTED ITS ECONOMY?

*Flávia Bedicks*

**Abstract**

In 2009, Brazil was in the path to become a superpower. Immune to the economic crises of 2008, the country's economy benefitted from the commodity boom, achieving a growth rate of 7.5 per cent in 2010, when Rousseff was elected. A few years later, nonetheless, Brazil's boom turned into an economic bust. In 2014, the largest corruption scandal in its history denounced the involvement of major politicians, including then-President Rousseff, in schemes of money laundering. In this essay, I analyze the impacts of such scandals and Rousseff's impeachment on the Brazilian economy. I argue that these two events contributed indirectly to Brazil's economic instability, as they shone a light on larger structural problems such as unemployment and high public expenditures. Looking at the future, I conclude by discussing the challenges that face Temer's administration.

**Introduction**

On October 8, 2016, I was sitting at the Wilson Center listening to Brazil's current finance minister, Mr. Henrique Meirelles, suggest that the ongoing financial crisis in Brazil is as severe, if not worse, than the Great Depression. As I looked around the room, everyone's faces looked puzzled, worried, hopeless. The accumulation of lower commodity prices, corruption,

FLÁVIA BEDICKS is a student of Economics and International Studies. She graduates in May of 2017.
College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) and School of International Service (SIS), American University
Email: fb4631a@american.edu

impeachment, and inflation present in the last four years have shaken the Brazilian economy severely. Prices have skyrocketed, investors have fled, unemployment increased, and stagnation has arrived. In this paper, I analyze two specific factors that contributed to the chaotic economic situation in Brazil: the corruption scandals involving the state-owned company Petrobras and the subsequent impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff. I argue that these two events indirectly contributed to the economic situation of the country as they magnified the political instability in Brazil. To support my argument, I start by analyzing the political rise of Dilma Rousseff. Then I discuss the momentum she received in 2010 from the economic boom and the Lula years. After giving a background on Rousseff's debut as President of the Republic, I provide a detailed explanation of the Car Wash Operation since its start in 2009. Lastly, I analyze the political and economic consequences that the corruption scandal brought to Brazil, including Rousseff's impeachment. I conclude by discussing the challenges that face Temer's administration.

**The Rise of Dilma Rousseff**

Dilma Rousseff's debut as a Brazilian politician did not start in the twenty-first century as many would argue. Much earlier than that, in 1964, sixteen-year-old Rousseff served as a militant for the VAR-Palmares, an armed revolutionary organization that fought against the military dictatorship in Brazil. This organization, influenced by Debray's Revolution in the Revolution and Fidel Castro's success in Cuba, found an answer for Brazil in Marxism. However, in a repressive far-right military regime, VAR-Palmares lacked political rights. In 1970, Rousseff was arrested in São Paulo under charges of subversion. Condemned to six years in prison, Dilma lost her political rights. Her body still carries scars from the torture she experienced at the Tiradentes prison (Amaral, 2011).

Once released from prison, Rousseff met Leonel Brizola, an iconic figure in Brazil's political history, with whom she founded the Democratic Labour Party, or PDT (G1, 2016). Her involvement with the PDT coined her official debut in a legally recognized political organization. Through the PDT, Rousseff was elected Porto Alegre's Municipal Finance Secretary between 1985 and 1988. In 1989, she became director general of Porto Alegre's City Council under the administration of Alceu Collares. In 1991, Collares appointed Rousseff as the president of the Foundation of Economics and Statistics, where she served until being elected the state's Secretary of Energy, Mines and

Communications in 1993 (Amaral, 2011).

A few years later, Rousseff's trajectory with the Worker's Party (PT) would begin. In 1998, she helped PT-candidate for state governor Olivio Dutra to win an election in Rio Grande do Sul. By then, Rousseff's *de facto* affiliation had turned from the PDT to the PT—a fact confirmed later that year when she left PDT after the party decided to break with the PT. In 2001, Dilma's preference for the Worker's Party went viral. In 2003, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva appointed Rousseff as his Minister of Mining and Energy (Amaral, 2011). In the same year, Rousseff became the President of the Board of the Directors of Brazil's largest oil and state-owned enterprise (SOE), Petrobras. She presided over the SOE's board for seven years, resigning in 2010 to run for Brazil's presidency (Tavares, 2016).

Two years after being nominated Minister of Mining and Energy, Rousseff had proven to be a firm, competent politician who could handle Brasilia quite well. Lula, impressed by her skills and desperate to find a replacement for his Chief of Staff Jose Dirceu, who was caught in the mensalão, the largest corruption scandal of Brazilian political history until then, fell on her. In Rousseff, he found a friend and the fuel needed to reset Brasilia's engine. In 2005, Lula appointed Dilma as his newest Chief of Staff. He trusted her not only to manage Brazil's ministries, but also two of his administration's major programs. The first, "Minha Casa, Minha Vida," (my house, my life) promoted affordable housing for those living in poverty in Brazil. The second, "Programa de Aceleração de Crescimento" (growth acceleration program, also known as PAC), provided an economic stimulus package with investment projects in Brazil. This program was particularly responsible for increasing Rousseff's reputation, as Lula proudly entitled her the "mother of the PAC" (Amaral, 2011).

As Chief of Staff, "mother of the PAC," and Lula's *protégé*, Rousseff became the Worker's Party strongest candidate for the 2010 elections. Running her campaign on the motto "for Brazil to keep changing," Rousseff won the runoff with 56.95% of the votes (Savarese and Bencke, 2016).

**Rousseff Gains Momentum**

The 2010 elections served as a referendum on Lula's administration. The election of Dilma Rousseff confirmed the public approval of the programs and policies implemented by the Worker's Party. It also confirmed Brazil's oblivion toward corruption and the people's excitement towards the years to come. Brazilians were proud to have elected their first female President, but most importantly, they were eager to continue benefitting from a strong economy.

Brazil's economy reached a 24-year peak in 2010. The economy grew 7.5

per cent, unemployment kept low at 5 per cent (see figures 3 and 5), and the Brazilian Real was at its strongest rates since the implementation of the Real Plan (see appendix, Fig. I). In addition, as Besta points out, 2010 " saw the highest increase in monthly incomes of Brazilians at 1490.61 Brazilian real ($893.4), up 19 percent compared with levels in 2003. Per capita income was up 5.5 percent in 2010 compared with 2009" (2011). These numbers, subsequents of other factors like commodity prices boom and the discovery of Brazil's pre-salt, convinced Brazil's new middle-class, children of the cash transfer program Bolsa Familia, that reelecting the Worker's Party would serve them well. Rousseff's reelection thus served as a referendum on the Lula years and an engine to catalyze Brazil's potential overseas.

Both the media and academia shared their excitement to see Brazil's future, as they wrote about the country as the 21st century superpower. In the end of 2009, The Economist cover announced "Brazil Takes Off" (The Economist, 2009). In 2010, Peter Hakim published his book entitled "Brazil on the Rise" (Hakim, 2010) and Forbes released an article suggesting "Brazil's Economy Catches Its Breath" (Delgado, 2010). Following this route of excitement, Dauvergne and Farias wrote a well-known piece called "The rise of Brazil as a Global Development Power" in 2012 (Dauvergne and Farias, 2012).

These, among other publications, reflected the projections created for Brazil's economic path: a path to be of success, development, growth, power, independence, and global influence. The first years of Rousseff's administration were filled with momentum to see Brazil step into the role of global leader. However, the end of 2013 served as presage to a large group of politicians, including Lula and Rousseff, that the years to come would not be so glorious. The economy had stagnated with an annual growth of 0.9 per cent (see figure 3) and the June 2013 protests demonstrated the population's dissatisfaction with the Worker's Party administration. With more than 2 million people taking over the streets, they protested against rampant increases in bus fares, inflation, corruption, and lack of investment in education and infrastructure. By the end of the year, the media that had responded so positively to previous PT years started to question Brazil's direction. One year away from the World Cup, the international press doubted whether Brazil was ready to host the global event (Vanegas, 2013). In September 2013, The Economist asked "Has Brazil Blown It?" Investment companies, such as Morgan Stanley, published reports suggesting that Brazil's golden economy was "a tale from the emerging world" (The Economist, 2013).

**2014 and The Car Wash Operation**

2014 arrived with many surprises. For some, 2014 was the year of excitement as Brazil would host the World Cup. For others, 2014 was the year of despair. On one side, the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) and the Federal Police (PF) discovered what has become the largest corruption scandal in the history of Brazil. On the other side, the stagnation of the economy and the discontent with the government brought a sense of hopelessness that spread among Brazilians across all socioeconomic classes.

In 2014, an expansive investigation performed by the Public Prosecutor's Office was disclosed. Initiated in 2009, the Car Wash Operation, named after a network of gas stations and car washes that to managed illicit resources pertaining to a criminal organization in Brazil, investigated a Federal Deputy from the state of Paraná, accused of money laundering (MPF, 2016). The MP also investigated Alberto Youssef, a black market dollar dealer who was already familiar to the Federal Police. In 2013, telephone interceptions monitored conversations among several dollar dealers in order to obtain further information on the criminal organizations charged with money laundering (MPF, 2016). In July of that year, the Police learned about Youssef's car donation to a former Director of Petrobras, Paulo Roberto Costa (MPF, 2016). This discovery led the Police to suspect that these criminal organizations' network for money laundering was larger than ever thought. The investigations did not only involve politicians who had previously been involved in this kind of corruption scandals, but they also involved businessmen and contractor companies across the country.

As the Federal Police, along with the Public Prosecutor's Office, denounced the dimension and severity of the Car Wash Operation, the economy reacted in despair. The first phase of the Car Wash investigations happened in March 2014. In this phase, the Police along with the MP arrested 17 people, including dollar dealer Alberto Youssef and former Director of Petrobras, Paulo Roberto da Costa (MPF, 2016). Since then, political and economic turmoil arose in Brazil as the Operation would discover more people involved every single day. In April 2014, the scandal had escalated so deeply that a Parliamentary Inquiry Commission (CPI) on Petrobras was installed in the Senate to address issues pertaining solely to the corruption revealed in the Car Wash Operation (G1, 2016). In June, already in its fourth phase, the investigations revealed that most of the money laundered had been deposited into bank accounts in fiscal havens, such as Monaco and Switzerland. Among the owners of these accounts was Paulo Roberto da Costa (Borges, 2016). When invited to testify about the issue, nonetheless, Costa became known as a whistleblower. Speaking under a plea bargain, Costa explained how the laundering schemes worked. In addition, as he denounced major players in these

schemes, he cited the involvement of President Dilma Rousseff (Borges, 2016; MPF, 2016). By September 2014, the Car Wash Operation confirmed that part of the money laundering was illegally used to fund 2010 political campaigns from major parties, including Rousseff's PT and VP Michel Temer's PMDB (Borges, 2016). By the end of the year, the Operation had reached the seventh phase, arrested 39 people, and investigated four major Brazilian contractor companies: OAS, Odebrecht, Camargo Correa, and Queiroz Galvão (Borges, 2016).

Even though 2014 came to an end, the political and economic turmoil present in Brazil continued to worsen. The economic indicators were not showing an optimistic scenario. In 2014, the economy grew only 0.1 percent while inflation reached 6.41 percent (see figures 2 and 3). Talks about a recession dominated the news, while frustration dominated people's conversations about the government. Mistrusting the Worker's Party administration, Brazilians feared that the 6.8 percent unemployment rate would skyrocket (Borges, 2016). In addition, as the dollar continued to quickly appreciate, they feared that the bust after the boom had arrived. The same media outlets that had partaken in Brazil's exhilaration around 2010 now expressed their woes. The Economist published "Why Brazil Needs Change" (The Economist, 2014) followed by "Brazil In a Quagmire" (The Economist, 2015). The Independent article said "It's Chaos in Brazil - but don't panic" (Herbert, 2014) while Bloomberg announced early in 2015 "The Betrayal of Brazil" (Smith et al, 2015).

## 2015 and Instability Rises

Despite the Car Wash Operation and the frustration brought with it, the corruption scandal did not compromise the Worker's Party leadership. In November 2014, Dilma Rousseff was re-elected president after a runoff against the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) candidate Aécio Neves with 51.6% of the votes (G1, 2014). Even though the Car Wash Operation did not compromise the Worker's Party ability to re-elect Rousseff as President in 2014, the scandal and the economic despair dominating Brazil at the time alarmed Brasilia that instability was on the rise. Early in January 2015, then President of Petrobras, Graça Foster, suggested that the company had lost R$ 88,6 billion due to the Car Wash Scandal (G1, 2015). In February, a former manager of operations of Petrobras revealed that the Worker's Party had received somewhere between US$ 150 to US$ 200 million in one bribery contract (MPF, 2016). A few months later, as the investigation reached its twelfth phase, Folha de São Paulo, a renowned newspaper in Brazil, published

an interview with Ricardo Pessoa, a contractor CEO who claimed that his company had donated R$ 7.5 million to Dilma Rousseff's reelection campaign (MPF, 2016).

A famous saying in Brazil says that those who search for something, will eventually find it. This proverb was reiterated throughout all of the MP's investigations in 2015. The more the Car Wash Operation searched for corruption schemes, the more names it found and the more complex the network of money laundering actors was revealed to be. In 2015 alone, the investigation had fourteen phases, arresting more than forty people, condemning more than twelve, and recovering more than R$870 million (G1, 2016). Through these operations, the presidents of contractor companies such as Odebrecht were arrested. Politicians such as former Presidents of Brazil Fernando Collor and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, then-Presidents of the House and of the Senate, Eduardo Cunha and Renan Calheiros, respectively, and former Chief of Staff José Dirceu were denounced for being involved in major money laundering schemes.

If anything, 2015 was the year that shook Brasilia. Brazil's political "crème de la crème" was shaken. Most parties were involved; every politician was pointing fingers. The German newspaper Die Zeit compared the political intrigues in Brazil to those in House of Cards (Fischermann, 2016). In addition to the political turmoil, economic instability also emerged. Economic indicators demonstrated that the economy had contracted by 3.8 per cent in 2015, while inflation had escalated to 10.67 per cent (see figures 3 and 4). The Brazilian Real had been severely depreciated as the exchange rate against the US dollar appreciated to 3.95943 (see appendix, Fig. I). Unemployment reached 9 per cent, the highest level in the last four years (see figure 5). Likewise, the federal debt also broke the administration's record reaching almost R$ 2 trillion (see appendix, Fig. III). In tandem, the political and economic instability that dominated Brazil in 2015 set the tone for drastic changes in the year to come.

## 2016 and Rousseff's Fall

The economic and political instability present in Rousseff's second term extended to 2016 as well—so much so that her presidency was compromised. The Car Wash Operations continued to investigate major networks of politicians and contractor companies involved with Petrobras and its money laundering schemes. By the time this paper was written, The Public Prosecutor's Office, along with the Federal Police, has established 1,397 procedures, conveyed 654 searches and seizures, 77 preventive arrests, 92 temporary arrests, and 6 in flagrante delicto. The Operation has received 52 criminal charges against 254 people for crimes of corruption, drug-trafficking, formation of criminal organization, and money laundering (MPF, 2016). These crimes refer to briberies that sum up to

approximately R\$ 6.4 billion, of which R\$3.1 billion are to be recovered. Up to December 2016, the Car Wash Operation has condemned 118 people, accounting for more than 1,256 years of prison in total (MPF, 2016).

Different from the previous two years, nonetheless, the findings on the Petrolão compromised the Worker's Party administration like never before. As major members of the Party were arrested and indicted of money laundering crimes, Brazilians grew disillusioned with their political leadership. Just like in June 2013, the population returned to the streets demanding Rousseff to leave her office. Economic mismanagement caused inflation to increase to 10.7 per cent, and unemployment to reach 11 per cent. Tired of corruption and frustrated with the lack of investments in the country, people demanded change.

In May 2016, the Senate opened the process of impeachment against Rousseff. According to jurists Janaina Paschoal, Hélio Bicudo, and Miguel Reale Jr., Rousseff had violated the Fiscal Responsibility Law (G1, 2016). They claimed she had authorized R\$2.5 billion of additional expenses between July and August 2015. According to the Law, such authorization could not have happened since government expenditures did not match the fiscal goals for the year, especially since the administration was committed to increase its savings to pay the public debt (G1, 2016). Rousseff was also charged for borrowing money from other federal institutions such as the Central Bank and the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) to finance her government's social programs in 2015, as cash transfer Bolsa Familia and Plano Safra (G1, 2016). This is known as a "fiscal pedal" in Brazil, as the government seeks to disguise a breakdown in the public accounts. However, as the judges highlighted, "fiscal pedals" infringe the Fiscal Responsibility Law, which forbids the government from borrowing money from public banks that are under the Executive branch (G1, 2016).

With Rousseff temporarily removed from office for three months, Rousseff's VP, Michel Temer, was put in charge of the interim presidency. Forbes reported that for the first time since 2009, Brazil's current account went into surplus. The market reacted positively with an appreciation of the Brazilian Real (Rapoza, 2016). As Temer appointed his cabinet, he carefully selected conservative technocrats who would take Brazil to a route much different from that during the PT years. So much so that into two weeks after Dilma's temporary leave, Temer's Finance Minister Henrique Meirelles already proposed cuts of more than 2 per cent of the GDP (Rapoza, 2016).

During the interim months, political instability was followed by acute polarization. On one side, scholars, mainstream civilians, politicians,

and the press would argue that it was time for Dilma and her crew to go (The Economist, 2016). On the other side, people would argue that Rousseff's impeachment was a political coup orchestrated by the Brazil's Rightist elite. Despite disagreements, the Senate voted 61 to 20 to impeach Rousseff, convicting her of infringing the Fiscal Responsibility Law. Then-interim head of state, Mr. Michel Temer took over Brasilia, where he will preside until 2018 (Romero, 2016).

**Impacts on the Economy**

Measuring the economic impacts of the Car Wash Operations as well as Rousseff's impeachment is not an easy task. An anonymous officer at the Brazilian Embassy in Washington DC suggested that the consequences brought by the economic and political instability in Brazil could by no means be quantified. For her, "the corruption scandal in Brazil removed the cork from the bottle. It served to shine light on larger structural obstacles that the country already faced both economically and politically." While I agree with the officer's argument that Brazil's de facto struggle refers to structural issues rather than corruption alone, I disagree that the economic impacts of the Car Wash Operation, as well as the impeachment, cannot be quantified. In this section, I will address the economic indicators that I personally monitored at the Embassy of Brazil, as well as some scholarly arguments, as an endeavor to measure the impact of both events on the Brazilian economy.

The Car Wash Operation contributed to the economic and political instability present in Brazil, but it was not the protagonist factor. The Operation, with the help of the press, was able to reveal the expansive network of corrupted politicians across Brazil. Such revelation did not give room for people's political complacency. For the first time, a corruption scandal compromised political parties and their members. In this way, the corruption scandal contributed to the political instability in the country. In addition, the scandal also played a role impacting the economic instability in Brazil. As corruption schemes and political instability were revealed to the public, investments decreased severely. Compromising Brazil's credibility, the Car Wash Operation and the impeachment spillovers detracted foreign investment. As Figure 1 shows, from 2014 to 2016, FDI decreased by almost US$20 billion. Moreover, domestic investments also decreased. The continuous increase in the interest rate has prevented investors from borrowing money (see appendix, fig. IV), and the involvement of major contractor companies in the corruption scandals have left no one to work on big infrastructure projects in the country. According to

consultancy firm Tendências, domestic investments shrunk 6 per cent in 2016 alone (Ribeiro and Cortez, 2016).

**Figure 1: Inflow of FDI in Brazil from 1994 to Present in US$ billions**
**Source: World Bank Data**



Besides investments, the Car Wash Operations as well as the impeachment impacted Brazil's GDP. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate how the economy shrunk since 2013. Figure 2 in particular show how the economy contracted, thus taking the country into a severe recession. Alessandra Ribeiro, from Tendências, has argued that the Petrolão is a factor that potentialized the contraction of the GDP. For her, two out the 3.8 per cent decline in economic growth relates back to the scandals (Ribeiro and Cortez, 2016).

**Figure 2: Brazil's Gross Domestic Product from 2000 to 2015 in current US$ millions**
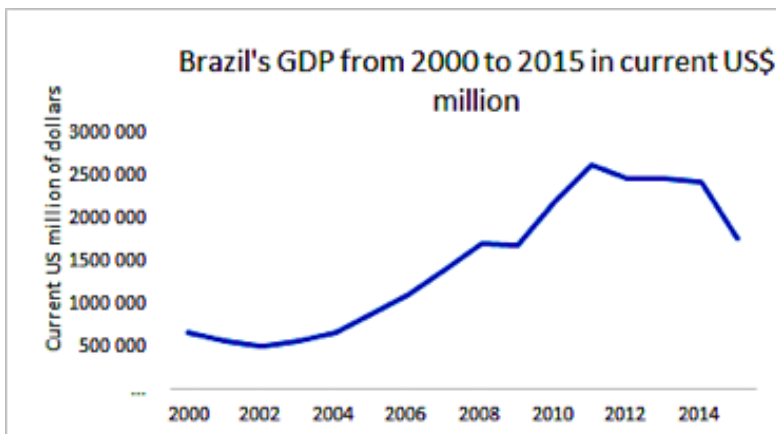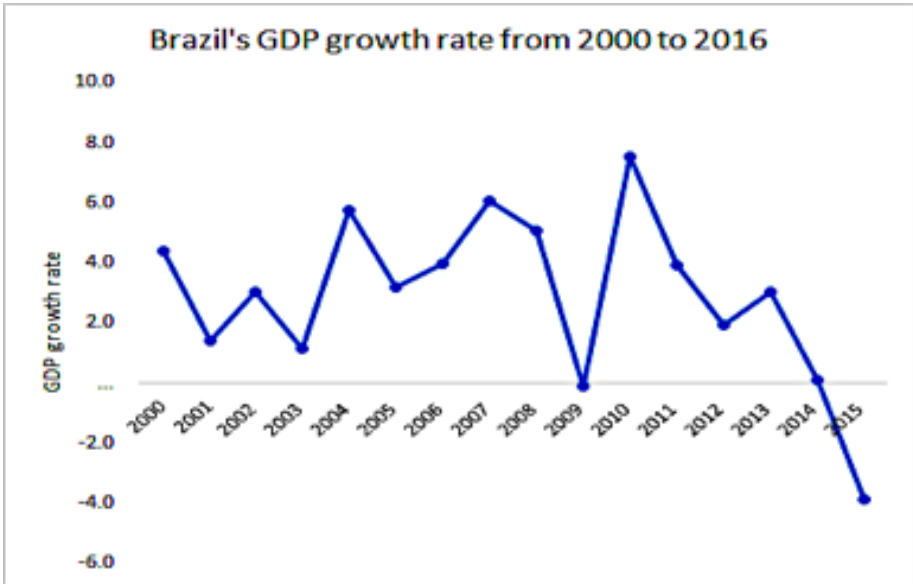**Source: BACEN**

**Figure 3: Brazil's economic growth from 2000 to 2016**
**Source: BACEN**



A decline in economic activity came in tandem with a rise in inflation as well as in the unemployment rate. In this case, the impacts of the two events analyzed might be indirectly related, nonetheless still present. The mismanagement of the economy has caused inflation to reach almost 11 per cent in 2015. This inflation, followed by the lack of investments, and the decline in economic activity may have decreased the number of jobs available in the market. Figures 4 and 5 show the price fluctuation as well as the unemployment rate in the last years. For Bruno Lavieri, "blaming the Car Wash Operation [for unemployment and stagnation] is like blaming the doctor for finding his patient's disease." However, as GO Associates have argued, this indirect impact of the investigations have costed more than 2 million jobs in two years due to the lack of infrastructure projects with Petrobras and contractor companies (UOL, 2016). Petrobras alone composed 13 per cent of the economic activities in Brazil (Petrobras, 2016). According to Getúlio Vargas Foundation, "the decrease in Petrobras' activities due to the Car Wash Operations could take away R$7 billion from the economy, lead to the loss of more than 1 million vacancies and a R$ 5.7 billion fall in the collection of taxes by the Union, states and municipalities in 2015" (UOL, 2016).

**Figure 4: Inflation levels in Brazil from 1995 to 2016**
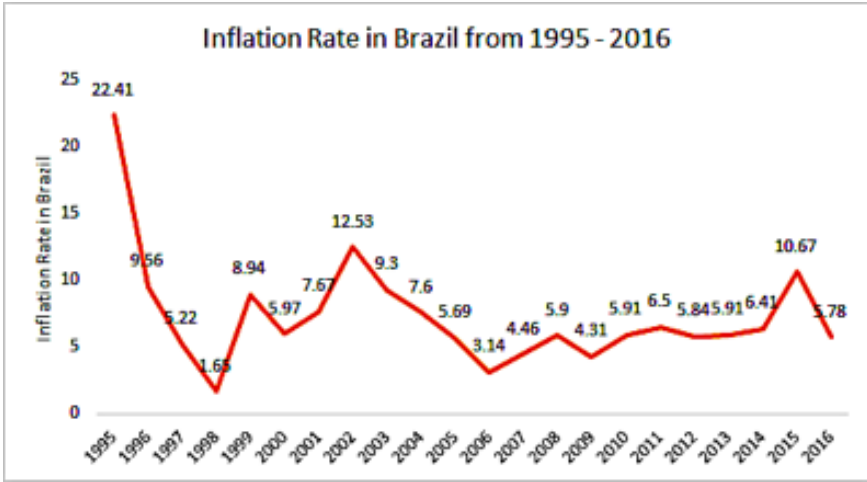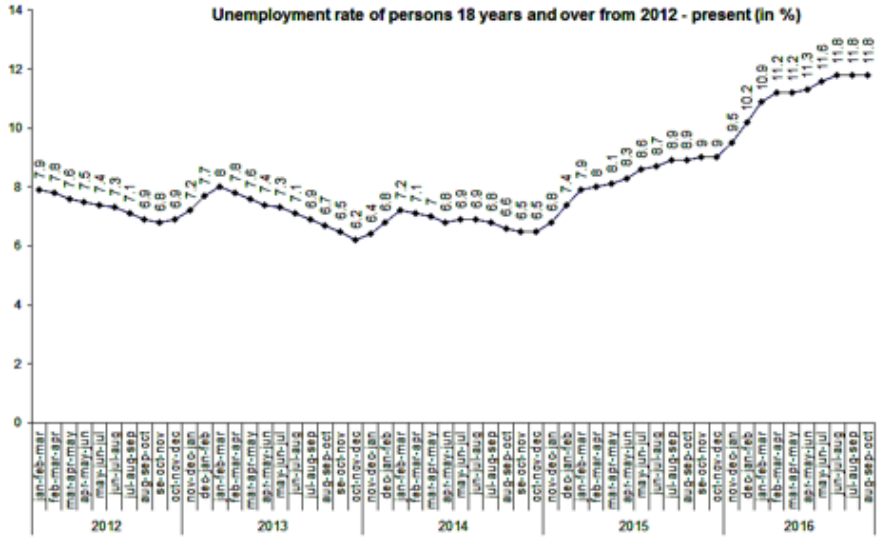
**Source: IBGE**



**Figure 5: Unemployment rate of persons 14 years or older from 2012 to present in Brazil**

**Source: IBGE**

Although the impeachment and the corruption scandal did not single-handedly cause Brazil's economic recession, they shone a light on major existent structural problems such as corruption, fiscal pedals, lack of investments, and poor allocation of resources. Moreover, both events indirectly contributed, even though did not cause, the economic crisis. The corruption scandal influenced the decline in economic activities and lack of investments in the country, which subsequently increased the unemployment rate. In addition, inflation became rampant and political instability remained. With that, government expenditures increased and private savings decreased significantly, as Figure 6 reveals.

**Figure 6: Composition of Brazil's GDP in terms of private consumption, current account balance, government expenditure, and private savings**
**Source: World Bank Data**
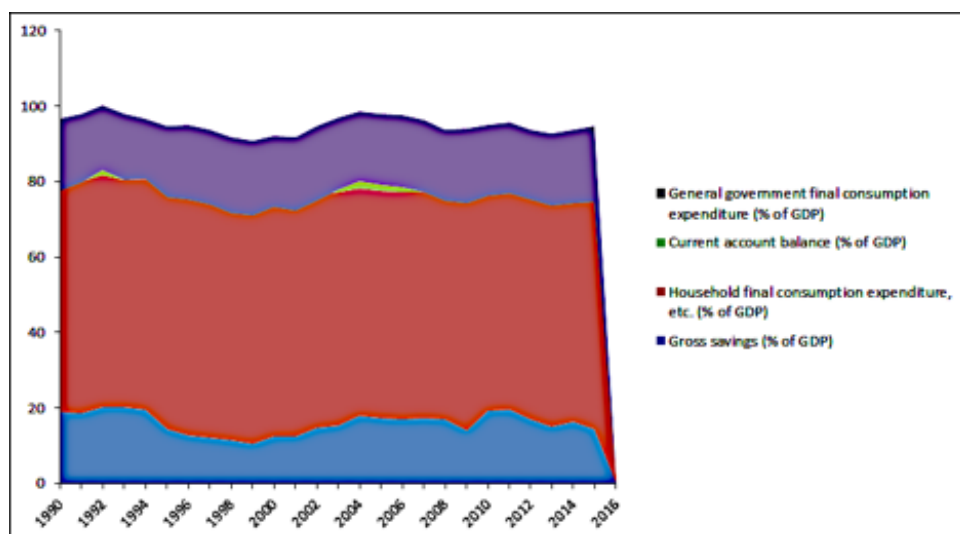


## Conclusion

With Michel Temer's administration comes new challenges. Foreign and domestic investors remain skeptical of Brazil's economic and political situation. Unemployment and inflation remains high, investments remain low, and the Brazilian Real continues depreciated. Since his inauguration, Temer dedicated most of his time and effort to get Bill 241 approved in Congress. This Bill proposes to reduce public spending and to balance the public accounts by freezing government expenditures in the next twenty years (Alessi, 2016). However, getting Bill 241 approved is not everything. President Temer will have to address several other factors such as Social Security and Tax reforms, unemployment rate, social

agenda, and Congress polarization to be able to recover from the economic and political instability that the Car Wash Operations shone a light to.

## Appendix

**Figure I: Price of US dollars in Brazilian Reais from 2011 to Present**
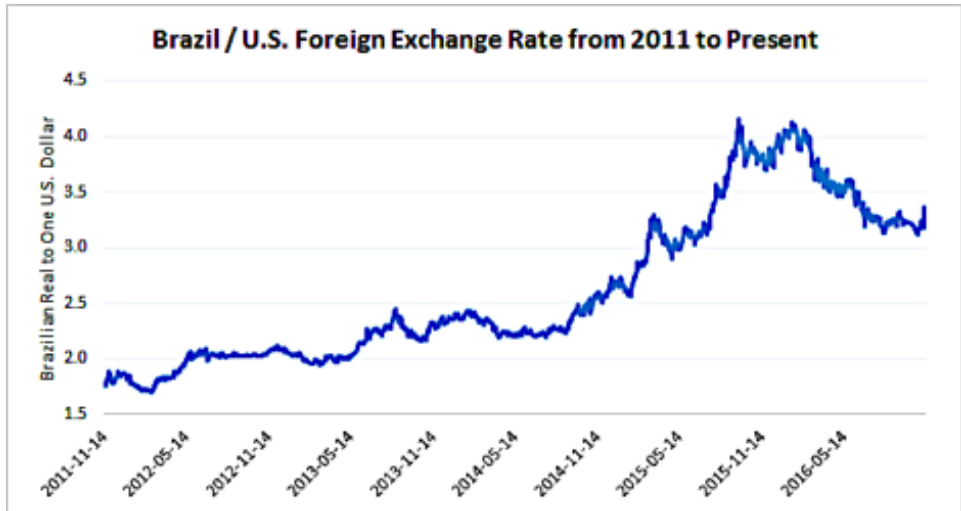
**Source: FRED**



**Figure II: Brazil's Public Debt in R$ millions from 2002 to 2016**
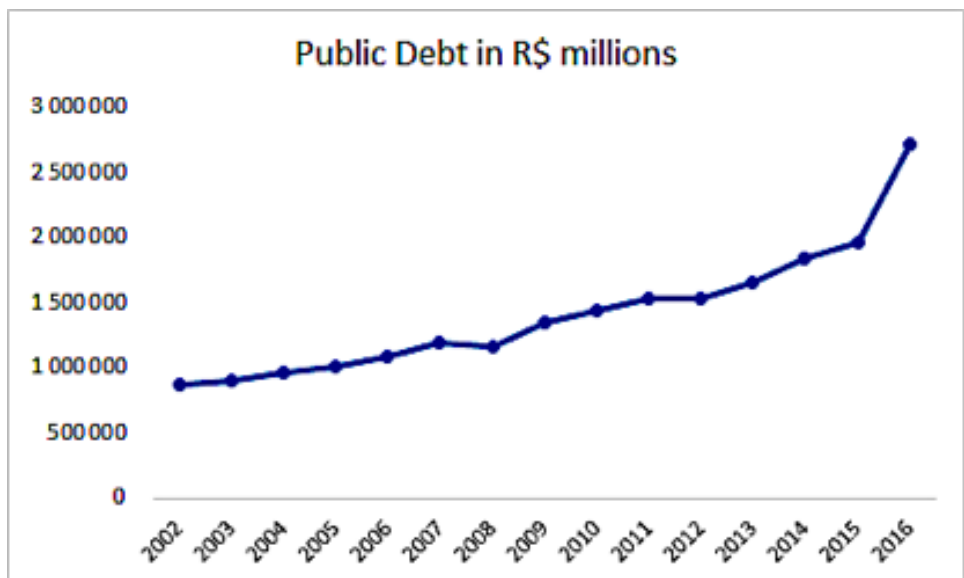
**Source: Tesouro Nacional**

**Figure III: Brazil's Public Debt as a Percent of its GDP from 2002 to Present**
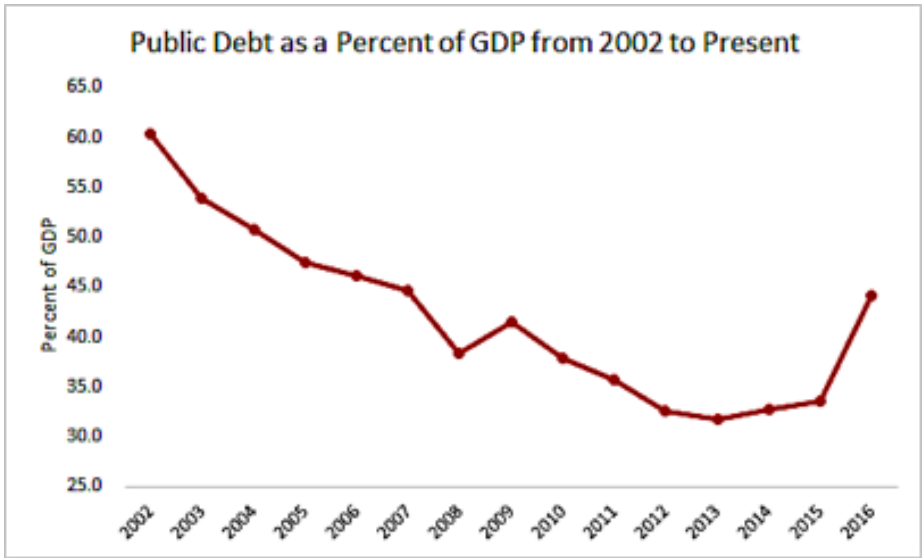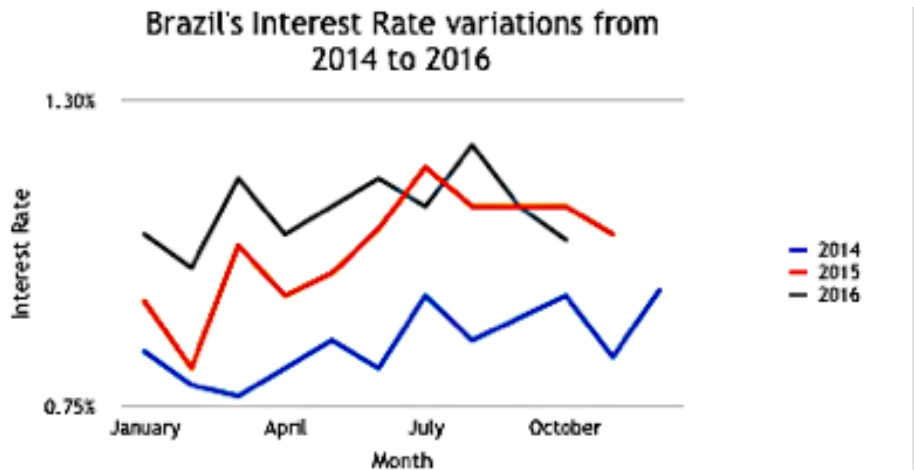
**Source: Tesouro Nacional**



**Figure IV: Brazil's monthly Interest Rate levels from 2014 to 2016**

**Source: BACEN**



## Glossary

BACEN - Central Bank of Brazil

BNDES - Brazilian Development Bank

CPI - Parliamentary Inquiry Commission
MP - Public Prosecutor's Office
PAC - Growth Acceleration Program
PF - Federal Police of Brazil
PDT - Democratic Labor Party
PMDB - Brazilian Democratic Movement Party
PSDB - Brazilian Social Democracy Party
PT - Worker's Party
SOE - State-Owned Enterprise

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# MORE CHOICES MORE VOICES?

*Nikko Bilitza*

## Abstract

The relationship between party system fragmentation and voter turnout is not entirely understood in contemporary political science literature. It is often assumed that party system fragmentation is a primary driver of proportional representation's tendency to produce higher turnout, however its effects on turnout across electoral systems has been sparsely studied. This paper seeks to assess this relationship through a sample study of 17 countries with both majoritarian and proportional electoral studies. The study finds that increased party system fragmentation increases voter turnout in countries with proportional electoral systems while decreasing turnout in countries with majoritarian electoral systems.

## Introduction

Within political science the relationship between increased party system fragmentation and proportional representation is well known. Many political scientists contend that the increased party system fragmentation that proportional representation is associated with partly drives this trend by offering more options and increasing the amount of parties mobilizing voter (Taagepera et al. 2013). Despite the frequency of this claim, not as much has been written about the effect of simply more party system fragmentation across both proportional representation countries and majoritarian countries.

NIKKO BILITZA was a student of Government.
He graduated in December of 2016.
School of Public Affairs (SPA), American University
Email: nb9030a@american.edu

If more electoral parties are contending an election, are more voters driven to turnout for their favorite choice niche party and are voters more mobilized due to an increased amount of parties trying to turnout their base? In this study I set out to analyze if increased party system fragmentation leads to increased voter turnout in both majoritarian and proportional representation countries. I hypothesize that increased amount of party system fragmentation leads to increased turnout and voter satisfaction. In my study I have found that increasing party system fragmentation increases voter turnout in proportional representation elections while decreasing voter turnout in majoritarian elections. Thus, the actual relationship between party system fragmentation and turnout is largely based off the electoral system in use.

## Literature Review: Two Perspectives on the Effect of Fragmented Party Systems

There is a sizable amount of literature that asserts that proportional electoral systems are associated with increased voter turnout (Listhaug et al. 2009; Banducci et al. 1999). In his landmark work "Patterns of Democracy," Lipjhart noted that on average voters in proportional representation democracies have a much higher turnout rate than voters in majoritarian democracies (Lijphart 1999: 286). However, how and why exactly proportional representation has so consistently generated higher voter turnout has yet to be adequately explained (Blais and Aarts 2006). This is where the question of party systems enters the debate. Many studies argue that the more fragmented party system in proportional representation countries is at least part of the reason why proportional representation generally preforms so well in these metrics (Taagepera et al. 2013). Others such as Dr. Blais and Dr. Dobryznska contend that proportional representation preforms well, in spite of, not because of, its fragmented party system (Blais and Dobrzynska 2003). Thus the literature is divided into two separate schools of thought.

### Confusion and Lack of Control

Much of the literature on party systems has been critical of the idea that there is a positive relationship between increased party fractionalization and percent voter turnout. Many political scientists contend that the lack of decisiveness due to inter-party negotiations about forming coalitions depresses voter turnout. Dr. Downs was the first to tackle the question of party systems and voter turnout in his pioneering work "An Economic Theory of Democracy" (1957). Dr. Downs argued that voters would not turnout to vote as much in highly

fragmented party systems due to the lack of decisiveness in their vote (1957). Party systems with low fragmentation present clear choices in who will govern, while highly fragmented party systems allow politicians, more than voters, to determine who will form a government (1957). This argument was further developed by Dr. Jackman in one of the landmark studies on party systems and voter turnout, "Political Institutions and Voter Turnout in the Industrial Democracies" (1987). Dr. Jackman arrived at a similar conclusion as, arguing that "multi-partyism assigns elections a less decisive role in government formation, depressing turnout" (1987). Dr. Jackman also argued that, contrary to intuition, having more parties would not cause people to turn out. Rather, most of those voters would not vote because the threshold to achieve legislative representation is much more difficult to surmount in majoritarian systems and thus likely to result in the voter wasting their vote (Jackman 1987). Dr. Vowel later provided evidence of how voters' apparent frustration with multi-party elections can depress turnout. In his 2002 analysis of New Zealand's post-mixed member proportional system, Dr. Vowel showed that the perceived lack of control of coalition bargaining during the post-electoral reform period decreased overall voter turnout (2002). Dr. Aarts and Dr. Thomassen echoed this sentiment critiquing fragmented party systems for "blurring the clarity of responsibility and making the sanction of elections as an instrument of accountability into a rather blunt weapon." (Aarts and Thomassen 2008).

Many studies have also argued that the sheer volume of options confuses voters and thus dampens voter turnout (Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011; Powell 2000; Brockington 2004; Huber et al. 2005). In their seminal work "Turnout in Electoral Democracies" Dr. Blais and Dr. Dobrzynska found evidence for this argument, writing that "turnout declines by 4 points when the number of parties moves from 2 to 6, but by only 2 points from 6 parties to 10 and from 10 to 15" (2003). Thus, they concluded that party system fragmentation beyond 3 parties confused voters, as well as making them less interested in the election, because the resulting government would be decided through coalition deals (Blais and Dobrzynska 2003). Furthermore, they argue that the increased voter turnout related to proportional representation is not caused by the highly fragmented party systems, but rather, in spite of the fragmentation (Blais and Dobrzynska 2003).

*More Alternatives and Less Alienation*

The argument for the close tie between increasing party system fragmentation and increasing voter turnout hinges primarily on the idea

that more voters will turnout more due to an increased ability to find a party they strongly identify with, and increased net mobilization efforts (Taagepera et al. 2013). This perspective is best summed up by Dr. Blais and Bodet who wrote "An individual voter is more likely to find a party that expresses views similar to his or her own if there are 10 parties running in the election and actually represented in the legislature than if there are only 2" (2006). Dr. Blais and Dr. Aarts argue that more parties will result in more mobilization and especially more mobilization of niche groups that feel more effectively represented by smaller parties (2006). Although there are many studies that are critical of the idea of a positive relationship between party system fragmentation and voter turnout, there are also plenty of studies that have argued that a positive relationship does exist between parties and voter turnout. Dr. Martin and Dr. Plümper have authored one such study; in their study of multiparty systems and voter turnout they concluded that "turnout rates in multiparty systems are higher because a larger number of voters find their preferences represented by some party" (2005). Dr. Taageprera, Dr. Selb, and Dr. Grofman concluded from their study of party systems that the relationship between parties and voter turnout was curvilinear with increasing parties correlated with increasing voter turnout, though only up to a certain point (Taagepera et al. 2013). In his study of party systems, Dr. Cerpaz offers credible evidence that more fragmented party systems offer a "great menu of political choices" that leads to "more people stimulated to vote" (1990).

Several studies have shown strong evidence that party fracturing reduces a feeling of "alienation" and "indifference" to the party system which seems to indicate a potential for higher levels of engagement with politics and thus higher voter turnout (Crepaz 1990). In their study of the Canadian party system's fragmentation in the 1990s, Dr. Bittner, Dr. Matthews and Dr. Johnston found that fragmentation decreased alienation and indifference amongst Canadian voters (2007). The authors also found that increased party system fragmentation ameliorated the effect of an overall decline in turnout due to other factors (Bittner et al. 2007). Dr. Martin and Dr. Plümper found that increased party system fragmentation led to reduction in "alienation" and "indifference" in the electorate as a result of increased party choices (Martin and Plümper 2005).

Some scholars support the theory that increasing party system fragmentation positively impact voter turnout but are careful to emphasize the role of institutions and political conditions. Dr. Ezrow and Dr. Xezonakis in their study of ideological congruence party systems concluded that more party choices that are close to the median voter increases satisfaction and thus possibly also turnout (2011). In a recently published paper Dr. Boulding and Dr. Brown concluded increasing party system fracturing increased voter turnout in proportional

representation systems while also decreasing voter turnout in majoritarian systems (2015). However, this clashes with several studies that found an increase in effective minor parties had a positive effect on voter turnout in majoritarian elections (Burden and Lacy 1992; Bittner et al. 2007).

For the purposes of this paper, I choose to use the "More Alternatives and Less Alienation" school of thought. The substantial amount of work on how increased parties lead to less alienation and indifference seems to indicate increased interest and engagement. Critics of the supposed confusion and opacity of fragmented party system elections fail to acknowledge that single party majority government elections fail to produce higher voter turnout than multiparty elections (Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998). There is also little evidence of mass voter confusion. In his survey of electoral systems, Farrell notes that there is only a .5 percent increase in invalid votes in multiparty systems (Farrell, 2011: 226). Furthermore, despite the body of work present, the question is far from settled. Dr. Blais, one of the foremost authors in the field wrote "The bottom line is that we have a poor understanding of the relationship between the number of parties and turnout" (Blais 2006). Thus, I find the second school of thought more compelling and deserving of further study.

**Research Design**

For the purposes of this paper I will be analyzing whether increasing party system fragmentation increases voter turnout. Does increasing fragmentation lead to confusion and apathy amongst voters or increased net mobilization and voter enthusiasm? I hypothesize that increased party system fragmentation will lead to increased voter turnout. I will be testing this claim by evaluating the voter turnout in high and low party system fragmentation countries. If I find higher voter turnout in my sample of high party system fragmentation countries, then my thesis will be confirmed.

*Variation*

For the purposes of this study I will be analyzing data from 34 countries (Table 1). I will draw on data from 17 countries with fragmented party systems and 17 countries with less fragmented party systems. The countries are then further divided up by electoral system, there are 8 countries with low party system fragmentation and 8 countries with high party system fragmentation party system with majoritarian electoral systems. I will also be analyzing data from 9 countries with proportional representation electoral

systems and low party system fragmentation and 9 countries with proportional representation electoral systems and high party system fragmentation. By using such a large sample size, I ensure a high level of variation within my sample. Furthermore, the countries come from a variety of regions and continents. The sample countries also vary in terms of their experience with democratic systems, some of them are older industrial democracies, while others are developing, recently democratized states. The selected sample also possess a large amount of variation in terms of country sizes. Lastly, within each subset I was also sure to create a high level of developmental and societal variation through using the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index's (HDI) classification of development (Table 2). Each subset contains a variety of countries classified as "low human development," "medium human development," "high human development" and "very high human development." This will ensure that my results are reflective of a wide swath of countries and not just either developing or developed countries.

**Table 1: Case Studies**

|  | **Majoritarian Electoral System** | **Proportional Electoral System** |
|---|---|---|
| **More Fragmented Party System** | India, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Canada, United Kingdom, and France | Brazil, Chile, Moldova, Guatemala, Netherlands, Serbia, Costa Rica, Latvia, and Austria |
| **Less Fragmented Party System** | Botswana, Burundi, Solomon Islands, Bhutan, Ghana, Jamaica, United States, and Trinidad and Tobago | Turkey, Poland, El Salvador, South Africa, Spain, Albania, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Malta |

**Table 2: UNDP Human Development Indicators**

|  | **Majoritarian Electoral System** | **Proportional Electoral System** |
|---|---|---|
| **More Fragmented Party System** | 2 Low Human Development Countries<br>3 Medium Human Development Countries<br>3 Very High Human Development Countries | 2 Medium Human Development Countries<br>3 High Human Development Countries<br>4 Very High Human Development Countries |
| **Less Fragmented Party System** | 2 Low Human Development Countries<br>3 Medium Human Development Countries<br>2 High Human Development Countries<br>1 Very High Human Development Countries | 1 Medium Human Development Countries<br>5 High Human Development Countries<br>3 Very High Human Development Countries |

Source: UNDP International Human Development Indicators, http://hdp.undp.org/en/countries

*Control*

When analyzing factors such as voter turnout at a country-by-country level, it is difficult to control for the many cultural, societal, and political factors that can affect voter turnout. Despite this uncertainty I am relatively confident that I have controlled for many potentially confounding factors and have created a valid research design. As noted in the literature review there is sizeable evidence that proportional representation systems have higher voter turnout. To ensure that this does not affect my data, I will break up my sample up by electoral system and analyzed the results within each electoral systems. This allows me to isolate the effect of party system fragmentation independent of electoral systems and their various properties.

Socioeconomic factors play a very powerful role in voter turnout so it is very important to control for that in the study of voter turnout amongst various countries (Blais and Dobrzynska 2003). I was sure to maintain a roughly proportionate share of low, medium, high and very highly developed countries within each electoral system's sample. For example, within the sample of majoritarian countries each unit of analysis has 2 low human development countries, 3 medium development countries and 3 high/very high development countries. By doing this I ensure that my results reflect differences in party system fragmentation, not difference in social or economic development.

*Indicators for Independent Variables*

For my independent variable, the party system fragmentation level of individual countries, I will draw on data from the University of Gothenburg's Quality of Government Institute Quality of Government Standard Data. Within Quality of Government Standard Data I will use the 2010 data on the effective number of electoral parties to determine whether a given country has a low or high level of party system fragmentation. This measure is both valid and reliable as the QoG Standard Data is a highly reputable source. Furthermore, my study is focused around elections so it makes sense to use the effective number of electoral parties rather than the effective number of legislative parties.

To differentiate between high and low system fragmentation within party systems I will use a cut-off amount of effective electoral parties to differentiate between high and low system fragmentation. Because proportional representation has a propensity to generate more fragmented party systems and majoritarian systems tend to generate much less fragmented systems, I have set different cut-offs for each system. For proportional representation I

have set the cut off at 3.5 effective electoral parties, for majoritarian systems I will use a cut off of 2.75 effective electoral parties. Most majoritarian countries only have a bit over 2 effective electoral parties so this threshold allows me to analyze those that break out of this pattern and have a functional sample size. Similarly, for proportional representation most party systems do not go below 3 effective electoral parties so this cut-off allowed me to meaningfully analyze different levels of fragmentation within proportional representation along with allowing a functional sample size.

*Indicators for Dependent Variables*

To analyze the voter turnout across my sample countries I will draw my data from the reputable International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance's (IDEA) comprehensive voter turnout database. I will use IDEA's database to calculate the mean voter turnout for every country from 2005-2010. This is a valid and reliable measure because it uses a reputable data source and allows me to analyze the voter turnout across many different countries with varying electoral cycles and election frequency.

*Summary*

In sum this research design allows me to accurately evaluate the effect of party system fragmentation on voter turnout. By incorporating 34 different countries from a variety of continents, regions and with varying experience with democracy and levels of development, I ensure a good amount of variation within the data. In regards to control it will always be difficult to account for the many social, cultural, and political factors that play into voter turnout. However, I am confident that with my data and within reason, I have effectively controlled for many economic and social factors by having each electoral system's units of analysis have proportionate number of developed and under developed countries.

**Sample Study with 17 Countries**

The debate about the effect of fragmented party systems on voter turnout has yet to be resolved. Some contend that increased choices will lead to confusion and a feeling of apathy due to lack of control over how the actual government is formed. Others argue that an expanded number of parties means that more voters can find parties they identify strongly with and thus be more motivated to voter turnout for an election. The data from this case study indicates that neither is absolutely

correct. In majoritarian countries increased party system fragmentation leads to decreased voter turnout. In proportional representation countries increased party system fragmentation leads to increased voter turnout.

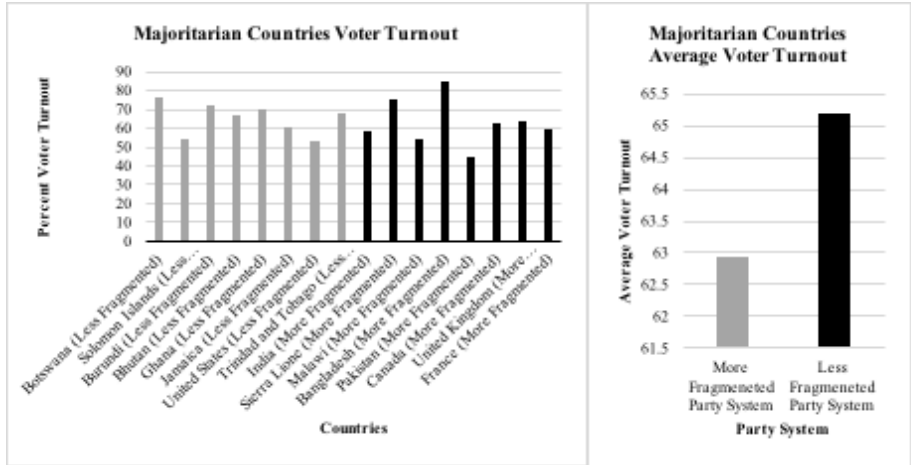*Voter Turnout Compared for Majoritarian Countries*



**Chart 1: Voter Turnout Compared: Majoritarian Countries**

Source: The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, http://www.idea.int/vt/viewdata.cfm#

Let us look at the countries with majoritarian electoral system first. When analyzing my results, shown in Chart 1, the data clearly indicate that party systems that are less fragmented have higher voter turnout. The more fragmented majoritarian party systems averaged 62.93 percent voter turnout compared to the 65.2 percent voter turnout of less fragmented party systems. This roughly 2 percent difference proves my thesis wrong. Thus we must evaluate explanations for why voter turnout was depressed in majoritarian countries with a larger number of party choices and more parties mobilizing voters. The percentages for the less fragmented party systems are fairly uniform across countries, while the results for the more fragmented party systems are much more variable with both very high and very low percentages. It would be interesting to see if the gap between more and less fragmented party systems would be smaller if Pakistan and Bangladesh were replaced by another equally developed majoritarian and highly fragmented country.

If more party fragmentation truly does depress voter turnout then we

must consider some of the possible reasons for this counter-intuitive phenomenon. Were voters in the high party fragmentation districts confused by the high number of parties running? Dr. Downs famously argued that too many choices will overwhelm voters and discourage them from voting. This seems unlikely. The average number of effective electoral parties contesting an election in the highly fragmented majoritarian systems was 4.395. A high number to be sure, but not an amount that should be difficult for someone to navigate at the ballot. In his authoritative survey of the literature "What Affects Voter Turnout?" Dr. Blais agrees, writing "I do not find the interpretation that the number of parties increases information costs very plausible either. Voters do not have to inform themselves about each party" (Blais 2006). Overall the confusion-based explanation seems to be one of the leas plausible explanations.

Another common explanation is the lack of control for the voter in terms of the final makeup of the governing coalition. This notion of accountability has received much support in the literature as an explanation of the negative relationship between parties and voter turnout (Aarts and Thomassen 2008). However this explanation lacks empirical support, a study by Dr. Blair and Dr. Dobrzynska actually found that single party governments are more associated with lower voter turnout than multiparty governments (Blair and Dobrzynska, 1998).

Another more recent theory comes from Dr. Boulding and Dr. Brown in their recent paper "Do Political Parties Matter for Turnout? Number of Parties, Electoral Rules and Local Elections In Brazil And Bolivia." Dr. Boulding and Dr. Brown argue that more parties contesting majoritarian elections results in more apathetic voters (2015). The authors argue that this is caused by more people supporting parties with little chance of winning a majoritarian election on their own (2015). Majoritarian elections in a country with less party system fragmentation experiences higher voter turnout because many of the minor party supporters coalesce around one of the few major parties. Thus, what enthusiasm and engagement a larger amount of political choices may garner is spoiled by lack of viability of most of the choices. This theory seems to be perhaps the least problematic explanation and warrants further research.

The results of my study indicate that for countries with majoritarian electoral systems, increased party system fragmentation results in a 2 percent decrease in voter turnout. The potential reasons for this could be confusion amongst voters or a perception of a lack of accountability or the greater hurdle to overcome for small parties and their voters in majoritarian systems.

*Voter Turnout Compared for Proportional Representation Countries*

**Chart 2: Turnout Compared: Proportional Representation Countries**
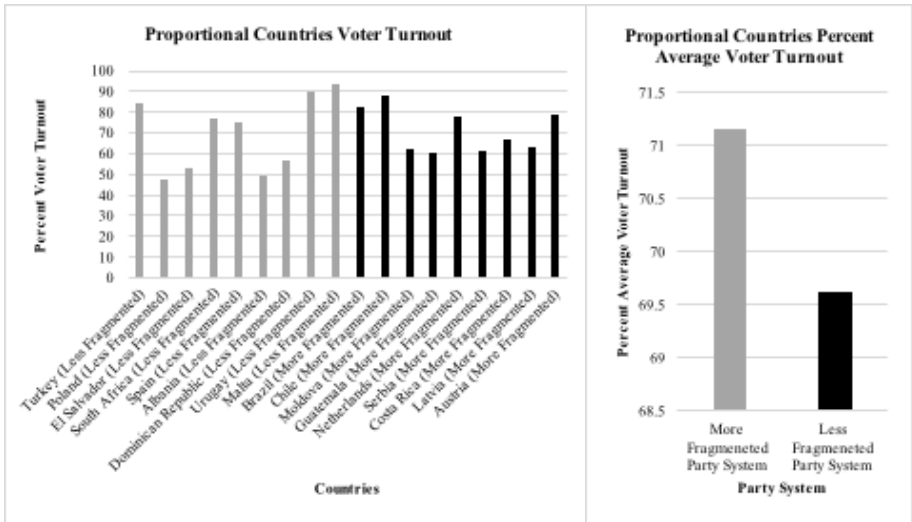
The analysis of the data for the proportional representation countries as shown in Chart 2 seems to clearly match my thesis. The data indicate that countries with proportional representation with more party system fragmentation have an average voter turnout of 71.16 percent. The data also show that less fragmented party systems have an average voter turnout of just 69.62 percent. The data for the less fragmented party system countries is characterized by a high variability ranging from 47 percent to 93 percent, while the data for the more fragmented countries appears more uniform covering a much smaller range (60% - 87%). Again the data show a 2 percent difference between the two party systems, however this time the data indicates the reverse of the last data set. The data clearly show that more fragmented party systems amongst proportional representation countries have higher voter turnout. This confirms my thesis that increased party system fragmentation can result in increased voter turnout.

## Discussion

The study clearly shows several patterns of interest and proves my thesis wrong. Within the sample of majoritarian countries an increase in party system fragmentation was associated with a decrease in percent voter turnout. However, in proportional representation countries, an increase in party system fragmentation clearly led to an increase in percent voter turnout. This

is a remarkable trend and indicates that increasing party system fragmentation affects majoritarian and proportional representation countries' voter turnout in completely different ways. As a result I conclude that my hypothesis, increased amount of party system fragmentation leads to increased voter turnout, was partially disproved by the study. The study illustrates that the effects of party system fragmentation on voter turnout is much more nuanced and complex than my hypothesis made it out to be. Instead it seems that the electoral system context is crucial to understanding how increasing party fragmentation will affect voter turnout.

*Potential Implications for Majoritarian Countries*

Certain elements of a highly fragmented party system seem to makes it conducive to increased voter turnout within proportional representation countries but not majoritarian countries. Many political scientists have asserted that more party fragmentation leads to more net party mobilization resulting in higher overall voter turnout. Perhaps the results of my study indicate that parties behave differently in terms of mobilization in different systems. In many ways majoritarian systems do not incentivize parties to mobilize to the same degree as in proportional representation countries. Parties do not want to waste their resources, this is especially true for smaller parties in majoritarian systems where they may be at a disadvantage (Boulding and Brown 2013). As a result parties acting in majoritarian systems mobilize only the voters needed to win certain elections (Boulding and Brown 2013). Parties have no incentive to maximize turnout endlessly but they have every incentive to only mobilize sufficient voters in districts where they have the support and resources to win a majoritarian election (Boulding and Brown 2013). For example in Quebec the emergence of The Bloc Québécois did nothing to mobilize voters or draw voters to the polls in ridings outside of Quebec (Bittner et al. 2007). Thus in majoritarian systems parties have no incentive to restlessly mobilize and try to increase voter turnout across the country. Parties only need to boost their voter turnout within electoral districts where they are competitive (Bittner et al. 2007). As a result of all this party mobilization will not increase overall voter turnout in party system with more fragmentation.

Another element that is said to drive voter turnout is increased voter affinity for parties due to there being a wider variety of parties (Taagepera et al. 2013). However, in majoritarian systems, increasing the amount of options decreases voter turnout. As was discussed earlier, the negative effect of increased party system fragmentation on voter turnout may be the result of voters responding to a lack of incentives to turnout to vote for parties with no chance of

success. Even if a party has considerable potential appeal amongst a portion of society, it will fail to draw voters into turning out if it lacks the ability to win a majoritarian election in individual electoral district (Bittner et al. 2007). For example in the UK a voter drawn to the politics of the UK Independence Party or the UK Green Party may decide to not turn out and vote for their party of choice due to a lack of viability in their single member district. As a result, voters who would have voted for one of the main parties as a compromise in a less fragmented majoritarian party system will perhaps abstain in a more fragmented majoritarian party system.

## *Potential Implications for Proportial Countries*

The data showed that proportional representation responds very differently from majoritarian systems. The data clearly indicate that increased party system fragmentation results in increased voter turnout. Why does proportional representation lend itself to increasing turnout when party systems are fragmented? The answer may lie in the increased incentives for parties to attempt to maximize their turnout and the ability of minor party supporters to cast their vote for minor parties without wasting it.

As was discussed earlier, parties in majoritarian systems only have an incentive to mobilize voters within districts that are competitive for the contending party (Boulding and Brown 2013). However in a proportional election parties have an incentive to mobilize as many voters as possible because all votes will go towards the party's eventual number of seats (Boulding and Brown 2013). Similarly for voters proportional representation eliminates the demobilizing effect of worrying about wasting votes (Boulding and Brown 2013). As a result, my thesis only holds true for proportional electoral systems as only in proportional systems do both parties and voters have an incentive to turnout.

## *Agenda for Future Research*

The results of my study indicate that party system fragmentation has differing effects based off the electoral system in use. This is a fascinating phenomenon and the exact mechanisms behind why party system fragmentation depresses and alternatively raises turnout in different systems requires further study. The cause of the negative relationship between party system fragmentation and turnout in majoritarian countries is especially interesting and there does not seem to yet be a clear answer (Blais 2006).

The lack of decisiveness has become a very common explanation in the field but the data on single party government election turnout directly contradicts this explanation. The work of Dr. Boulding and Dr. Brown on the effects of party system fragmentation across electoral systems is very promising and present perhaps the most promising explanation of the effect of party system fragmentation.

**Conclusion**

The data in this study indicate that proportional and majoritarian systems respond to increased party system fragmentation quite differently from each other. In majoritarian systems, increasing party fragmentation leads to decreased turnout. In proportional representation systems increased party fragmentation leads to increased turnout. This disproves my thesis that an increased amount of party system fragmentation leads to increased turnout and voter satisfaction and indicates that specific institutional features within both electoral systems results in different responses to the political realty of increased party system fragmentation. Overall the exact effects of party system fragmentation across electoral systems and how electoral systems respond is an area that is worthy of further study.

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# THE EFFECTS OF RACE AND RELIGION ON PATRIOTISM AMONG AMERICANS

*Maria Islam*

## Abstract

This paper examines the reasons behind people's different views of defining what "patriotism" is. Three multivariate linear regressions were performed to determine the causes behind an individual's level of patriotism. Two of the regression models found that individuals who identify as black have lower levels of patriotism than whites. None of the models supported the author's hypothesis that Muslims would have lower levels of patriotism than someone non-Muslim. The study also found support from all the regression models for one of the confounding variables, age; the older you are the more patriotic you tend to be. Only one model found support for region, which is the second confounding variable, if you are from the "south" you will be more patriotic. Most of the previous literature only defines the characteristics of a patriotic individual. However, this paper examines the causes that make people define "patriotism" differently.

## Introduction

In the United States, people have different perceptions about what "patriotism" is. What are the reasons behind people's different views of defining the characteristics of "patriotism?" In this paper I propose two arguments. My first argument is that individuals who identity with more mistreated historically racial groups in the U.S., such as blacks, will have lower levels of patriotism

MARIA ISLAM was a student of International Studies, Law, and Society.
She graduated in May of 2016.
School of International Service (SIS), School of Public Affairs (SPA), American University
Email: mi0700a@american.edu

than someone whose racial group has been less mistreated historically. My second argument is that individuals who identify with contemporarily mistreated religious groups in the U.S., such as Muslims, will have lower levels of patriotism than someone whose religious group has not been mistreated contemporarily.

There have been hundreds of studies which deal with the various meaning of patriotism. These studies are descriptive, emphasizing the characteristics of what a patriotic person is to certain people. Compared with the research that defines what patriotism is, there seems to be a lack of research where scholars explicitly highlight what causes individuals or certain groups of people in the U.S. to define "patriotism" differently. My research explicitly tries to explain what causes people to offer different definitions of "patriotism."

My research is relevant to scholars because individuals who are concerned with identity formation are interested in my topic, and my study gives a new cause for why there is a variation in defining what "patriotism" means. It is also crucial for policy makers because they can use my research to think about how there are certain individuals who lack patriotism and perhaps come up with policies that would make these people more patriotic. The general public values this topic because it is a topic of their interest, so they want to be able to understand the causal factors that lead people to define "patriotism" differently.

I used the large-N quantitative methodology, and then ran multiple linear regression tests on SPSS to test my hypotheses. I looked at individuals who were surveyed through the General Social Survey, in the U.S. in 2004. There were several major findings that I found. I found a relationship between an individual's race and two of the questions I used to measure my dependent variable (DV), which are levels of patriotism. I found support that if you identify as black you will have lower levels of patriotism than someone white. I also found how religion does not show any relationship with the three questions used to measure the DV. So, being raised as a Muslim does not affect your levels of patriotism. I found support for age, which is one of my confounding variables. As you get a little older your, level of patriotism will be a bit higher. My second confounding variable, region where a person lives, only found support for one of my DV question, which is "how important it is to serve in military when needed." People from the south had more patriotism than any other regions when answering this question.

I found a variety of results from testing my argument. I cannot establish causation and strong support between my variables and my hypothesis with high confidence because I have not looked at all the variables that can influence an individual's level of patriotism. I also do not know with a high degree of confidence that the data on the IV came before the data on the DV. However, this paper is still relevant because I found support for new hypotheses about the determinants

of patriotism, suggesting that ethnicity is not the only thing that likely shapes someone's level of patriotism. My findings about blacks and non-blacks also support the finding in a previous study that different ethnic groups have different levels of patriotism.

This article proceeds as follows. This paper will first discuss the existing literature on the research topic and the theories that have been used to explain the variation in defining "patriotism." I will then present my theory and argument by providing my theoretical discussions and theoretical models. Then I will explain my two hypotheses that I will be testing. The next section will explain my research design, starting with an introduction of my unit of analysis, each of my variables, and concluding with a discussion of my cases, observations, and methods. Towards the end of the paper, you will find an analysis of the results from my multivariate linear regressions, which will be followed by a conclusion in which I discuss my findings, their implications, limitations, and avenues for further research.

## The Literature Review

People have different perceptions about what "patriotism" is. What are the reasons behind people's different views of defining the characteristics of "Patriotism?" To answer this question, I looked at many studies. I found that there have been hundreds of studies that deal with the various meaning of American identity. These studies are simply descriptive, emphasizing the characteristics of what "patriotism" means to certain people. Comparing with the research that defines patriotism, there seems to be a lack of research where scholars explicitly highlight what causes individuals or certain groups of people in the U.S. to define "patriotism" differently. Despite the gap in research to answer my research question, there are some limited scholars with their explanations expressed in the literature that I have explored, that are useful when addressing my research question.

Based on the bodies of literature I have reviewed, there are two main schools of thought that best explain the causes in variation in the perception of what "patriotism" is. These dominant schools of thought are psychological and cultural/social. When attempting to explain the causes in variation in the perception of what patriotism is, the problem with psychology is that it does not thoroughly explain all the different ways an individual's background and beliefs can affect their definition of what patriotism is. It focuses more on the psychological processes of how one arrives at their answer. Many studies that fall under the psychological school of thought contain flaws with the author's

arguments and with how the experiments in each study were carried out. Therefore, I find using the cultural/social school of thought to be more compelling because it will emphasize how someone's race, religion, age, and the region they reside in influences why they define "patriotism" differently. Because many scholars have not tested this argument empirically in the context of explaining the causes in variation in the perception of what patriotism is, and the ones that did empirically test contain at least one or more flaws, this paper will make more contribution to the limited scholarly literature that already exists.

*Psychological School of Thought*

The first school of thought when discussing the causes behind the variation in the perception of what "patriotism" is psychological. This school of thought is primarily concerned with how people react when they see different individuals, which explains what causes them to define "patriotism" differently. Devos and Heng argue that "the American=White effect stems from an accessibility bias leading individuals to assume that a White person is more likely to be patriotic than an Asian person" (Devos and Heng 2009, 193). They showed pictures of White Americans and Asian Americans to the participants. Their first experiment demonstrated the automatic tendency to respond "patriotic" to be greater after White faces than after Asian faces. In the second experiment, the result showed the amount of time allowed for responding, influences discriminability, but leaves accessibility unchanged. Their last experiment showed the impact of ethnicity on accessibility. One of the limitations in the argument by the authors is that they believe individuals define "patriotism" differently because of an accessibility bias. When people see certain faces they become biased without even realizing. I believe it has more to do with an individual's social/cultural factors rather than only the psychological process. The authors also do not talk about the levels of patriotism among different groups of people in the U.S., which is what I want to focus on.

Taking on a similar view, Devos and Banaji (2005) examine and believe in socio-cognitive fracture, which exist between the conscious and unconscious assigning of the attribute "patriotism" among different ethnic groups. Through their six experiments, the difference between beliefs about the group and the self-operating outside of conscious control are shown. Group identity can influence how one defines what "patriotism" is, and the characteristics they assign to it. Their primary finding concluded that White Americans are considered more patriotic because of their dominance in society. The argument made by the authors is good because it essentially points out how someone "White" is more patriotic than someone non-white. However, the flaw is that they do not focus on any other

causes besides group identity and sociocognitive fractures which exist between the conscious and unconscious assigning of the attribute "patriotism" among different ethnic groups. Also, they do not mention any level of patriotism among different ethnic groups. I think an ethnic group is an important cause of patriotism, but there are some other important causes of patriotism, which they did not explore.

Barlow, Taylor, and Lambert (2000) explored how women from White, African, and Cuban ethnic groups perceived what "patriotism" is. They argued that feelings of inclusion, exclusion, and the opportunities determine an ethnic group's comfort within a national category like "patriotism" and how they define it. Interestingly, the scholars found a correlation between how long people have stayed in the U.S. with how much someone claims to be patriotic. They found that the longer Cubans stayed in the U.S. the more patriotic they felt. In socio-psychological context their studies show, that if the U.S. does not come up with systemic ways to include certain groups, like African Americas, they will feel excluded and their definition of "patriotism" will vary greatly. The flaw in their argument is that it only applies for women. They did not test to see if men from different ethnic groups also defined "patriotism" differently based on the opportunities they had here. The authors also did not mention anything about patriotism among these different ethnic groups.

Park-Taylor et al. examined how the second-generation Americans' defined what "true" patriotism means and how their definition may have been influenced by 9/11 and the war in Iraq (2008). They collected data from 12 participants through interviews. They found how a traumatic event can change individuals' psychological views of how they define "patriotism" along with the effect of sociopolitical forces. The flaw with the author's argument is that they only studied catastrophic events, such as 9/11, causing people to define what "patriotism" is differently. They did not look at any other factors, such as an individual's race or religion, which can also influence a person's definition. Also, they collected data from only 12 participants to support their argument, so we cannot be sure if this argument applies to a larger group of people.

Jahromi's (2011) study looked at how young people—"diverse with regards to ethnicity, immigrant status, and socioeconomic school context—make meaning of their experiences in ways that inform their ideas about, and identification with, being patriotic in the USA." Again, the individual psychological experience is highlighted. Three interviewers conducted 22 interviews with youth between the ages of 15 and 18 (Ibid). She concluded that specific experiences effect how one forms and defines what "patriotism" is. The flaw of Jahromi's argument is similar to Park-Taylor et al.'s because she also

says that specific experiences effect how one defines "patriotism." She leaves out many other possible causes which can affect how someone defines "patriotism." Also, she does not mention anything about patriotism in her study.

*Cultural/Social School of Thought*

The second school of thought is Cultural/Social. The causes for different variation in the perception about what "patriotism" is explained in these articles under this school of thought, which were more logical and useful when trying to explain my research question. This school of thought emphasize how one's ethnicity, culture, and beliefs serve as root causes along with other proximate causes that drive how someone defines what "patriotism" is. Tsai et al. (2002) explored what being "patriotic" means between Asian Americans and European American young adults. Tsai et al. argue that "[e]thnic groups in the United States have different concerns about, statuses in, and experiences with mainstream American culture; as a result, their notion of what it means to be "patriotic" may vary" (Ibid, 258). They presented their results from two studies that illustrated how six aspects of being patriotic are similar and different for various ethnic groups in the U.S. The results of the studies were contrary to their argument. Neither of the groups significantly differed in their references to political ideology and cultural exposure (Ibid). Also, contrary to their predictions, there were no differences in the meaning of being patriotic for Asian Americans who spent more time and those who spent less time in the United States.

The authors' argument is convincing, and I believe it is the best one to answer my question, but there are numerous flaws in this study, too. This study talked about patriotism. They found that Asians have less patriotism than Whites. They talked about race, and one of my hypotheses is about race. I think race is an important cause of patriotism, as the authors argued, but there are some other important causes of patriotism that this study leaves out. Because they left out certain variables, this argument should still be tested. Another flaw is that the authors used interviews, and spoke to a small number of people. So, does race really have an effect on a bunch of different people? They only found that it has an effect on a small number of people. In my study, I want to use survey questions, which will analyze lots of individuals.

One study compared participants' self-reported ethnicity with their view of being a typical patriotic. Weisskirch (2005) argued that ethnic minorities will not consider themselves as "typical Patriotics," and those who do perceive themselves as "typical patriotic" will have less of an attachment to an ethnic group. So one's ethnic identity correlates with how much they consider themselves to be "patriotic."

His results supported his argument for the most part. Weisskirch talks about ethnic identity being related with how someone defines what "patriotism" is, which is relevant. However, his argument creates a limitation because it does not acknowledge other causes, such as religion, age, or the region of the U.S. in which an individual lives in. Also he fails to talk about patriotism among different ethnic groups in the U.S.

Rodriguez et al. (2010) argue that as cultural backgrounds and values of Americans change, the definition of "patriotism" will also change. They found that individuals thought in order to be "patriotic," sacrificing connection to family and community was needed. Further they found how personal identity was positively related to feeling patriotic and ethnic identity was negatively related to feeling patriotic (Ibid). They use the social dominance perspective to explain why some ethnic group members may feel more or less "patriotic." The argument about individuals who affiliate with certain ethnic groups that can cause them to be more or less "patriotic," is relevant. However, the argument does not investigate any other variables, which are also relevant just as much as someone's ethnic group.

Different perceptions of "patriotism" can arise from looking at someone's physical features. In Cheryan and Monin's (2005) study, individuals with Asian features were seen as less patriotic than others. They argue that Asian Americans face identity denial because they are constantly considered less patriotic than Whites. Eventually, this leads to the formation of hierarchy, based on color and physical appearances. The limitation of this study comes from the authors not mentioning any other causes besides physical appearances that can lead people to define what "patriotism" is. Schwartz et al. (2012, 122) indicated how one's perception of how they identify "patriotism" is related to their background, along with the experiences they had experienced and differences in how immigrants frame what "patriotism" is. They were able to find sufficient evidence for their claim. Their study is helpful for understanding my question; however, the study has many flaws. One limitation stated by Schwartz et al. is "the inclusion only of college students in our samples did not allow us to examine the properties of the American Identity Measure in other segments of the population" (Ibid). Another limitation is that the authors did not talk about any other causes besides someone's background influencing how they define "patriotism."

Based on the bodies of literature I have reviewed, I conclude there to be two main schools of thought that best explain the causes in variation in the perception of what "patriotism" is. The dominant schools of thought are psychological and cultural/social. When attempting to explain the causes

in variation in the perception of what "patriotism" is, the psychological school of thought does not thoroughly explain all the different ways an individual's background and beliefs affects their definition of what "patriotism" is. It focuses more on the psychological processes of how they reach their answer. Many studies that I have labeled under the psychological school of thought contain flaws within the authors' arguments and how the experiments in each study were carried out. Therefore, I find using the cultural/social school of thought to be more convincing because it will emphasize how someone's race, religion, age, and region influences the causal aspect of why people define "patriotism" differently.

There have been multiple studies that deal with the various meaning of patriotism, which are simply descriptive. There have not been studies that explored the effects of race and religion on patriotism among individuals in America. My answer will make a contribution to the literature because not much empirical research has been done to test the causes of why people define "patriotism" differently and because the ones that did empirically test my argument contain at least one or more flaws with the author's arguments or research design.

## Theory

### Theory for Hypothesis 1

Imagine a person who is African American. Throughout history, individuals from this racial group have been mistreated in the U.S., where equality and opportunity is said to be the same for everyone. These people expect to be treated equally just like a white person, but when they get mistreated because of the color of their skin and their cultural differences they become upset. They also become emotionally upset knowing they live in a free country where their ancestors were slaves and dealt with segregation, not too long ago. They feel that they are being treated differently in work and social environments. Eventually they realize that although America claims to welcome everyone, it is not true for their case. They lose faith and start losing their beliefs in American values such as democracy, voting, and the military. Eventually an individual from a mistreated ethnic group's level of patriotism will be lower than someone whose ethnic group was not mistreated.

### Theoretical Model H1

African Americans experience with Slavery and Segregation > racial group members being emotionally upset that they are not being treated fairly >

Realization that America does not live up to its values, such as the land of freedom, opportunity and equality for all > Individuals from these group start losing faith in American values > their level of patriotism is lower than someone whose racial group was never severely mistreated.

*Theory for Hypothesis 2*

Picture a person who identifies being a Muslim. After September 11, 2001, Muslims have been discriminated against greatly in the U.S. The terrorist attacks on 9/11 were carried out by a few radical Muslims, yet many Muslims seem to receive the blame for a few criminals. Muslims in the U.S. want to be treated equally just like someone who shares a different religion, such as Christianity. Instead, they are being mistreated because of their religion. They became emotionally upset knowing they live in a free country where they are being stereotyped because of their religion. They feel they are being treated differently in work and social environments. Soon, they come to the realization that although America claims to welcome everyone, it does not live up to this value. They lose faith and start losing their beliefs in American values such as democracy, voting, and the importance for being in the military. An individual from a mistreated religious group will have a low level of patriotism than someone whose religious group has not been severely mistreated.

*Theoretical Model H2*

Individuals who identity as being Muslims > 9/11 happens > Muslims begin being heavily discriminated in the U.S. > Muslims become upset because they are being judged as a result of the actions of few > Realization that America does not live up to its values > Individuals start losing faith in American values where it should not discriminate any form of religions > their level of patriotism is lower than someone who was not discriminated against because they associate with a particular religion.

## Hypotheses

*Hypothesis 1:*

Individuals who identity with severely mistreated racial groups (IV) in the U.S., such as Blacks, will have lower levels of patriotism than someone whose racial group has not been severely mistreated.

*Hypothesis 2:*

Individuals who identify with severely mistreated religious groups (IV) in the U.S., such as Muslims, will have lower levels of patriotism than someone whose religious group has not been severely mistreated.

**Research Design**

The Unit of analysis for my independent variables—someone's ethnic affiliation and religious affiliation—and my dependent variable—variation in defining "American,"—all focus on individuals. I used survey questions from the General Social Survey (2004) to measure all my variables.

*Variables:*

My dependent variable is the variation in patriotism. I define patriotism in three ways. The first is patriotism in terms of adherence to certain American values, such as serving in military. Operationally, this question is defined through a survey question that asks how important it is to serve in military when needed. The responses will be measured ordinally. There are seven categories for this measure of the dependent variable. 1 being "not important at all" and 7 being "very important," the respondents could have chosen any number in between as well. Basically, the higher number you chose the more patriotic you will be considered.

The second is patriotism in terms of espousal of certain American norms, such as voting. Operationally it is defined through a survey question that asks how important it is always to vote in elections. This question will be measured ordinally. There are seven categories for this measure of this dependent variable. 1 being "not important at all" and 7 being "very important," the respondents were allowed to choose any number between 1 through 7. If an individual chose a higher number that will indicate that they were more patriotic.

The third is patriotism in terms of espousal of certain American principles, such as democracy. Operationally it is defined through a survey question that asks how well democracy works in America. This question will be measured ordinally. There are seven categories for the measure of this dependent variable. 1 being "not important at all" and 7 being "very important," the respondents could have chosen any number between 1 and 7. When an individual choses a higher number that will indicate that they are more patriotic.

The first independent variable is conceptually defined as an individual's racial group affiliation. Operationally it is defined from a survey question that

asks the race of the respondent. The nominal level of measurement is used here because I am looking at individuals' race that they identify with. My two categories will be individuals who identity being "White" or "Black." The "Black" category for an individual will be 1 while all other categories will be 0. I put Black in one category and all others in a separate category, to see if there are any significant differences between Blacks and Whites, in terms of patriotism.

The second independent variable is conceptually defined as an individual's religious affiliation. Operationally it is defined by a survey question that asks the religion in which the respondent was raised. The nominal level of measurement will be used here because I am looking at individual's religion in which they were raised in. The religion groups I want to use are "Muslim/ Islam" and have "other" as another category which will include, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhism, Hinduism, Orthodox-Christian, Christian, Native American, and Inter-nondenominational. The "Muslim/Islam" category for an individual will be 1 while all other categories will be 0. I put Muslim in one category and all others in a separate category, to see if there are any significant difference between Muslim/Islam and other religious groups, in terms of patriotism.

The first confounding variable I will test is the respondent's age. The first confounding variable is conceptually defined as an individual's age. Operationally this will be measured through a survey question that asks the individuals for their age. Age will be measured continuously. It will be measured from 18 to 88 years. For this variable I expect to see a positive relationship, the older you become the more patriotic you will tend to be.

The second confounding variable is the region of the interview. This variable is conceptually defined as the region in the U.S. where the individual's interview took place. Operationally it is defined from a survey question that asks the region of the interview. The nominal level of measurement will be used here. The different regions where interviews took places are; New England, Middle Atlantic, E. Nor. Central, W. Nor. Central, South Atlantic, E.Sou. Central, W. Sou. Central, Mountain, and Pacific. I will put all the regions that have "South" in them into one category, then all the other categories into another. The "South" category for an individual will be 1 while all other categories will be 0. I put South in one category and all others into a separate category, because I want to see if there are any significant difference between individuals from the south and other parts of the U.S., in terms of patriotism.

*Cases, Observation, Methodology, and Methods*

The case I am using to test my hypotheses is the United States during the year 2004. The observations, I want to analyze, which are the 2812 individuals who were surveyed in 2004. The observations I want to analyze, which are each American in the year 2004, are the 2,812 individuals who were surveyed in the 2004 GSS, which is my data source. Since I plan to analyze a large number of observations, I have to use large-N quantitative methodology to analyze my data. More specifically, I will be using the statistical method which will include multiple regression tests for my variables.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

| | | Race of Respondent | Religion | Age of Respondent | Region | How Important to Serve in Military when Needed | How Important to Always Vote in Elections | How Well Democracy Works in America |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **N** | Valid | 2611 | 2567 | 2789 | 2812 | 1453 | 1457 | 1441 |
| | Missing | 201 | 245 | 23 | 0 | 1359 | 1355 | 1371 |
| **Mean** | | 1.14 | .0074 | 45.75 | .3855 | 5.45 | 6.19 | 6.58 |
| **Median** | | 1.00 | .0000 | 44.00 | .0000 | 6.00 | 7.00 | 7.00 |
| **Mode** | | 1 | .00 | 40 | .00 | 7 | 7 | 8 |
| **Std. Deviation** | | .352 | .08573 | 16.566 | .48680 | 1.878 | 1.453 | 2.293 |
| **Minimum** | | 1 | .00 | 18 | .00 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| **Maximum** | | 2 | 1.00 | 88 | 1.00 | 7 | 7 | 10 |
| **Percentiles** | 25 | 1.00 | .0000 | 32.00 | .0000 | 5.00 | 6.00 | 5.00 |
| | 50 | 1.00 | .0000 | 44.00 | .0000 | 6.00 | 7.00 | 7.00 |
| | 75 | 1.00 | .0000 | 57.00 | 1.0000 | 7.00 | 7.00 | 8.00 |

*Analysis of the Descriptive Statistics*

The appropriate measure of central tendency for the variable "race of respondent" would be the mode, which is 1, because it is a nominal variable, and "black," race goes with number 1. The appropriate measure of central tendency for "religion in which the respondent was raised in" would also be the mode, which

is .00 because it is a nominal variable, and Muslim, religious group goes with number 1. To measure "age of the respondent" the best central tendency would be the mean, which is 45.75, because it is a continuous variable. The appropriate measure of central tendency for the variables to measure my dependent variable would be the median because they are all ordinal variables. I would use 6.00 to measure, "how important to serve in military when needed. I would use 7.00 to measure, "how important to always vote in elections, and use 7.00 to measure, "how well democracy works in America."

## Results from Multiple Regression Tests

**Table 2: Regression Results Model 1, Coefficients[a]**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| | (Constant) | 5.301 | .235 | | 22.542 | .000 |
| | Race of Respondent | -.945 | .143 | -.185 | -6.596 | .000 |
| 1 | Religion | .606 | .902 | .018 | .672 | .502 |
| | Age of Respondent | .025 | .003 | .216 | 7.860 | .000 |
| | Region of the Interview | .284 | .107 | .074 | 2.649 | .008 |
| **R Square** | | .087 | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: How Important to Serve in Military when Needed

*Analysis of Regression Model 1*

The results from my first linear regression test show a mix of results. I found support for one of my hypotheses and one of my confounding variables. The unstandardized coefficient for race of the respondent shows that as you shift up on race (IV1), or as you move up one unit on race from white to black, you are going to get -.945 amount of decrease in the level of patriotism. This is close to a one unit drop for this question. Basically, as you move up from white to black you will see one unit decrease in how patriotic that individual is on this particular question. This supports my hypothesis. The unstandardized coefficient for my second hypothesis, about religion shows that as you shift up

on religion (IV2), or as you move up one unit on religion from "all other religion" to "Muslim/Islam," you are going to get a .606 amount of increase in the level of patriotism. This does not support my hypothesis. We do not see a drop in the level of patriotism as you move from other religions to Islam.

I found support for my first confounding variable, age. The unstandardized coefficient for age of the respondent shows that as you shift up on age (CV1), you are going to get .025 amount of increase in the level of patriotism. So, as you become older, you tend to be a bit more patriotic. I also found support for my second confounding variable, region of the interview. The unstandardized coefficient for region shows that as you shift up from "all other regions" to "southern regions" (CV2), you are going to get .284 amount of increase in the level of patriotism. This supports what I predicted; if you are from the south, your level of patriotism, defined as important to serve in military when needed, will be higher than other regions.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05 with race, I can conclude that I am more than 95% confident that the relationship between race and patriotism will be found in the population. The p-value is way over 0.05 for religion; therefore, I cannot conclude that Muslims will have lower levels of patriotism in the population than someone non-Muslim. The p-value is less than 0.05 with age; I can conclude that I am more than 95% confident that the older you become the more patriotic you will be. This can be found in the population. The p-value is also less than 0.05 with region, so I can conclude that I am more than 95% confident that if you are from a southern region you will have higher levels of patriotism and this can be found in the population. This regression's R-square value of .087 means that the four variables account for only 8.7% of the variation in the dependent variable, which suggests that there are many other factors that also influence an individual's level of patriotism.

**Table 3: Regression Results Model 2, Coefficients[a]**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| | (Constant) | 5.384 | .185 | | 29.082 | .000 |
| | Race of Respondent | .123 | .113 | .031 | 1.082 | .279 |
| 1 | Religion | .504 | .709 | .020 | .710 | .478 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Age of Respondent | .014 | .002 | .166 | 5.877 | .000 |
| | Region of the Interview | .011 | .084 | .004 | .125 | .900 |
| **R Square** | | .028 | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: How Important to Always Vote in Elections

## *Analysis of Regression Model 2*

I found no support for my hypotheses in my second regression model. I found support for the relationship between age (CV1) and patriotism. As you shift up on race (IV1), from white to black, you are going to get .123 amount of increase in the level of patriotism. For my second hypothesis, as you shift up on religion (IV2)—as you move up one unit on religion from "all other religion" to "Muslim/Islam"—you are going to get .504 amount of increase in the level of patriotism. None of these support my hypothesis. I found support for my first confounding variable, age. The unstandardized coefficient for age of the respondent shows that as you shift up on age (CV1), you are going to get .014 amount of increase the level of patriotism. The unstandardized coefficient for region shows that as you shift up from "all other regions" to "southern regions" (CV2), you are going to get .011 amount of increase in the level of patriotism. This shows my expected relationship.

Since the p-value is more than 0.05 with race and religion, I cannot conclude that I am more than 95% confident the relationship between people who identify being black, people who identify being Muslim/Islam and patriotism will be found in the population. Since the p-value for age is .000, I can conclude that I am more than 95% confident that the relationship between age and patriotism will be found in the population. The p-value is .900 for region, so I am not confident that the relationship between southern regions and patriotism will be found in the population. This regression's R-square value of .028 means that the four variables account for only 2.8% of the variation in the dependent variable, which suggests that there are many other factors that also influence an individual's level of patriotism.

**Table 4: Regression Results Model 3, Coefficients**[a]

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| | (Constant) | 7.259 | .302 | | 24.033 | .000 |
| | Race of Respondent | -1.065 | .183 | -.168 | -5.811 | .000 |
| 1 | Religion | 1.730 | 1.023 | .048 | 1.692 | .091 |
| | Age of Respondent | .010 | .004 | .073 | 2.565 | .010 |
| | Region of the Interview | .104 | .137 | .022 | .764 | .445 |
| **R Square** | | .037 | | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: How Well Democracy Works in America

*Analysis of Regression Model 3*

The results from my third linear regression test display a variety of results. The unstandardized coefficient for race of the respondent shows that as you shift up on race (IV1), you are going to get -1.065 amount of decrease. This is an over one unit drop for the question. This supports my hypothesis; if you are black you will have lower level of patriotism than someone white. The unstandardized coefficient for my second hypothesis, religion shows that as you shift up on race (IV2), from "all other religion" to "Muslim/Islam," you are going to get 1.730 amount of increase. This does not support my hypothesis. Again, we do not see a drop in the level of patriotism as you move from other religions to Islam. The unstandardized coefficient for age of the respondent shows that as you move up one unit on age you are going to get .010 amount of increase. The unstandardized coefficient for region shows that as you shift up from "all other regions" to "southern regions" (CV2), you are going to get .104 amount of increase, this does not support my expected relationship.

Since the p-value is .000 for race, I can conclude that I am more than 95% confident that the relationship between race and patriotism will be found in the population. The p-value for religion is .091, this is close to being significant, but I cannot conclude that Muslims are less patriotic than non-Muslims in the population. Since the p-value is .010 for age, I can conclude that I am more than 95% confident that the relationship between age and patriotism will be found in the population.

The p-value is .445 for region, so I am not confident that the relationship between southern regions and patriotism will be found in the population. This regression's R-square value of .037 means that the four variables account for only 3.7% of the variation in the dependent variable, which suggests that there are other factors that also can influence an individual's level of patriotism.

## Conclusion

Why do people define "patriotism" differently? As this paper tries to explore the possible causes, we can tell that the answer is not simple. My research is relevant to the scholarly community because multiple scholars have studied my topic and my research would further advance their study into finding the causes for variation in defining "patriotism." It is also crucial for NGO's and other institutions because it explains why people may feel differently towards patriotism, based on their race and age. If the NGO focuses on race, religion, region, and age relations in the U.S., then my research would be valuable for them. My research question is important to the general public because they are interested in the outcomes and in an accurate explanation for them so that they can use it for explaining to others about why people define "patriotism" differently.

There have been hundreds of studies that deal with the various meaning of patriotism. Most, studies are merely descriptive, emphasizing the characteristics of what "patriotism" is. Comparing with the research of defining American identity there is a lack of research where scholars explicitly highlight what causes individuals or certain groups of people in the U.S. to define "patriotism" differently. My research explicitly tries to explain why people offer different definitions of "patriotism." The results I found are valuable for everyone because it deals with how one form their identity in the U.S. Identity formation is a huge topic in the U.S., thus my topic will contribute to those who are interested in knowing how identity gets created, or breaks apart.

My first argument is that individuals who identity with mistreated racial groups (IV) in the U.S., such as Blacks, will have lower levels of patriotism than someone whose racial group has not been severely mistreated. My second argument is that individuals who identify with mistreated religious groups (IV) in the U.S., such as Muslims, will have lower levels of patriotism than someone whose religious group has not been severely mistreated. I used the large-N quantitative methodology and ran multiple linear regression tests with SPSS to test my hypotheses. I looked at individuals in the U.S. in 2004.

I found a relationship between an individual's race and two of the DV questions (military service and democracy-related questions), supporting that if you identify as black, you will have lower levels of patriotism than someone white. I also found how religion does not show any relationship with the three DV questions I used. So being raised as a Muslim does not affect your levels of patriotism. I found support for age, which is one of my confounding variables in all three DV questions. As you get a little older your level of patriotism will be higher. My second confounding variable, region of the interview only found support for one of my DV question which was "how important it is to serve in military when needed." Individuals from the "south" had more patriotism than any other regions in for this question. I found a variety of results from testing my argument. I cannot infer causation and strong support for my arguments with high confidence because I have not looked at all the variables that can influence an individual's level of patriotism. Lastly, I do not have any process-tracing data.

*Implications*

I found support for new hypotheses about the determinants of patriotism, suggesting that racial group affiliation is not the only thing that likely shapes someone's level of patriotism. Age is also factor in determining an individual's level of patriotism. My findings about blacks and non-blacks support the finding in a previous study done by Tsai et al., that different ethnic groups have different levels of patriotism. (Blacks have less patriotism than Whites) My findings are relevant to scholars because many are interested in my topic and my study gives a new cause for why there is a variation in defining what "patriotism" is. This research is crucial for policy makers because now they can think about how there are certain individuals who lack patriotism relative to other people and perhaps come up with policies that would make blacks and other racial group members more inclusive in the U.S. society, so their level of patriotism increases. Finally, the general public cares about my topic because it provides information about how one's identity gets created. They also will understand why some people are more or less patriotic in the U.S.

*Limitations*

There are several limitations to my study which should be taken into account. The survey questions I chose to measure my dependent variables with may not be the best ones for measuring one's level of patriotism. I only looked at four variables. There are ton of other variables that I have not been able to look at

that can highly influence a person's level of patriotism. It is important to test other variables so we can be more certain about the relationships we find.

I cannot talk about causation because my data and results do not allow me to. There might be causation, but I cannot be sure about it. It is even harder for me to determine causation because I have survey data. Race for almost everyone comes before attitudes about patriotism, so this issue does not prevent me from establishing causation between race and patriotism. The temporal sequences of variables have probably been established. But the issue is that is this a true relationship? Or is this relationship being driven by some third variable or any other variable that I did not analyze? Thus, I am uncertain about the relationships I found. I am less uncertain about the race because I have established the temporal sequence, but there is still uncertainly because I did not analyze all other potential causes. Future research should take more time into account because that may help greatly with producing and analyzing better results.

*Avenues/Ideas for Future Research*

There should certainly be more research done with the topic I investigated. People who want to look more into the causes of the variation in defining "patriotism" should use survey questions that are more direct about patriotism. Perhaps, using survey questions from a different source other than the General Social Survey would be a good approach. Also, looking at different years in the U.S., and seeing if my argument also applies to other countries. Last, analyzing other potential variables which can also cause variation in patriotism is also something relevant that should be tested by scholars.

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# SUICIDE TERRORISM AS A TACTIC: HOW DOMINANT, YET SUBTLE REPRESENTATIONS FORM IDENTITIES AND MEANINGS

*Frank Mariscal*

**Abstract**

Although terrorism has been present in the world for centuries, it is only since the 1980s that suicide terrorism has become an object of study for academics and an existing concern for government professionals. While discourses on suicide terrorism have evolved, and passed through small, but varied cycles of resurgences, one of the bigger revivals of suicide terrorism discourse appeared in 2001, after the horrific attacks of 9/11. This paper analyzes the two major discourses surrounding the motivations that terrorist organizations in the Middle East have for utilizing the tactic of suicide bombing. These two perspectives, both widely held among public officials, have been at odds with one another on whether to attribute suicide terrorism to Islamic fundamentalism or to secular, strategic motivations. I argue that Islamic fundamentalism is the dominant discourse among U.S. officials and media by explaining how this presiding representation put forth by these entities has influenced the government's foreign policy options towards the Middle East, affected Muslims in the U.S. and shaped the way U.S. public society perceives Muslims in general. By presenting original research on the multidimensionality of suicide terrorism, I will explain that the term "suicide terrorism" is an empty signifier, one which requires recognition of its nominal status. This assertion is crucial to our understanding of how Muslims are misrepresented in today's age, and how powerful discourses can shape the way we think, act, and interact with certain people, oftentimes without conscious effort.

## Introduction

Although terrorism has been present in the world for centuries, it is only recently that suicide terrorism as a tactic emerged as a subject of study for academics worldwide and as an existing concern for government professional ever since the

FRANK MARISCAL is a student of International Studies, Justice, Law, and Criminology. He graduates in May of 2018.
School of International Service (SIS) and School of Public Affairs (SPA), American University
Email: fm1410a@american.edu

Tamil Tiger of Sri Lanka revolutionized the tactic back in the 1980's (Lutz and Lutz 2013, 276). The tactic of suicide terrorism is one that has increasingly been used by many terrorists and is responsible for more than half of all terrorist attacks in history (Ibid, 276-277). This tactic has clearly caused direct damage to infrastructures and people around the world, but this phenomenon has also indirectly altered perceptions towards people of Arab descent, their way of life, and has shaped U.S policy in unprecedented ways. According to an FBI report, there were only about 20 to 30 Muslim-related hate crimes per year before 9/11, but Muslim hate crimes have gradually increased between 100 to 150 a year following the events of 9/11. In 2001 alone, that number reached nearly 500 (McClary 2015). This new phenomenon has given rise to 2 major discourses that have constantly been clashing with one another: Islamic fundamentalism and secular/strategic motivations. My intent is to answer the question of: how do two seemingly opposite discursive regimes, initiated by American elites, feed off each other such that innocent Arabs and Muslims end up being perceived and treated as combatants, or more specifically, suicide terrorists?

While both discourses on suicide terrorism have developed, and passed through small, but varied cycles of resurgences, one of the bigger revivals appeared in 2001, after the horrific attacks of 9/11. Prior to this date, the more secular and strategic view of suicide terrorism was the main lens through which American elites and the media viewed the perpetrators of such attacks. Due to the influence of the Soviet Union, more secular, Marxist-Leninist terrorist groups, such as FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and the Shining Path of Peru, accounted for many of the terrorist attacks during the 80's and early 90's. However, after 9/11, a new mode of terrorism emerged, forever changing the perceptions, aspirations, attitudes and fears of the West towards this new threat that had been jumpstarted by suicide terrorists. No longer was this a political or secular problem, but it changed into a religious problem—more specifically a Muslim problem. Thus, this paper analyzes the two discourses surrounding the meanings associated with suicide terrorism and discusses how certain representations, cast either explicitly or unknowingly by public officials and the media, contribute to the ongoing misrepresentation and faulty perceptions towards certain groups of people who happen to look like the suicide terrorists.

Subsequently, the crux of this paper lies in the need to challenge the discursive development of "Islamic Terrorism" as a widespread existential risk, inciting reflection upon the normative results of the dialect, ideographic confining, and knowledge creation produced by the term. Moreover, I conclude

that the binary system perpetuated through the quantitative system of categorizing, compartmentalizing, and distinguishing suicide terrorist's motivations as either "religious" or "secular" contributes to the othering of Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. Instead, I call for a more nuanced and constructive way of viewing terrorist organizations and their motivations for said tactic. Through an in-depth analysis of public official statements and media news reports, not only is the Islamic fundamentalist discourse exposed as the current presiding paradigm within the U.S., but it is revealed that it has affected Muslims within the U.S. in many ways, whether it be through the government's increased security in mosques, or through violent actions taken by civil society towards Muslims (Lutz and Lutz 2013, 285-286). By presenting original research on the multidimensionality of suicide terrorism, the term itself will show itself to be an empty signifier, one that requires recognition of its nominal status, a word that does not point to any actual object or agreed upon meaning (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 46). This concept is crucial to our understanding of how Muslims are misrepresented in today's age, and how powerful discourses can shape the way we think, act, and interact with certain people, oftentimes without conscious effort.

This article first synthesizes relevant literature on suicide terrorism with the hopes of establishing a theoretical framework that can be used to situate the research question into the overall academic discourse. The two scholarly camps most relevant in the academic world also happen to be: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Secular/Strategic Efficacy schools of thought. The pertinent literature finds itself directly informing the clashing discourses that are discussed in this paper. After an analysis of the scholarship, the paper lays out the specific methodological components utilized to tackle the research question to justify the specific choices made when it comes to mapping the representations that have arisen from both discourses. Methods such as identifying the specific contexts in which the discourses have been formulated in, discussing the methods used for data generation, and touching on the notions of reflexive and trustworthy research. Subsequently, an analysis on the meanings associated with suicide terrorism, as represented by public officials and the media, is conducted. More specifically, this analysis will scrutinize the language, rhetoric, and specific themes that arise from a plethora of official and media layers of discourse. Additionally, this examination will reveal the dynamic nature of the term suicide terrorism, an empty signifier, and how easy it is to attach multiple meanings and identities to it, which can in turn, incite certain actions towards certain groups of people who have been conflated with the identity of the actual perpetrator.

## Literature Review

Although suicide terrorism is a dynamic and constructive term, the definition from Lutz and Lutz will be used to provide a consistent conceptualization of this practice. This tactic can include, but is not limited to the strapping of bombs in certain areas where the individual will also be present (on clothing, in bags, on the body, in a car, inside enclosed room, etc.) or crashing vehicles into a structure with an individual in the vehicle (Lutz and Lutz 2013, 276). Different studies dedicated to explaining the causes of suicide terrorism can be divided into 2 levels of analysis—there are those that focus on the individual bomber and those that focus on organizational motivations. Most analysts agree that profiling suicide bombers individually is difficult given their diverse backgrounds (Post et al. 2009, 22-23). Additionally, scholars claim that suicide bombers do not suffer from salient psychopathology, and thus the probability of mental illness playing a part in their motivations is not likely (Mohhadam 2009, 51). Certain points of study that have emerged can range from a strong commitment to a cause, a desire for revenge, or the expectation of benefits after death (Post et al. 2009, 18-19, 21; MacEoin 2009, 22). Overall, no study has surely identified either the necessary or sufficient conditions for any individual to engage in suicide terrorism. This literature review does not focus on individual motivations of suicide terrorism; instead it will focus on the organizational level of analysis.

*Religious Ideology School*

The distinguished work of a prominent figure in this school of thought, Michael Bonner, has carved a path for the constant flow of scholarly literature that merges suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism (Bonner 2006, 2). This school of thought has gained so much traction that it has comfortably situated itself into the conscious and subconscious minds of U.S. military leaders, politicians, news reporters and average citizens alike. This is mainly because most suicide attackers tend to be of Arab descent from countries such as Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Palestine, or Turkey; the common thread here is that most of these countries are predominantly Muslim (MacEoin 2009, 16). Denis MacEoin points out that by 2008, 1,121 suicide bombers had carried out attacks in Iraq. Furthermore, he asserts that apart from Sri Lanka where the Tamil Tigers used the tactic, suicide bombing has become an almost exclusively Islamic phenomenon (MacEoin 2009, 17-18). These quantitative findings indicate that suicide bombers have been Muslim for the most part,

regardless of their country of origin, since the 1990s.

       These experts agree that the notion of *jihad* is what charges terrorist organizations to adopt these suicidal tactics. *Jihad* does not refer to "holy war" or "just war," but rather translates into "striving" (Bonner 2006, 2). When this word is followed by the following modifying phrase *fi sabil Allah*, "in the path of God"— when assumed to be in direct force, *jihad* suggests fighting for the sake of God (Ibid, 3). Additionally, in the *Hadith*, martyrdom is explicated in detail with all its rewards such as attaining paradise after death, and receiving a proper burial in enemy territory (Hafez 2010, 367). Ironically enough, Islam strictly forbids suicide. Scholars like Grimland and his colleagues highlight the fact that Muslims consider themselves to be servants of Allah, the provider and creator who determines the lifespan of his creations; thus, a Muslim is not free to end their life whenever they want and the consequences of such acts are dire. Conversely, they note that if a Muslim puts themselves into the role of a *shahid*, or martyr, they are promised life after death in paradise with 70 of his dearest relatives and close friends and 72 virgins (Grimland et al. 2006, 111). These academics have concluded that this promise of the afterlife which the Quran and the Hadiths teach is what many terrorist organizations strive for, and thus they engage in acts of *jihad* via their strict interpretation of their holy books and take it to a whole new level. (Hafez 2010, 369). At the same time, it is important to understand that there appears to be a split within Islamic teachings between the radicalized jihadist interpretation (extremists within the Salafi camp), the hardliner Salafi interpretation, which is also fundamentalist but not necessarily violent, and the traditional, peaceful Islamic interpretation.

       Scholars in this camp suggest the implementation of education programs designed to outright ban religious propaganda that "may set in motion new ways of altering the religious fanatic's mindset" (MacEoin 2009, 24). Additionally, scholars have influenced US foreign policy by sending troops to these "Muslim lands," which have waged jihad against our country, so that we may destroy those who threaten us with religious convictions (Ibid, 24). A shortcoming with this mode of thought is that Islam is the sole motivation for committing the act of suicide bombing, when there is evidence suggesting religious drives are not the only motivational factor. This mode of thought can be traced in the rhetoric put forth by news reporters and U.S. officials. This has fueled the belief that future terrorist attacks can be avoided by a wholesale transformation of Muslim societies, such as seen in the United States' recent conquest in Iraq (Pape 2005, 137). Thus, this school of thought informs the research laid out in this paper because it corroborates the fact that the Islamic fundamentalism school of thought is not only elucidated in official and media layers of discourse but also in academic circles, which further strengthens

my claim that these specific representation of suicide terrorists do in fact exist and influence our attitudes, behaviors and perceptions towards Muslims.

*Strategic Efficacy School*

Academics from this school of thought assert that suicide terrorism is not simply used for religious or ethereal purposes, rather they purport that suicide terrorism has more of a secular and strategic logic to it. Robert Pape, along with other scholars, asserts that contrary to common belief, Islamic fundamentalism is not the central cause of suicide terrorism. This school of thought claims that this false presumption has ignited the belief that future terrorist attacks can be avoided by a total transformation of Muslim societies (Pape 2005, 150). Moreover, Pape discovered that the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, a secular Marxist group who were very opposed to religion, committed more suicide attacks than any other religious terrorist organizations during the 90's and early 2000's (Ibid, 237). These scholars argue that a terrorist organizations' decision to partake in suicide terrorism has one strategic, political, and secular goal: and that is to utilize a tactic that is low cost, but highly effective. This is done so that it can be employed as a logical, strategic maneuver that will force democracies, such as Western and European nations, to withdraw military forces from the land these terrorists consider to be their homes so that they can live peaceful lives.

Another intellectual, Bond, states that the 9/11 terrorists committed these atrocities not because of religion but because the cost of the tactic was cheap, and the outcome could achieve maximal results (Bond 2004, 35). He further explains that the terrorists considered the U.S. an occupying force in the Middle East because of the presence of military bases, forward operating bases, and America's support for Israel (Ibid, 36). Grimland also indicates in his research that terrorist organizations wish to effect political change as swiftly as possible in the face of strategic inferiority; he gives examples of how terrorists compelled American and French forces to abandon Lebanon in 1983, and how the Kurds compelled Turkey to grant them autonomy in the late 1990's (Grimland et al. 2006, 112). At the same time, it's important to mention that some terrorist organizations, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan want to install Islamist political desires into the government, rather than purely secular ones, so sometimes there is a crossover between religion and politics and the lines are often blurred (Ibid).

According to many critics, much of the methods utilized by Pape and other scholars in this school of thought, such as the gathering of raw suicide

bombing incidents, correlations, and other quantitative methods, are misleading and outdated. In broader terms, statistical regularity or predictability only indicates correlations but not causation. Most of the scholars in this camp guide themselves off correlations, which have the potential for inaccurate results. Scott Atran asserts that Pape's study relies solely on the computations of statistical trends rather than supplementing them with other discernments from nonrandom interviews with the human subjects of study in this topic (Atran 2006, 132-133). This school of thought informs the research conducted in this paper by providing the reader an in-depth understanding of the rationale behind the opposing discourse of the religious motivations. However, the academic literature surrounding this school of thought is not a popular one. It is a view that has gained some traction throughout the years, but not enough to influence the media, political processes, civil society such as the religious discourse has.

## Methodological Considerations

### Mapping Representations/Evidence Generation

I have conducted a critical discourse analysis on the representations cast by public officials and media representatives on the motivations behind suicide terrorism and the suicide terrorist. Thus, I map how these representations have formulated and "racialized" Arabs and Muslims into becoming the suicide terrorists that everyone fears. This in turn, helps explain the changed perceptions and attitudes towards Muslims which then leads to biases, toxic attitudes, and sometimes harmful practice that can stem from any echelon of the societal ladder: the government, media, and civil society. I rely on a postmodern conceptualization of language to unmask the hidden power structures lying beneath the discourses of Islamic fundamentalism and secular motivations discourse, to better understand how both discourses of suicide terrorism inform each other. Moreover, it is important to recognize that some representations become accepted as "true" and others do not, therefore it is important to ask how certain constructions of knowledge become dominant (Dunn 2008, 83).

I cast a wide net on the types of sources my subject would require so that I could be exposed to a plethora of texts and ultimately ensure I approached my evidence generation collection method in a nuanced fashion (Ibid, 86-87). First, the use of different layers of discourse were explored, such as official or media discourses. For example, George W. Bush's Address to the Nation after the 9/11 attacks and a telephone conversation between the President, and other government officials were used as text that can be critically analyzed. This was

specifically chosen because during 9/11, President Bush served as a symbol and the highest echelon of power in the U.S. during this significant paradigm shift that occurred in the U.S. Thus, I thought it was important to analyze the mind of George Bush to uncover his thought processes and biases so that we can understand how his rhetoric and decisions directly stem from his position of power and how that influences those under him in the societal hierarchy of power. Additionally, news reports of suicide bombings from the 1980s up until the present day were selected. To ensure diversity and consistency, 5-10 news articles dating as far back as the 1980s, such as the Beirut suicide-bombing attacks, up until the Paris 2015 attacks, were used as viable texts for analysis. The criteria I utilized when searching for appropriate news articles for the purposes of my research project was three-fold. I made sure to investigate the background and details surrounding every bombing that was reported in these newspapers to find out what terrorist organization was responsible, the number of causalities inflicted, and the geographical location of the explosion. Once this information was collated, and the terrorist organization's traditional *modus operandi* was identified, I used all this information to my advantage to logically deduce the terrorist organization's motivations for conducting that specific suicide attack. Once this was done, I then proceeded to the linguistic analysis of the text.

After analyzing the texts, many relationships between texts across multiple layers of discourses within both Islamic fundamentalism and the strategic/secular discourses have been elucidated. In addition to this, intertextuality has been established across both overarching discourses as well (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 78-79). Through this mechanism, I have discovered a hybrid hierarchy in society and a repetitive cycle that exists between government, media, and civil society, which continually feed into each other. Most importantly, I have discovered that the media is often utilized as a tool by the political elite to influence the masses. Both functions serve similar purposes in our government and because of this, it is expected that some primary sources I have utilized will contain shared meanings and thus may make some of the content analyzed repetitive to a certain degree (Ibid, 81).

*Contextuality*

It is important to note that in interpretivist research, human beings are not understood as objects, but rather as living, breathing, dynamic agents. Such people are viewed as actively and cooperatively constructing or deconstructing

their cultures, societies, practices, languages, and realities (Ibid, 46). Thus, this type of research focuses more on contextuality rather than generalizability because different meanings are created depending on the context. For my research, the larger historical context for the discourses and practices I am researching would be the meanings associated with suicide terrorism throughout the passages of time. The first time the tactic of "suicide terrorism" was employed occurred in a vastly different context than the one in which it used today and was perpetuated by the Japanese Kamikaze's during World War 2 (Lutz and Lutz 2007, 273). Moving forward, this tactic flared up during the 1980's when the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka started using it for more secular, nationalistic purposes to drive their oppressive government out of power (Pape 2005, 138). Ever since then, suicide attacks have been increasing at an alarming rate, due to both secular and religious motivations, and post 9/11 is when the number of suicide bombings started to uncontrollably skyrocket (Ibid, 139).

*Evaluative Standards/Reflexivity*

In postmodern theory, there is no such thing as concrete, objective proof, but if there is a rational, logical suspicion that my claims have validity, it is possible to proceed with the research project (Dunn 2008, 92). I currently hold no position of power, therefore, I lack the ability to sway any politician or powerful person that may have initially perpetuated the ongoing misrepresentation of Muslims via their rhetoric on suicide terrorism. However, I realize that I am a member of civil society and may have unknowingly conflated Muslims and Arabs to suicide terrorists without conscious effort, thus perpetuating the ongoing stereotypes against these groups of people. Furthermore, there was no anticipated language barriers I encountered, mainly because the text I analyzed mostly originate from American politicians and news outlets. In terms of trustworthiness, I have incorporated an explanation and implementation of key terms and concepts to address all aspects and nuances of my data generation and framing of my analysis (Ibid, 92-93).

Realistically, I have not used a large amount of news articles or as many different presidential/public official statements that could have been used. Thus, this lack thereof, may have hindered the breadth of my analysis. With more time outside of the school year, more sources will be able to be analyzed and in turn contribute to the overall conversation, providing an even richer understanding of the discourses. At the same time, I was provided with sophisticated tools to conduct my analysis. I was given access to the software program NVivo, which compartmentalizes and aggregates all the data inputted in the system into separate classifications, nodes and categories. This makes it easier to identify trends across

a variety of texts and layers of discourse. In the future, since I already have an adequate supply of resources for a sophisticated research project and more time, I may be able to expand and conduct an even richer analysis on the discourses.

**"Suicide Terrorism" as an Empty Signifier**

In order to fully comprehend how discourses have the power to warp the identities of the "suicide terrorist," and in turn the attitudes towards the ones who are seen as the constant perpetrators of said practice, one must first understand the very essence of the empty signifier and how this way of theorizing an issue offers an overarching framework around which a large quantity of subjects can be directed towards many different demands and interests. The "empty signifier" refers to a concept, which has no intrinsic meaning and only becomes meaningful in relation to specific contexts (Fadaee 2014, 569). According to Ferdinand de Saussure, all words have two dimensions. The first element is the way a word sounds or looks, which he called the signifier and the second element of a word is what it means, or what it signifies. Ultimately, Ferdinand purports there is often not a clear connection between the signifier and the signification (Ibid). In other words, as Seymour once said, "one person's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" (Seymour 1975). The absence of a universally concurred meaning of suicide terrorism, let alone terrorism in general, provides a permit for the term to be manipulated by those maintaining the hegemonic norms of today, barring any true engagement with the dangers and complexities of utilizing the term as a disparaging name.

Thus, it is important that one is aware of the linguistic link between power and knowledge, whereby discourse is seen to have a "gainful force" which decides the acceptable types of political character and practice (Neumann 2008, 61-62). This concern with how language can be a byproduct of power and how it can be employed through various mediums to maintain certain "regimes of truths" is crucial to analyzing how the discourse of Islamic fundamentalism or secularism is utilized at an elite level. Whether this is done intentionally or not depends on a case-by-case basis, but the fact remains that these "truths," which are formulated from the top, slowly trickle down the societal hierarchy of power by influencing the media next and then eventually influencing civil society, and most of the time unwittingly. This article embraces the notion of the "empty signifier" and affirms that suicide terrorism is to be considered an empty signifier and a challenged idea that is constantly dependent upon a

specific social translation of political setting and condition.

Suicide terrorism as an organized tactic utilized by terrorist organizations has always been attributed to either religious or secular, nationalistic motivations. The tactic of suicide bombing has mistakenly been conflated with the identity of the terrorist organization itself, thus lending itself to an assignment of either a "religious group" or "secular group" (Lutz and Lutz 2013, 278). This rigid, quantitative method used by many scholars, politicians and military personnel alike, of automatically assigning terrorist organizations an identity or ideological affiliation in an objective manner has allowed the term suicide terrorism to become synonymous with the terrorist organizations' identity. This in turn makes it easier to label a suicide terrorist or terrorist organization as a certain people and easily associate them based off general characteristics, traits, and outward identities such as a race, ethnicity, or religion. In the case of suicide terrorists, most of these attacks have originated from the Middle East and North Africa in recent years and thus has provided a foundation for some politicians' and citizens' rationale towards associating the suicide terrorist with the identities of other groups, such as Muslims or Arabs (Ibid). Mainly because most suicide terrorists who carry out attacks tend to be of Arab descent and oftentimes radicalized Muslims (MacEoin 2009, 16).

**Analysis**

*Islamic Fundamentalism and Official Discourse*

After conducting an in-depth analysis on the rhetoric used by government officials after a suicide attack occurs, in the short timespan that suicide terrorism, as an organized tactic, has existed, it has become apparent that officials use the Islamic fundamentalism frame, sometimes unknowingly, as a tool to paint the attackers as "inherently evil" or "not human," which ends up stripping the individual's humanity and fuses his or her existence with the devil incarnate (Bush, 2001). Due to the brain's ability to engage in cognitive heuristics, the identities of the individuals who conducted the attack are now easily attributed to other individuals who look like the attacker (Alsultany 2014, 445).

An example of this rhetoric being employed from the highest levels of government is George W. Bush's Presidential Address to the Nation and his Telephone Call to the Governor of New York and the Mayor of New York City immediately after the events of 9/11. Attempting to calm Americans down after these attacks were carried out while simultaneously trying to appear strong in the face of adversity, President Bush states:

As a mark of respect for those killed by the heinous acts of violence perpetrated by faceless cowards upon the people and the freedom of the United States on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, I hereby order, by the authority vested in me as President of the United States of America by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff at the White House... (Bush, 2001).

Furthermore, the theme of solidarity and patriotism complements the continual denigration of these terrorists. At one point of his Address to the Nation speech, President Bush confidently exudes:

These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our Nation into chaos and retreat, but they have failed. Our country is strong. A great people have been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve. America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining (Bush 2001).

President Bush reaffirms the strength of the American people during times of danger and existential threats by confidently claiming, "our country is strong" and that even though these attacks may "have shattered steel," the American resolve has not wavered (Bush 2001).

This provides a segue to the telephone conversation that President Bush had with Mayor Giuliani and New York Governor George Pataki in two days' time, in which a war-like rhetoric began to take form among the American elite. At one point in the telephone conversation, the Governor responds to the President's remarks and thanks him for the support he has received from the federal government and immediately after exclaims, "You are right our Nation is united as never before, and we will triumph over this evil with your leadership and your inspiration" (Bush, Giuliani, and Pataki 2001). Governor Pataki's remarks reveal the thought processes and ideas he has already concocted in his mind. The Governor has already established that our nation

has come under attack by "evil," foreign enemies and the only way to deal with this blow is to triumph against said "evil" with the encouragement and effective leadership skills of the Commander-in-Chief (Bush, Giuliani, and Pataki 2001). The Governor's verbal expression of commitment and loyalty to the president can be construed as a subconscious effort on his part to search and grasp for a leader (in this case happens to be the president) who will be leading this so-called war effort. To top it off, the President finishes up his phone conversation by assuring the Governor and the Mayor that his resolve on winning the war is strong and has been declared on America. He mentions this is a new kind of war and that the government will adjust accordingly (Bush, Giuliani, and Pataki 2001).

Per Giorgio Agamben's explanation, the notion of "ambivalence" is central to modern democratic sovereign power. "Ambivalence" refers to the same act, which is considered both unjustifiable and necessary. Thus, these moments of "ambivalence" come to fruition when "exceptional" moments of crises' take place, such as a terrorist attack against the state. The state in turn takes advantage of these hectic moments to establish procedures and codes to sanction government abuses of power or to simply use force (Alsultany 2014, 445-446). Thinking about the more extensive moral outcomes of the "Islamic Terrorism" discourse and the specific political rhetoric mentioned before, the allotment of a retrogressive, fanatic and characteristically fiendish religious identity can be utilized to exemplify the hegemonic power of the United States. The disparaged figure of the Muslim extremist gives a negative counter-image through which the United States can combine its own aggregate support, proposing a more civilized liberal society that will be secured against the risk of the Islamic "Other" utilizing whatever methods necessary in times of "ambivalence."

Despite 9/11 being the hallmark event that jumpstarted this dominant discourse, the discourse tends to flare up when a suicide terrorist attack occurs in Western nations. The suicide attacks carried out in Paris, France on November 2015, brought forth the same attitudes and responses reminiscent to the time after 9/11, mainly due to this "politics of fear" attitude which has been prevalent since 2001 (*CNN* 2015). A perfect example demonstrating the aggressive revival of the Islamic fundamentalist discourse in more recent years is found in President Donald Trump's rhetoric, but more specifically when he was running as a candidate in 2016. Rather than attempting to rally citizens together for a war as Bush did and implicitly contributing to the Islamic fundamentalist discourse, President Trump has been a bit more pragmatic and blunt in his interviews and speeches (Trump 2016). For example, in an interview with Anderson Cooper, Trump was asked whether he trusts Muslims in America and he responded: "Many of them I do. Many of them I do, and some, I guess, we don't. Some, I guess, we don't. We have

a problem, and we can try and be very politically correct and pretend we don't have a problem, but, Anderson, we have a major, major problem. This is, in a sense, this is a war..." (Ibid).

As evidenced by this blurb from the interview, President Donald Trump has continually tried to frame the problem of suicide terrorism, and more generally terrorism, as a purely Islamic problem. President Trump has painted all Muslims as possible perpetrators and has even offered radical solutions to quell this perceived problem. He has proposed to ban all Muslim immigrants who attempt to enter this country and has called for the monitoring of all Mosques to detect any suspicious activity (Ibid). Whether he will follow through with his efforts is unknown and is not the focus of this subject. President Trump, with all his power and influence, has unknowingly revived the age-old Islamophobia of 9/11, and has promised to offer "solutions" that could causally affect innocent Muslim and Arab lives in the United States. Furthermore, there are also elements of intertextuality woven into these discourses. Interpretive researchers see the research world and the researcher as entwined, with evidence being brought into existence through the formulation of a research question and those actions taken in the research setting, which act on that specific framing (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 79). The fact that official discourses from 2001 share the same ill-perceived attitudes and thought processes towards Muslims and Arabs (due to actions of suicide terrorists) as ones from today, reveal that hegemonic discourses, such as Islamic fundamentalism, have the power to withstand the passages of time and reappear once again in public official rhetoric.

*Islamic Fundamentalism and Media Discourse*

In addition to analyzing official discourse surrounding the meanings associated with suicide terrorism, the analysis of media representations of suicide terrorism is just as important in attaining an awareness on how the societal hierarchy, mentioned before, operates and how their specific function assists the hegemonic practices from the government. Countless themes found in the official discourse also appear in the media discourse. For example, in a news report of the Paris suicide bombings on November 2015, the term "Islamic terrorism" was used repeatedly and ISIS was suspected to have been behind the attack (CNN 2015). The news report started out with a more sentimental and dramatic mood: "On a night when thousands of Paris residents and tourists were reveling and fans were enjoying a soccer match between France and world champion Germany, horror struck in an unprecedented manner" (CNN

2015). Pay attention to the initial framing of this short narrative, "on a night when thousands of Paris residents and tourists..." provides expressive details the news reporter uses to create an emotional attachment with his or her audience so that they may feel more connected to the situation and in turn more likely to sympathize with the victims while demonizing the perpetrators. Either way, the final words, "horror struck in an unprecedented manner" paints these "thousands" of innocent Parisians as citizens whose lives were suddenly interrupted by these evil, heartless monsters dubbed ISIS, who happen to be Islamic jihadists (*CNN* 2015). Thus, upon the mention of "Islamic jihadists," the "politics of fear" resurfaces and a climate of suspicion, confusion, and anger towards individuals who happen to look like these perpetrators come to fruition. Once this process takes place, more sentiments and attitudes are continually expressed to the public via the media.

For example, as U.S. President Obama was sending his condolences and support for the investigation, he was recorded mentioning to the French President that, "This is an attack not just on Paris, not just on the people of France, but an attack on all humanity and the universal values we share" (*CNN* 2015). Just as in the aftermath of 9/11, the President framed his attitudes and thoughts in a way that paints the specific hectic situation in an "us versus them" light, which in turn inspires citizens to have feelings of solidarity with each other as if they're preparing to head into war. Thus, these violent actors (suicide terrorists) are once again depicted as enemies of the state and any individual who looks like these violent actors or share a similar identity (practicing the same religion) take the flak as well due to our natural tendency to make quick assumptions. Within these quick, cognitive decisions made by the brain, one might not necessarily believe that Arab people are evil, but it is simple to irrationally associate the religion they practice as the source of the problem, which then leads to intolerance and unfair practices towards them, sometimes to the point of physical harm or death (Alsultany 2014, 458-459).

Although the net was cast wide in terms of identifying news sources and articles since the 1980's up until now, not many articles were used in the final product of this paper because many of the themes and nodes present in the media discourse was also found in the official discourse, so there wasn't an urgent need to dissect every news article gathered (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 80-81). That would require more time and resources to accomplish. The main point that connects the outlet of the media to the dominant Islamic fundamentalism discourse is the fact that media is often used as a tool by the government for certain agendas. Although government officials have standard operating procedures and goals that serve their specific job functions, the government is composed by individual human beings who are also affected by the repercussions of suicide attacks. Similarly, the

media can have an agenda they are trying to advance on their own part as well (Alsultany 2014, 447). Whichever the case is, it is necessary to recognize that the media yields the implicit power to shape the representations, perceptions, attitudes and practices of ordinary citizens from every walk of life because they are the lowest echelon of the societal hierarchy.

*Secular Discourse and Its Nuances*

The alternative discourse of suicide terrorism at play is the secular discourse, which has been in constant flux with the Islamic discourse for the last 30 years or so. This discourse appears to have been more dominant prior to 9/11, specifically in the 1980's when the Tamil Tigers were the main actors in the suicide terrorism arena. This discourse is a bit subtler in its evolutionary timespan and requires a bit more interpretation when put up against the Islamic fundamentalist timeline, which at least has a monumental marker such as 9/11 that denotes the primary paradigm shift in American thought.

For this strategic/secular discourse, the official and media texts both tend to focus on the strategic and logical capacities of the suicide mission itself and thus the aftermath of the incident is emphasized more. Subsequently. It morphs into a "criminal" or "investigative" problem rather than a combat-focused war dilemma in which an "Other" or "enemy" is needed. The traditional us versus them dilemma have not been found because the secular terrorist does not usually subscribe to a specific creed or belief system. Instead, they fight for a cause or an ideology, but there is no big institution, such as the religious institution of Islam, backing them. Thus, the secular suicide terrorist is more fluid and can bypass the exterior biases and judgements oftentimes made by the media, public officials and civil society. In a 2003 news report from the New York Times, the details and strategic logic that the Chechen terrorists implemented in their suicide attack is carefully noted:

> The force of the blast, estimated to come from the equivalent of a ton of TNT, gouged a gaping crater more than 30 feet wide and some 20 feet deep in the road and damaged the headquarters of the regional government, as well as offices of the Interior Ministry and the Federal Security Service, or F.S.B. (Myers 2003).

When the details of this suicide attack are compared to other suicide attacks televised by the media, it was revealed that the specific details, "20 feet

deep in the road" and "30 feet wide," did in fact serve a logical purpose of "damaging the headquarters of the regional government." This level of specificity is generally not present in other news reports that were religiously motivated (Myers 2003). As one can see, these Chechen terrorists, who are also referred to as "separatists," or "guerillas" are detailed in media reports for their specific, logical and strategic goals of inflicting secular, political change. Islamic terrorists may also very well have political motivations and have been found to operate strategically (such as Islamist terrorism), but because of their identity label with a religious institution such as Islam and because of their Arab-looking facial features, they end up being reprimanded more so than other secular terrorists. So, their corporeal selves are depicted as the enemy of the state (signifying the democratic countries of the West, mainly the U.S.).

When looking at cases of public officials' discursive strategies employed within the secular discourse, there are instances when these suicide attacks are treated more like criminal investigations rather than combat operations. For example, a State Department official in a report regarding actions to be taken after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, mentions that "women police officers can better detect female suicide bombers; women prison guards can help reach female inmates with counseling to prevent them from radicalizing behind bars" (Sewall 2016). Even though democratic values have come under attack due to the recent suicide attacks in Paris, this state official does not automatically assume a combat stance as other officials have done before (see George W. Bush and Donald Trump examples). Instead, she suggests a solution that may be useful for countering future female suicide attacks, which is the use of female police officers who could potentially serve as early warning detection agents. Rather than contemplating further war with terrorists and perpetuating the cycle of "Othering" towards their race or religion, the use of preventive and investigative operations to deter suicide attacks appears to be a more reasonable measure. Moreover, the element of "redemption," or of saving the suicide terrorist from their eventual demise, is apparent in Sarah Sewall's thought processes (Sewall 2016). Some naysayers may purport that because this official is a woman, she may be more prone to having a compassionate and hopeful worldview, particularly when it comes to counterterrorism policy; thereby, ostracizing other points of view that may seem too "aggressive" in relation to hers.

Another exceptional finding within this discourse are the news articles pertaining to the Tamil Tiger's "awesome" and "awe-worthy" suicide bombing practices (Waldman 2003). In a New York Times article, a storyteller's perspective on the Black Tigers alluded to a time when: "They go in sea and on land in black robes," he said, proud of his knowledge. "They will go and jam themselves against

anything" (Waldman 2003). In another instant the article mentions that out of all the suicide terrorist groups, they are the most ruthless and most disciplined (Waldman 2003). Overall, the Black Tiger Suicide squad from the Tamil Tiger (LTTE) secular terrorist organization has been depicted as worthy of praise and an impressive model to follow. They are exalted to the level of "guru" among all other terrorist organizations who have utilized the tactic of suicide terrorism. Yet, they aren't condemned to the extent that other "Islamic fundamentalist" groups have been. Neither public officials nor the media focus on their race, ethnicity, or religion. Instead they focused on the innovative and bold ways the Tamil Tigers carried out their attacks, emphasizing the strategic and secular nature of the tactic. Based off these findings, an obvious difference in the representation of a suicide terrorist, in regards to which terrorist organization they are a part of, is apparent. It's almost as if the established classification for the terrorist organization's motivations and identity play a major role in determining whether public officials or media officials will report a suicide attack in a certain way or not.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, this paper has sought to analyze the meanings associated with suicide terrorism since the 1980's in the democratic West, specifically in the U.S. This has been done via discourse analysis towards the varying representations cast by government officials and media news reports on suicide terrorists. This was all done by analyzing various articles and public official statements, with a special emphasis on President Bush's address to the nation, his telephone conversation with the governor of New York and the Mayor, a State Department official's speech, some *New York Times* articles on Chechen terrorists and Tamil Tigers, the recent Paris and Brussels attacks as depicted on *CNN*, and many more. These articles and public official statements underwent a scrupulous linguistic/discourse analysis that focused on syntax patterns, diction emphasis, modes of tonality, and the context in which the rhetoric was employed. The link between the "racialization" of Muslims and suicide terrorist actions has been established through the notion of the "empty signifier," which helps us understand that multiple meanings can be attached to the term suicide terrorism or suicide terrorist (Alsultany 2014, 447). Ultimately, the findings have confirmed that out of the two overarching discourses surrounding suicide terrorism, the Islamic Fundamentalism Discourse has been reigning since 9/11, which marked the paradigm shift in American thought. The Secular Discourse appears to have been in a position of power prior to the events of

9/11 but not afterwards. This dominant religious ideology discourse has formed false misrepresentations of Muslims and Arabs nationwide and has contributed in influencing the attitudes of politicians and citizens alike, which in turn have led to practices that can be harmful and negative towards these people. Examples of such practices by the government is the surveillance of mosques as a security measure after 9/11, and faulty foreign policy options that have led to a belief that Muslim societies are the enemies and require a wholesale transformation of their societies through the deploying of American troops to democratize. Such practices initiated by civil society because of the misrepresentations from the elite have ranged from as small as posting hateful, racist comments of Muslims on YouTube videos or as heavy as brutally beating up people who "look" Muslim or Arab.

This article has problematized the term "Islamic Terrorism" as conveyed inside conventional International Relations discourses for the route in which it muddles complex substances by socially developing the figment of an unmistakably separated metanarrative which at last is logically unwarranted. The discourse of Islamic fundamentalism and the representations thereof, are better understood as an emotional depoliticizing term intended to make citizens, through the use of the media, think less and fear more. Therefore, it is important to not accept hegemonic truths at face value. Is it possible to expose the normative ramifications and underlying motives behind the discourse of "Islamic fundamentalism" or other similar terms? Moreover, it is also important to remember that this practice of suicide terrorism can easily change its meaning over time due to its inherent nature of meaning everything and nothing at the same time. (See the concept of the "empty signifier.") The current dominant discourse attributes suicide terrorism with Muslims, but what if Muslims were not the ones to have attacked us during that paradigm shift period in 9/11? What if they were Buddhists? What if they were Christians? Would Christianity, the dominant religion in the U.S., even get backlash for an attack conducted at the level of 9/11? Hypothetical questions such as these could prove to be useful in exploring the implications of the intersectionality of race, religion and ideology in the field of terrorism.

This does not mean that Islamic terrorism doesn't exist and that it doesn't pose a threat to the established order, because it does. However, this article merely highlights the religious-secular distinction, in regards to the suicide terrorist's motivations and identity. These dangerous discourses and this venomous rhetoric has to be brought to light and called out so that thoughts of "Islamic fundamentalism" are properly reconfigured in the individuals' mind. Instead of viewing one whole religion or one whole race as the source of the problem, one should take the time to first learn about the race or religion, attain a basic understanding of said topic, and then conduct a proper reflection of the lessons learned, which should then reveal

that the religion or race itself is most likely not the source of the problem. This would in turn, allow for that reconfiguration of the mind to occur, which would then lead to less misperceptions and negative behaviors towards Muslims in the United States.

Moreover, my research and findings have shed some light on the dangers and risks of using quantitative methods to assess, classify, and assign attributes to the motivations behind suicide terrorism and assigning identities to terrorist organizations who adopt this tactic. This only creates a binary system of an either-or system, either religious or secular, which perpetuates the continual clash of discourses and heightens malpractices towards people who don't deserve it. Ultimately, realizing and understanding the dynamic and constructive nature of the tactic of suicide terrorism and the dynamic motivations of suicide terrorists is key. Classifying suicide terrorists and the term suicide terrorism as a subject that is in constant flux is the appropriate way to view the phenomenon. Looking ahead, I call for more research into the subject of religion (with all its nuances) within the study of International Relations to gain a fuller understanding of the subject, which seems to have a track record of being avoided for the most part in traditional International Relations studies. A critical understanding of the religion of Islam and comparing it to other religions may offer more insight into the tactic of suicide terrorism and the ambiguous answers to the organizations' or individuals' motivations for partaking in such a destructive, but bold action. With enough analysis, perhaps it is possible to figure out how identity is formulated in a meaning-making context and may even offer alternative, more peaceful solutions to US foreign policy towards the Middle East.

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# ABOUT THE JOURNAL

*Clocks and Clouds* is an American University undergraduate research journal that publishes articles on the cutting edge of political science, international studies, and public policy. The journal is meant to add a voice to the intellectual dialogue both within the American University community and in broader academia. Our name comes from the work of philosopher Karl Popper, where clouds are a metaphor for the disorderly and irregular in social science while clocks represent the predictable and rational. By providing a venue for top undergraduate research, *Clocks and Clouds* aims to find the clocks amidst the clouds.

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