SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF CONTENTIOUS POLITICS: MASS MOBILIZATION IN THE ARAB UPRISINGS

by

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A Dissertation
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Megan. Without her unending love, support, patience, and innumerable sacrifices, this dissertation would be nothing but a blank page.

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ABSTRACT

SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF CONTENTIOUS POLITICS: MASS MOBILIZATION IN THE ARAB UPRISINGS

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Understanding why protests grow in size and scale in some places but not in others is an often asked question for which there are numerous potential explanatory factors. This dissertation focuses on the influence that spatiality has on the underlying mechanisms at work in the processes of social mobilization and protest scale shift. Using Protest Event Analysis to collect and analyze data from hundreds of individual protest events compiled from news media sources, I employ a mechanism-process approach to investigate how the *space* and *place* of protests impacts the size and scale of protests in Egypt and Jordan in 2011. This dissertation argues that there are critical spatial factors that are underrepresented and undertheorized in the contentious politics literature that alter the nature of mechanisms related to collective action and help explain some of the divergent process outcomes of protest episodes in the MENA region and beyond.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Contentious Politics in the Middle East and North Africa

Mass mobilizations in late 2010 and early 2011 that took place in Tunisia and Egypt led to the overthrow of decades-long rulers in those countries. Protests in those countries grew in size and scale to historic levels, with hundreds of thousands to millions of people across dozens of protest sites mobilizing in protest of economic and political grievances, like high unemployment, low standards of living, corruption, and oppressive authoritarianism. Almost immediately, mass mobilizations protesting similar grievances spread to many other countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In 2011, some countries experienced mobilizations that grew in size and scale comparable to those in Tunisia and Egypt, albeit with varied outcomes. In Libya, protests that began in the eastern city of Benghazi grew into a rebellion that spread across the country. Similar situations emerged in both Syria and Yemen, where a series of isolated protests grew to unprecedented size and spread to cities and towns around the country. In these cases, demonstrators were met with violent repression from the government, and nonviolent protests evolved into sustained movements and civil conflicts that engulfed the entire country.

In other countries in the region, despite persistent attempts at widespread mobilization, protests failed to grow in size and scale. In Bahrain, initial small-scale

protests quickly gained support and began to grow in size. The crackdown on protesters occupying the Pearl Roundabout in the capital, facilitated by the deployment of troops from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), quashed any momentum that demonstrations had built. Demonstrations in Jordan took place all around the country during the first half of 2011; though protests were not large compared to mobilizations in the countries mentioned above, they were considered the largest mobilization in Jordan in decades. The Moroccan government responded to the limited protests that emerged there in early 2011 not with overwhelming force, but rather with reform. A constitutional referendum was held and overwhelmingly passed that took limited steps toward democratization.

The protest trend that started in Tunisia and Egypt continued in many countries in the MENA region, but the variation in size and scale that protests reach is notable. Why did protests grow in size and scale in some countries but not in others? Though the question is seemingly straightforward, the answer is more complicated. Attempting to explain the size (e.g., the total number of participants) and scale (e.g., the geographic spread or total number of protest sites) of a series of protests is a seemingly straightforward question, but the answer is more complicated. Many attempts to understand the trajectories of protest movements, and those in the MENA region since 2011 in particular, have been undertaken, looking at structural factors—stagnant and repressive political conditions, economic anxiety, the new availability of social media platforms to connect and organize dissenters, the influence of militaries or monarchies—and the role of agency—authoritarian resilience, the decisions of elites, the strategies of protest organizers. A range of other factors, from broad historical or cultural ones down

to tactical choices of regimes and riot police, have also been investigated as potentially explanatory.

Research on social movements incorporates many of these factors into analyses on similar questions and topics, though until somewhat recently there has been a distinct lack of geographic diversity of cases explored. Before the series of uprisings took place since 2011, there was a limited amount of research being published on social movements and contentious politics more broadly in the MENA region, and what was published was predominantly focused on Islamist movements.[1] There has been a drastic shift in the ensuing years, and there are now hundreds of articles and books published on seemingly every aspect of the subject. With a flood of new country cases to investigate, scholars have attempted to understand the trajectories of mass mobilizations by building on many of the concepts social movement scholars have used for years, including resource mobilization structures, political opportunities, collective action frames, and repertoires of contention.

These foundations of social movement research have been widely critiqued as overly structural and not accounting for the actors and arenas involved in contention.[2] The approach that began with McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's 2001 *Dynamics of Contention* aimed to move toward a more dynamic model that better balanced the influence of external conditions and social structures with individuals' perspectives and decisions. The use of mechanisms—events or phenomena that, when activated, produce

[1] Notable examples include Brynen, Korany, and Noble 1995; Schwedler 1996; Wickham 2002; Hafez 2003; Wiktorowicz 2004; Bayat 2010; Beinin and Vairel 2011.
[2] See Gamson and Meyer 1996; Goodwin and Jasper 1999; Morris 2000; Jasper 2004.

the same effects in a range of contexts—and processes—combinations of mechanisms that produce larger scale effects—was further developed into a more formalized approach in Tilly and Tarrow's *Contentious Politics* (2007). Through careful identification and analysis, multiple complex interactive mechanisms and processes are used to understand episodes of contention, like mass mobilizations, in different situations. This dissertation is firmly rooted in the literature on contentious politics and this mechanism-process approach. Despite its flaws (discussed in Chapter 3), it has proven to be a useful framework in which to situate this dissertation's inquiry.

Still, there are important factors observed in the mass mobilizations that took place across the MENA region that are not adequately accounted for in this approach. One of the assumptions of much of the social movement literature and the mechanism-process approach is that the spaces in which protests take place are simply the setting or background. In attempting to understand why protests grow in size and scale in some places but not in others, this dissertation investigates the processes of mobilization and scale shift of protests while incorporating critical spatial factors that are largely absent in discussions and explanations of mass mobilizations in contentious politics research. Space is not just the background or setting for where protest mobilizations take place, but it "materially frames interactions, gives them meaning, provides players (protesters and the police) with opportunities, and imposes constraints on them" (El Chazli 2016). I argue and demonstrate that space is intrinsically connected to some of the central concepts in theories of social movements and contentious politics, and in fact influences causal

mechanisms underlying the processes of mobilization and scale shift in ways that affect the size and scale of protests.

What bearing do geographic factors, or spatial dynamics, have on how support is mobilized, how information about protests and repertoires of contention diffuse within a country, how regimes respond to mass demonstrations in different locations, or the extent to which social movements and digital networks are used for dissemination and coordination? The following example is instructive in showing spatial aspects as fundamental parts of mechanisms of contentious politics. In Egypt, social media platforms allowed people to connect across vast distances to develop personal connections over shared political and economic grievances, plan and coordinate demonstrations in real time, and share tactics for avoiding and dealing with police repression. Egyptian police were strategically deployed around prominent and locations, like the presidential palace and Tahrir Square, and used spatial constraints to their advantage to block, corral, or otherwise attempt to direct the movements of protesters (e.g., blocking one of the bridges leading from western Cairo into Tahrir Square). Coordination took place between individuals and organizations from various sectors of society with otherwise disparate interests toward creating new networks and coalitions, across both at local and national scales, to put forth aligned demands to address injustices. Tahrir Square in Cairo was used as a strategic and symbolic area of protest, for its layout and location as well as its historic significance, and its occupation became a means of maintaining and building support; Tahrir Square is a large open space at the

heart of downtown with multiple large streets leading into it, and was the site of mass demonstrations throughout Egypt's modern history.

The Approach of this Dissertation

In attempting to answer the question of why protests grow in size and scale in some places but not in others, this dissertation builds on the foundations of social movement and contentious politics research. Reframed using those analytical concepts, this dissertation seeks to test the underlying mechanisms implicated in the processes of mobilization and scale shift identified in previous research findings. The hypothesized relationships between the mechanisms of mobilization—repression, concessions, and diffusion—and the mechanisms of scale shift—diffusion, attribution of similarity, emulation, and brokerage—are displayed in Figure 1 below.

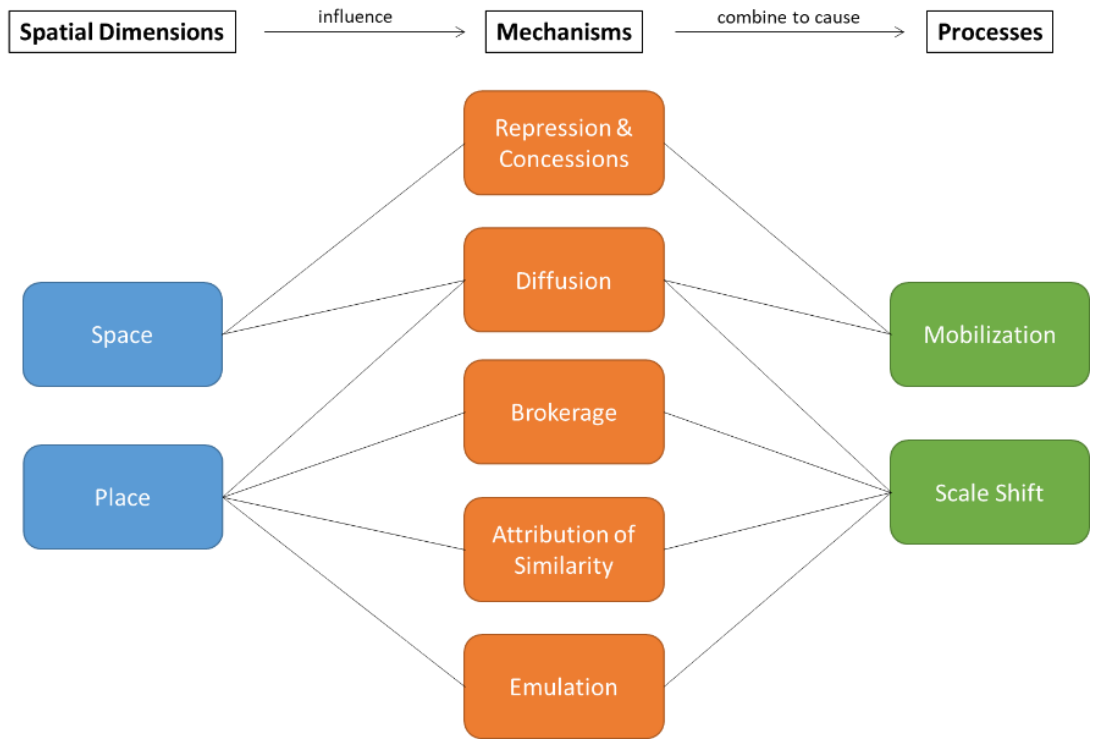

Figure 1: Diagram of hypothesized relationships between spatiality and mechanisms and processes of contention

This dissertation uses a spatial lens to test the relationships between mechanisms and processes associated with protest movements that increase in size and scale, and those that do not. In doing so, I argue that it is not only the activation of certain mechanisms that trigger process outcomes—like mobilization through a larger number of protest participants, and scale shift through increasing the number of protest sites—but also the spatial dynamics of those activated mechanisms that can account for differences in size and scale of protests. My analysis makes an original contribution to both the field of contentious politics and studies of spatiality and fills a gap in the literature by testing multiple hypotheses on the relationships between the spatial dimensions of *space* and *place* and mechanisms and processes of contentious politics on new cases using a

mechanism-process approach. This approach allows for describing a myriad of details involved in contentious episodes, identifying particular mechanisms that produce significant changes, reconstructing those mechanisms into larger-scale processes, and combining these into explanations of specific outcomes. I also add a layer of nuance by showing how space, which is often discounted or ignored in such studies, is fundamental part engrained in mechanisms and thus process outcomes.

Using this approach to address the question of why protests grew in size and scale, rather than looking at the overall outcome of a protest movement (e.g., the overthrow of a regime), is another important distinction that sheds additional light on the MENA uprisings and helps to dispel some problematic, or at least overly simplistic, explanations of contention that have been posited. A common refrain in the immediate aftermath of the MENA uprisings was that a country's regime type (e.g., republic or monarchy) was a critical factor in understanding where protests escalated. In short, the cultural argument is that there are strong social norms against challenging monarchs, in part because of religious and/or tribal legitimacy. The institutional argument points to the monarch's ability to remain above everyday politics and deflect discontent on ruling politicians (Yom and Gause 2012). However, when looking at countries where protests increased in size and scale, the monarchical exception argument does not hold up. Protests in Bahrain were violently suppressed within one month of beginning, but in that time, massive crowds amounting to nearly one-sixth of the entire population participated in demonstrations at the Pearl Roundabout (Ulrichsen 2015). This level of mobilization

was unmatched in any other country in the region, regardless of regime type, directly contradicting one of the most prevalent explanations of these events.

Though my research question is posited to contention in general, my discussion in this introduction, and throughout the rest of this dissertation, focuses on countries in the MENA region. Most readers would ask why I have confined my analysis just to MENA cases if this is a worldwide phenomenon. Indeed this is an especially interesting topic in light of not only the ongoing uprisings in the MENA region, but also the preponderance of similar protest movements that emerged in countries around the world soon thereafter. For example, the international Occupy protest movement in 2011-2012 and the popular uprising in Ukraine in 2014 adopted similar strategies as were seen in Egypt of occupying central city squares. One of the benefits of the mechanism-process approach is that its constituent parts, the mechanisms and processes, are, in theory, applicable across a range of contexts and circumstances. Thus the approach can be used to study contention in Western Europe, the Middle East, or Latin America and expect to find combinations of mechanisms to have the same resultant process effects. Utilizing the mechanisms-process approach, and demonstrating that spatiality is a built-in dimension of mechanisms, implies that this type of analysis should be applicable both within and outside the MENA region. Despite the approach's broad applicability, there is a dearth of research that explicitly applies this approach to countries in the MENA region, which is one reason why I chose to select two countries from there.[3]

[3] One exception is Tilly and Tarrow (2007) which includes brief examples the Middle East.

Besides that the MENA region is my area of expertise, my decision to select case studies from the MENA region stem from a few other important factors. The two case studies in this dissertation, Egypt and Jordan, exhibit a number of similarities, as well as important differences, that make them especially suitable for comparison. To aid in narrowing the potential elements explaining divergent outcomes in the size and scale of protests, it helps to compare cases with some economic, political, cultural, and other social similarities. Selecting two countries from the same region with similar socio-economic indicators (e.g., GDP per capita, unemployment rate, Human Development Index), autocratic leadership (despite different political systems), and linguistic and religious traditions takes a step toward that end.

As mentioned above, there is also the fact that these two countries different in an important way, exhibiting variation on the dependent variables derived from my research question. In Egypt, a series of protest events took place in the early weeks of January, both in response to an attack on a Coptic church and also in solidarity with protesters in Tunisia. The number of participants in protests grew dramatically beginning with the demonstrations on January 25, 2011 through to the end of the protest episode there in February 11, 2011, when Hosni Mubarak was forced to step down as president. Smaller scale protests of a few hundred to a few thousand people quickly become protests with upwards of hundreds of thousands of people across the country demanding political and economic reforms. Protests in Egypt not only grew in size, but the scale of protests, measured as the number of protest sites, also increased dramatically from a handful to a few dozen in a given week.

The protest episode in Jordan took a different trajectory. Protests against unemployment, high prices and cost of living, and other economic issues occurred in the first few days of 2011 in a number of Jordanian cities. Some of the largest days of demonstrations in decades, attended by upwards of 5,000 people, in some instances, occurred in the first three months of 2011. Despite a sense of solidarity with Tunisian, Egyptian, and other protesters across the MENA region, and similar economic and political grievances, the size of protests never increased to more than a few thousand people. An uncommon occurrence of violent repression by security forces took place on March 26 to break up an attempted sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle in Amman. After that instance, protests continued with some regularity, but the size of those protests declined overall and remained low, except for a few instances of demonstrations of a few thousand people over the next few months. The diversity of protest sites across Jordan varied throughout the first seven months of 2011, but never exceeded 10 unique locations in any given week, particularly as the months progressed.

Despite both countries showing some increase in the size and scale of protests, they show markedly different trends in the extent of the increase in size and scale. The literature on contentious politics posits that the activation of certain combinations of mechanisms should result in larger-scale processes. However, it does not account for the variation in the extent of those process outcomes. My research attempts to show that differences in the spatial dynamics of those mechanisms can explain part of that variation. This dissertation adds a layer of nuance to the overly simplistic and formulaic explanation implied by the literature and the mechanism-process approach. Spatiality is

an important element in many aspects of contentious politics, including the puzzle explored in this dissertation; spatiality is currently undertheorized and underutilized, and, when incorporated into the mechanism-process approach to analyze protest episodes, for example, it has the potential to add explanatory power.

It would not be unreasonable for someone at first glance to question what space has to do with social mobilization and protest scale shift. Once a spatial lens is incorporated into one's perspective on these issues, the relevance and applicability of spatiality to many phenomena in contentious politics and social science writ large becomes much clearer. I will demonstrate the significance of spatial dimensions on mobilization and scale shift with one of the examples referred to throughout this dissertation. The occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo became a phenomenon watched around the world. The importance of that *space*, in terms of its location and physical layout, as well as its *place* with associated social and historical significance, was, I argue, a pivotal factor in the increase in the size and scale of mobilization in Egypt. Tahrir Square sits in the heart of downtown Cairo as a large traffic circle with major roads and bridges leading to it that connect multiple parts of the sprawling city. Tahrir Square occupies a massive open space surrounded by government buildings, educational institutions, hotels, restaurants, museums, metro stops, and more. Multiple protests throughout Egypt's modern history have taken place in Tahrir Square, and thus it holds a social and cultural significance among Egyptians. Tahrir actually means "liberation" in Arabic, the name given to it after the revolution in the 1950s. Given its physical and

socio-historical significance to Egyptians, it is an obvious and easily accessible site for a protest.

A demonstration in Tahrir Square can be easily dwarfed by the sheer size of the space and make a group of even a few thousand people seem insignificant. That spatial aspect of it, however, can also be reversed; when enough people amass in Tahrir Square to fill it, it sends a signal of the extent of support for the demonstration. In the case of the 2011 protests, the constant media and social media coverage of the occupation of Tahrir Square stood as a symbol for non-participating Egyptians as well as to the government as to the scale of opposition to the Mubarak regime. The simple fact of the continued occupation was a mobilizing tool because the visualization of the opposition lowered the risk and cost for people to join the demonstration. Because the number of protest participants in Tahrir Square was so large, the Square was able to be secured from all sides, making it difficult for security forces to repress or attempt to disperse the demonstration. The Tahrir model of occupying the central square was also adopted in cities across the country and the region.

Jordan, in contrast, does not have a central square with the same spatial and historical significance in its capital Amman. Amman is dotted with many traffic circles throughout its downtown area, but there is not one particular space that is large and centrally located and has any social or historical significance like Tahrir Square. But that did not stop a newly formed youth movement from organizing a Tahrir-style sit-in at a traffic circle near the Interior Ministry in March 2011. The Interior Ministry Circle did not have a history as a protest site, but its proximity to the Interior Ministry, associated

with police and security forces, added a layer of spatial significance. The spatial layout of this circle differed greatly from that of Tahrir Square, however. The Interior Ministry Circle consisted of three levels of roads, with a high-speed underpass, a mid-level traffic circle, and a high-speed overpass. This made it much more difficult for a group of protesters to safely secure the space for a long-term occupation.

In light of the long-term occupation in Tahrir Square that contributed to the overthrow of the Mubarak regime, the Jordanian government viewed this demonstration as a particularly threatening affair. Despite the political culture in Jordan of allowing most demonstrations to take place without risk of repression, in this instance the Jordanian regime responded with an infrequently seen level of violence. Both police and pro-regime thugs descended on the Interior Ministry Circle, with the thugs beginning by throwing rocks from the overpass above and police attacking protesters directly. In less than a day, the attempted occupation of the Interior Ministry Circle was dissolved. The effect of this uncommon instance of violent repression was a decrease in mobilization, as fewer people attended less frequent protests in the weeks and months that followed.

These brief anecdotes from Egypt and Jordan demonstrate a variety of ways in which spatiality can influence various mechanisms of contentious politics. This dissertation includes many such discussions of how spatiality influences mechanisms related to mobilization and scale shift in my analyses of the protest episodes in Egypt and Jordan. The question of how to study these phenomena is an equally important one to consider before proceeding.

To address my research question on the size and scale of protests, I created a customized database of protest events taken from news media sources. Using Protest Event Analysis (PEA) techniques, I collected data on nearly two dozen categories of information for each protest event related to the size and location of protests, information about the participants and their demands, data on repressive measures taken against protesters, and information about concessions offered in response to protests. PEA techniques have benefited from decades of being used and improved to formalize and optimize a method to collect, code, and analyze large amounts of protest data. I reviewed over 2,000 news articles from *Egypt Daily News*, *The Jordan Times*, and *Reuters News*, and coded data on over 500 protests events in Egypt and Jordan. This data was used to both gather information about the key mechanisms underlying the processes of mobilization and scale shift, including basic information about protest events (e.g., location, participants, type of protest), data on violence or repression at protest events, and information on concessions associated with or following protest events.

Using a coding scheme, some of the data were transformed into quantitative data to allow for comparative and summary analyses. Supplementary qualitative data was needed to gather more information on certain spatial dimensions and mechanisms and to facilitate using the mechanism-process approach to explain the variation in outcomes in my case studies. In implementing this approach, I combined the quantitative and qualitative data and analysis from my database with additional qualitative research to establish a comprehensive picture of all of the main mechanisms involved in my dependent variable processes of mobilization and scale shift. Using specific

conceptualizations of key terms and detailed narrative exploration of the protest episodes, I demonstrate the activation of combinations of mechanisms to explain protests that increased in size and scale in Egypt but not in Jordan.

Structure of this Dissertation

This introductory chapter is followed by a detailed literature review in Chapter 2. In my literature review, I provide an overview of research on social movements and contentious politics from the past few decades. A brief history of how space has been conceptualized and studied in sociology and political science informs how my analysis uses a spatial frame to explore and understand mechanisms of contention. The remainder of the chapter reviews research that has been conducted on the mechanisms and processes investigated in this dissertation. Though the majority of contentious politics literature does not incorporate space in an analytically meaningful way, I attempted to include studies that lend credence to spatiality.

Chapter 3 details the methodological framework at the foundation of this research project. In discussing my research design, I explain my research question, hypotheses, logic of case selection, key operationalization of key concepts, methods of data collection and analysis, and challenges and limitations of my study.

Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation consist of my case studies on Egypt and Jordan. Each chapter begins with a broad overview of what took place in during protest episode, followed by a more detailed look at individual protest events through summarizing and analyzing the findings from my database. I then show a variety of ways in which space is intertwined with mechanisms and processes in contentious politics. The

remainder of each chapter identifies and details, with a spatial lens, whether combinations of key mechanisms were activated in the protest episode, resulting in processes of mobilization and scale shift, or an increase in the size and scale of protests.

The conclusion in Chapter 6 uses the main findings from the case studies on Egypt and Jordan to reconstruct and compare the processes of mobilization and scale shift in Egypt and Jordan and show how the spatiality of mechanisms and the certain contextual factors combine to explain the divergent outcomes of the size and scale of protest episodes. I also apply my findings to the broader contentious politics literature and, briefly, other country contexts.

This dissertation argues that incorporating spatial analysis of contentious mechanisms helps explain the variation in mobilization and scale shift process outcomes. Specifically, I argue that spatiality influences the mechanisms and processes of contention by influencing the collective action, with *space* increasing or decreasing collective action via the mechanisms of repression, concessions and diffusion; and *place* adding meaning to collective action via the mechanisms of diffusion, attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation. In Egypt, violent repression led to an increase in the number of people participating in protests, whereas in Jordan, protests were sustained at relatively moderate levels until the sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle was violently repressed, leading to a subsequent stagnation in growth of protest participants. Police in Egypt used the spaces of protest in their repression strategies by securing important political buildings, blocking demonstrators into spaces that were more easily policeable, and shutting down mobile and Internet service at protest sites. In Jordan, the secret

police, or *mukhabarat*, regularly intimidate and threaten activists, journalists, and citizens to pressure self-censorship, which can include refraining from participating in protests.

In addition to these spatial dynamics of repression, Egyptian and Jordanian regime strategies of repression and concessions were influenced by protester demands, differing levels of government repression, and differing public stances of leaders toward protests. In Egypt, immediate and forceful repression were combined with weak and nominal reforms as concessions, which only maddened demonstrators instead of pressuring them to discontinue participation. Repression continued in Egypt throughout the duration of the protest episode, whereas in Jordan, violent repression was a rare occurrence. When combined with moderate reforms, the rare instance of repression in Jordan seemed to successfully dissuade increased mobilization. In Egypt, Mubarak publicly spoke condescendingly to and about protesters, especially youth, whereas King Abdullah sympathized with protesters and their frustrations with the political and economic system.

In Egypt, the Tahrir model of occupying a central city square brought together people from different economic, demographic, social, and religious groups into one common location with a shared historical significance. Media coverage of demonstration in Tahrir Square demonstrated the extent of opposition to Mubarak, thus reducing the risk of and encouraging people to join the protests. In Jordan, there was no Tahrir-style protest site that was able to facilitate mobilization in the same way.

In both Egypt and Jordan, increasingly digitally connected youth were inspired by Tunisian and other activists across the Arab world. Ideas, tactics, and repertoires of

contention spread among activists online. Social media networks were used to as public spaces where disaffected youth could share grievances, organize, and eventually disseminate information about planned protest events. The We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page was popular among Egyptians and reached a following of over one million people in February 2011.

Use of these online technologies allowed for the erasure of spatial divisions and boundaries and the mobilization of countless individuals. These online platforms also acted as infrastructure for activists and organizers to establish relationships and coordinate with individuals from other ideological, political, religious, and economic groups in pursuit of common goals. In Jordan, the Hirak youth network, which began among tribal youth in southern Jordan, used both in-person and online means to express their discontents, gain supporters, and spread their organizational model and message to every city and town in Jordan. Jordanian protest movements were hindered by their inability to cooperate for an extended period, however; historical disagreements based on ethnic and geographic divisions, for example, made coordination among competing opposition and activist groups unsustainable, thus minimizing the extent to which protests could increase in scale. In Egypt, on the other hand, disparate movements were able to broker cooperation toward joint demands and goals among organizations with already established relationships as well as organizations creating cooperating for the first time. By coordinating action through multiple pathways, Egyptian protest movements were able to scale up protests to a greater degree than in Jordan.

Contentious politics is inherently spatial; it takes place in the physical dimension of *space*, the socially or historically imbued dimension of *place*, and the digital public arena that transcends spatial boundaries. Investigating and interpreting mechanisms and processes of contentious politics through the lens of spatiality is both a natural and a novel undertaking. In tackling the puzzle of why protests increase in size and scale in some places but not in others, this dissertation hopes to further the normalization of treating spatiality with the analytical rigor and complexity that such a robust element deserves. In the end, using both quantitative and qualitative data and analyses, this dissertation contributes to research on contentious politics, the spatiality of protests, and the Arab Uprisings, and in combination provides a unique addition to the social science literature on these topics.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The world was caught by surprise when mass protest movements erupted in Tunisia and spread to Egypt and across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), resulting in variations of regime change, civil war, political reform, and authoritarian entrenchment. There had been protests across the region for years but they rarely, if ever, grew to the size and scale that was seen in Tunisia and Egypt. Many scholars of the Middle East before this time emphasized the stability and longevity of authoritarian regimes in the region. This was an understandable focus, since many of the Arab world's leaders had been in power for decades. Despite the unpopularity of rulers, with support of the military, control of the economy, the provision of some social services and subsidies for basic needs, and even occasionally political reforms, it seemed reasonable that rulers' tight grips would hold. It was clear that something was different now, and there was a rush to try to understand and explain everything from the origins to the trajectories to the consequences of these uprisings.

While some level of protests did occur in most countries, mass mobilizations that grew significantly were the minority of cases. Why was it that protests increased in size and scale in some places but not others? In the years since these uprisings in the MENA region began, it became clear that this was not just a regional phenomenon. Mass mobilizations had erupted in countries across the world, in Venezuela and Nicaragua,

Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso, Greece and Ukraine, South Korea and Hong Kong. Of course historical context, economic circumstances, and political cultures are unique to each country, but there is reason to believe that there are important similarities among these mass mobilizations, and social scientists have developed many tools and methods to make particular types of inquiries and draw conclusions about the many questions that have emerged from these phenomena.

This dissertation is such an attempt to probe cases in the MENA region, where this apparent new era of mobilization began. It was important to review and understand the designs and findings of existing studies relevant to my own research question to help inform the design, methodology, and analysis in my dissertation. This chapter offers both summaries and critiques of a variety of literature related to social movements and contentious politics, and discusses how these literature are relevant to my dissertation. After briefly reviewing the developments over the past few decades in theories and approaches to studying social movements and contentious politics, I focus on a particular factor that is seemingly important in mobilization but is largely neglected in this literature: spatiality. Space is not just the setting or structure in which contention takes place, but can be changed by the social actions taking place there; space is also a feature that influences protest and counter-repression tactics; and places of contention can have socially constructed meaning that impacts mobilization. By adding these spatial perspectives to my analysis of contentious politics, new dimensions of the mechanisms underlying mobilization and scale shift can be uncovered and better understood, thus leading to a more robust and nuanced explanation of why protests grow in size and scale.

I begin with a background on the various conceptions of space and how it has been analyzed in social science studies, specifically on contentious politics. What follows is a review of research related to my research question of why protests grow in size and scale, with a specific focus on studies that have analyzed various mechanisms related to protest mobilization and scale shift, some of which incorporate spatial factors or frameworks, in both MENA cases as well as in other regions.

Social Movements and Contentious Politics

The foundations of modern theories on social movements and contentious politics date back to scholars from the 1950s and 1960s who derived their theories from functionalist social psychology.[4] The basic argument was that social movements emerged with the specific function of addressing societal and psychological grievances. According to these theories, society was naturally in a state of equilibrium. As the society produced demands, institutions were built to address them; if the institutions were not able to address those demands, social frustration, political disorder, economic deprivation, and psychological distress resulted and led to the creation of social movements. Many early theories claimed that the social strains were caused by the effects of globalization, modernization, or industrialization, and led people to support social movements. As these supposed advances infiltrated societies, oftentimes the political and economic situations deteriorated greatly. In response to these negative effects, people were driven toward mobilization via social movements to address and solve these grievances (Wiktorowicz 2004, 6).

[4] See for example Turner and Killian 1957, Kornhauser 1959, Smelser 1962, and Huntington 1968.

These theories were flawed in a variety ways: they oversimplified the explanations of mobilization; they ignored case studies with similar conditions where a movement did not emerge; they claimed that grievances were mainly psychological when in fact they were political; they were applicable mainly to liberal democracies; and they claimed that society is naturally in equilibrium, whereas later theories argued that society was fluid and constantly changing (Wiktorowicz 2004, 8-9). When applied to cases of MENA uprisings since 2011, these theories focused on relative deprivation prove lacking. Why were there significant protest movements in middle-income countries and not just the poorest countries in the region? In addition, the MENA region has generally experienced economic growth, improvements in education and health, and a stable level of economic inequality in recent history, which suggest that these demands are being met to a certain degree (Moore 2012).

Multiple strands of related social movement theories (SMTs) grew out of this literature, informed both by the shortcomings of earlier research as well as the emergence of new civil rights and anti-war movements. Theories based in resource mobilization, cultural framing, and political opportunities played off of one another, attempting to address gaps or shortcomings of each other. Explanations focused on resources as key to collective action placed individuals as rational actors and the decision makers, not governments or institutions.[5] As societal grievances arise, movements grow when individuals make decisions to mobilize via professional organizations (including non-governmental organizations, political parties, student associations, and informal social

[5] See McCarthy and Zald 1973, Oberschall 1973, McCarthy and Zald 1977, and Jenkins 1983.

networks). Movements are then able to grow depending on whether they are able to mobilize sufficient material and organizational resources. Resource mobilization theories have been used to explain a wide variety of social movements, from liberation theology and guerrilla movements in Latin America to environmental movements and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States (Edwards and McCarthy 2004, 116-117). For example, Civil Rights leaders worked with national organizations, like the NAACP, student groups, and religious communities to pool their material, human, and organizational resources to mobilize collective action in the form of marches, sit-ins, civil disobedience to influence both the American culture and policies.

Another group of scholars focused on political opportunities and constraints as central to increasing mobilization.[6] Movements needed to be studied in their political contexts to understand the variations in their strategy, structure, and success. The more political opportunities available to a social movement, the greater its chances of increasing support and establishing resource mobilization structures to address its grievances and accomplish its goals. By examining a society's level of stability, repression, and political and institutional access, this approach attempted to better explain social movement emergence and activity (Wiktorowicz 2004, 13-15; Tarrow 2011, 25-28). The emergence of popular contention, the level and form of mobilization, and outcomes of a variety of social movements—from antinuclear movements in Europe and the United States to repertoires of contention in Great Britain in the late-18th and early-19th centuries to the collapse of the former Soviet Union—have all been studied using

[6] See Tilly 1978, Kitschelt 1986, Kurzman 1996, and McAdam 1999[1982], and Tarrow 2011.

variations of this political-centered approach (Kriesi 2004). Jack Goldstone's (1998) account of the breakdown of the Soviet communist regime identifies political opportunities seized upon by a population suffering from declining standard of living and seeking radical political changes. Political opportunities for popular contention to bring about such changes emerged from a Soviet state weakened by economic and political failures and divided elite over how to respond to these crises.

Another variant of theories on social movements turned to cultural dimensions—like the discourse, emotions, and, predominantly, framing of collective action—that examine how social movement leaders contextualize or simplify political and socio-economic ailments and their solutions to recruit members and mobilize resources.[7] Framing is used by social movement leaders to explain political or economic aspects of the world to potential recruits and to "frame" those aspects in a way that is easily comprehendible and encourages mobilization. The aim of framing is to validate and legitimize the social movement's goals or interests while discrediting the opposition. Culture, religion, and/or identity are commonly invoked to make the message resonate with the people and lead to greater mobilization (Wiktorowicz 2004, 15-17; Tarrow 2011, 25-26). This cultural approach has been used to better understand a variety of new social movements since the 1980s, including the nuclear disarmament movement, new social movements like European Greens, and the Chinese democracy movement. For example, student movements in China in 1989 rightfully expected the government to label them as counterrevolutionary. To counteract this, they intentionally framed their messages and

[7] See Snow et al. 1986, Morris and Mueller 1992, Johnston and Klandermans 1995, and Benford and Snow 2000.

tactics in ways that resonated with the experiences of the broader public and that aligned with Chinese cultural traditions of Confucianism, communism, and nationalism. This successful use of framing contributed to the growth the democracy movement from a hundreds of university students to millions of Chinese citizens (Zuo and Benford 1995).

These theories have all made important contributions to improving our understanding of social movements and mobilization. There are significant shortcomings with resource mobilization, political opportunity, and cultural approaches. In general, all of these theoretical approaches are structurally biased. Political opportunities and mobilizing structures are often taken as preexisting and do not account for the dynamic, subjective situations and contexts that influence social movements and mobilization. Though some culturally-informed research has attempted to give agency centrality over structure,[8] collective action frames are often treated more as top-down rather than interactive.

In addition, resource- and culture-based approaches may be able to explain certain instances of mobilization, but not able to explain why mass mobilizations happen *when* they do or why some are successful and others are not, particularly in authoritarian contexts (Beinin and Vairel 2013, 5-7; Mekouar 2016, 5).

One particular lacuna in the social movement literature until relatively recently was the lack of geographic diversity of the movements it covered. The vast majority of cases studies examined using social movement theories were of movements in Europe and North America. In particular, there was a dearth of research testing these theories to

[8] For example, Foran 1993, Selbin 1993, and Goodwin 2001.

cases from the Middle East and North Africa.[9] The research that did attempt to apply SMTs to MENA countries, such as Quintan Wiktorowicz's (2004) edited volume *Islamic Activism*, mostly just confirmed the applicability of the theories to the region; they did little to critically engage with and build on the existing literature, rather tending to summarize and apply it.[10]

Acknowledging some of the limitations of earlier iterations of these approaches, Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, who have all made significant contributions to the development of SMTs, attempted to synthesize existing and complementary theories into a more coherent and comprehensive approach. The goal was to move toward a systematic model that explicitly specified how mobilizing structures, political opportunities and threats, cultural frames, and the various actors involved in a series of related social phenomena—from social movements and anti-slavery movements to democratization and revolution—are linked. By specifying the mechanisms and processes that connected these elements, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's 2001 *Dynamics of Contention* (*DoC*) began building this relational approach to understand contentious politics. While *DoC* was a pivotal book, it merely sought to offer preliminary ideas of how to organize and understand contentious politics and it raised more questions than it answered. A number of critiques were leveled against *DoC*: "too many mechanisms and

[9] Notable exceptions include Schwedler 1996, Wickam 2002, Hafez 2003, Clark 2003, and Wiktorowicz 2004.
[10] Of course, since the uprisings that began in 2010-2011, there has been much more research on social movements and social movement theories examining cases from the MENA region.

processes, lack of clarity about methods, and a confusing number of empirical illustrations" (Buechler 2016, 201).[11]

Dynamics of Contention offered many different mechanisms and processes as dynamic, active features of contentious politics, but it was not until the 2007 follow up, *Contentious Politics* that a more comprehensive treatment of these mechanisms and processes, as well as a more systematic approach to explaining contention using them, were given (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). This mechanism-process approach is not without its flaws, and is criticized as being widely misapplied, but it has made significant progress from its antecedent SMTs (Buechler 2016, 202). Its linking of more micro-level events (mechanisms) to larger-scale processes has powerful potential to bridge and balance structure and agency into an inclusive explanatory framework for a wide variety of actors (from states to individuals) and social phenomena whose study is usually siloed into sub-disciplines. Perhaps most importantly, the mechanism-process approach is simply better suited than SMTs for studying the recent cases of social mobilization in the MENA. The region's authoritarian contexts with varying degrees of opportunities and risks for mobilization, combined with overall weak formal organizations with limited resources and political freedoms, diminishes the explanatory utility of traditional social movement theories (Beinin and Vairel 2013, 7-8). These commonalities among many countries in the MENA region render theories that are based on Eurocentric assumptions of how politics and social movements function less applicable. An approach built upon combinations of small-scale, lower-level mechanisms as opposed to more rigid, structural

[11] For critiques of *Dynamics of Contention*, see Koopmans 2003, Diani 2003, Rucht 2003, Oliver 2003, and Taylor 2003.

factors like those central to SMTs (e.g., political and mobilizing structures) is able to be applied in more diverse contexts.

Tilly and Tarrow (2007) recognize certain key processes, including mobilization and scale shift, which are frequently identified across cases of protests, revolutions, and other contentious episodes. These processes, and some of their underlying mechanisms—including repression, diffusion, brokerage, emulation, and attribution of similarity—are central concepts to this dissertation and discussed in the context of contentious politics literature in this chapter. By understanding and analyzing these mechanisms and processes with the addition of a spatial lens, this dissertation uncovers new insights as to why protests grew in size and scale in Egypt to a much greater extent than in Jordan.

This section has described how the study of social movements and contentious politics has evolved since the 1950s, from grievance-based theories to theories of resource mobilization, cultural framing, and political opportunities to the mechanisms and processes approach introduced by *Dynamics of Contention*. Each theoretical iteration has made important contributions to the overall understanding of contentious politics; each iteration has also suffered from certain deficiencies, the most significant of which have been discussed. The following section will focus on one critical aspect of contentious politics that is absent in much of this literature: spatiality.

Spatiality in Contentious Politics

The important role of space in social processes has become increasingly accepted and utilized in many social science disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, history, and geography. In political science, however, it has not yet reached the same

level of prevalence. A growing number of scholars of contentious politics, who often straddle the political science/sociology divide, incorporate certain aspects of space into their research. Much of this literature and some of its concepts and theories are taken from or based on research in geography, such as that of Doreen Massey (Massey and Allen 1984). Charles Tilly, who has written extensively on social movements, protest mobilization, and contentious politics generally, summarized how space has been treated in literature on contention: "numerous scholars have focused on contention across space, and have involved different territorial units. But accounts of space are often underspecified, ignoring the fact that space structures both contention and repression; that contention is often about space; and that public spaces often structure the way contention unfolds and is remembered" (Tarrow 2001, 11).

Philosophers and sociologists have also influenced many scholars of contentious politics who adopt the premise that space is not just the background where social processes take place, but rather a constituent part and player in the structures and relationships of those processes. Michel Foucault (1979; 1980) and Henri Lefebvre (1991) were pioneers in attempting to normalize the idea that space is socially constructed and affects how people experience and conceptualize the world. For example, Martin and Miller (2003) adopt Lefebvre's tripartite conceptualization of socially produced space as perceived, conceived, and lived (Martin and Miller 2003, 146). Miller (2013) incorporates Foucault's technologies of power with Lefebvre's three-pronged sociospatial relations.

Though some have applied and expanded upon these philosophical and sociological ideas in various new ways in discussing contentious politics, space is most often treated as an *a priori* setting in which contentious action takes place; narratives of protest events, for example, may include a description of the setting in which a contentious activity took place, or a discussion of how space affected the strategy of a particular actor. In this way, space is treated as a background or contextual factor, useful for description but rarely explanation.[12] However, space can be expanded and treated in many different ways, for example as the context in which social relations take place, as something that is socially constructed and embedded, or as places that have historic and cultural meaning. In other words, "spatiality is both context for and constitutive of dynamic processes of contention" (Martin and Miller 2003, 149). Using this multifaceted conceptualization of space is central to analyzing and understanding the dynamics of protest mobilization and scale shift in Egypt and Jordan.

A handful of publications through the 1990s and early 2000s investigated the role of space in social movements and contention.[13] For example, a 2001 edited volume that aimed to give voice to some of the theoretical and conceptual gaps in research on social movements and contentious politics included a chapter on space in contentious politics (Aminzade et al. 2001). This chapter laid important groundwork by providing "a rudimentary theoretical vocabulary for thinking about space in contentious politics" and applying it in spatial analyses of the Beijing student prodemocracy movement in 1989

[12] For example, sociologist Peter Saunders says "Space does not 'enter into' what we do in any meaningful sense, because mere space can have no causal properties…It is passive, it is context" and "there is nothing for theory to say about space" (Saunders 1989, 232, 282).
[13] Routledge 1993; Pile and Keith 1997; Miller 2000; Miller and Martin 2000; Tilly 2000; and Sewell 2001.

and the French Revolution (Sewell 2001, 52). Sewell's chapter begins with the basics, explaining what is meant by space in the social sciences in both abstract and concrete conceptions. His discussion on spatial structures and spatial agency is particularly relevant for discussing social movements and contentious politics; emphasizing the need to understand a dual conceptualization of structures as both medium and outcome of social action, Sewell says that "Spatial structures…are durable and constraining, but they also are subject to transformation as a consequence of the very social action that they shape" (Sewell 2001, 55). For example, the spatial structure of Alexandria in Egypt had historically constrained protests to meander through the city's many narrow alleyways with no central square as a designated starting or ending point. However, the unprecedented number of participants in the 2011 protests overflowed from the winding alleys onto the city's main streets, transforming the effect of the spatial structure through social action, and overwhelming police forces.

The idea of spatial copresence, the bringing together and interaction of people with each other, is heavily featured in contentious politics. The act of demonstrating, or bringing together large numbers of people in a public space, not only offers publicity and pressure to a group's demands, but also offers a sense of solidarity among like-minded participants and even the potential to stand up to acts of intimidation and repression. The occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo exemplifies the importance of spatial copresence in contentious politics; the massive number of people that filled the space of Tahrir Square brought international attention to the grievances of the demonstrating Egyptians; protesters in Tahrir Square created a community they hoped Egypt could become, from

its own system of participatory governance and decision making to security, sanitation, and recreational activities; and, in instances of violence and repression from security forces or counter-protesters, demonstrators stood together to repel attacks and care for the wounded. Sewell discusses various other aspects and conceptualizations of space briefly, and demonstrates the importance of spatial analysis, and specifically of "spatial structure in shaping protest and the significance of spatial agency in reshaping structure," through extended examples from China and France (Sewell 2001, 71).

Sewell's chapter was an important step toward incorporating space meaningfully into contentious politics. But in the context of the response to *Dynamics of Contention* and the subsequent expansion of the use of mechanism-process approach in studies of contentious politics, more substantive contributions came in a 2003 special issue of *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* dedicated to explaining "how space, place, and scale are bound up in the dynamics of contention" (Martin and Miller 2003, 153). Using *DoC* as a springboard to examine space's role in contention, these articles argued that "spatiality is both context for and constitutive of dynamic processes of contention" and that spatiality "plays a crucial role in shaping the operation of mechanisms and processes" (Martin and Miller 2003, 149). The authors' explications and applications of how spatiality is bounded to mechanisms and processes in contentious politics were among the first to do so.

Since then, the use of spatial concepts in some sociological and political science analyses of social movements and contentious politics has become more widespread. As the literature has progressed, space has come to be conceptualized and utilized in many

different ways, from rather simplistic, one-dimensional conceptions to multi-faceted, complex ones. The 2013 edited volume *Spaces of Contention: Spatialities and Social Movements* attempted to synthesize these multiple characterizations of spatiality in order for space to be used in more systematic and analytically useful ways (Nicholls et al. 2013). Focused on social movements as opposed to contentious politics more generally, this multidisciplinary volume provides a useful overview of how various spatial concepts have been and can be used in research related to social mobilization in diverse regional contexts. While a wide assortment of research on spatiality and contentious politics has been published in recent years, contributions that incorporate spatiality into a mechanism-process based understanding and explanation of contentious politics have been lacking.[14] Still, the spatial categories of *space* and *place* are utilized and analyzed in the existing literature, and are the most relevant spatial categories to this dissertation.

In studies that do provide some basic treatment of spatial issues, there is often a differentiation between the ideas of place and space as the two basic geographic concepts. According to sociologist Thomas Gieryn, space is the "abstract geometries (distance, direction, size, shape, volume) detached from material form and cultural interpretation," whereas "place is space filled up by people, practices, objects, and representations" (Gieryn 2000, 465). In other words, space consists of the actual physical, measurable properties of a geographic area, and place refers to the more socially imbued aspects of geography (though not political aspects such as territory or boundaries). Analyses of

[14] For recent examples of research that incorporates spatiality into social movement and/or contentious politics, see Eder and Öz 2017; Kavada and Dimitriou 2017; Riphagen and Woltering 2018; Steinhilper 2018; and Brady 2019.

places account for more than just the geographic location of a space, but also the social, cultural, and political history and significance of a site. Place is vital in "helping disparate actors form into a cohesive political force" and "producing the kinds of intensive relations needed to facilitate mobilization" (Nicholls et al. 2013, 4, 5).

In the context of contentious politics, a protest against police repression that takes place in front of the Interior Ministry building is infused with meaning; it is not just the act of protest itself, but a protest at a site that symbolizes the main grievance of the protesters and is actually the physical headquarters of the decision makers at which the protest is directed. Tahrir Square in Cairo offers another example of the significance of both space and place. The geography of Tahrir Square, as a large open space in downtown Cairo that is widely accessible to protesters makes it a space that could physically accommodate a large protest and make it easier for a large number of people to mobilize. In addition, Tahrir Square was the site of multiple mass protests in Egypt's history, and was given the name Tahrir, which translates to "Liberation," Square after the 1952 Egyptian revolution. These factors contribute to the spatial significance of both the *space* and *place* of Tahrir Square as a protest site. As Javier Auyero describes, “space and place constrain and enable (and are constrained and enabled by) contentious politics” (Auyero 2007, 569).

Further examples of how *space* and *place* are implicated in contentious politics, and specifically mechanisms and processes involved in mobilization and scale shift, will be discussed below. This section has given a brief overview of the history of how spatiality has been incorporated into the literature on social movements and contentious

politics. The next section will offer more detailed critical reviews of research that includes spatial analyses of contention.

Spatiality and Mechanisms of Contentious Politics

Deborah Martin and Byron Miller succinctly link two aspects of this dissertation, space and mechanisms of contention, saying that "mechanisms and processes of contention are innately and necessarily spatial; altering their spatial constitution alters their operation" (Martin and Miller 2003, 150). Having discussed social movements and spatiality in contentious politics above, the remainder of this chapter will focus on the processes of mobilization and scale shift. The following sections will thus review research that analyzes those processes and their underlying mechanisms, including diffusion and repression and concessions, with an emphasis on research that incorporates various spatial elements and frameworks into their analyses.

In a special issue of *Urban Geography* on cities, spatialization, and politicization, Byron Miller and Walter Nicholls´ introductory article highlights the geographies and spatialities of urban social relations and mobilization (Miller and Nicholls 2013). Specifically, the authors look at why in some cases social movements create strong ties and scale to local, regional, national, and even transnational levels, while in other cases activist ties and movement mobilization are more limited. In investigating what explains these differences, Miller and Nicholls found four factors that contributed to the limited duration of urban social movements:

1. local actors do not build ties with or find similar motivating frames as other activists and organizations;

2. inappropriate diagnoses of the problem and prognoses of the solution (whether because of differing opinions, misdiagnoses, or ineffective strategies);
3. inter-organizational resource competition; and
4. the state can disempower or constrain organizations.

In identifying these factors, the authors argue that too much attention is focused on the aspects of urban life and spaces that contribute to social movement mobilization while ignoring the importance of the geographies of multiple, complex conditions to align for protests to happen, as well as how spatiality of repression and mobilization can lead to movement demobilization. These findings align with Tilly and Tarrow's thinking behind complex combinations of mechanisms and processes in contentious politics; in fact, three of the four factors Miller and Nicholls identify can be boiled down to individual mechanisms: new coordination (in this case, a lack of), competition, and repression. In sum, Miller and Nicholls´ argument is that "these geographies and spatialities matter greatly, from the systemic geographies of oppression, to the geographical framing of issues and solutions, to the geographical basis of solidarity and resource mobilization, to the relative mobility or fixity of protagonists as they attempt to control or escape the geographically defined arena of struggle. The spatial constitution of the processes shaping mobilization matters" (Miller and Nicholls 2013, 467).

Salwa Ismail (2013) and Asef Bayat (2017) present important findings about urbanity, space, and protest mobilization. Ismail's 2013 article looks specifically at urban subalterns[15] and how their socio-spatial context in the "urban political configuration" influences their engagement in revolutions. Ismail compares how patterns of mobilization

[15] Ismail explains the term subaltern as referring to diverse social actors who are excluded from the political sphere and economically and culturally marginalized.

and protest differed in Cairo and Damascus in the early days of the Arab Uprisings by looking at forms of organization and activism, levels of cohesion, and lines of division among urban subalterns. In the Syrian case, the configuration of urban space and modes of control by the Assad regime made it difficult for anti-regime activists to mobilize and coalesce in large public squares and to develop a unified movement with a cohesive message and set of goals, as was seen in Cairo. A number of urban quarters in peripheral Damascus have been occupied for decades by predominantly low-level military recruits who are part of the same religious group as the Assad family, who are Alawites. These neighborhoods, often associated with the security establishment and the Assads, have contributed to a lack of unification among subalterns across large swaths of urban space and have thus acted as buffers between the Assad regime(s) and other urban subaltern groups (Ismail 2013, 891).

In Cairo, a different dynamic emerged among urban subalterns, one with much less fragmentation than in Damascus. In contrast to the Syrian case, spatial micro-power relations and dynamics of everyday interaction between Cairene subalterns and agents of the government (e.g., police repression, struggles for housing and social services) combined with increased political activity, organization, and mobilization in recent decades to create a sense of a unification among “the people” that facilitated the revolutionary activism that was seen in Egypt in 2011 (Ismail 2013, 866). Ismail´s analysis of these cases offers a spatial and historical perspective of the urban dynamics of protest in the Arab uprisings and lends some useful insights into variations of mass mobilization and other mechanisms of contentions.

As part of his attempt to "make sense" of the Arab Uprisings, Asef Bayat (2017) focuses part of his research on understanding the urban core of protests. Specifically, he asks "what aspects of urbanity render cities the spaces of contention; and why are certain urban sites, streets, and squares more conducive than others for mobilization?" (Bayat 2017, 113). Bayat builds on earlier research to address part of these questions. His 2007 book *Making Islam Democratic* compares the trajectories of social, political, and religious movements in Iran and Egypt. Bayat explores various instantiations of active citizenry through the art of presence, "the ability to create social space within which those individuals who refuse to exit can advance the cause of human rights, equality, and justice, and do so even under adverse political conditions" (Bayat 2007, 201). Acting outside the traditional political sphere of Islamist parties or social movements, individuals and groups engage in everyday activities that result in normalizing the broader society to practices that the ruling regime may oppose. Bayat uses the example of the struggle for gender equality in post-revolutionary Iran. Iranian women were able to "assert their public presence in society…through the practices of everyday life, such as working outside the home, pursuing higher education, engaging in sports, performing art and music, traveling, and executing banking transactions in place of their husbands" (Bayat 2007, 202). In theory many of these activities seem nonpolitical, but in practice, the inherent political nature and significance of these practices is laid bare in the context of cultural and political norms and rules in society. Through this bottom-up approach, women were able to normalize their role in society and eventually economic and political institutions as well.

In later research attempting to understand the Arab Uprisings, Bayat built on these concepts through what he termed social nonmovements—"the collective action of dispersed and unorganized actors" (Ghandour-Demiri 2013).[16] Comprised of urban subalterns, these mostly poor city dwellers' everyday lives consist of contention, not in the form of amassing for a demonstration, but rather in defying laws and authorities out of necessity—"street vendors, subsistence workers, poor households, street children, the homeless, nonconformist youths, and women continue to infringe on public space and order, clashing with the police repeatedly as they carry on with their lives to earn a living, socialize, or organize social and cultural rituals" (Bayat 2017, 122). In part, it was in these various social nonmovements who regularly engage in "street politics" relocating their contentious engagements from their neighborhoods and backstreets to the public square that turned protests into mass mobilizations.

Bayat also identifies three factors, which closely map onto *space* and *place*, to explain why certain sites are more "insurgent" than others. First, he points to the historical or symbolic significance of certain spaces, like government offices or spaces of previous protests. Insurgent spaces are also often conveniently located near mass transportation that can facilitate not just people from the area and the city at large, but also from towns and villages far from urban centers. Locations that are close to cultural or intellectual spaces, like universities, mosques, and cultural cafes, are frequented by "the cultural milieu, critical constituencies, nonconformists, or groups with alternative lifestyles," and also frequently host contentious activities (Bayat 2017, 126-127). Bayat

[16] See also Bayat 2010.

astutely notes a significant challenge of converting the successes of mass mobilizations into systemic, long-term change is that "political engagement and mobilization cannot remain only in the main squares for long but have to be adjusted to the everyday of people's lives, in the backstreets, neighborhoods, households, workplaces, schools, and villages" (Bayat 2017, 134).

Through a detailed case study of protests at the 3rd Summit of the Americas in Québec City in 2001, Lessard-Lachance and Norcliffe´s 2013 article examines how the geography of protests influences the success of protests. The authors analyze multiple aspects or levels of geography, looking at the impact of both protesting in certain parts of the city as well as the particular physical or geographic characteristics of those protest locations. The main question they explore is how the geography of protests influenced or contributed to the success of the protest. One of the difficulties in attempting to answer such a question involves how to define “success.” In the case of the anti-globalization protest in Québec, though the protests did not necessarily change the minds or agenda of Western leaders at the Summit of the Americas (which is how some might characterize success), the protests were “successful” in terms of delaying the meetings, attracting a lot of media attention, and mobilizing unprecedented numbers of protesters (Lessard-Lachance and Norcliffe 2013, 182).

How did space contribute to mobilization and the limited success of the protests in Québec City? One example involves taking spatial constraints and using them to the advantage of the protesters. Barricades were erected to separate demonstrators from the area where heads of state were meeting; though this could be seen as an obstacle,

demonstrators on the front lines being blocked by the barriers exemplified the exclusionary, unrepresentative, and undemocratic nature of the meeting. This visual representation helped validate the protesters' positions and arguments against the meeting and facilitated mobilization. The protesters in Québec City were able to use spatial constraints to their advantage, to help make their point, and to facilitate mobilization (Lessard-Lachance and Norcliffe 2013, 191).

Protesters also used the geography of the city and the location of protests as metaphors to support their argument. Much of the upper part of the city where the summit was being held was sealed off, thus forcing many of the protests to the lower city. Though this was originally a constraint, the protests were then able to be spun as a metaphor of the poor, disempowered Lower Town against the wealthy Upper Town, or similarly of the affluent North Americans versus the "other" Central and Latin Americans (Lessard-Lachance and Norcliffe 2013, 191). In addition, the symbolic occupation of the Citadel of Québec City, which has cultural, military, and political importance as the administrative center for centuries as well as "the hearth of the only surviving non-Anglophone province or state in North America," had a significant impact to "arouse the passions" of many protesters and Québécois (Lessard-Lachance and Norcliffe 2013, 184).

Jillian Schwedler and Sam Fayyaz (2009) offer a detailed inspection of the geographic aspects of protests in Jordan. The authors look at the spatiality of various protest marches in Amman to show that not just the purpose of demonstrations but also the symbolism and meaning of their geography can be quite significant. Jordan experienced a series of protests over the period of a few weeks beginning in March 2002

in response to Israeli incursions into Palestinian towns in the West Bank. Demonstrations were organized by the Islamic Action Front (IAF) (the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood), a group of professional associations called the Professionals Association Complex (PAC), and student groups despite not having the permits required by the new temporary public assembly law. Within a few weeks, thousands of demonstrators participated in over one hundred different types of demonstrations (marches, rallies, strikes, etc.), blocking streets and disrupting much of daily life in downtown Amman. A number of the marches planned their routes to arrive or pass by important or symbolic locations, such as major traffic intersections and the Israeli embassy. Anti-riot police often blocked protest groups´ movements and at times responded with tear gas and water cannons (Schwedler and Fayyaz 2009, 5-6).

The IAF, PAC, and student demonstrations were not the only pro-Palestinian demonstrations to take place during this period. Queen Rania also led a protest march, beginning in an affluent Amman neighborhood and ending at the UNICEF headquarters to submit a petition for Palestinian aid. This march was sanctioned by the government and demonstrated the regime's support, both domestically and internationally, for Palestinians in the West Bank (Schwedler and Fayyaz 2009, 7-8). These examples demonstrate the significant role that geography can play in contentious collective action. Through their strategic and symbolic choices in organizing demonstrations, the IAF, PAC, and student protesters were able to "challenge the existing geographies of 'normal politics,' for example by marching from one symbolic site to another (mosque to embassy), disrupting routine commercial activities, or embarrassing the regime by

demonstrating a level of dissent that the regime has sought to conceal" (Schwedler and Fayyaz 2009, 9). In juxtaposition to Queen Rania's protests, these examples show how protests in the same city in support of the same cause but with very different geographic dynamics can lead to very different outcomes. In addition to this demonstration of the Jordanian regime's ability to use geography and collective action for its own purposes, since 2002 the government has transformed previously popular spaces for protest to no longer exist or have the same effect and relevance. Major traffic circles that were easily blocked by even a small protest have been undermined by the installation of high-speed overpasses, thus nullifying the public disorder and security threats of former uses of geography in public protests.[17]

The above section summarized a selection of research that look at spatiality and various aspects of the process of mobilization, and inform my analyses in this dissertation. Asef Bayat's and Salwa Ismail's research each explore mobilization as it relates to urban spatiality and urban life, particularly among subalterns and their everyday interactions with government. These research aid in my understanding of Egyptian and Jordanian publics and movements that took part in protest events in their countries. The community that coalesced in Cairo's Tahrir Square embodied the politics of everyday activities: life in the square included communal education, prayer, meals, games, cleaning, and songs, but these activities took on intense political overtones when taken in

[17] Schwedler makes the important point that there is no evidence to suggest that these infrastructure projects carried out with the expressed intent to stifle protests. But this has certainly been a side effect of these projects (Schwedler 2011, 12).

the context of their spatiality, the occupation of a historically and politically significant city square in opposition of the ruling regime.

Miller and Nicholls similarly analyze urban spaces, but also argue for the need to look beyond the spatiality of urbanity *per se* and so also understand the geographies of activist/organizational relationships and the geographies of oppression, for example. The studies of Lessard-Lachance and Norcliffe and Schwedler and Fayyaz offer in-depth spatial analysis of protest events or protest movements, demonstrating how *space* and spatial constraints can be transformed into advantages in various ways, how the *place* of protests can either impede or help sustain mobilization. For this dissertation, looking past the urban spaces of protests in Jordan and Egypt were central to understanding the protest episodes as a whole in each country. The Hirak movement in Jordan began as a network of tribal youth in southern cities, but expanded their geographic, ethnic, religious, and ideological diversity. Still, certain factors related to the composition of these groups and their foundation in tribal populations resulted in obstacles to aligning with the more urban, upper-middle class protest movements in Amman. Though repression in Egypt and Jordan looked very different throughout the 2011 protests, geography—in terms of the spatiality of not only particular protest sites but also certain neighborhoods, cities, and regions—played a role in strategies and tactics of both security forces and demonstrators. My dissertation not only draws from but also builds upon the research reviewed above, applying and adapting their findings to new scenarios. The next section will review a variety of literature on the relationship between mobilization and repression and concessions that comprise an important foundation for my dissertation's analysis.

Taking a narrower focus on mechanisms of mobilization for collective action, it is important to look at factors and actors outside of social movements, organizations, and individuals on the mobilizing side of the equation to those who are the target of the collective action, namely the regimes in power. Of course, the protesters engaging in contentious political activities are not acting in a vacuum; there are multiple dynamic external factors and actors that influence the trajectories of protest movements. This section will outline some of the research findings on this repression and concessions as related to mobilization and spatiality.

Government responses to protest activity, particularly in nondemocratic contexts, often entail repression to some extent. Indeed there is a substantial amount of research that looks at the dissent-repression nexus. The relationship between protest mobilization and government repression is not static or unidirectional. There are often years and decades of interactions between governments and protest movements, so it would be much too simplistic to imply one particular instance of protest mobilization as a starting point that then leads to a government reaction. There is a complex and iterative relationship between repression and mobilization, which is demonstrated by the word choice of "nexus" in the description and by many of the research findings in the dissent-repression research program.

When speaking of repression, it does not only mean violent actions such as police brutality or torture; repression can also include nonviolent activities, like surveillance and imprisonment, or any "obstacles by the state (or its agents) to individual and collective actions by challengers" (McPhail and McCarthy 2005, 3). There are many ways that

governments attempt to repress political mobilization, and a central question in much of the relevant literature asks whether this actually deters collective action or not. Even after decades of research on this topic, there is no definitive answer; the empirical evidence shows that sometimes repression increases mobilization, but other times it decreases mobilization.

For example, Kira Jumet's (2017) book *Contesting the Repressive State: Why Ordinary Egyptians Protested During the Arab Spring* draws interesting conclusions about this relationship. The Egyptian government's repression in the first few days of the 2011 uprising came as a shock to many Egyptians. Seeing photographic and video evidence of Egyptians being brutalized and shot at by their own government filled many with outrage. The government then decided to implement a communications blackout by cutting off access to the Internet and text messages on January 28. Social media platforms had allowed individuals to express grievances in a less risky way than actively participating in contentious politics, but, crucially, it also signaled to others the extent of opposition to the regime and thus lowered the threshold for participation in protests. The decision to disconnect Egyptians was also a signal to many that Mubarak perceived online mobilization and the protests in general as a potential threat, but Jumet argues that that decision backfired. The combination of violent repression against protesters and the extreme step of blocking all Egyptians' Internet and mobile phone networks elicited an emotional response in many Egyptians and "may have inadvertently accelerated protest rather than diffused it" (Jumet 2017, 89).

In an attempt to tackle the contradictory puzzle of mobilization and repression, Will Moore's (1998) article examines three different theoretical explanations to dissident responses to government repression using the same set of cases: 1) protesters will switch from nonviolent to violent behavior (and vice versa) in response to state repression; 2) dissident responses to repression vary based on regime type (democratic or nondemocratic); and 3) levels of mobilization in response to repression differ in the short-term and long-term (Moore 1998, 852). His analyses only showed support for the first model, which says that "if the state represses nonviolent protest behavior, then the dissidents will respond with violent protest behavior" (Moore 1998, 853). In the end, Moore's findings are marginally useful, but in reality only shed light on half of the dissent-repression nexus (i.e., protest responses to government repression but not government responses to protest behavior).

Davenport, Johnston, and Mueller's (2005) edited volume *Repression and Mobilization* made a concerted effort to help explain how and when repression is followed by greater mobilization or not by gaining a better understanding of the causal dynamics between repression and mobilization. One of the concluding chapters by Charles Tilly is especially insightful. In "Repression, Mobilization, and Explanation," Tilly provides a diagram that explains the dissent-repression nexus through four separate simplified examples of causal scenarios: when repression decreases mobilization, when repression increases mobilization, when mobilization decreases repression, and when mobilization increases repression (Tilly 2005).

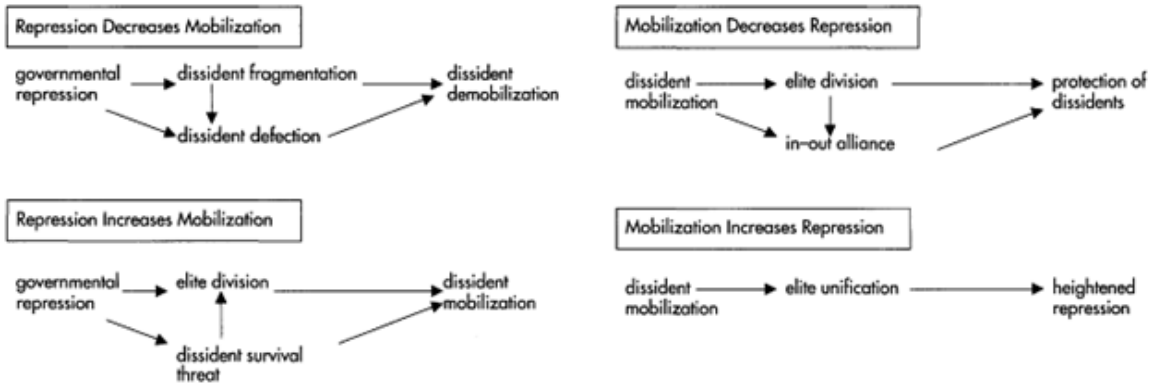

Figure 2: Exemplary causal paths between repression and mobilization
Source: Tilly 2005, 225

Tilly uses the framework developed in *Dynamics of Contention* to explain how differences in combinations of underlying mechanisms and various processes can create divergent outcomes. In each of these diagrams, the main nodes represent the processes and mechanisms like brokerage, signaling spirals, certification, and polarization, to name a few. These diagrams are not explanations in and of themselves, but rather theoretical examples of potential explanations that are not yet empirically tested. The point of these examples is to show that there are no general laws that explain mobilization, repression, and their relationship; it is the context and interplay of mechanisms and processes that determine how mobilization and repression influence one another in any given situation. This framework is an extremely useful analytical tool, not just for conceptualizing the dissent-repression nexus in general terms but also for understanding it in specific situations. It is worth emphasizing Tilly's point, however, that in reality, especially in the medium- and long-term, the cause-effect between repression and mobilization goes in both directions; repression and mobilization shape each other.

Charles Tilly was one of the first to explicitly discuss the connections between spatiality and repression in contentious politics, saying "the spatial organization of repressive activities and their evasion significantly affects viability for different forms of contentious politics" (Tilly 2000, 143). Building on some of the points that Tilly identified in his review of contention in France and Britain, Francisco (2010) expanded on the dimensions of space in protest and repression. Drawing on a number of historical examples, Francisco made a number of observations about space, repression, and protest: 1) dissident entrepreneurs seek to shift protesters into a space that reduces the probability of coercion and maximizes mobilization; 2) dissidents adapt not only tactically but also spatially when faced with large coercion forces; and 3) the inability of states to repress protests increases as dissident mobilization diffuses spatially (Francisco 2010, 70).

Given these observations, the case of protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square provides an interesting counterexample. Tahrir Square, modeled after the wide avenues and large open squares of Paris, is "one of the most easily policeable spaces in the city" (Schwedler 2013, 231). And though it is easily accessible by protesters, the impact of even thousands of demonstrators in the square would be dwarfed by the square's expanse. This made the massive occupation of Tahrir Square all the more remarkable, as it in fact reversed the original spatial intent of the square. Protests in locations outside of major urban areas also shed light on spatial dynamics of repression. In Tunisia, for example, police forces struggled to repress protests in multiple non-urban locations in the face of protesters with "deep local knowledge—and their personal connections and network ties within the community as a whole" (Schwedler 2013, 232).

These examples demonstrate some of the interesting spatial dynamics of repression, and particularly how cases from the Arab Uprisings have challenged existing knowledge and provide new subjects for research. Space is not a static factor in the background of contentious action. Space is dynamic in that it is subject to agency, to the actions of individuals or masses of individuals. Though Tahrir Square was designed with the intention of being policed easily and had the effect (whether intentional or not) of minimizing the visual impact of demonstrations, the decisions of hundreds of thousands of Egyptians to convene and occupy the square reversed the implications of the square's spatiality. The difficulty of filling and securing a space as large as Tahrir Square would normally be a hindrance to a more effective protest, but Tahrir's spatial qualities, and that demonstrators were able to completely fill and defend the massive area, actually facilitated mobilization by showing the extent of protester support and their ability to maintain an extended occupation in spite of repression.

There are many other studies in this vein of literature that attempt to provide a picture of exactly how repression and mobilization interact in varying situations. But when considering government responses to protest mobilization, repression is not the only option. In many countries, repression, and especially violent repression, is not used by governments as a legitimate response to protests, particularly nonviolent ones (though there are many examples to the contrary). Even in nondemocratic societies, governments respond to dissent in a variety of ways. One possible alternative is accommodation, or concession – giving in, to some degree, to the demands of dissenters. Kressen Thyen's (2018) article attempts to explain the variations in government responses protests the

2011 uprisings in Egypt and Morocco. Thyen argues that government responses to dissent are not based on the immediate interests of the regime, but rather are determined by "preexisting patterns of political contention." More specifically, the article identifies the mechanisms of institutionalization, external certification, and interest polarization as shaping government responses. In contexts where protests are generally permitted, the protester-government interaction is more established and thus more predictable, decreasing the likelihood of repression. In contrast, the more polarizing the protester demands are (e.g., calling for the ouster of the ruler), repression is more likely (Thyen 2018, 92-93).

Previous research using theories based on protesters' expected value of collective action has shown evidence that concessions from the government increase protests and contribute to increased diffusion of protests (Rasler 1996, 134-135). The logic is essentially that as governments offer concessions (i.e., public goods), more people will join the protests thinking that increased protests will result in increased public goods; as the expected value of protest increases, so do the protests themselves and their diffusion. Government concessions can also be seen as a sign of government weakness and have the same effect on expected values of protest. Rasler's case study of Iran leading up to the 1979 revolution also showed that a government strategy of alternating from concession to repression was unsuccessful; once protests had reached a certain threshold, networks and "solidarity structures" among dissidents were already well established and providing the resources and support needed to continue pushing for social change (Rasler 1996, 147).

Repression and concession do not have to be mutually exclusive or exist on a dichotomous scale, however. Dina Bishara (2012) tries to look past the duality of repression and concession in the literature to consider alternative options of government responses, such as tolerance. Her analysis illustrates how governments sometimes choose to ignore protests for short or long periods of time and how such dismissiveness affects protester perceptions of government and future mobilization (Bishara 2012, 8-10). She also found that the sequence of regime response matters; ignoring protests for a short time followed by repression is likely to produce different outcomes than ignoring protest for a long time followed by repression. Finally, Bishara stresses the importance of the iterative nature of the dissident-government relationship and how protester perceptions can change over time, meaning that "protesters' cumulative experiences with certain regime officials might shape their subsequent strategies" (Bishara 2012, 26). For example, this dissertation analyzes repression and concessions in Jordan, where the government has historically been tolerant of demonstrations and rarely responds with repression. As protests expanded in size and scale in early 2011, the Jordanian government responded as usual, with police presence to ensure order and adherence to the generally accepted protest norms. When a coalition of Amman youth and other movements attempted to stage a sit-in at a major traffic circle near the Ministry of the Interior, however, security forces and counter-protesters responded with force and violently dispersed the sit-in. The drastic change in the government's response seemed to have an impact on subsequent demonstrations; anecdotal evidence from protest participants and leaders as well as data collected for this dissertation show a decline in

the size and scale of protests across the country. This differed from the situation in a number of other MENA countries with a history of forcefully repressing protests, like Egypt, Syria, and Libya, where repression in response to demonstrations only seemed to fuel greater mobilization.

With repression being one of the key mechanisms in the process of mobilization, this section has reviewed the theoretical background on dissent and repression and the lack of evidentiary consensus in the literature. Tilly dispels the notion of a unidirectional relationship between repression and mobilization, which is also borne out in the literature, instead repression can increase or decrease mobilization, and mobilization can increase or decrease repression. Kira Jumet's research shows how repression in Egypt during the 2011 protests actually facilitated mobilization. Rasler and Bishara each consider the iterative nature of protest mobilization and government responses, accounting for a variety of government responses from repression to tolerance to concessions. Schwedler's discussion of *space* and repression showed how policeability and mobilization were influenced by different protest sites in Egypt and Tunisia.

Like mobilization and repression, social diffusion is a concept that has been written about for many years and across a wide variety of disciplines within social science and humanities. Especially popular in recent discussions has been diffusion of protest strategies, tactics, and activities across international boundaries, or transnational diffusion.[18] Waves of mass mobilizations and revolutions throughout the second half of

[18] Gilardi (2012) provides a comprehensive history and overview of how transnational diffusion fits into broader research and debates in international relations. For more recent research and research that focuses

the twentieth century, for example African independence movements in the 1960s, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and most recently the Arab Uprisings, are pointed to as examples of how contentious actions have diffused across borders. But the concept of diffusion has been, and should be, conceptualized more generally in order to better understand its basic features and how it manifests in different (i.e., not only transnational) contexts. The section synthesizes the current theoretical and empirical understanding of diffusion as it relates to both processes of mobilization and scale shift, as well as how technology has been used as a means of diffusion as use of mobile phones and the Internet have expanded. Diffusion is a critical mechanism underlying both mobilization and scale shift in contentious politics, and has clear spatial implications as it involves transmission across space. The question of Internet and mobile technologies are also relevant as means of diffusion, especially in the context of increased access to these technologies across the MENA region. Understanding diffusion is thus one of the key factors to understanding why protests increased in size and scale.

Rane and Salem (2012) provide a simple and analytically useful explanation of the diffusion process as having four main elements: "*transmitters* or those who initiate the diffusion of the innovation; *adopters* or those who receive the innovation; the *innovation* or item that is being diffused; and the *channel* or the means by which diffusion occurs" (Rane and Salem 2012, 98-99, emphasis in original). Diffusion can come in different forms, and there are many potential objects of diffusion, like social and cultural ideas, norms, and repertoires of collective action. In sociology and other fields

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on the subject in the MENA region, see also Abdelrahman 2011, POMEPS 2016, Romanos 2016, della Porta 2017, and Romanos 2020.

analyzing social movements, scholars have written extensively about diffusion of actions, strategies, and tactics in contentious politics. In order to make diffusion more analytically useful in the context of social movements and contention, McAdam and Rucht (1993) discussed different pathways of diffusion: relational, which happens through direct, interpersonal contact; and non-relational, which happens through the media. Tarrow (2010) added mediated diffusion, which happens through third parties who have relationships with both the initiators and adopters.

Della Porta and Tarrow (2012) analyzed diffusion of both countersummit protests (against the World Trade Organization, G8 summits, etc.) and police responses to those protests. In doing so, they identified a set of three mechanisms that explained diffusion and innovation for both protesters and police: promotion, which is a proactive/deliberate attempt to diffuse; assessment, which involves analyzing and adapting successful methods in new situations and contexts; and theorization, such as technical innovation (della Porta and Tarrow 2012, 127). The authors then briefly examine some of the events of the Arab Uprisings with these mechanisms in mind, identifying a new tactical action in Egypt: "the long-term occupation of an important square, linked to the creation of a free space where citizens could express themselves and form networks" (della Porta and Tarrow 2012, 145).

As strategies, tactics, and repertoires of contention more generally diffuse across locations and among movements and individuals, there is the potential for the new diffused ideas to foster mobilization. Especially when transmitted among those with similar cultural, socioeconomic, ideological, or other collective identification categories,

and when framed to resonate with a particular audience, the diffusion of innovations (of strategies, etc.) can be a central element of mobilization. McAdam (1983) wrote about black civil rights movement in the United States and the tactical interaction between the insurgents and the police. His analysis demonstrated a process of tactical innovation and adaptation as both the civil rights movement and police forces engaged in a constant struggle to gain an advantage over the other.

Some scholars have suggested that the process of political mobilization can be likened to and treated as the diffusion of an ideological innovation; Marquette argues that "the ideology of the mobilizing agent can be treated as an innovation, the process of political mobilization can be understood as the diffusion of that innovation (Marquette 1981, 8). This helps to simplify the process of political mobilization, condensing our understanding of micro and macro mobilization (both individual events and broader social "process" mobilization) into a cohesive framework and relating diffusion directly to mobilization. This framework could be reapplied to elements of diffusion other than the ideologies which Marquette examines (communism, fascism, and democracy), including protest tactics, strategies, and slogans.

To help further elaborate the link between diffusion of repertoires of collective action with mobilization, I will briefly look at some insights from Conny Roggeband. Roggeband (2010) explains that diffusion can be broken down into two processes: horizontal and vertical diffusion. Horizontal diffusion occurs between social movement organizations and can be characterized as relational, nonrelational, or mediated (as described above from Tarrow 2010); vertical diffusion, or scale shift, implies a more

significant shift in the number, level, and focal point of contentious actions with new actors and broader claims. Scale shift can work in two directions: "upward (when local action spreads to a higher level) and downward (when a generalized practice or idea is adopted at a lower level" (Roggeband 2010, 20).

Shifting contentious collective action is a complicated process and takes place through a number of actors and various mechanisms. Scale shift requires coordination among actors at the different spatial (local, national, international) levels; brokerage to build new connections between actors and organizations; theorization which is akin to framing the focus of contention more generally or narrowly; and, particularly for scaling downward, certification, or validation, of the shifted ideas and claims by authorities (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 108-109). As diffusion of contention shifts scales, it expands the opportunity for increased support of and mobilization for social movement causes to new geographic locations. Scale shift also helps to demonstrate the link between diffusion and micro and macro political mobilization, as discussed by Marquette. For example, an individual act of protest (the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi to protest his humiliation and desperation) can be vertically diffused to the local level (demonstrations in Sidi Bouzid), national level (protests across Tunisia), and international level (the Arab Uprisings).

A recent article by Arne Wackenhut (2019) seeks to understand the diffusion of protests in Egypt during the 2011 uprising that contributed to their initial increase in size and scale by digging into the mechanism of diffusion and looking at the role of relational networks among opposition groups. In the years before the 2011 protests, a variety of

new opposition groups had emerged, including *Kefaya*, April 6 Youth Movement, and the Baradei Campaign. Some leaders and members of these movements came from existing and diverse opposition groups—from leftists to labor unions to the Muslim Brotherhood—and had connected with one another through participation in protest events in the decade leading up to 2011. Not only did participation in these contentious activities foster relationships among activists, but repeated interactions with the Mubarak regime also helped "professionally socialize a new generation of prodemocracy activists" (Wackenhut 2019, 5).

In the lead-up to the 2011 protests, it was young activists from among ideologically diverse opposition groups that played a key role in planning and mobilizing the January 25 demonstrations. These "early risers" also expanded the range of protest participants by framing their demands and chants not in terms of democracy and human rights, but rather socioeconomic issues like unemployment and the rising cost of living. Given the history of protest activity in Egypt that failed to diffuse to the extent of the post-January 25 protests, Wackenhut argues that "relational networks among the Cairo-based political opposition should be regarded a necessary, albeit insufficient, condition in the protest diffusion process" (Wackenhut 2019, 14).

The last aspect of diffusion to be discussed is not a theory or framework of diffusion, but rather a means of diffusion: media and information and communications technologies (ICTs). This has been a popular topic in recent years in discussions about the spread of protests across the MENA region and the world. I will only briefly discuss

the main aspects of the debate over the role of media, particularly social media, and ICTs in contentious politics.

The idea that social media can play a critical role in revolutions and protest diffusion has become pervasive in popular media and a debate in the academic literature on these subjects, with some questioning whether the mass uprisings in the MENA can be called Facebook or Twitter revolutions.[19] A broader debate has been ongoing between cyber-utopians and cyber-skeptics.[20] Those who tout the overwhelmingly positive influence and power that ICTs can have for empowering the citizenry to stand up against authoritarian governments are often referred to as cyber-utopians. They claim that new technologies like the Internet enables people to access and share information with much greater ease and speed than before. Social media, in particular, allows individuals to engage with people outside of their immediate sphere of regular interaction and across borders and networks; it can also be an empowering outlet for individuals to express their opinions and make their voices heard.

For all of the hype around the power of social media in popular uprisings, there are also many cyber-skeptics who refute the claims of cyber-utopians, or at least allege that the impact of ICTs are exaggerated. Some skeptics emphasize that governments can use such new technologies for repressive purposes (e.g., restricting access to certain information, monitoring use by particular individuals) which can counteract the potential benefits of those technologies. Others in the cyber-skeptic camp do not see ICTs like

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[19] See for example Lotan et al. 2011, Baron 2012, Khamis and El-Nawawy 2012, Reardon 2012, and della Porta and Mattoni 2015.

[20] Gladwell and Shirky 2011 summarizes a debate between a prominent cyber-utopian, Clay Shirky, and cyber-skeptic, Malcolm Gladwell. Other notable cyber-skeptics include Evgeny Morozov and Jaron Lanier.

social media as markedly different than older technologies, particularly in their overall effect; the difference with new technologies is not qualitatively different than their predecessors, but rather that they act as force multipliers increasing the speed and distance of information flows.

To oversimplify, the cyber-utopians see the positive effects of new ICTs as outweighing the negative effects and vice-versa for the cyber-skeptics. But how does this debate play out in reality with respect to ICTs being used for the purposes of organizing and mobilizing contentious collective action? There have been many studies published in that examine the role of new technology in social and political mobilization.[21] Though it may be difficult for these studies to establish a strong causal link between ICT use and the overall outcome of political mobilization, they can certainly show the various ways in which technologies have been used as a means of diffusion. People can air their grievances and connect with others who have similar grievances; media (photos, videos) and other documentation of government abuses can be posted online; protest strategies, tactics, and slogans can be shared across long distances. All of these utilizations of ICTs can be and have been used to spread the ideas and claims of social movements and to facilitate mobilization by garnering support for a particular movement and facilitating the coordination of events (e.g., time and location of demonstrations) and between various actors.

[21] Notable studies most relevant to this dissertation include Earl and Kimport 2011, El-Nawawy and Khamis 2012, Howard and Hussain 2013, Brueur et al. 2014, Brym et al. 2014, Ruijgrok 2017, and Jost et al. 2018.

Cyber-skeptics also have numerous examples of ICTs being used by governments opposed to such social and political activism by their citizens. There are numerous examples from countries during the Arab Uprisings of governments using technology to attempt to thwart mass mobilizations and generally maintain power through various means, including:

- tracking online activity of opposition and social movement leaders and arresting them;
- monitoring Facebook pages and Twitter accounts used to disseminate information about protests; and
- censoring information and even entirely shutting down mobile communications and Internet access (Hassanpour 2011).

This section has provided an overview of the current understanding of diffusion, including various elements, pathways, and scales of diffusion. The reviewed literature shows how diffusion of ideas and repertoires of contention can lead to not just the adoption those ideas and repertoires but also tactical and strategic innovations, with brief examples from within and beyond the Middle East and North Africa. For example, recent research findings from Wackenhut shows how both formal and informal organizations and networks as crucial actors in the diffusion of protests to increase the size and scale of mobilization. This section also discussed the debate over how media and ICTs, particularly in authoritarian contexts, have helped or hindered the ability of protests to diffuse and shift scales.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter represents only a small fraction of the theoretical and empirical research related to mobilization and scale shift in contentious politics, but that which is most relevant to the analysis in my dissertation. This chapter

opened with a broad overview of the history of social movement theories and research and approaches to studying contentious politics more generally. The theories and methods for understanding and studying contention have evolved and attempted to account for certain criticisms and gaps in their approaches, of which some of the most glaring have been pointed out here. The progression from social movement theories toward the mechanism-process approach to understanding contention has expanded the category of objects of study (e.g., not just social movements, but also protests, revolutions, civil wars, etc.), but also focused the framework in which we understand these social phenomena. The mechanism-process approach to understanding contention certainly has strengths and weaknesses, which have been mentioned above, but it has proven explanatory value and has been adopted, with some alterations, in this dissertation. Given the critique of the mechanism-process approach as being overly structural, this literature review and the analysis in my dissertation attempts to highlight the agency of individuals in the mechanisms and processes at work in protests, as well as incorporate analyses of the spatial dynamics of mechanisms and processes of mobilization and scale shift.

One significant lacuna identified in this vein of political science research is the lack of attention given to the critical role of spatiality, and *space* and *place* in particular, in contentious politics. I have explained the conceptual history of spatiality, adopted from other areas of social science, and demonstrated how spatiality can be, and has been, to a limited extent, applied in contentious politics research. When examining the uprisings across the MENA region, however, much of the existing contentious politics literature is

missing an important aspect of why protests grow in size and scale by not taking spatiality seriously. Building on the literature in this review, my dissertation shows that *space* and *place* are integral pieces of the mechanisms underlying the processes of mobilization and scale shift. Spatiality is inherent in these mechanisms, and this dissertation, in part, attempts to tease out the ways in which spatiality influences and in fact plays an important role in why protests grow in size and scale.

With a focus on the processes of mobilization and scale shift at the core of my research question about why protests increase in size and scale, I detailed the theoretical backgrounds of mechanisms central to those processes and highlight research that incorporates spatial analyses of those mechanisms and processes. Specifically, the mechanisms of repression and diffusion are relevant for mobilization and receive significant attention; diffusion is a key mechanism in the process of scale shift, while other mechanisms of scale shift that are closely related to or involved with diffusion receive less explicit attention.

In particular, the research of Lessard-Lachance and Norcliffe (2013) and Schwedler and Fayyaz (2009) are drawn from in this dissertation as examples of how the *space* and *place* of protests can facilitate mobilization; Jumet's (2017) research informs how repression can have counterintuitive effects on mobilization, and the iterative nature of collective action and how governments respond discussed in Bishara (2012) is also reflected in my analysis; and the framework that Roggeband (2010) and Tarrow (2010) use, and the analysis that Wackenhut (2019) applies, are both reflected in my discussion of diffusion.

Despite the increasing acceptance and incorporation of some elements of spatiality into some contentious politics research, the lack of a dissertation-scale (or comparable) research project that appreciates the significance of spatiality and takes seriously the mechanism-process approach is glaring, and, as I demonstrate, missing analytical potential. It is my intention that this dissertation fills this gap and provides a coherent incorporation of *space* and *place* into a comprehensive case study analysis that investigates the mechanisms and processes of mobilization and scale shift. Spatiality further lends a degree of explanatory power to some of the mechanisms investigated in this dissertation as they relate to mobilization and scale shift, and the question of why protests increase in size and scale in some places but not others. The methodological framework for this dissertation, which includes using Protest Event Analysis to create and analyze a database of protest events, combined with this mechanism-process approach is a further unique contribution to the political science literature and will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide comprehensive documentation of the decisions I made and steps I took in formulating, designing, and conducting the research and analysis for this dissertation. The first section describes my research design, specifying my research question, dependent and independent variables, and my hypothesized relationships between spatiality and mechanisms and processes of contentious politics; the logic of my case selection; the character and quality of data that was collected and used in my quantitative and qualitative analyses; and how I operationalized key terms used in my dissertation's analysis. What follows is more detail on the process I followed to collect and code data from news media and secondary sources that I needed for my analysis. The next section explains how I went about synthesizing and analyzing those data using summary statistics and the mechanism-process approach to allow me to answer this dissertation's central research question. The final part of this chapter details the challenges and limitations I faced in my research given my research design and data and the steps I took to mitigate and minimize them.

Research Design

As described in Chapter 1, the central research question for this thesis is: Why do protests grow in size and scale in some places but not in others? The dependent variable—or rather dual dependent variables—at the heart of this research question are

thus the size and the scale of protests. With its foundation in the literature on contentious politics, my inquiry had a hypothetical and conceptual starting point with potential explanations—established relationships between particular mechanisms and the processes of mobilization and scale shift. A more specific version of my research question that acknowledges previously identified mechanisms and processes at work could be reframed as: Do the activation of key mechanisms identified in the contentious politics literature as underlying the processes of mobilization and scale shift adequately account for the variation in the size and scale of social mobilization? So in this formulation, the size variable is a proxy measure of the process of mobilization, and the scale variable is a proxy measure for the process of scale shift.

This framing of my research question and dependent variables helps connect them with the contentious politics terminology used in the broader literature and this dissertation, but a clear explanation of the dependent variables is still required. What exactly is meant by the size and scale of protests? How are they measured? For the purposes of this dissertation, the size of protests is measured by the total number of participants across all protests on a given day. I compiled data collected from news media sources on the number of participants at individual protest events to estimate the total number of people who participated in protest events across the country each day during the period studied. Measuring the size variable as the total number of protesters in the country as a whole, as opposed to the number of protesters at each individual protest event, gives a more macro-level picture of the extensivity of protests over time. Since such data on participation levels is difficult to approximate and often vague, sometimes

reported simply as "hundreds" or "thousands," I used broad ranges to categorize them. I used an exponential scale for these categories not only to be able to display all of the data meaningfully in one graph, but because as the numbers of protest participants gets larger and larger, it is exceedingly difficult to collect precise figures; the wider ranges in the higher categories allow for the broad approximations that were used for such widely attended protest events.

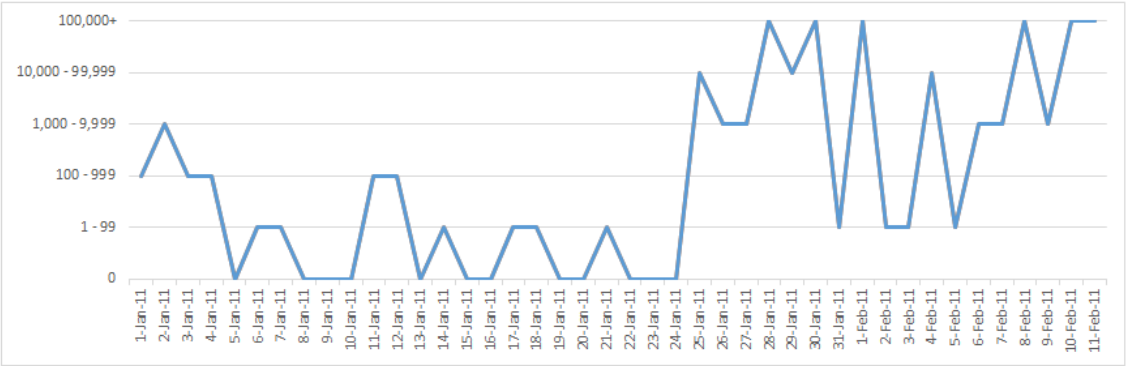

Figure 3: Number of daily participants in protest events, Egypt

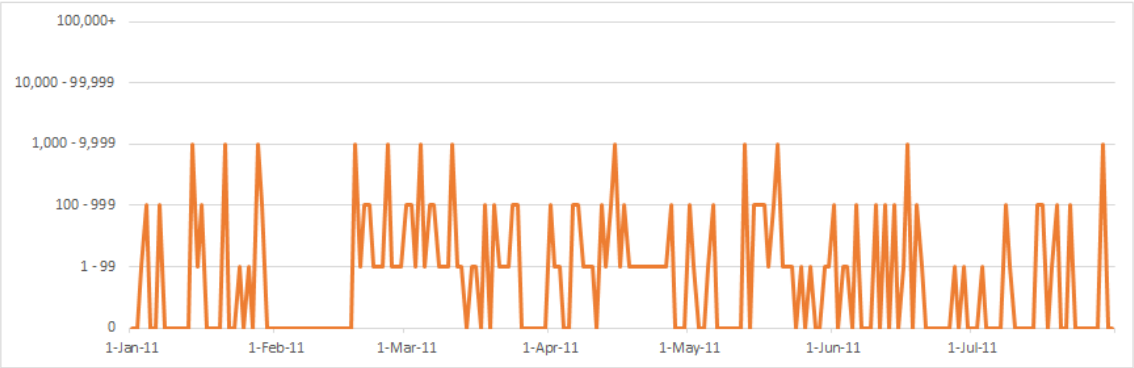

Figure 4: Number of daily participants in protest events, Jordan

The graph of Egyptian protest participants shows a few weeks in early 2011 with rather modest-sized protests occurring every few days. Beginning on January 25, however, there was a marked increase in the frequency and size of protest events; there were multiple days in the subsequent weeks of demonstrations where many tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of people participated in protest events across Egypt. Even with these conservatively estimated figures taken from a limited dataset of protest events, it is clear that there was an increase in the size of protests that was sustained, more or less, throughout the period of the protest episode. The graph of Jordanian protest participants shows a different trajectory for the overall size of that protest episode, which, it should be noted, is a significantly longer period of time than the Egyptian protest episode (seven months compared to six weeks). While there were a handful of days in the first few months where multiple thousands of people engaged in protest activities—which, when considered in historical context of Jordanian protests, is fairly large—protests never grew significantly large in size. There was sustained protest activity throughout the rest of the protest episode, but protests of that size, and protests in

general, became less and less frequent over time. When taken together, the data displayed in these graphs shows variation on the size dependent variable—protests grew in size in Egypt but not in Jordan.

The second dependent variable, the scale of protests, is measured in this dissertation by the number of unique protest sites per week in each country over a given period. As with the size variable, the period of time used to measure the scale variable differs in accordance with the length of the protest episode in each country. Meaningful comparisons can be made between the two countries for at least the length of the Egyptian protest episode, but that comparison is also telling of the scale of protests across the entire duration of the Jordanian protest episode. One way to ensure some comparability was to measure scale with the number of individual protest sites, as opposed to the number of cities which experienced protests. One of the reasons for creating my own database of protest events for this dissertation stemmed from the need to have granular data on individual protest events, including specific protest sites, which was not available is other larger, machine-coded datasets. Measuring scale by the number of cities experiencing protests would have been overly simplistic and an altogether less accurate measure of the scale of protests, as there can be many protests in single city, especially in a city as large as Cairo, for example.

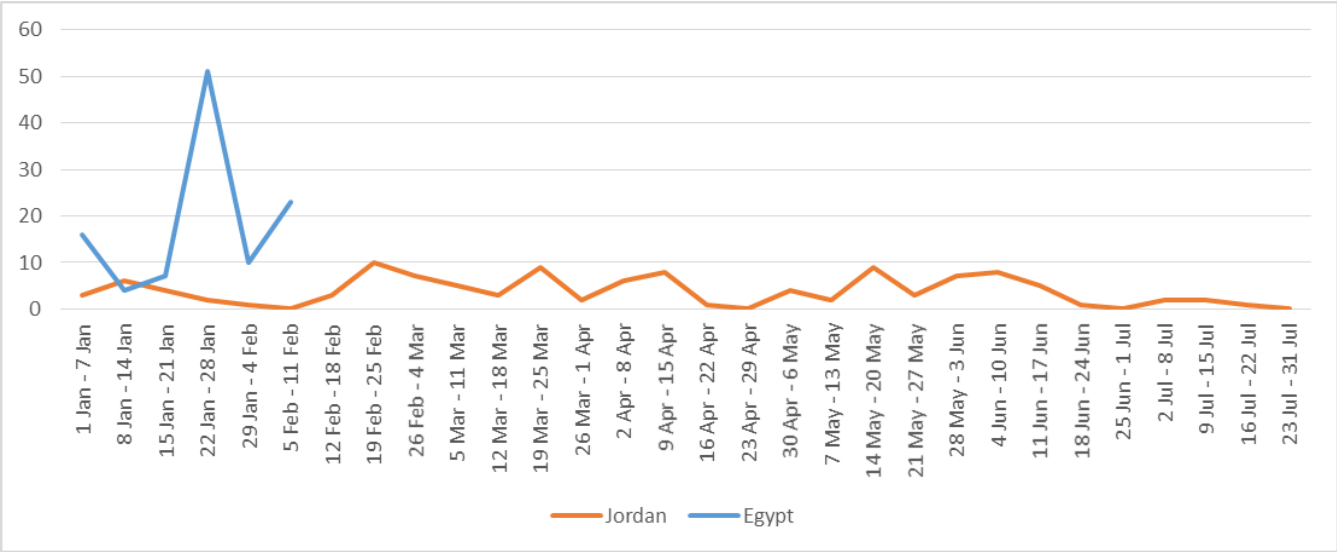

Figure 5: Number of protest sites, Egypt and Jordan

As with the figures measuring the size of protests in Egypt and Jordan, Figure 5 shows a stark difference in the scale of protests between the two countries. The weeks in which Jordan saw the most number of protest sites is at a similar level to the weeks in which Egypt saw the least number of protest sites. There was a huge spike in the scale of protests during the first week of the Egyptian uprising, which then declined but still to a level higher than any week during the seven months of the Jordanian protest episode. In Jordan, there were a few weeks with about 10 protest sites, but for the most part the scale of protests was limited to a few sites. By June and July, the number of protest sites had declined and remained at a low level for the remainder of the period. As with the variable measuring the size of protests, there is significant variation between the scale of protests experienced in Egypt and Jordan.

These are not perfectly analogous variables for the processes of mobilization and scale shift that are examined in each case study, but defining and measuring these

variables as such allows for quantifiable approximations that give a reasonable measure using data that are central to much of the research and analysis in this dissertation. These variables are also subject to many of the drawbacks of using protest data collected from news media sources, discussed later in this chapter, including missing or contradictory data and a bias toward reporting on larger protests and protests in major cities. It is thus important to remember that these are minimum figures for both the size and scale of protests.

As explained in Chapter 2, the processes of mobilization and scale shift are critical for protests to grow in size and scale. With a clear understanding of how size and scale are operationalized in this dissertation and that these variables relate to mobilization and scale shift, it is appropriate to turn the explanatory variables that are posited in the literature on contentious politics, which this dissertation is attempting to contribute. Figure 6 below shows a diagram of which mechanisms are associated with and must be activated for mobilization and scale shift to take place.[22]

[22] See Chapter 6 of Tilly and Tarrow 2012.

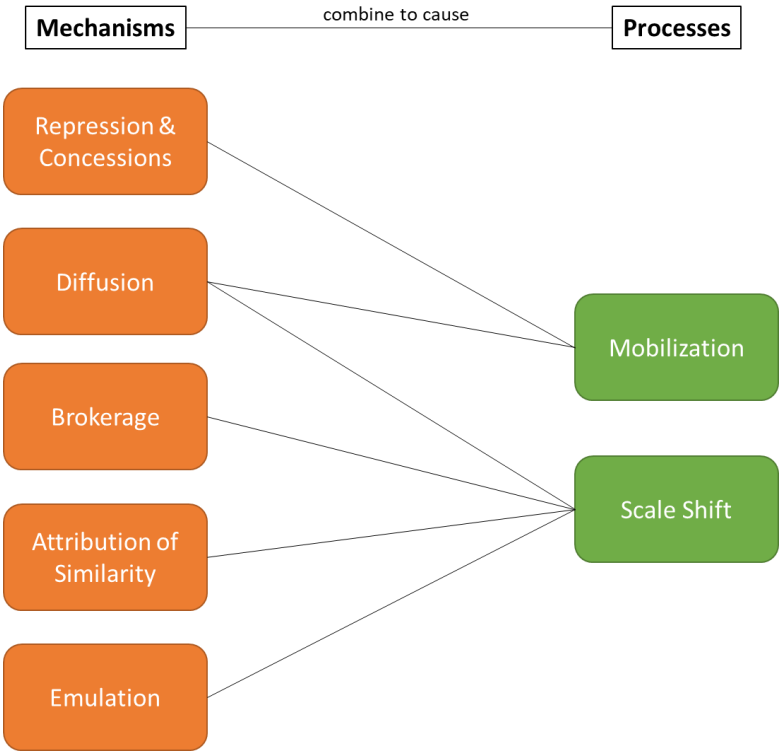

Figure 6: Diagram of hypothesized relationships between mechanisms and processes of contention

The literature on contentious politics, which was discussed at length in Chapter 2, is rich with research and case studies that have established various mechanisms that are involved in more complex processes, including mobilization and scale shift. The mechanisms identified in Figure 6 are not the only elements associated with these processes, but they are understood to be essential to produce the higher-level processes that allow protest movements to grow in size and scale. My dissertation acts as an additional test in the panoply of case studies showing the relationship between these particular mechanisms and processes.

In addition to testing the hypothesized relationships between these mechanisms and processes in this dissertation, I aim to highlight the significance of spatial dimensions

in mechanisms and processes of contentious politics. This dissertation goes a step further than existing research that shows how spatial dimensions are constitutive elements of contentious politics and in fact hypothesizes that spatiality has a causal effect on mechanisms and processes of contentious politics. As explained in Chapter 2, mechanisms and process of contentious politics are inherently spatial such that altering their spatial constitution influences how they engage with one another and thus the outcomes produced. It is not sufficient to simply assert that space matters, so my hypotheses and analyses dig down into the mechanics of spatiality. Political geographer Byron Miller succinctly explains what it is that links spatiality to collective action: "Space matters because it is relational. It is the medium through which all social relations are made or broken – and making and breaking relationships is at the core of all questions of collective action" (Miller 2013, 286). *Space* and *place* are the two distinct, yet interacting, conceptual frames I use to demonstrate the role of spatiality in the causal chain influencing mobilization and scale shift.

Clearly differentiating between *space* and *place* helps narrow the focus of the specific ways in which spatiality influences individual mechanisms that combine to cause increased mobilization and upward scale shift of protests. *Space* is the geographic location and physical characteristics (i.e., distance, size, shape) of the sites in which everyday life and contentious politics take place. It may seem that *space* represents a fixed, objective setting, but it acts as more than just a structural factor. *Space* can be the spatial surroundings of the site of protests that imposes constraints, but it can also be the object of protests as well; it both shapes and is shaped by individuals and networks of

actors, like social movements, that inhabit, interact in, and come together to contest space. *Place* accounts for the more symbolic, meaning-filled aspects of spatiality. It is in *places* that individuals interact over time and create collective identities, where social and political relations develop and are shaped. Subsumed in Paul Routledge's explanation of "terrains of resistance" are the conceptual elements of *space* and *place* and their significance in sites of protest:

> *"A terrain of resistance is not just a physical place but also a physical expression (e.g. the construction of barricades and trenches), which not only reflects a movement's tactical ingenuity, but also endows a space with an amalgam of meanings—be they symbolic, spiritual, ideological, cultural, or political. It constitutes the geographical ground upon which conflict takes place, and is a representational space with which to understand and interpret collective action."* (Routledge 1996, 517)

Given these understandings of *space* and *place* and how they relate to collective action, I outline specific hypotheses for how spatiality impacts the mechanisms and processes of contention in Figure 7. To generalize the causal mechanisms at work, *space* has the potential to lower the cost of collective action, and *place* has the potential to add meaning to collective action. At their most basic level, these are the means through which spatiality causes significant changes in the activation of key mechanisms underlying the processes of mobilization and scale shift. I argue in this dissertation that the presence or absence of certain dynamics of *space* and *place* influence mobilization and scale shift, and thus the size and scale of collective action, through the mechanisms of contentious politics identified in Figure 7 below.

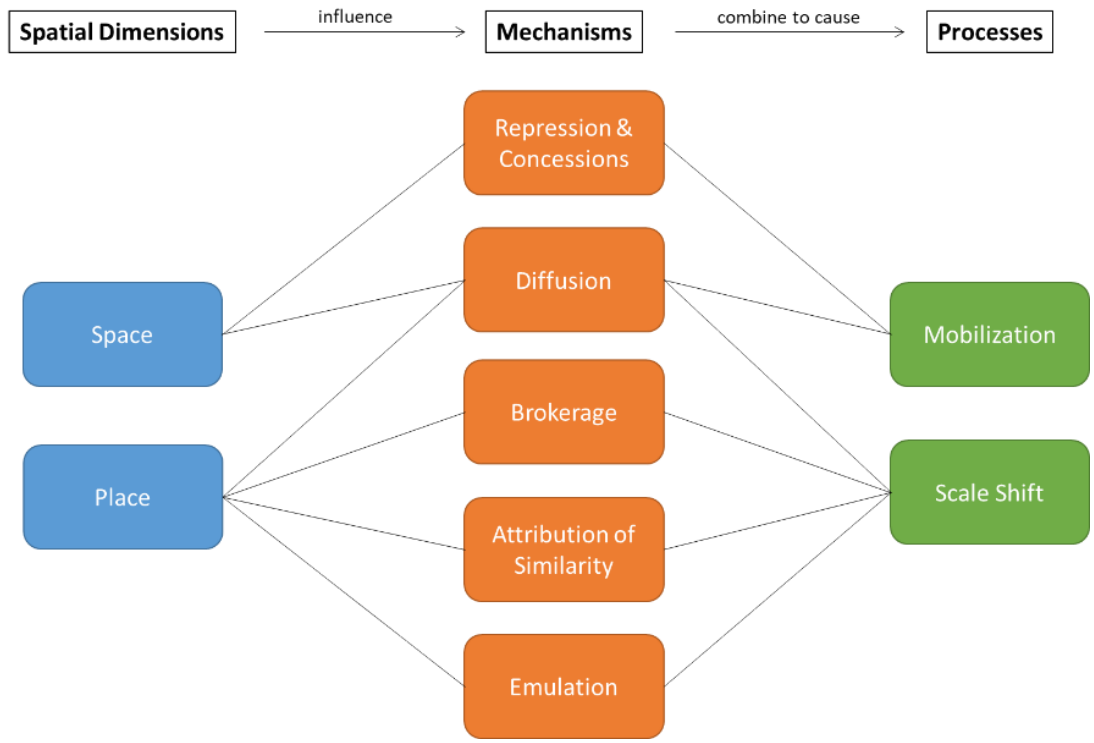

Figure 7: Diagram of hypothesized relationships between spatiality and mechanisms and processes of contention

The above figure shows which spatial dimensions I hypothesize are linked to certain mechanisms of mobilization and scale shift, but what is the specific process through which *space* and *place* influence those mechanisms? The causal process differs for each of the hypothesized relationships and therefore warrants enumeration and explanation.

Hypothesis 1: Protest *spaces* that hinder **repression** will decrease the cost of collective action and thus facilitate greater mobilization.

I discussed in Chapter 2 the complicated relationship between repression and mobilization; there is evidence that shows repression can increase or decrease mobilization, and evidence that shows that mobilization can increase or decrease

repression. It is important to recognize the potential multi-directionality of this relationship, and that repression and mobilization is an iterative process. Still, with the understanding of *space* developed in this dissertation and its purported impact on collective action, I assert that the physical characteristics and layout of sites of protest can influence the means and extent of repression used against demonstrators. For example, a protest march that ends in a city square with many possible entry and exit points would make it difficult for security forces to successfully implement crowd control tactics or other repressive measures. This inability to control or disperse demonstrators makes it less costly for other individuals to join a protest, and can thus facilitate an increased number of protest participants. On the contrary, responding to a protest in a contained space, whether a narrow alley or a large square that is cordoned off by barricades or security vehicles, police are more easily able to implement crowd control tactics and restrict participants' movement. This situation makes it more costly for people to join that protest event, thus deterring an increase in the number of protesters.

Hypothesis 2: Protest *spaces* that are **conceded** to demonstrators reduce the cost of collective action and thus facilitate greater mobilization.

Concessions need not only be conceived of at the policy level, as a government acquiescing to the demands of a protest event. When considered on the same plane as repression, as discussed in Chapter 2, smaller-scale types of concessions can be quite spatially relevant. When thinking of repression as a means, with force or otherwise, to disperse the participants of a protest event, concessions could be thought of as relinquishing *space* to protesters and allowing a demonstration to continue. When

conceived as such, a concession such as the removal or retreat of security forces from attempting to manage or disband a protest event—in other words, ceding *space* to protesters—provides a greater opportunity for more people to join a protest, or reduces the cost of collective action.

Hypothesis 3a: Protest *spaces* that are accessible, expansive, and centrally located will decrease the cost of collective action, thus enabling **diffusion** and facilitating upward scale shift.

The term diffusion, conceptualized in greater detail later in this chapter, can be used in reference to the spreading of a variety of phenomena related to protests, including ideas, slogans, and tactics; diffusion can be interpreted as inherently spatial, spreading from one site to another. With regard to the *space* of protests, I propose that staging a protest event at a certain type of site, with particular physical characteristics and relative location in a community, can itself be a tactic that can be replicated. A protest event that takes place in a large, open space that is centrally located and easily accessible to a large number of people decreases the cost of collective action; if the tactic of organizing protests at this type of protest site is replicable across multiple communities, whether within a neighborhood, a small town, or a major city, it is more likely to be diffused to new sites, shifting up the scale of contention.

Hypothesis 3b: *Places* of protest with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance add meaning to phenomena that are **diffused** and to collective action, thus facilitating mobilization.

When *places* have some sort of historical or cultural significance associated with them, that imbued meaning can make a protest held in that place resonate more with certain portions of a population, whether locally or at a distance. The meaning of *place* and the meaning of slogans, tactics, or demands can be translated and transmitted to new *places* to individuals and organizations with whom those phenomena also resonate. For example, a protest taking place in a neighborhood populated by an ethnic or religious minority may diffuse protest activity, tactics, or other innovations to similar *places* (i.e., minority neighborhoods) in other cities.

Hypothesis 4: *Places* of protest with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance help develop common identities among individuals and organizations, thus adding meaning to collective action and facilitating **attribution of similarity** and upward scale shift.

The meaning associated with certain *places*—whether because of proximity to significant political or cultural buildings, a historic(al) event that occurred, or simply the lived realities of local inhabitants' daily lives—can have a powerful bonding effect on people. The realization of a coinciding associations or affiliations of a particular *place* or type of *place*, especially in this context of a *place* of protest, among otherwise seemingly disparate individuals or groups can create a strong sense of similarity among them. This newly attributed similarity can add new dynamics of meaning to collective action. For example, impoverished urban residents living in informal housing and working in the informal sector may organize protest action against disproportionate police abuse and repression. The realization among residents of another neighborhood of similar

grievances can lead to their attribution of similarity to and sense of solidarity with the initiators of contentious action. This spatially-influenced attribution of similarity is a key mechanism in the scaling-up of contention.

Hypothesis 5: *Places* of protest with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance help build and strengthen relations among individuals and organizations, thus adding meaning to collective action and facilitating **brokerage** and upward scale shift.

Assuming that socially-recognized meaning permeates *places* of protest, it follows that there is some element of agreed-upon commonality among a variety of the population. This powerful ability of *place* to bring people together spatially also creates an opportunity for otherwise unconnected individuals and groups to develop and strengthen new relationships. For example, youth groups mobilized through online social networks and members of the Muslim Brotherhood organized through their local mosque can be drawn to collective action based on shared recognition of the *place* of protest; this bridging of groups that would otherwise be unconnected is part of the process of building strong ties and expanding the scale of contention to other *spaces* and *places*.

Hypothesis 6: *Places* of protest with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance provide a model for how contentious activity in similar *places* can add meaning to collective action that can be **emulated** elsewhere, thus facilitating upward scale shift.

Though some *places* of protest have unique significance to a population (e.g., a square in a capital city associated with a revolution from previous decades), some social

or political meanings associated with certain types of *places* are relevant across different locations. The meaning associated with a protest in front of a municipal building or police station can be replicated across multiple sites. This property of these type of *places* of protest that are ascribed certain meaning allow for them to be imitated at a variety of sites and scales.

As discussed above, the variation between the size and scale of protest episodes in Egypt and Jordan is clear. My case study analyses also show that each of the mechanisms associated with mobilization and scale shift are present in both Jordan and Egypt. Thus, I propose that it is not only the activation of the underlying causal mechanisms that lead to increasing the size and scale of protests, but that the spatiality dynamics hypothesized here enhance the effects of those mechanisms to increase the size and scale of protests.

To add further clarification, brief examples from Egypt and Jordan that speak to some of the hypothesized relationships are provided here, but the case study chapters include more nuanced discussions on all of the proposed relationships between spatiality, the mechanisms and processes, and thus the size and scale of protests. The role of Tahrir Square in the narrative of the Egyptian uprising is seemingly ubiquitous in the literature on protests in the past decade, and it is in fact especially instructive in understanding the spatiality of mobilization. Tahrir Square is an expansive area in central Cairo that consists of a large traffic circle with multiple major roads and bridges nearby that connect different parts of the city; it is surrounded by many culturally and politically significant buildings, as well as shops and restaurants, hotels and a museum, a university, and more; and it also has socio-historical significance in that it has been a site of protest for decades.

Given the physical geography, or *space*, of the square, it is an unlikely location for a long-term sit-in to be maintained, in part because of the ease with which security forces would be able to disband a group of protesters. What happened in January-February 2011, however, was that protest organizers and participants were able to use the spatiality of Tahrir Square to their advantage. Instead of a group of demonstrators being dwarfed by the immensity of the square, the mass of people demonstrating actually began filling up the square. The visual impact of tens of thousands of people completely overtaking Tahrir Square acted as an indicator of the extent of opposition to Hosni Mubarak's regime, which helped reduce the perceived risk of potential protesters from joining and strengthened the solidarity of participants and sympathizers, not just in Cairo but across the country. The crowd grew to be so large that Tahrir Square became essentially inviolable; the demonstration stretched into all of the surrounding streets, which were then able to be defended from attempts by counter-protesters or security forces from entering and inflicting violence and/or repression.

Both the *space* and *place* of Tahrir Square allowed for new relationships to form among individuals and organizations, and existing relationships to be reshaped and strengthened. The massive expanse of Tahrir provided the physical *space* for a large number and variety of people to participate in the demonstration there, and the meaning that had come to embody the *place* of the occupation enhanced participants' ability to develop a sense of community and solidarity around common struggles and grievances. The *place* of Tahrir also became a symbol and inspiration for all of the protests taking place across the country, further facilitating mobilization and scale shift.

Figure 8: Tahrir Square, Cairo, February 1, 2011
Source: Flickr: https://www.flickr.com/photos/peta-de-aztlan/5439066210/

This example of Tahrir Square also aids in contrasting with a counterexample from Jordan. Inspired by Egyptian protesters, a new Jordanian youth movement aligned with established opposition parties to attempt a Tahrir Square-style sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle. This traffic circle differs from Tahrir Square spatially in many ways, however. The Interior Ministry Circle is near downtown Amman, but it is one of many traffic circles in the area that flow north and south, east and west. It is, as the name suggests, near the Interior Ministry, which lends a certain spatial significance as a *place* of protest. The Interior Ministry Circle has no social or historical significance as a place of protest though; in fact there is no central square in Amman that Jordanians would

ascribe the same significance to as Egyptians with Tahrir Square. The geographic layout of circle is also drastically different from Tahrir Square and unsuitable for pedestrians, let alone an occupation. There are actually three criss-crossing levels to the circle: the middle level is the roundabout itself, leading out to at least five different roads; there are also high-speed thoroughfares that pass over and under the traffic circle. A group of demonstrators large enough would technically be able to occupy all three levels of the circle, but the way it is structured makes it difficult. Spatiality worked against the would-be occupiers of the Interior Ministry Circle, as security forces and pro-regime thugs were able to coordinate from the upper and middle levels to attack protesters. After less than a day, demonstrators were forcibly removed from the circle and the attempted sit-in was over. In contrast to Tahrir Square, the spatiality of the Interior Ministry Circle, both its *space* and *place*, restricted the ability of protesters to occupy, inspire, and mobilize Jordanians locally and across the country to participate in protest events.

Just as the *space* of Tahrir Square was shaped by the protests that took place there, *place* can be a malleable spatial characteristic as well. Communities that live and work in particular neighborhoods embed meaning into them, but different actors may assign different meaning to protests in different *places*. Jordanians from regions outside of the capital may have certain preconceived notions about demonstrations taking place in Amman, perhaps as focused on urban, elitist, or even Palestinian priorities and not speaking to the experiences and concerns of East Bank Jordanians in southern Jordan. Even within a city, connotations of the *places* of protest can differ greatly. Residents of working class neighborhoods in East Amman could have very different conceptions of

protests taking place in the more affluent neighborhoods in West Amman. The spatial significance of these different *places* in collective imaginaries can alter the nature and dynamics of collective action there, influencing how and when and with whom individuals and networks interact and align.

The above examples are only brief illustrations of some of the ways in which spatiality influences the mechanisms and processes of mobilization and scale shift, or the size and scale of protests. The case studies in Chapters 4 and 5 provide further details and examples to test the hypothesis that spatiality has a causal effect on these mechanisms and processes in contentious politics.

Having explained the above framing and conceptualization of my research question and the hypotheses being tested, I turn to explain the logic of my case selection, the character and quality of data that was collected and used in my quantitative and qualitative analyses, and how I operationalized key terms used in my dissertation's analysis.

I chose to investigate protest episodes in two countries: Egypt and Jordan. Most critically, the two countries exhibit variation on my dependent variables—protests in Egypt grew in size and scale whereas in Jordan the protests were much more limited, in both size and scale. Studying one country where protests grew in size and scale generally meant that case would be more popular in media and academia, and thus extensively covered; this could be a drawback in that it could be a challenge to cover new ground, but on the contrary, it meant that there would be extensive information available to contribute to my research and analysis. Including a country where protests did not grow in size and

scale afforded an opportunity to cover a case that was less popular and thus less covered in the literature.

Why only entertain country case studies in the Middle East and North Africa? Aside from being my region of expertise, studying two countries with considerable similarities can be useful for discounting certain political, economic, cultural, or other factors. While there are important differences between Egypt and Jordan, they also exhibit a number of similarities that make them fit for comparison. The countries are comparable across several key economic indicators, including GDP per capita, unemployment, and GINI coefficient (which measures inequality).[23] Egypt and Jordan also rate similarly on the Human Development Index, which assesses a population's health, access to education, and standard of living.[24] Egyptians and Jordanians also share linguistic and religious traditions, as well as Arab identities, and many other cultural similarities. In terms of political systems, though Egypt is a republic while Jordan is a monarchy, they both operate functionally as authoritarian states. Certain important differences follow from these political systems, though, such as Egypt, at the time of the uprising, was dominated by one party, the National Democratic Party, whereas Jordan functions as a multi-party parliamentary system. These differences certainly have potential governance implications, some of which could impact the dynamics of political freedoms, the sophistication and level of support of existing opposition parties, or the ability of an authoritarian ruler to deflect criticism to politicians and other elites. Some of

[23] GDP per capita when adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP) – Egypt: $10,019; Jordan $9,501. Unemployment rate – Egypt: 11.8%; Jordan 12.0%. GINI coefficient – Egypt: 30.2; Jordan 33.7. All figures from World Bank for year 2010, available at: https://data.worldbank.org/?locations=EG-JO.
[24] Human Development Index for 2010, on a scale from 0 to 1 – Egypt: 0.67; Jordan: 0.73. Available at: https://ourworldindata.org/human-development-index.

these factors will be discussed in the analyses and conclusions of this dissertation, but despite these differences, Jordan was selected over other potential country cases that would have aligned more on this aspect, like Iraq, which was not chosen due to other misalignments and too many external factors (e.g., international military intervention).

The centrality of Tahrir Square, not just in the episode of the Egyptian uprising, but in the protest zeitgeist across the region and the world, make it an especially compelling case to examine spatiality in this dissertation. As described above, Jordan offered some interesting spatial variation when compared to Egypt, in that it doesn't have a major central square like Tahrir in the capital city. There are also other interesting variations with respect to the spatial dynamics of protests that took place in the Egypt and Jordan. Egypt experienced large-scale protests that included people from many sectors of society which erupted almost simultaneously across the country in major cities; many of the protests were centered in city squares and major downtown areas, and some, like the occupation of Tahrir Square, was a continuous affair; police and government forces used multiple violent and nonviolent forms of repression against protesters; and the government offered nominal reforms as a form of concession, but the limited outreach was viewed by the protesting public as insufficient in both timing and scope. Compared to Egypt, protests in Jordan were much more limited in size, but nonetheless the largest in the country in decades; demonstrations were consistent in their frequency and size in the capital as well as in select peripheral areas for a period of time, but then waned; very little violent repression was used against Jordanian protesters by police and security forces;

and some limited political and economic reforms were enacted, but they did not lead to any significant changes in the status quo socio-political and economic power structures.

In addition to exhibiting variation on the dependent variables of size and scale of protest, the quantity and quality of data required to address my research question on protests in both countries were available. Given the scope of this dissertation as described here, and given the variation I am attempting to explain, I took a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data and techniques to examine and evaluate both individual and series of protests in Egypt and Jordan. I needed specific data about where a large number of protests happened over a set period of time. There are very large event databases, like GDELT and ICEWS, that contain rather comprehensive, machine-coded data about thousands of protest events that took place over large spans of time.[25] However, the data included in those databases was insufficient for my research needs. For example, those datasets identified the cities in which protest events took place, but did not contain specific enough data about the actual sites of protests, how many participants were involved, and who those participants and organizers were. I wanted to know that a demonstration of a few dozen people started in the alleys of Cairo's Bulaq al-Dakrour neighborhood and ended in Tahrir Square or in front of the parliament building with hundreds or thousands of other people. I also wanted to be able to analyze the type and level of repression that police and security forces inflicted on protesters, for example, to ensure a robust understanding of one of the key mechanisms related to mobilization and scale shift. This level of granular detail was also absent from the large datasets. By

[25] For more information on GDELT, see: https://www.gdeltproject.org/. For more information on ICEWS, see: http://lockheedmartin.com/en-us/capabilities/research-labs/advanced-technology-labs/icews.html.

using Protest Event Analysis (PEA) techniques to create my own dataset containing both quantitative and qualitative data, I was able to customize the types of data that were collected to ensure that I had access to the data that would best allow me to tackle my research question on the size and scale of protests as well as some aspects of the underlying mechanisms of mobilization and scale shift.

I used PEA to "systematically map, analyze, and interpret the occurrence and properties of large numbers of protests by means of content analysis," across both geographical areas and over time (Koopmans and Rucht 2002, 231). This technique of data collection has been developed over decades of research and adaptation to improve researchers' abilities to collect, code, and analyze large amounts of data about protests.[26] In particular, Swen Hutter's chapter on PEA offers an up-to-date and detailed accounting of many of the practical questions of how to do PEA, especially (Hutter 2014). PEA is known for transforming words into numbers and is thus often associated with quantitative analysis. But I decided to also utilize the rich qualitative data I collected in my dataset to gain a more detailed understanding of the protest events investigated. Given my research question, dependent variables, and the resources available to me, PEA was an ideal technique to use for my data collection and analysis.

One important benefit of creating my own database was that I could use my customized data to create maps that show the number of protests that occurred, where they were happening, how big they were, and how all of these factors changed over time. For a dissertation concerned, in part, with understanding how protests spread over space

[26] For more information on Protest Event Analysis, see: Koopmans and Rucht 2002; Fillieule and Jiménez 2007; and Hutter 2014.

and time, I thought that having detailed, cartographic visualizations was a critical component to demonstrating my argument. While there were many benefits to creating my own database, there were also some limitations. One limitation that is important to mention here is the number of protest events that could be included in my dataset compared to the larger machine-coded datasets. As a single person research project with limited time and financial resources, there was a limit on how many protest events I could collect sufficient data for. The difference amounted to data on hundreds of protest events being collected in my database rather than thousands in the ICEWS dataset, for example. As with any dissertation, there are trade-offs in decisions that must be made about how to best go about answering a research question, and I took steps to mitigate negative externalities of my decisions. More information on this and other limitations of my research design are discussed in more detail below.

Certain data about some of the explanatory variables (the mechanisms) and spatial dimensions were not available in news media sources. In addition to the quantitative and qualitative data collected in my database, additional qualitative data were used to supplement my dataset. These data were also useful in providing more detail and nuance about particular aspects of protest events, and, given the limited sample size of protest events in my dataset, referenced protest events that were not included in my news media data. Drawing mainly from government and INGO reports, academic papers, and monographs, I consulted information about protest events from first-hand accounts; interviews with protest organizers, protest participants, and government officials; and secondary accounts and analyses.

The central focus of this study is the relationship between spatiality and the various mechanisms of protest mobilization and scale shift, as measured by the size and scale of protests. There are a number of concepts and terms that are utilized throughout this dissertation that require specification and explanation. This is important not just for the sake of clarity, but because part of the strength and validity of the mechanism-process approach comes from identifying that certain actions or events happen. And so having a clear understanding of exactly what is meant when I point to an instance of brokerage or diffusion is critical to my analysis.

Contentious politics by definition is political and therefore involves the government as an actor; I specifically investigated protests directed against political, economic, and/or social powers, the most prominent being the state or ruling regime. These protests are understood and referred to as either anti-government or pro-reform protests. This dissertation examines individual instances of protest as well as series of protests over a longer duration. I use the terms "episode," "cycle," and "series" in reference to these series of protests, or "bounded sequences of contentious interaction" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 213). I also refer to a protest "movement" in this sense, not as in a particular social movement organization but rather the overall movement of individuals and organizations engaged in a given series of protests. Below I describe how I conceptualize the key mechanisms associated with protest mobilization and scale shift, features of protest episodes, and dimensions of spatiality that will be utilized in this dissertation.

I adopt a broad definition of **mobilization** for the purposes of this dissertation, the same as used by Tilly and Tarrow: an "increase…in the resources available to a political actor for collective making of claims" (Tillly and Tarrow 2007, 215). Resources here can mean anything that contributes to an organization or broader movement's ability to carry out activities, from financial support to people willing to protest to political figures willing to publicly support a cause. Different types of resources may lend to different types or levels of mobilization, but mobilization will generally foster a larger base of support by building on new and existing networks to express claims and challenge opponents. Mobilization is a complex and multifaceted process that intersects with and can be explained by analyzing multiple mechanisms. Some of the key mechanisms of protest mobilization identified in the contentious politics research agenda outlined in the literature review include repression, concessions, and diffusion.

The response of a regime to protests is another important mechanism of protest mobilization. When speaking of the regime response here, I am interested in looking at the reaction of the actor(s), whether individuals or institutions, who are the target of the protests or seen as aligned with them and thus contributing to the protesters' grievances. The literature describes a variety of ways in which regimes can respond, ranging from various forms of repression to different types of concessions. These are the primary types of responses encountered in my study.

I have adopted a definition of **repression** as "obstacles by the state (or its agents) to individual and collective actions by challengers" (McPhail and McCarthy 2005, 3). Since the severity of repression can vary greatly, I will attempt to differentiate between

low and high levels of repression as well as the particular types of repression that are employed (e.g., from surveillance or banning protests to torture or death). The word **concession** is used in the sense of a type of yielding or compromising by the state toward some demand or grievance of those involved in collective action. Like with repression, I attempt to differentiate between low-level concessions and more substantive accommodations as well as the type of concession (Rasler 1996, 138).

I use the term **diffusion** to mean the "spread of [a] contentious performance, issue, or interpretive frame from one site to another" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 215). As described in the literature review, many different "things" can be diffused, from norms and ideas to protest slogans and strategies. Identifying exactly what is diffused can be a complex and subjective endeavor, and simply identifying the presence or absence of diffusion is likely a trivial distinction. But knowing the pathways through which such objects are diffused, whether relational, nonrelational, or mediated pathways, can provide important contextual information, for example about the relationship between the transmitters and adopters. Examples of such distinctions could include the sharing of information about a particular protest march between social movement organizations (relational), or learning about a protest through the media (nonrelational). The Internet and social media are other means of diffusion that have received much attention in recent years and are also incorporated into my analysis of diffusion. Understanding these aspects of diffusion particularly aid in assessing the trajectory of a protest movement and some of the reasoning behind the "how" and "why" of diffusion.

Scale shift is an "increase or decrease in the number of actors and/or geographic range of coordinated claim making" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 217). It entails a shift across space and social sectors, as well as a shift *downward* to a more local level or *upward* to a higher level (regional, national, international). Scale shift is also one of the most significant processes in contentious politics. Mechanisms associated with scale shift include diffusion, emulation, attribution of similarity, and brokerage. **Emulation** is the "deliberate repetition within a given setting of a performance observed in another setting" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 215). Emulation does not need to entail an exact copy of a protest tactic or other behavior between groups; emulation can also include adopting a repertoire of contention but adapting it to fit the local context in which emulation is occurring. It is a critical mechanism in the process of scale shift and seen as a strong indicator that shifting the scale of local action is taking place (Tarrow and McAdam 2005, 130). For example, Sarah Soule's research on student divestment movements focused on emulation of the tactic of building "shantytowns" on university campuses across the United States (Soule 1997).

Attribution of similarity, the "identification of another political actor as falling within the same category as your own," is another key mechanism of scale shift (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 215). Attribution of similarity is often an intermediary step between an original action and its emulation. Contentious actors may intentionally frame their claims or actions in a way that targets specific groups in the hope of expanding the appeal of their movement; a social movement may try to find ways to identify with another group to encourage coordinated action and, eventually, shifting up the scale of contention.

Attribution of similarity need not be an intentional process, though; it can also happen organically (Tarrow and McAdam 2005, 129). For example, disgruntled youth across the MENA region found solidarity with one another, identifying similar grievances with the economic and political status quo. This attribution of similarity was an intermediate step in the process of diffusing protest actions across cities and countries.

Brokerage is another mechanism that has been found to be a crucial factor in shifting the scale of protest; it is a simple yet important concept: the "production of a new connection between previously unconnected or weakly connected sites" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 215). Brokerage is the act of establishing new connections and networks, expanding support and resources for mobilization, and can often be facilitated via diffusion. This can be a difficult concept to quantify, especially when focusing on individual protest events as the level of analysis; through qualitative analysis, brokerage and the relative value added toward mobilization can be assessed more appropriately in protest movements as a whole.

In addition to examining space and the micro-level mechanisms of protest, it is important to understand features of larger-scale protest episodes as well. To measure more macro-level aspects of protests movements, I collected data on the duration, size, and geographic spread of protests within each case.

The **duration** of a protest episode seems like a straightforward factor to analyze, but it can be fraught with ambiguity. Some protest movements may emerge and grow exponentially, or emerge and demobilize, in a relatively short and definitive period of time. A popular narrative of protests in Egypt in 2011, for example, is that three

consecutive weeks of protest resulted in Hosni Mubarak stepping down from power, which was one of the central demands of the protesters. However, those three weeks of protest were built upon years of increasing grievances, mobilization, and protests. So while I could delineate the January-February 2011 protests as an individual protest cycle, a longer timeframe is required for a more comprehensive picture. A protest cycle may also carry on indefinitely. In Jordan, the incidence and intensity of pro-reform protests grew over the course of a few months. Though protests continued with some regularity, their frequency, size, and, eventually, scale diminished.

In discussing the **size** of a protest episode, I mean the number of people participating in protest activities. In assessing the size of a protest movement over time, it may be helpful to look at estimates of the total number of protesters across a country as a whole as opposed to just at one particular event in one particular city (i.e., if there are coordinated protests across a country on a particular day). It is also useful to put these numbers in the context of the total population of a given area, to make comparisons across regions and countries more meaningful. Unfortunately, accurate data on the size of a given protest can be difficult to come by. Reports of figures of protest participants in the media can vary for a number of reasons, including the sheer complexity of estimating large and constantly fluctuating numbers of people in diverse spaces, and possible biases or agendas of those collecting and reporting the information. Still, estimates of the trend of the size of protests can be powerful data, and are in fact key for measuring my dependent variable.

Like with the size of protests, information on the **scale** or geographic spread of protest activity can also be useful for evaluating a series of protest events over time and space. Tracing the diffusion of protests across cities and regions in a country can show the ebbs and flows of a protest cycle, whether the wave is confined to the centers of big cities or spread throughout the periphery as well. With regards to the dependent variable in this dissertation, the scale to which protests spread is measured by the number of unique protest sites in a country over a certain period of time.

In terms of spatial dimensions, I focused on two of the most commonly used and understood concepts: *space* and *place*. **Space** consists of the actual physical, measurable properties of a geographic area, and **place** refers to the more socially subjective aspects of geography (Nicholls et al. 2013, 16). These are important elements that will be analyzed in this dissertation, and are explained in more detail in Chapter 2.

Data Collection Methods

Going into the data collection process for creating my database of news media events, I knew there were a number of categories of data to be included based on the spatial dimensions, mechanisms, and processes that I was investigating. My intent was to use multiple national and international news sources, including sources in the native language, to increase the likelihood of a more comprehensive sample of protests. National sources are more likely to cover smaller protests and protests outside of major metropolitan areas, compared to international press that are more likely to cover protests that were larger, more violent, or taking place in big cities. I also wanted to only use independent national news sources (i.e., no state-owned media) to increase the likelihood

of unbiased reporting of protest events and details about protest events. Using multiple sources would allow for comparing data on the same protest event across sources, and thus provide corroboration of individual pieces of data (e.g., number of participants, number of injuries). For national sources, I used *The Jordan Times* and *Daily News Egypt*. Both are independent English-language daily newspapers that fit my other criteria and had a sufficient number of articles available in the time periods I was studying.[27] I was forced to limit the number of sources I utilized in order to keep the number of articles to review for data collection to a manageable size for a single person research project. For my international news sources, I decided to use *Reuters News*. The potential issues and limitations with using news media sources in research on protest events are discussed further below.

Regarding what parameters to use when searching those news media sources, I knew there were certain categories of data that I wanted to be included in the articles that appeared in my search results based on the spatial aspect of my research as well as the specific mechanisms that were being studied. With protest events being the main unit of observation in my dataset, I wanted my search parameters to include a wide variety of terms that could be used to describe various types of protest events. I included variations of the following terms in my search parameters: protest, demonstration, march, occupation, strike, sit-in, self-immolation, riot, resistance, disobedience, and unrest.

The time period used in my news media search parameters were different for Egypt and Jordan. For Egypt, there was a clear minimum period of protest activity that I

[27] *The Jordan Times* is owned by the government-controlled Jordan Press Foundation, though it is generally believed to have some amount of editorial freedom.

wanted to investigate given my research question, from January 25, 2011 when the first of the mass protests occurred to February 11, 2011 when Mubarak was removed from office. To allow for other protest events that may have taken place before this period, I expanded the search parameters to begin on January 1, 2011. Given the more fluid duration of the protest episode in Jordan, I decided to base that time period on the point when a comparable number of protest events had been cataloged in my dataset for Egypt, approximately 250. The time period in Jordan in which a comparable number of protest events transpired naturally coincided with a clear period of demobilization. Using this rationale for delimiting the Jordanian protest episode also, in theory, provided each national movement the same number of protest events to increase the size and scale of mobilization.

In terms of the specific categories of data that I would be recording in my database. This was in part a function of the spatial categories and mechanisms to be analyzed as well as what I was practically going to be able to document from news sources and use in my analysis. The structure of my database allowed for nearly two dozen different pieces of data about a single protest event to be recorded. These data can be described in four broad categories:

1. information about the data source, including the name of the news source, the date of the news article, the title of the news article, and the date of publication of the article;
2. basic information about the protest event, including a unique identification number I created for each protest event; the specific location, including the city, neighborhood, and actual site of each protest; the tactic used or type of protest event (demonstration, sit-in, strike, etc.); information about the protest event organizers or participants, including the number of participants, types of participants (e.g., organizational affiliation of protest event organizer or portion of participants), and more specific information

about particular participants (e.g., if notable individuals like government officials participated); and the reasons for or demands of the protest even;

3. data about violence or repression that took place at a protest event, including the number of arrests or detentions, the number of injuries, the number of deaths, the types of repression used against protesters, violence perpetrated by protesters or others, and the actors involved in any of these acts of repression or violence; and
4. information about concessions that were associated with or followed from protest events and the actors involved.

In total, I reviewed nearly 2,000 news articles to find those that discussed anti-government or pro-reform protest events containing information about any of the relevant categories of information in my database. I used the CAMEO (Conflict and Mediation Event Observations) system, which has been developed for more than a decade and for which there are many resources available, to manually code my data.[28] The CAMEO system assigns numerical or textual codes to different categories of actors, actions, and events in the data. Figure 9 shows examples of codes used for different types of protest events:

[28] See http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/data.html. The CAMEO framework is widely used, including by the ICEWS (Integrated Conflict Early Warning System) database. ICEWS has a much larger set of protest events collected from dozens of news sources, which made it a standard against which I could test how representative my sample of protests was.

14: PROTEST
140: Engage in political dissent, not specified below
141: Demonstrate or rally, not specified below
  1411: Demonstrate for leadership change
  1412: Demonstrate for policy change
  1413: Demonstrate for rights
  1414: Demonstrate for change in institutions, regime
142: Conduct hunger strike, not specified below
  1421: Conduct hunger strike for leadership change
  1422: Conduct hunger strike for policy change
  1423: Conduct hunger strike for rights
  1424: Conduct hunger strike for change in institutions, regime

Figure 9: Sample of CAMEO codes for protests
Source: Gerner, Schrodt, and Yilmaz 2012, 136

In addition to having all of these different classifications for "Protest," there are categories of codes for everything from "Make Public Statement" and "Provide aid to "Assault" and "Use Unconventional Mass Violence." Though much, if not all, of the data I collected in my database could have been coded according to CAMEO's scheme, I only coded the information that was critical for types of analyses I did. The categories of data I used the coding system for were the type of protest event (e.g., 1432 for "Strike or boycott for policy change"), the type of repression used (e.g., 176 for "Attack cybernetically"), and the type of concessions offered (e.g., 0831 for "Accede to demands for change in leadership"). In general, I adhered to the specific guidelines and examples explained in the CAMEO codebook (Gerner, Schrodt, and Yilmaz 2012). For each numerical event code, there was a corresponding annotated example, as in Figure 10 below, with a description, example, and additional notes. But there were still instances of ambiguity in the data where I needed to make judgment calls about how to code a particular item. I kept track of the types of language and actions commonly used in news articles, and then developed a codebook for how I was coding those events to maintain

internal consistency. For example, given the description and example in Figure 10 from the CAMEO codebook, I used 175 to code any instances of using crowd control tactics, tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets. Any instances of clashes/fights between protesters and police, security forces, or pro-regime thugs using "unsophisticated" weapons like rocks, bottles, knives, or Molotov cocktails.

CAMEO	175
Name	Use repression
Description	Actively repress collective actions of dissent by forcing subjugation through crowd control tactics, arrests, etc.
Usage Notes	Note the difference between repression of dissidents and military engagements.
Example	Liberian riot police used tear gas to disperse demonstrators protesting election results in Monrovia.

CAMEO	180
Name	Use unconventional violence, not specified below
Description	Use of unconventional forms of violence which do not require high levels of organization or conventional weaponry, not otherwise specified.
Usage Notes	Use this event form to code use of forms of force and violence that do not require high levels of organization typical of state-military establishments. Terrorist attacks, if not further specified, should be coded here. Use this default code also for use of knives, rocks and other such unsophisticated weapons. This residual category is not coded except when distinctions among codes 181-186 cannot be made.
Example	A temporary camp for Congolese refugees was attacked by Burundian militiamen armed with machetes, killing at least 156 people, the UN refugee agency reported.

Figure 10: Sample of CAMEO descriptions for repression
Source: Gerner, Schrodt, and Yilmaz 2012, 79-80

There are a few other specificities to my coding that are worth mentioning. To account for self-immolations as acts of protest akin to demonstrations, sit-ins, etc., I coded them using code 140, "Engage in political dissent, not specified below." I coded sit-ins as 144, "Obstruct passage, block." I chose not to use the code 145 "Protest

violently, riot" for a few reasons, including the difficulty of parsing at what level of violence a protest turned into a riot, whether a demonstration that resulted in violence was instigated by security forces or protesters, and the potential for inconsistencies in how different news sources characterize riots. Instead of struggling over categorizing riots, I focused on detailing the levels and types of violence at different protest events in my database.

Regarding data collection from secondary sources to supplement my database, once I finished coding and analyzing the data, I had a much better sense of what specific types of information were lacking in my database. I did a thorough and targeted search for where I could find the data I needed to supplement my database for my analysis. For example, the data I collected from news articles on repression was very useful for getting a sense of the types of repression that were used and in what distribution, the frequency and scale of repression overall, and certain specific details. However, narrative accounts of protest events from people who observed or participated in them offered other nuanced details, including spatial descriptions of the sites of repression or how space was used or was a critical factor in repression that took place. Using mainly academic papers, monographs, and government and INGO reports, I was able to supplement my database with these and other types of data to me to provide a more comprehensive picture of the spatiality of individual protest events, for example, and the contexts in which they took place.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Using Protest Event Analysis to transform qualitative data from news media sources into quantitative data provided me with the potential to use a variety of quantitative and statistical analyses to gain overarching insights on the broader protest episode that would otherwise be difficult to determine using only qualitative data. Using the CAMEO coding scheme, a portion of my data were converted into nominal data—data that have mutually exclusive but not ordered categories. In my database, the data that were coded included the reasons for or demands of protest events, the types of repression used, and the types of concessions offered. Other data in my database, like the number of participants at a protest event and the number of arrests, injuries, and deaths at a protest event, were ratio-level data—data in specific numerical order where the difference between the values is meaningful and there is a clear zero. The remainder of the data were neither numerical nor coded numerically (i.e., qualitative), and thus not suitable for quantitative analyses. The level of the data determined the types of statistical analyses and tests that are available, but my research question and DVs guided the types of tests I chose to perform.

Though some of my data were indeed ratio-level data and therefore technically suitable for regression and other sophisticated statistical analyses, I did not conduct such statistical tests on my data, for two reasons. First, the ratio-level data categories were not variables whose relationships were directly relevant to my research question. Second, I did not have enough cases or variables required to use regression analysis. However, the richness of the data collected using PEA means that simple descriptive and summary

statistics have great potential to offer insights on information that otherwise can be difficult to grasp (Hutter 2014, 355-358). For the nominal-level data, which was data that had been coded using the CAMEO system, certain techniques like chi-squared tests were both possible and potentially relevant to my dissertation. I did attempt to do a chi-squared test to compare the distributions among the coded categories of the types of protests and the types of repression used, but for technical reasons, a chi-squared test was not possible.[29]

In the end, I found that analyzing the distributions of the categories of the coded data was quite insightful and contributed to my ability to present a comprehensive, big-picture perspective on protest events in Egypt and Jordan. Analysis of these data and maps built using protest event size and location data, as an alternative means of visualizing my dependent variables, also contributed to understanding the trajectory of the protest episodes over their duration.[30] Given the spatial dimension of the analysis in this dissertation, geographic visualizations of the dependent variables offer a more intuitive rendering of the size and scale of protests in Egypt and Jordan. The maps offer a snapshot of the size and scale of protests at a given point in the protest episode, or, when viewed as a series, show how the size and scale of protests fluctuated over time. In addition, this type of visualization allows for assessing both dependent variables for each individual country in one consolidated figure.

[29] This was because there were too many zeroes in the data (i.e., there were too many protest events with either no repression or without certain types of repression). Even when I removed all of the zeroes from the data and attempted to perform a chi-squared test, the result was very weak and showed a low correlation between categories.

[30] I made the maps using QGIS, a free and open-source geographic information system (GIS) software.

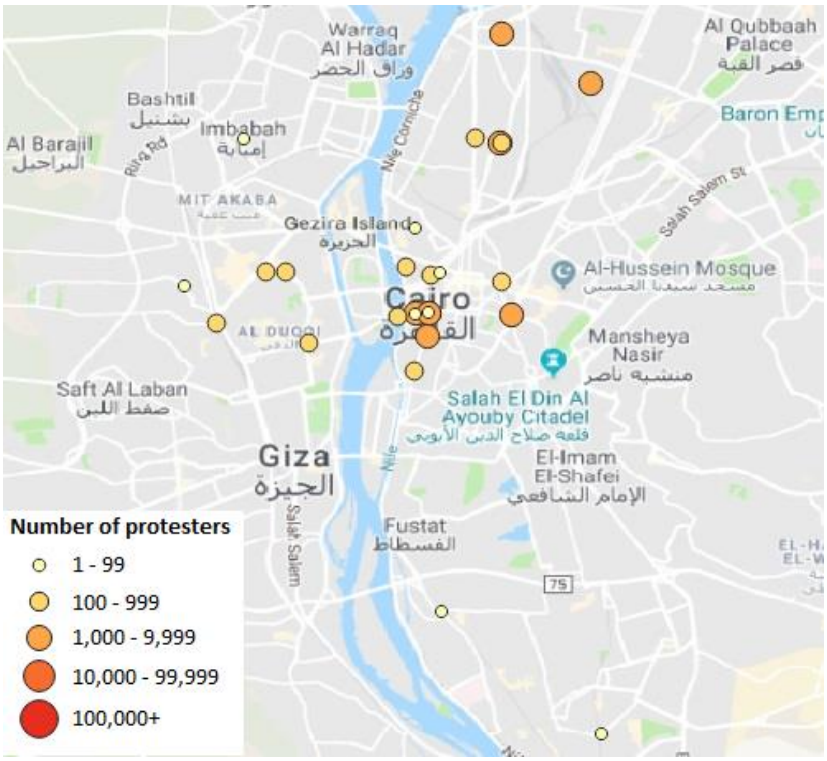

Figure 11: Protest events, Cairo, January 25, 2011

Figure 12: Protest events, Amman, February 2011

As discussed below, the data collected from news media sources are not perfectly accurate representations of protest events. Because of this fact, there were many cases of protest events that had very little size and/or specific location data, as well as discrepancies in the size of protests in different reportings of particular protest events. Regarding location data, I used the most specific information on the site of protests as was available, down to the level of which intersection a march began at or what city square a demonstration took place. Many news reports only mentioned the city in which a protest event took place; for those cases, I selected a location at the center of a city (not the geographic center *per se*, but a major downtown traffic circle, for instance) where those protests would appear on the maps. Some types of protest events, especially strikes

and work stoppages that took place in Jordan, were largely not included in the map data because of insufficient data (e.g., many news articles were vague in describing the locations of strikes and work stoppages, using phrases like "public health facilities" or "several towns" or "across the Kingdom" instead of the names of specific locations or cities).

Regarding data on the size of protest events, there were many reports that did not mention the number of participants or gave general numerical estimates (i.e., dozens, hundreds, thousands); there were also cases with considerable discrepancies in the number of participants. Figure 11 and Figure 12 above show examples of the type of maps used in my dissertation, which includes a legend showing the bands for the number of protesters. For protest events with no data on the number of participants, I used the smallest circle representing the lowest band on that protest event's location. For protest events that had discrepancies in reporting how many people participated, I used the smallest of the reported number of participants. These maps were a powerful tool to show multiple data points about individual protest events at the same time as showing variation on my dependent variables, the extent to which a protest episode increased in size and scale over time.

To this point, I have mostly explained the ways in which I used both quantitative and qualitative news media data from my database in my dissertation's analysis of protest events in Egypt and Jordan. As discussed above, I conducted additional research from secondary sources to supplement the data in my database, particularly to gather information on some of the mechanisms and processes being analyzed to answer my

research question dealing with the processes of mobilization and scale shift. The mechanism-process approach developed, described, and used by Tilly and Tarrow (2012) is the final methodological piece of the puzzle in my dissertation's analysis that enabled me to identify the activation of combinations of mechanisms and processes, and thus to draw conclusions on my research question.

Rather than attempting to analyze large, complex contentious episodes as a whole, the mechanism-process approach allows for the deconstruction of an episode, or series of protests and other contentious events in the case of this dissertation, into underlying processes, and then further still into mechanisms. After breaking down the constituent pieces of a protest episode, it is possible to recreate a causal account of the episode as a whole. This not only allows for mapping the underlying mechanisms and processes that lead to a particular outcome and a deeper understanding of a protest episode, but it is also possible to easily compare multiple episodes or cases. One of the benefits to mechanisms and processes is that they produce the same effects in different contexts. Thus, the same combination of mechanisms that are present or activated in a particular protest episode should produce the same resultant process in a different contentious episode. If the presence or absence of a particular mechanism is the only difference between two episodes with differing outcomes, one can point to that mechanism as the explanation for the difference. Similarly, processes, which are simply combinations and sequences of mechanisms with larger-scale outcomes, should also produce the same result in different situations.

1. Specify the sites of contention you are studying
2. Describe relevant conditions at those sites when the contention you are studying begins.
3. Identify and describe the streams of contention at or among those sites you want to explain.
4. Specify the outcomes whose relation to the contention under study you want to determine
5. Break the streams of contention into coherent episodes.
6. Search the episodes for mechanisms producing significant changes and/or differences.
7. Reconstruct the processes into which those mechanisms compound.
8. Using analogies or comparisons with similar processes elsewhere, combine conditions, mechanisms, and processes into explanations of specified outcomes.

Figure 13: Steps in the mechanism-process approach to the explanation of contention
Source: adapted from Tilly and Tarrow 2012, 242

Figure 13 above outlines the key steps in the mechanism-process approach that was used in this dissertation. The steps in this process use very specific terms with particular meanings that have been developed by Tilly, Tarrow, and many others who have contributed to the literature on contentious politics. The appendix from which this figure is taken is part of the effort to formalize and document the concepts and methods that have been advanced for years toward understanding and explaining contention. As Tilly and Tarrow explain, it is not necessary to follow the steps in any particular order, but in the end, a researcher is likely to have gone through them all.

Indeed, throughout both of my case study chapters in this dissertation, I addressed steps one through six, though not always explicitly or using the framing and language as above. This includes a detailed description of the protest episode, its deconstruction into the processes of mobilization and scale shift, further deconstruction of the mechanisms underlying those processes that can be identified, and finally the reconstruction of those

mechanisms and processes into an overall account of the protest episode. Chapters 4 and 5 on Egypt and Jordan each include descriptions of the sites of contention being studied, both in general (i.e., each country) and often more specifically about individual protest sites throughout each chapter (Step 1). Each chapter opens with a brief recent history of contentious politics in the country (Step 2), followed by a summary of the contentious episode under consideration, the protests in 2011, using data collected from news media and other sources (Step 3). The outcomes of these contentious episodes being studied, namely the change in size and scale of protests, is referred to in each chapter to maintain clear links between what is being discussed at any given time and the broader research question of this dissertation, but is described in more detail in Chapter 3 (Step 4). The contentious episode is broken down and discussed in smaller pieces, including at the level of individual protest events (Step 5). A significant portion of each case study is dedicated to searching the protest episode for mechanisms that produce significant changes, with an emphasis on the spatiality of those mechanisms (Step 6). The conclusion of each chapter includes a summary reconstruction of the compounded mechanisms and processes found in each protest episode, but discussed in more detail in the final chapter of this dissertation (Step 7). Chapter 6 is where I pull together the main findings on the mechanisms from my case study analyses, reconstruct the processes of mobilization and scale shift into explanations of my specified outcome of interest—protests that increased in size and scale—and compare the results of my two case studies (Step 8).

Tilly and Tarrow (2007) identify four distinct variants of mechanism-process approach explanations. The variation which my dissertation most closely resembles is the

"local process" account which takes "processes whose operation analysts have already established in other settings and appl[ies] them to particular instances—often combining more than one well-documented process for a more complete explanation" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 207-208). The processes of mobilization and scale shift, which are associated with my research question on the size and scale of protests, are likely the most established processes in contentious politics. The acceptance of particular underlying mechanisms and a general understanding of how they function in relation to these broader processes are well-documented, and thus the "local process" variation was ideal for testing how to include spatial analysis of those mechanisms and processes into this dissertation. Adding my spatial adaptation using this approach with well-established processes helped provide greater confidence that the outcomes investigated were not the result of a faulty or missing mechanism.

In implementing this approach, I combined the quantitative and qualitative data and analysis from my database with additional qualitative research to establish a comprehensive picture of all of the main mechanisms involved in my dependent variable processes. In each of my two case study chapters, I presented the data and summary analyses of protest events from my database, followed by an accounting of the evidence of the key actors, events, and actions, involved in the mechanisms and processes contributing to mobilization and scale shift. The conclusion of each case study chapter reconstructs each protest episode and summarizes the key findings relevant to my research question and dependent variables being investigated. It is in the final chapter of this dissertation that the mechanism-process approach culminates as I draw conclusions

for the protest episodes in both Egypt and Jordan, as well as offer critical points of difference that contributed to their differing results.

Challenges and Limitations

As alluded to above, there were a number of challenges I confronted in undertaking the research for this dissertation. Some of these were known ahead of time, while others arose throughout the research process and forced changes to my original research design. The nature of my research question, data, and analyses also meant there were inherent limitations to my dissertation. In this section, I detail those challenges and limitations and what measures I took to mitigate them, when possible.

In a research project, such as this dissertation, with limited scope—to investigate the spatial dynamics of mechanisms of complex processes of protest mobilization and scale shift—it is impossible to fully account for and incorporate all of the potential factors that play a role in the political trajectories in Egypt and Jordan. Things like international pressure and intervention, state capacity, uneven governance, and other factors are likely to have contributed in some way to the eventual outcomes being studied in each country in various ways, and my dissertation does not mean to imply the contrary. Rather, my focus is on the particularities of some of the key mechanisms and processes that account for the size and scale of protests, and, where related to this central focus, other factors are considered.

With spatiality as a critical aspect of my dissertation and the hypotheses being investigated, it is important to be candid about the deficiencies and weaknesses of my study, especially with regard to its spatial components. While my database contains some

spatial data on protests, there are some important aspects of spatiality relevant to the causal mechanisms I propose are at work that were not able to be collected. My hypotheses are based on the premise that the *space* of protests can lower the cost of collective action and the *place* of protests can add meaning to collective action. Though a sample of protest events in each country's protest episode was captured in my dataset, limited information was available on the specific locations and trajectories of many individual protest events. For some of the larger and more prominent protest events that took place, detailed accounts of where marches and demonstrations began and ended were available via news media sources, included in my database, and analyzed as part of my case studies. However, having detailed data on the *space* and *place* of only a limited number of protest events decreases the confidence with which I am able to draw conclusions on the validity and effects of these spatial causal mechanisms on the size and scale of protest episodes. In addition, the quality of the data from news media sources is imperfect and, without information on the historical and social significance of protest sites, offers an incomplete picture of the *space* and *place* of protests.

Future studies that attempt to tackle the same or similar questions of spatiality and contentious politics could improve upon my approach to investigating such questions in a few ways. One such approach could take the form of a narrower focus, for example investigating a smaller number of protest events for which there is a plethora of spatial data available for; this would be best accomplished with the addition of interviews with organizers and participants of those particular protests. Alternatively, a similar research project could focused on a small number of protest sites and compare the influence of

space and *place* of particular locations across multiple protest events or episodes. For any such research addressing questions of the *place* of protests, more historical, sociological, and/or anthropological research on the locations of protests would offer critical insights to accompany data on the protest events or episodes themselves.

As described in my research design, this dissertation took a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative techniques to analyze the data I collected on protest episodes in Egypt and Jordan. Regarding my implementation of Protest Event Analysis, it was a demanding and time-consuming process, which limited both the number of case studies I could include in this dissertation and the number of protest events I was able to cover in my database. Despite only having two case studies, there was sufficient variation across the two cases to allow for interesting and robust analyses; there is also the opportunity to conduct similar research on additional cases in the future. Other protest event databases exist but did not contain the specific information I required to answer my research question, so the decision to create my own database was imperative.

The number of protest events included in my database is not comprehensive, but I was able to compare my sample of protest events with the more comprehensive ICEWS dataset to show that my sample is in fact representative of the totality of protest events that occurred in the countries and time periods I studied. I was able to do this because both ICEWS and my database used the CAMEO coding system. Using a single-factor ANOVA test, I compared the distribution of codes in the protest event coding category (i.e., the proportion of demonstrations, sit-ins, strikes, etc.) between my database and the

ICEWS database. As shown in Table 1 and Table 2 below, the test found that there was no statistically significant difference between the protest event data for Egypt and Jordan (i.e., F less than F crit).

Table 1: ANOVA test for Egypt protest event data

SUMMARY						
Groups	*Count*	*Sum*	*Average*	*Variance*		
COLBURN	13	1	0.076923	0.033162		
ICEWS	13	1	0.076923	0.034902		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	1.11E-16	1	1.11E-16	3.26E-15	1	4.259677
Within Groups	0.816772	24	0.034032			
Total	0.816772	25				

Table 2: ANOVA test for Jordan protest event data

SUMMARY						
Groups	*Count*	*Sum*	*Average*	*Variance*		
Column 1	17	1	0.058824	0.006297		
Column 2	17	1.10929	0.065252	0.045903		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	0.000351	1	0.000351	0.01346	0.908365	4.149097
Within Groups	0.835211	32	0.0261			
Total	0.835562	33				

There are other limitations to creating my own database using news media sources, including the amount of missing and contradictory data for some protest events.

News sources have limited information for some of the categories of data that I collected; for example, some news articles only included information on the type and location of a protest event, while others had much more comprehensive data. In addition, there was a dearth of information available on concessions, and any link I was able to draw between protests and concessions was tenuous. The accuracy of data in news sources, for example on the total number of protesters at a given event, may differ from source to source. Even where there are significant amounts of data available for an individual protest event, reporting on protests in newspapers is potentially biased in a number of ways. Smaller protests and those outside of metropolitan areas are less likely to get covered by the media. In addition, certain media outlets may be owned by, aligned with, or intimidated by the government and thus ignore reports of protests or produce coverage that is biased in favor of the government and its position or message. Using international sources in addition to national ones, as well as supplementing my data with secondary sources, were two steps I took to mitigate these weaknesses.

I took a number of steps in my research design to account for these deficiencies. The representativeness of my sample compared to ICEWS, which collects data from many more sources than I was able to consult, lends greater credibility to my data. But even with creating my own database with customized categories of data built for my research, I was not able to collect information on every category of data for every protest event. Certain mechanisms, like brokerage for example, are not conducive to coding and analysis at the level of individual protest events. This is one reason why I chose to supplement my use of PEA with data collection from additional non-media resources.

This additional qualitative research was used to support the news media data on individual protest events with a broader picture of how certain mechanisms functioned and also provided additional checks on the limits and biases of news media data.

One particular challenge I faced in my qualitative data collection process was my inability to conduct primary research in the field. In particular, the spatial analysis in this dissertation could have been enhanced with visits to protest sites and interviews with participants, for example. However, knowing this limitation up front, I was able to create a research design that was able to adequately address my research question. Many of the secondary sources I used included thorough original research on protest events and interviews with protest participants of some of the major protest events in Egypt and Jordan.

CHAPTER 4: EGYPT

Thousands of people gathered in Tahrir Square to protest against the unjust political and economic situation in Egypt and to call for the president to step down from power. The Muslim Brotherhood has been banned, demonstrations have been banned, and more than 4,000 protesters have been arrested as security policies and forces have become increasingly restrictive and repressive. The government is using innovative tactics of digital repression to surveil mobile phone and social media activity of suspected anti-government activists. The government has also recently lowered the price of gasoline, an apparent attempt to offer a concession in light of the recent protests.

The above description is not of events from Egypt in 2011, but rather from 2019. More than nine years since the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011 after 18 days of mass protests across Egypt, seemingly little has changed. In many ways, the events of early 2011 were just the beginning of what has been a years-long saga of contention. Is Egypt heading toward another episode of mass mobilization and regime change? If (or when) another protest movement escalates in Egypt, will it grow to the same size and scale as in 2011? What can we learn from the 2011 protest episode to inform ongoing contention in Egypt, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and other countries?

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of how protests increased in size and scale in Egypt in this chapter, I will first offer a big-picture overview of events leading up to and including the mass mobilization in January and February 2011, accompanied by closer look at data on individual protests collected from news media sources. After offering a brief explanation and exploration of various elements of the spatiality of contentious politics in Egypt, the remaining sections provide detailed narratives of the key features involved in mechanisms and processes of mobilization and scale shift, including repression and concessions, networks, diffusion, and scale shift, while assessing my hypothesized relationships between spatiality and those mechanisms and processes of contentious politics. The conclusion provides a summary of the main findings.

Overview: the 2011 Uprising

It is instructive to understand the landscape of contentious politics in the years leading up to the protest episode being studied. In the decade before the 2011 uprising in Egypt, workers protests and strikes constituted a significant source of protest activity in the country. Many Egyptians suffered economically as a result of uneven development from neoliberal economic reforms. A wave of protests beginning in 2004 led many worker strike committees develop into organized labor unions in both private and public industries, from textile workers to teachers. The duration of strikes began expanding as unions were able to extract concessions through negotiation, as was the case in the 2006 Misr Spinning strike in Al-Mahalla Al-Kubra. The less frequent use of violent repression from security forces in response to demonstrations and strikes when compared to the

1980s and 1990s also contributed to the uptick in protest events in this period. (Alexander and Bassiouny 2014, 97-124).

A new coalition of ideologically diverse activists—including Islamists, Nasserists, and left-wing activists—who came to be called Kefaya was formed in 2004 and directly criticized President Mubarak, a rare provocation in that period. Kefaya formed in opposition to Mubarak grooming his son to succeed him as president as well as general political corruption, essentially pushing for top-down change. Kefaya struggled to attract large numbers of supporters to their protests, especially given the threat of violent repression in light of their bold criticisms of the regime. Though Kefaya was not a successful movement in terms of achieving their desired reforms, the group recruited and professionalized a new generation of activists (Wackenhut 2020, 5).

Another group known as the April 6 Movement was a youth group that was formed out of Kefaya with the hope of expanding worker protests into broader movement focused on bottom-up democratic reforms. April 6 attempted to turn a local 2008 strike in Mahalla into a nationwide strike, using tools like Facebook and blogs to promote it. Their connections to labor movements, modern and sophisticated tactics, and non-partisan populist message made it a serious threat to the Mubarak regime (Hafez 2013, 108-111). These movements continued to expand their support across the country and organize more demonstrations in direct opposition to Mubarak and police violence. The April 6 Youth Movement was one of the first to call for protests and strikes on Police Day, January 25, each year.

There are many other movements and organizations that have been active in protests and opposition politics—including the Muslim Brotherhood, the Revolutionary Socialists, the Baradei campaign, Youth for Change, and Tagammu—but those mentioned above, and discussed in greatly detail below, are some of the most significant players that took part in organizing and participating in demonstrations in 2011. Beginning in early January, a group Egyptians representing youth movements, labor movements, and the Muslim Brotherhood began planning a non-violent protest for January 25, a national holiday celebrating the police. They had been inspired by the protest movement in Tunisia that led to the ousting of longtime ruler Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. They planned 20 protests in Cairo that were announced on social media and disseminated by organizers on the ground, most of which were set to start outside of mosques in working-class neighborhoods. Security forces from the Interior Ministry had a long history of suppressing demonstrations and, especially given the recent events in Tunisia and public announcements of these protest sites, were prepared to encounter protesters throughout the city. Organizers hoped to use their knowledge of the spatial disbursement of police to their advantage. The hope was that by organizing 20 concurrent protests around the city, the security forces would be overextended and at least some of the groups would be able to reach the target destination of Tahrir Square.

As protesters moved throughout the labyrinthine streets of Cairo chanting for an end to poverty, police abuse, and government corruption, tens of thousands of Egyptians joined demonstrations across the city to Tahrir Square. Similar situations transpired in other cities including Alexandria, Suez, Mansoura, and others, on what was known as the

Day of Anger. Police and protest organizers alike were surprised by the number of people that participated on the first day of protests. Protesters in Cairo reached Tahrir Square but were cleared out by police that evening. Protests, and clashes with riot police, continued over the next two days. The a variety of types of repression were employed—from beatings and tear gas to banning demonstrations and disabling mobile and Internet services.

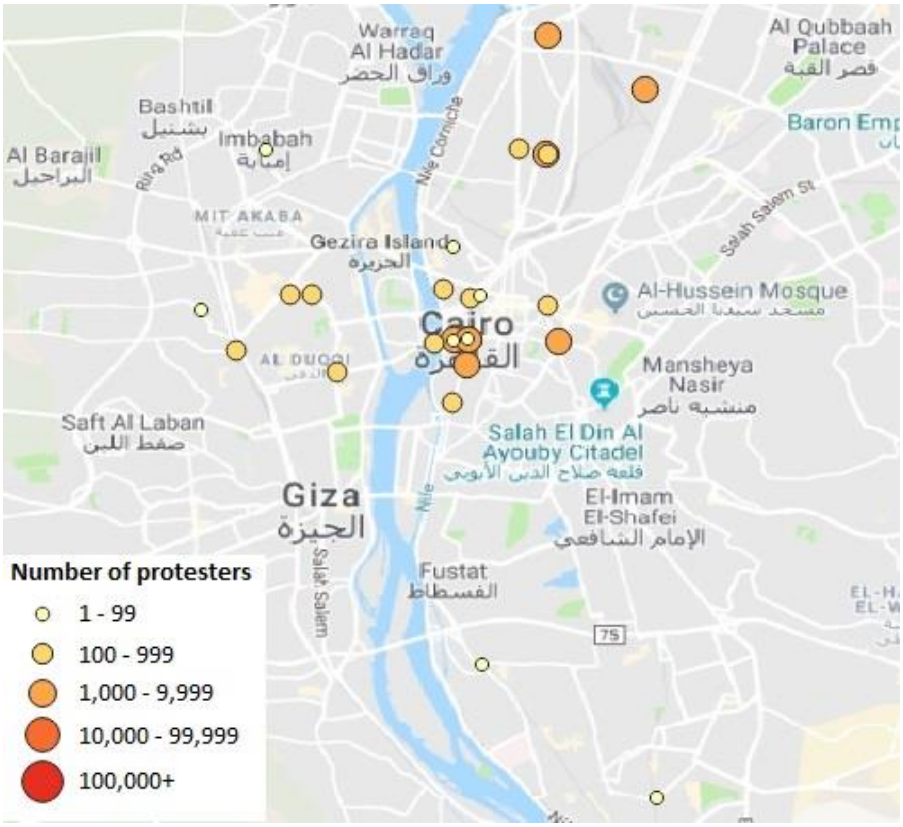

Figure 14: Protest events, Cairo, January 25[31]

[31] To provide a layer of spatial context to the protest episode as a whole, these maps were created using data from my database that show the size and location of individual protest events on key dates. For protest events with conflicting counts for the number of protesters, I used the more conservative estimates.

Even larger demonstrations calling for Mubarak to step down from power were organized for Friday, January 28, known as the Day of Rage, across the country. After Friday prayers, hundreds of thousands of people spilled onto the streets. Violent clashes between protesters and police led to hundreds of injuries, and though the military was deployed, it did not interfere. It wasn't until after this fourth day of protest that President Mubarak made his first televised address to speak directly to those that had mobilized against him. In that address, the first step toward offering a concession was taken as Mubarak promised to promote democracy and asked his Cabinet to resign. By this time, the protesters' demand that Mubarak himself resign was widespread across the country, and this initial concession did not appease the masses or significantly reduce mobilization.

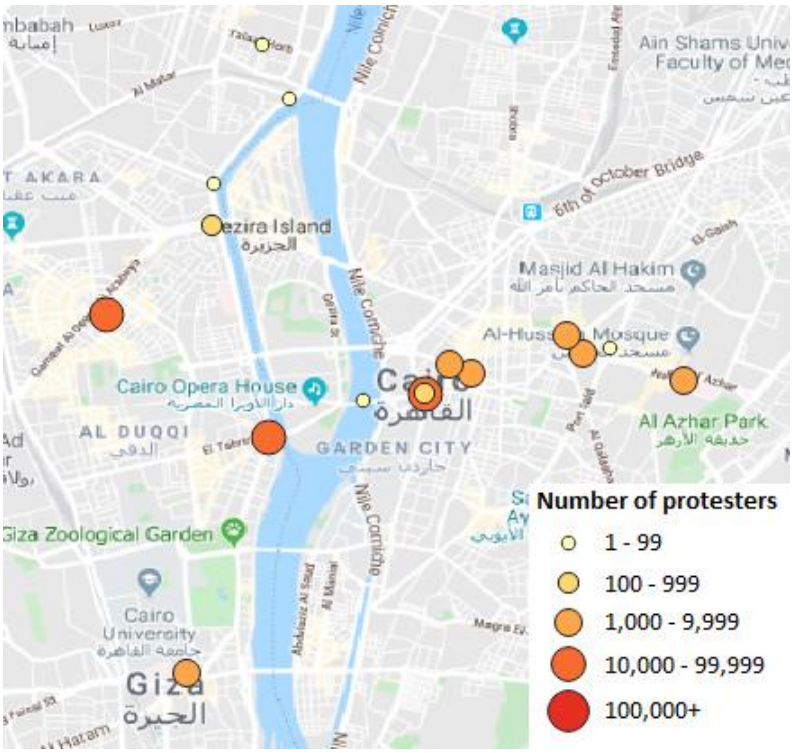

Figure 15: Protest events, Cairo, January 28

The following day, on January 29, Mubarak appointed a new Prime Minister, Ahmed Shafiq, as well as a Vice President, Omar Suleiman, which was the first time in nearly 30 years that that position had been filled. Both men were Mubarak allies, having previously served in his government, and were not seen as steps toward fundamental change. After days of violence and attempting to repress the ongoing demonstrations, police withdrew from the streets. In Cairo, thousands of protesters were then able to successfully maintain an occupation of Tahrir Square. Protests continue to grow across the country, and Mubarak appointed a new government composed largely of regime loyalists on January 31. Though police were no longer a visible threat to protesters, groups of Mubarak supporters (believed to include pro-government hired thugs, known as

baltagiya, and nonuniformed police) regularly came into conflict with anti-government protesters. On February 1, between 250,000 and two million people protested in Cairo; that same day, in another televised address, Mubarak refused to accede to demands that he step down from power, but said that he would not run in the next presidential election.

The following two days were among the most violent of the uprising. Clashes between anti-government protesters and pro-regime counter-protesters escalated to such a level that the military had to intervene and the new Prime Minister apologized for the Mubarak supporters. Conflicts ranged from throwing rocks and bottles to clashes with sticks and knives to live gunfire. In another apparent sign of concession, several prominent members of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) and government ministers were accused of corruption and removed from their posts; some were even barred from leaving the country and had their bank accounts frozen. On February 3, Vice President Suleiman met with opposition political parties, including the Muslim Brotherhood, and representatives from the protest organizers to hear their demands and attempt to negotiate a settlement. This was the first time the government engaged in an official dialogue with the Muslim Brotherhood, which has historically been banned. The groups agreed to form a constitutional reform committee to address protester demands and concerns, while protests continued in Tahrir Square and across the country.

Despite February 4 being dubbed the Day of Departure, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators were left disappointed when their ongoing calls for Mubarak's removal were left unanswered. The government announced a 15% salary and pension increase to government employees, a critical base of support for the regime. Banks were reopened in

an attempt to return cities to some normalcy, though schools and the stock market remained closed. Protests continued to grow as labor unions joined demonstrations and significantly increased strikes across a variety of sectors. It was rumored that Mubarak was going to step down from power in another televised address on February 10, but instead he once again vowed to remain until the next election. Less than 24 hours later, the Vice President announced that President Hosni Mubarak was stepping down as president and immediately handing over power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

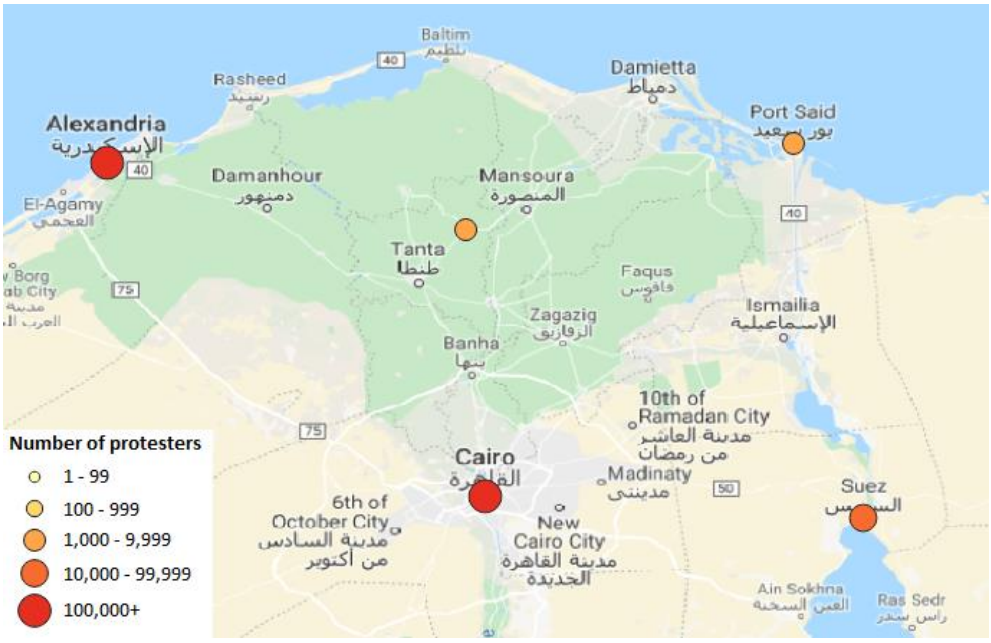

Figure 16: Protest events, Northern Egypt, February 11

This chronological review of the events leading up to and including the 2011 uprising that resulted in the ouster of President Mubarak provides an important overview

perspective of how protests grew and spread across Egypt. An alternative and additionally instructive perspective with which to understand these events is to look at summary data on the types of protests and reasons for protests that was collected in my database from news media sources.[32] Figure 17 shows the breakdown of the types of protest events included in my database.

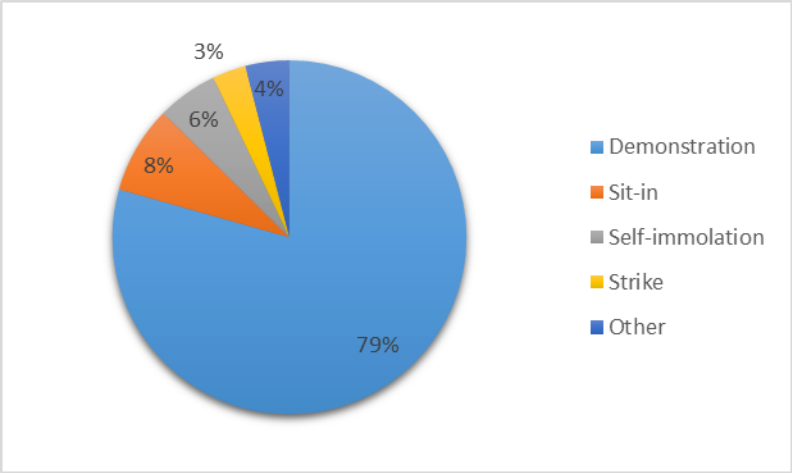

Figure 17: Type of protest event, Egypt, January 1 – February 11

The data on the types of protest event that occurred show that demonstrations (which include anything described generally as a protest, demonstration, march, or rally)

[32] This dataset includes approximately 250 accounts of protest events and reports of repression and concessions in Egypt. Of course, the actual number of protest events that occurred throughout Egypt in the time period under consideration (January 1, 2011 through February 11, 2011) far exceeds that number, but due to a number of resource constraints, this data set includes a limited, but representative, sample of protest events. Because this dataset does not contain a comprehensive accounting of protest events and their associated data (crowd size, number of arrests, etc.), the visualizations use percentages rather than actual figures. This will allow me to provide an overall and representative picture without misrepresenting the scale of what transpired. An additional complication with using the raw data is that certain categories of the data may be counted multiple times. For example, a single protest event could be coded as demanding both the removal of Mubarak from office as well as increased rights, or coded for multiple types of repression used against protesters.

accounted for nearly 80% of documented protest events. Protest events that were described as having multiple demands or reasons for protesting were counted in multiple categories.[33] These demonstrations occurred in a huge variety of locations, from the biggest cities, like Cairo and Alexandria, to smaller cities, like Port Said, Suez, Assiut, Mahalla, and Mansoura, to smaller towns, like Edfu, El Arish, and Samalout. More specifically, protest events occurred at locations including outside of government buildings (e.g., Parliament, the Interior Ministry, municipal government offices, the presidential palace, and courts), the state TV station (i.e., the Maspero building), police stations, mosques and churches, big and small city squares, side streets and main streets, outside of workplaces (e.g., lawyers syndicate, journalists syndicate); many of these locations have been protest sites in the past and may have particular meaning or significance associated with them; for example protests against police brutality may take place near the Interior Ministry, while a worker strike among journalists may take place in front of their office building.

Sit-ins and strikes, historically more common forms of protest in Egypt, particularly among labor unions, accounted for 11% of protest events. Participants in these types of protest events were mostly public sector workers or factory workers, some calling for salary increases but many participating in solidarity with protesters against the regime. The church bombing that occurred in Alexandria on January 1 also inspired sit-ins in solidarity with those injured and killed in the attack. Self-immolations, where individuals set themselves on fire as an act of protest, accounted for 6% of protest

[33] For the vast majority of protest events, only one demand or reason was provided, a handful of events included two demands or reasons, and only two protest events identified three demands or reasons.

events.[34] The individuals who involved in these acts included unemployed men, factory worker, and lawyers. Stated reasons for the self-immolations were predominantly protesting poor living and economic conditions. A number of them took place in front of parliament or other government buildings. The remaining 4% of "other" types of protest events include petitions, making appeals and calling for specific government action, holding vigils or funerals, and in one case, acts of civil disobedience by public figures and former Members of Parliament.

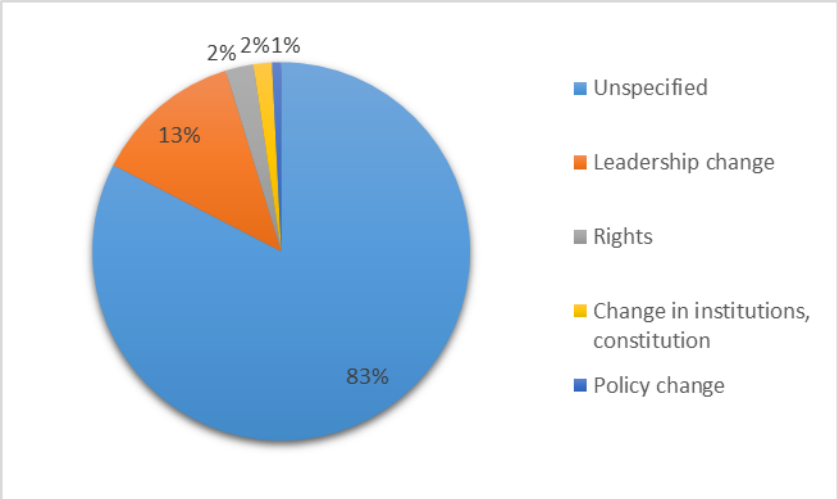

Figure 18: Reason for protest event, Egypt, January 1 – February 11

Figure 18 shows the reasons and demands specified across all types of protest events. Most accounts (83%) of protest events in the news articles consulted did not include information about the reason for the protest event or the demands made by the

[34] Unlike other similar databases of protest events, I accounted for self-immolations as a separate type of protest event, which, in combination with my smaller sample size, could account for its (relatively) high prevalence as a protest tactic. Such dramatic events are also more likely to be covered in the news media.

protesters. During the first few weeks of 2011, most of the protest events included in the database were in response to the Alexandria church bombing or marches in solidarity with Tunisian protesters who were in the midst of their own uprising. Beginning on January 25, where documented, the focus of protesters' demands shifted to poor economic conditions, police brutality, and political reform. As the protests continued, more and more of the demands shifted to a change in leadership (13%). Most of the calls for leadership change were focused on President Hosni Mubarak, though some demands including the impeachment or stepping down of Interior Minister Habib El-Adly.

Most of the demands for greater rights (2%) related to Coptic Christians in light of the Alexandria church bombing. Protest events whose demands included significant changes to Egypt's political system accounted for 2% of the total. Such significant changes included overhauling the constitution and demanding a secular state. The 1% of protest events that demanded policy changes referenced either general economic reforms or laws affecting Christians (e.g., a sit-in in Shubra, a Christian neighborhood in Cairo, called for the ratification of a law related to constructing places of worship).

Having reviewed the events of the Egyptian protest episode in January-February 2011 from a narrative perspective and reviewing data on the types of and reasons for protests, it is important to revisit Figure 3 and Figure 5 from Chapter 3 that specify the outcomes of the dependent variables—the size and scale of protests. After a period of low-level protest activity in the first three weeks of 2011, there was a surge of protest participants and locations beginning on January 25; the data shows that the size of protests fluctuated daily but overall there were massive and increasing numbers of people

participating in protests; the scale of protests, meaning the number of protest sites documented across the country, peaked during the week of the January 25 protests, but remained relatively high until the end of the protest episode. This chapter attempts to explain this outcome by probing the mechanisms underlying the processes of mobilization and scale shift and the influence of *space* and *place*.

Spatiality of Protests in Egypt

Before addressing in depth each of the individual mechanisms related to the processes of mobilization and scale shift, as well as the implications of spatiality on the process outcomes, it is important to engage with the spatiality of protests in a more general sense. To demonstrate the centrality of spatiality to analyses of protest events, I will review the progression of an individual protest event with a spatial lens before engaging in a broader discussion on the *space* and *place* of protests across Egypt, from Cairo and Alexandria to Sinai and Upper Egypt. This will provide both a more detailed understanding of and justification for studying spatiality and its role in protest events, and act as a base from which investigations into my hypotheses can draw.

After a surprising show of support for the protests that took place on January 25 around Egypt, followed by two days of sporadic protests, marches were planned for a "Day of Anger" on January 28. Given the past three days of protest, it was clear to the regime that the goal of protesters was to reoccupy Tahrir Square. In preparation, security forces were strategically deployed to the major streets leading to Tahrir. "Thus the battles that took place on the Friday were predominantly battles on the bridges leading into Tahrir and its environs from the west, and in the boulevards feeding into the Square from

the south and the east. The northern part of the Square, by contrast, was more difficult to control as, there, numerous major traffic arteries converged, with no clearly bounded, and thus readily defensible, space" (Gunning and Baron 2014, 249).

Figure 19: Qasr al-Nile Bridge, Cairo, January 28, 2011
Source: https://www.thecurrent.org/feature/2011/01/28/egypt-cairo-protests-violence

All around Cairo, protests began immediately after Friday prayers as Egyptians spilled out from mosques onto the streets. Just east from Tahrir Square in central Cairo, a few hundred protesters grew into a group of 5,000 to 10,000 people spread between Falaki, Mohamed Farid and Talaat Harb streets. Using the dense urban streets to their advantage, as police fired tear gas and chased them, they are quickly able to wind through alleys and side streets and rejoin the protest group. As the group got closer and closer to

Tahrir, the police responded with greater urgency, escalating their tactics from firing tear gas from a distance to charging at protesters to driving security trucks through the crowds of people.

Just west of Tahrir Square was the Qasr al-Nile Bridge where security forces were equipped in riot gear and with several armored vehicles. Their goal was to stop the few thousands individuals who had made their way from Mustafa Mahmoud Mosque and other locations on the west side of the Nile river down to Al Galaa Square from crossing the bridge just 500 meters away from Tahrir. Police attempted to keep demonstrators from advancing by holding their line and keeping regular volleys of tear gas, as well as occasional water cannons, coming from behind. Eventually a swell of protesters pushed back and made some progress advancing across the bridge. This scene carried on for hours as protesters and police clashed on the narrow bottleneck leading into the heart of central Cairo.

Figure 20: Tahrir Square and the surrounding area, satellite view
Source: Google Maps

Tahrir Square was the focal point of protests in Cairo on January 28, as well as for much of the protest episode into February, and it has become emblematic of the protest movements that swept the Middle East and North Africa in 2011. The centrality of that space in the popular culture understanding of the uprisings in the region, and the adoption of the tactic of occupying a city's central square or similarly significant landmark in subsequent popular mobilizations that emerged across the world, is an indication of the influence that geography has on protest events and episodes. It may seem obvious to state that mobilization and protests are influenced by the spaces in which they take place, but acknowledgement of the impact of space on the process of mobilization is often left unstated or relegated to a background factor in most discussions in the literature on contentious politics. Tahrir Square now stands as a recent example of a protest site whose

spatial significance is widely acknowledged, and is an ideal case to begin to demonstrate how spatial dimensions, physical and otherwise, can influence protest mobilization.

When talking about *space* in the context of the spatiality, I am specifically referring to the actual physical aspects of a geographic area. In the heart of downtown Cairo, the large traffic circle in Tahrir Square is actually surrounded by about 11.5 acres of public space (Said 2014, 5). There are multiple roads, both large and small, leading into and out of the square, one of which leads directly to the Qasr al-Nile Bridge, one of the main connections to western Cairo and Giza.

Surrounding Tahrir Square are mosques and churches, the famous Cairo Museum, the (former) headquarters of the National Democratic Party, the Arab League headquarters, the original American University in Cairo campus, the Ritz Carlton Hotel, and countless restaurants and retail shops. It is not insignificant that the headquarters of the National Democratic Party, a symbol of the ruling party of Hosni Mubarak at the time, was a target of protests and was set ablaze during the 2011 protests. Directly facing Tahrir Square is the Mogamma building, an imposing symbol of Egyptian bureaucracy which "no Egyptian or visitor can escape…Birth certificates, passports, drivers' licenses, residency visas, and many other official papers can be obtained only there" (Rabbat 2011). Not far from Tahrir Square are other significant and symbolic government buildings, including the Interior Ministry, Parliament, and Maspero, the state television headquarters. As the city of Cairo has evolved and been built up (and out), Tahrir Square has remained not just physically central to the city but also socially and culturally.

When thinking about the *place* of Tahrir Square—that is, the socially imbued aspects of its geography—its long historical significance must also be considered. The modern history of the space itself dates back to the 1860s when Ismail Pasha, the Khedive (i.e., Viceroy) of Egypt and Sudan, worked to modernize Cairo as a "Paris on the Nile." Pasha was inspired by Paris' Place Charles de Gaulle Square, the meeting point of 12 avenues and the location of the famous Arc de Triomphe. During its time under British rule and throughout the 20th century, Tahrir Square had a long history as a site of demonstrations. The name Tahrir Square ("Liberation Square" in Arabic) was first used informally after a mass demonstration in 1919, and was officially renamed as such after Egypt's 1952 revolution (Said 2014). Since then, it has continued to be a space for large protests and marches, from student protests in 1967 to bread riots in 1977 to anti-Iraq War demonstrations in 2003 (Taher 2012).

In addition to this long history as a site of meaning and protests, Tahrir Square is also a source of strategies and tactics (Said 2014, 7). With many roads to enter and exit from, people could stream in from multiple directions and converge from different parts of the city. It is also centrally located and a major transportation thoroughfare, so any disruptions to normal traffic flows would have a noticeable impact. But more than just the strategic use of the *space* of Tahrir, the *place* of Tahrir as a site of occupation during the 2011 uprising came to be "genuinely revolutionary..., a model of a new Egypt, with not only its own infrastructure, security apparatus, borders and healthcare stations but, significantly, also its own form of participatory, devolved self-government" (Gunning and Baron 2014, 242). Tahrir Square had become "a microcosm of the alternative order

the revolutionaries seemed to desire—democratic governance, nonhierarchical organization, collective decision making, self-help, cooperation, and altruism" (Bayat 2017, 115).

This section's discussion of *space* and *place* in the Egyptian uprising has thus far focused mainly on Cairo, but looking at examples of other protest locations and dynamics can help highlight some complementary, or contrary, points. For example, to contrast Cairo's geographic division by the Nile River and the tactical repercussions noted above, Alexandria is a sprawling city along Egypt's northern coast, without comparable bottleneck areas produced by numerous bridges. Alexandria also lacks a large central square that was close enough to multiple protest locations, making Tahrir Square-style sit-ins less effective and more difficult to maintain. What was more common in Alexandria protests was for demonstrators to march through the narrow, winding alleyways around the main streets, with no particular planned end point (El Chazli 2016). During the 2011 protest episode in Alexandria, however, demonstrators ventured onto the main streets, breaking the heretofore unstated but mutual understanding between protest organizers and police. The spatial configuration of the city combined with unexpected numbers of people joining protests and new tactics meant that police were overwhelmed and unable to suppress protests in the opening days of the uprising. When confronted by riot police, demonstrators were able to quickly surround and overwhelm them on multiple fronts, resulting in clashes that were fierce yet short (Gunning and Baron 2014, 249-250).

Figure 21: Downtown Alexandria, satellite view
Source: Google Maps

When compared to the spatial trajectory of events in Tunisia, where protests began in Sidi Bouzid, a small city in the interior, and then spread around the country, locations all across Egypt planned and participated in demonstrations on January 25. Despite so much of the media and academic discussions focusing on Cairo and Tahrir Square, the cities and towns and villages were indispensable in the lead-up to 2011 and the ability of protests to increase in size and scale. Years of protests and strikes in peripheral cities like Suez and Mahalla, severe repression in North Sinai, and marginalization of Upper Egyptian towns all contributed to the environment in which nationwide mass demonstrations erupted. The spatial dynamics of government policies and public reactions at different scales is notable in these situations as well: national

government policies scaled down to the local level impacting daily life, from food prices to job availability; the ability of unions to organize their resources and members to go on strike, and of the regime to exercise control within local territories through police and local officials to combat such collective action; and the sharing of repertoires of contention—strategies and tactics, like occupying a city square and how to choose protest locations—from Cairo across the country.

Repertoires of contention in Egyptian protests, including grievances, demands, and strategies, were shared across diverse geographic areas in the regions, cities, and towns further afield from Cairo and Alexandria. As found in the analysis of my protest event database earlier in this chapter, economic and political reforms were almost universally demanded by protesters throughout the 2011 uprising. These aspirations and grievances were shared among the protesters in Tahrir Square and disaffected citizens across Egypt despite their geographic distance. For people living outside of Cairo (the vast majority of Egyptians), it was clear that many of their economic hardships and political grievances, from lack of political rights to harsh police repression, were a result of policies imposed by the central government; local councils were also viewed as being aligned with the national party and ruled from Cairo. Economic policies enacted during the Mubarak era, particularly those related to structural adjustment programs, contributed to increasing instability in daily life across the country. The removal of subsidies on wheat and oil made these crucial commodities more expensive; at the same time, funding for health care and education declined, and a shrinking public sector meant fewer job opportunities (Abu-Lughod 2012, 22).

Lila Abu-Lughod (2012) offers important insights on the perspective from a small village in Upper Egypt during the 2011 uprising. When local youth saw what was happening in Tahrir Square, they were inspired by the protesters and sympathized with their demands. In the days following January 25 with the widespread breakdown of prisons and police stations, the village youth felt a sense of urgency and took it upon themselves to protect their village by guarding the entrances and exits. With one of the most direct forms of government presence and oppression in their village removed, they formed local popular committees, and a Facebook group, to discuss how to address the village's issues and needs, like the distribution of bread and garbage collection. Abu-Lughod's example demonstrates that "because the nation-state is experienced everywhere that local councils, security police, and government economic policy are at work, the young people's activism must be considered national. Their efforts were directed at those forces of the nation-state that operated locally" (Abu-Lughod 2012, 24). At the same time that protests and policies at the center (Cairo) inspired collective action in the periphery (the village), that action was uniquely localized. "What happened in [t]his village shows that each local "Tahrir Square" was unique. Affected by the same national policies and state institutions, each region and location experienced them through the specific problems they created for people locally" (Abu-Lughod 2012, 25).

Having reviewed the events that took place in the Egyptian protest episode and some general information about the spatiality of protests in Egypt, I can begin probing my hypotheses and piecing together the actions and interactions among various actors

and situations involved in the key mechanisms underlying the increased size and scale of protests.

How Do *Spaces* of Repression and Concessions Impact Mobilization?

Unpacking the use and impact of repression and concessions in the Egyptian protest episode serves two purposes: to offer concrete examples showing how repression was a factor in increasing mobilization in Egypt, and to investigate the relationship between protest *spaces* and repression and concessions. More specifically, in exploring the Egyptian protest episode, I will look for evidence proving or disproving two of my hypotheses: 1) Protest *spaces* that hinder repression will decrease the cost of collective action and facilitate greater mobilization. 2) Protest spaces that are conceded to demonstrators reduce the cost of collective action and thus facilitate greater mobilization. This research will also be situated in the existing literature on the dissent-repression topic, which is, at best, inconclusive: there is evidence that repression can either increase or decrease mobilization, as well as evidence that mobilization can either increase or decrease repression.

As useful context to frame my summary and analysis of data on protests and repression collected from news media sources, I turn to the important findings from Neil Ketchley's (2017) research investigating violence between police and protesters in Egypt during the 2011 uprising and beyond. Ketchley's research has proven enlightening with regard to the extent to which "protesters' ability to sustain and intensify street-level mobilization during the critical early phase of the 25th January Revolution was inextricably entwined with anti-regime violence" (Ketchley 2017, 19). Protester attacks

on police stations, which occurred mainly in retaliation for the deaths of protesters at the hands of police, were found to have pulled officers away from the protest sites and thus hindered their capacity to regroup; this allowed protests to spread and grow (Ketchley 2017, 21). These diversionary tactics, combined with the Egyptian government's underestimation of the level of opposition they faced in Cairo, contributed to the ability of protesters to push through police lines and eventually successfully occupy Tahrir Square, an important achievement for reasons discussed above.

Though there were some tactical advantages for protesters' occupation of Tahrir Square, like its central location, wide open space, and many entrances from which protesters could join, some of those same spatial characteristics also had disadvantages for the protesters in terms of repression and mobilization. The wide avenues leading to the square are, by design, easily policed, and such an open, sprawling space can make a crowd of even a few thousand people look small (Schwedler and King 2012). The nearby Qasr al-Nile bridge, and other bridges throughout the city, played a significant role in the dynamics of the many clashes between police and protesters. The bridges act as a natural chokepoint, blocking protester advancement and enhancing the effectiveness of police attacks. This negated the overwhelming numerical advantage the protesters had to surround and overwhelm police, and led to more protracted interactions (Gunning and Baron 2014, 249-250).

To get a better sense of the sequencing of protests and repression in this particular case, it would be instructive to offer a brief narrative of the first few days of protests and repression in January 2011. Ketchley (2017) documents how protests grew in the early

days of the uprising in the context of government repression and protester violence. The detail provided here offers a more complete picture of the dynamics of violence and repression during the Egyptian uprising.

The April 6 movement, who participated in organizing the protests on January 25, had years of experience dealing with Egyptian security forces, and so the strategy they enacted accounted for how police would deploy and confront protest marches. In an attempt to evade and outsmart the police, organizers announced false starting locations, times, and endpoints for the protests across Cairo. Two hours before the scheduled start times, protesters gathered far away from the most heavily secured areas. The police soon realized what had happened, but by that point, "a game of cat and mouse was [being] played through Cairo's backstreets and popular quarters. The police struggled to detect and intercept columns of anti-regime protesters converging on Midan al-Tahrir from several different directions while the protesters sought to evade their pursuers," many breaking through multiple police cordons to get there (Ketchley 2017, 24-25).

After the first day of protests, the regime gained a clearer understanding of the scale of anger and willingness of people to come out in the streets, they quickly altered their approach. A few dozen protests and marches were held on January 26 and 27, but riot police harshly cracked down, leading to a temporary demobilization. Suez was the exception to this trend. Police had used live ammunition against protesters on January 25, leaving multiple people dead. Thousands of protesters in Suez continued to demonstrate, acting as an inspiration for protests around the country, against a backdrop of "escalating anti-police violence and the use of harsh repression (Ketchley 2017, 27).

Within the first 24 hours of protests, up to 1,000 protesters, activists, and political figures were arrested across the country. Police in Cairo retook Tahrir Square in the early morning of January 26, but protesters continued with calls for more demonstrations, a "Friday of Anger" on January 28. Unlike the January 25 protests, the Muslim Brotherhood and other political opposition movements agreed to participate. The night before the "Friday of Anger," Mubarak ordered that all Internet and mobile networks were to be shut down. This attempt by the government to repress communications capabilities may have actually led to increased mobilization as people took to the streets to find out what was happening. In spite of, and in part because of, Mubarak's attempts to stifle coordination and mobilization efforts, tens of thousands of Egyptians filled the streets after Friday prayers across the country, and were met by a well-prepared security force who did not hesitate to use crowd control tactics like tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets. What the police were not prepared for, however, was the extent to which protesters would retaliate against police stations (Ketchley 2017, 28).

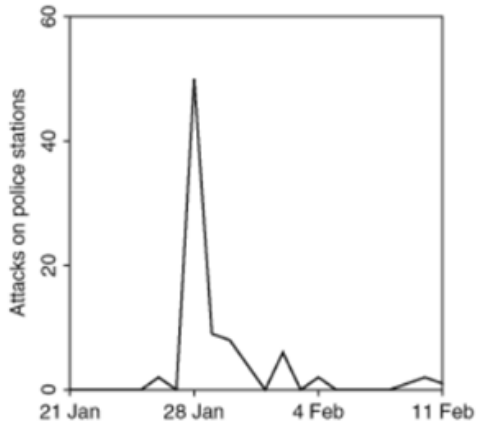

Figure 22: Attacks on police stations, January 21 – February 11
Source: Ketchley 2017, 30

According to different accounts, between 25% and 50% of Egypt's 342 district police stations were attacked over the course of the uprising, with the vast majority of attacks taking place on January 28 (Ketchley 2017, 29). The attacks typically included a few hundred protesters armed with Molotov cocktails setting the police station on fire and looting it. January 28 saw over 50% of police stations in Cairo and Giza, over 60% in Alexandria, attacked. (Ketchley 2017, 29-30). Unsurprisingly, this increase in the level of violence coincided with an increase in the number of both protester and police deaths. In fact, the vast majority of protester and police deaths occurred on January 28, as seen in Figure 23.

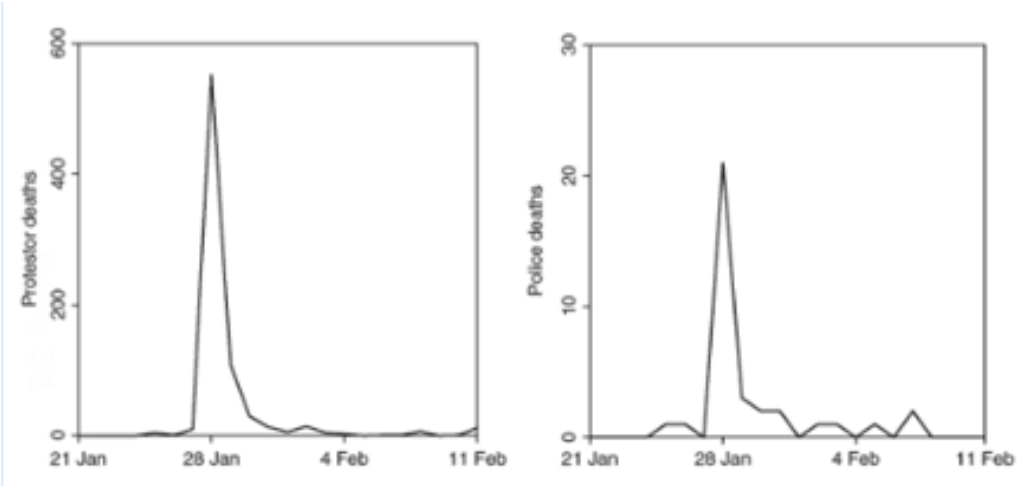

Figure 23: Protester and police deaths, January 21 – February 11
Source: Ketchley 2017, 31

Ketchley's comprehensive count of protester and police deaths shows how violent of a day January 28 was in comparison to the rest of the protest episode, which is noteworthy in itself. When reviewing a narrative summary of the first few days of protests, one thing that is clear is the iterative and adaptive nature of mobilization and repression. The protest organizers' strategy from the beginning on January 25 was informed by previous interactions with police, namely where and how they deploy given certain stated protest locations and times; police struggled to control or contain demonstrations. The police quickly adapted, making mass arrests and implementing harsh repression. There was a temporary decline in the number of protest participants reported that corresponded with the increased repression after the first day of protests. By the fourth day of protests, tensions had escalated dramatically, and the protesters rallied and retaliated against the previous days of police violence by unexpectedly attacking police stations across the country.

Data collected from news media sources for this dissertation confirm Ketchley's findings that damaging property was the next most common type of attacks by protesters. Especially on January 28, there were many instances of demonstrators setting fire to police stations, including in Cairo, Alexandria, and Suez, as well as government buildings and security services and police cars and trucks. Examples such as setting fire to the governorate building in Alexandria, the NDP headquarters in Tahrir Square, and a courthouse in Kharga were included in the 29% of cases of property damage.

As with the discussion of spatiality in the uprising, it is important to look outside of Cairo in order to get a more holistic sense of the situation regarding state repression and violence in Egypt. Residents in the North Sinai have long struggled for basic rights, including health care, education, water, and jobs, and have a vibrant culture of staging protests and strikes over those rights. The region is also known for the severe response from the government against such collective action, in the form of police brutality, torture, arbitrary detention, and collective punishment of residents. There have been many instances of political unrest since 2005, so much so that Bedouin political activist and writer Ashraf al-Anani called January 25, 2011 "an ordinary day in Sinai" (Alexandrani and Frisen 2016, 168). And the protests remained peaceful in the Sinai towns of Al-Arish, Shaykh Zuwaid, and Rafah until the first peaceful protester was killed; the peaceful demonstrations then quickly turned into an armed revolution (Alexandrani and Frisen 2016, 168). Instances of violence were soon experienced across the country. "Ferocious clashes in Alexandria’s Sidi Gaber and Qaid Ibrahim Square equaled the heroic struggles in the working-class towns of Suez and Port Said. Abdeen

Square in Suez saw the first violent battles of the uprising, where protesters torched the notorious Abdeen police station" (Bayat 2017, 116).

While small town and village locales provide a stark contrast to Tahrir Square, the city of Alexandria provides an interesting comparison to Cairo in discussing these protests. Though Alexandria is Egypt's second largest city, and saw significant protest activity in 2011, it received little media coverage and academic study. One of the sparks that spurred many Egyptians to anger and action actually originated from Alexandria. Khaled Said was a young Alexandria man who was beaten to death by security officers in 2010. A picture of his disfigured corpse was circulated widely, and the Facebook page created in his name, We Are All Khaled Said, ended up becoming an organizing tool for protesters (this will be covered in greater detail below). With anti-regime anger already brewing, an Alexandria church was bombed on January 1, 2011, leading to protests across Alexandria and Cairo condemning the attack as well as the government for not providing adequate security.

These anecdotes from across Egypt are instructive, but looking at the types and extent of reported repression from my database helps shed more light on the *spaces* of repression and the role of repression as a mechanism of mobilization in Egypt. The data included in Figure 24 represents qualitative data collected on the categories of repression used against protesters. In general, repression occurred across the entire date range studied, including against protesters demonstrating after the Alexandria church bombing. However, the majority of repression occurred between January 25 and February 3, with January 28 registering the most number of repressed protest events. Cairo accounted for

the largest share of where repression was reported (over 60%), which could be explained by the fact that Cairo experienced more protests and more repression than other locations, as well as the news media's tendency to report on larger protests events taking place in larger cities.[35]

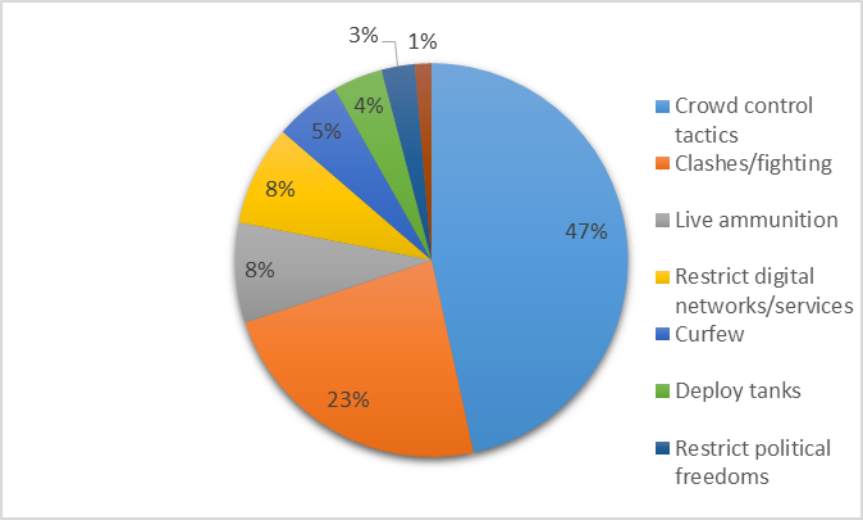

Figure 24: Types of repression used against protesters, Egypt, January 1 – February 11

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the incidences of repression in the protest event database are of violent repression directed against protesters. Crowd control tactics, including the use of tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets, accounted for 47% of the reported repression tactics used against protesters. Crowd control tactics are generally used to disperse crowds without resorting to extreme violence. One of the aims of security services during the first few days of protests was to stop smaller groups of

[35] In the ICEWS database, against which my database was compared and found to be representative, approximately 57% of cases of repression reported were located in Cairo. More details are available in Chapter 3.

demonstrators from being able to join up with larger groups, especially in Tahrir Square. To achieve this, barricades or specific formations of police would be used to force demonstrators into, or block them from, certain areas so that tear gas or other nonlethal weapons could be used to break up crowds. There were even reports of security vehicles being driven toward crowds in order to disperse them. The *spaces* of protests have clear implications for these types of repression. Police and security forces utilize and adapt *space* in their repressive tactics; when the natural *space* of a protest site is inadequate for their purposes (e.g., a space is too open or has too many entrances), police use artificial barricades to control protesters' movements, both those in the immediate vicinity and any potential additional participants. Such modifications of *space* that facilitate repression can increase the cost of collective action. Examining the types of repression used by government forces against protesters during the Egyptian Uprising is an important part of understanding the extent of what protesters faced. In addition to categories of repression, I collected data on the number of reported arrests, injuries, and deaths at protest events. Because my database does not attempt to include a comprehensive count of all protest events that happened during the time period studied, I did not conduct analyses of the overall number of arrests, injuries, and deaths documented. Rather, I take a closer look at individual protest events with some of the highest reported numbers of arrests, injuries, and deaths.[36]

The number of arrests made at protests was only reported on for about 6% of the events in my database. Some of the highest reported numbers for arrests took place on

[36] For media reports that contained multiple or disputed accounts of the number of arrests, injuries, or deaths, I generally recorded the most conservative figure.

January 25, as reported in the Daily News Egypt.[37] There were varied accounts of the number of protesters arrested in Suez; activists said roughly 1,000 people were arrested, but the list of confirmed names was less than 200. The Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights could not provide accurate arrest numbers because they claim people were being detained illegally. Other than accusations of the police engaging in excessive violence and illegal detainments, there was little context provided for arrests in Suez. In Cairo, at least 131 arrests were confirmed to have taken place on January 25. The context provided for the arrests in Cairo consisted mainly of the chaotic scenes described around the city, including police chasing protesters down side streets, using tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters in Tahrir Square, and clashing with protesters as they approached the parliament building.

The number of injuries reported for any particular protest event varied widely depending on the source.[38] Still, the consensus based on a number of reports is that protests on January 28 and February 2 resulted in the most number of protester injuries. Much of the violence committed on January 28 can be linked to the attacks on police stations that took place throughout the country, including approximately 4,000 injuries in Cairo alone, and 190 injuries in Suez. Demonstrations on February 2 in Cairo's Tahrir Square saw fierce clashes between anti-government protesters and pro-government counter-protesters (reportedly paid by Mubarak's National Democratic Party) in which Molotov cocktails, rocks, and other projectiles were used that left estimates of 915 to

[37] "Five dead, hundreds injured and arrested on 'Day of Anger.'" *Daily News Egypt* (January 26, 2011).
[38] International news sources were much less likely to report tallies of arrests, injuries, or deaths compared to domestic news sources.

over 1,000 injured, according to official estimates.[39] As clashes continued through the night into February 3, alternate injury counts were reported. A volunteer field nurse in Tahrir Square disagreed with official Ministry of Health counts, saying that 2,755 injured people have been reported, from severe gunshot wounds to fractures and superficial injuries.

By far the deadliest day of protests in the time period studied was January 28. Similar to the reports of the number of injuries, there is a significant difference in the number of deaths reported by various sources. A specific death toll for January 28 was difficult to identify, and aside from Cairo, Alexandria, and Suez, there were no counts for most locations across Egypt in the news media consulted. Reports in the days immediately following January 28 offered preliminary and minimal numbers, with sources saying they expected the numbers to rise well above their count at the time. A Human Rights Watch statement estimated the minimum number of dead (since January 25) to be 130, which was the highest number reported in my database.[40] Secondary sources, however, have reported much higher numbers of deaths on just January 28, ranging from over 500 to around 900 (Ketchley 2017, 31; El-Mahdi 2014, 69). Part of this discrepancy can be explained by the fact that the secondary sources have the benefit of hindsight in that they can compare and compile from multiple sources to come to a final count, whereas individual news media articles are published while protest events are still ongoing and injuries and deaths are continuing to be accounted for. This is one

[39] "NDP denies complicity in Tahrir massacre." *Daily News Egypt* (February 3, 2011); "6 killed, over 800 injured in Tahrir clashes, says Ministry of Health." *Daily News Egypt* (February 3, 2011); "3 NDP members quit parliament, party." *Daily News Egypt* (February 4, 2011).
[40] "Protesters' death toll to rise, say human rights groups." *Daily News Egypt* (January 31, 2011). "Protests in Tahrir as fighter jets circle central Cairo." *Daily News Egypt* (January 30, 2011).

reason why it was critical to supplement my database based on news media accounts with secondary sources.

Despite the limits of my data and my ability to conduct more sophisticated analyses on the numbers of arrests, injuries, and deaths, the most notable examples shared here offer a sense of the extent of repression and violence perpetrated during the protest episode. When viewed in the context of the number of protest participants on any given day, there is no clear link between the few days in early February with reported lower participation in protests and the period with more arrests and injuries. Overall, there was an upward trend in the number of protest participants despite arrests, injuries, and deaths.

Acts of nonviolent repression were also used with the assumed aim of decreasing the level of protest mobilization. Accounting for 8% of reported repression tactics, the government engaged in a range of restrictions from blocking certain websites, including Facebook and Twitter, and disabling SMS and other messaging services, to completely blocking all Internet and mobile services for certain periods of time, both in limited locations and across the entire country. The Egyptian government has long attempted to supervise and control information and communication technologies to monitor, intimidate, and detain political activists (Freedom House 2012). For example, the Interior Ministry started using social media as part of their counterinsurgency strategy against protesters (Howard and Hussain 2013, 22). Security services reportedly used online surveillance techniques to identify the administrator of the We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page and arrest him (Loveluck 2014). It was well known that these services were being used to coordinate protest events, and this tactic was a clear effort to

supersede spatial considerations and hinder the ability of organizers during the first few days of demonstrations to continue to mobilize. The Mubarak regime also engaged in hacking and other types of malicious digital activities against Al Jazeera and other news media websites.

As part of its continuing effort to repress protest mobilization in the early days of the uprising, the Egyptian government instituted a series of curfews. On Friday, January 28, a curfew was put in place in Cairo, Alexandria, and Suez from 6 PM until 7 AM the next morning. On Saturday, January 29 the curfew was extended from 4 PM that evening until 8 AM the next day. The curfew was extended even earlier on Sunday, January 30 to begin at 3 PM. In addition to dissuading people from joining the protests, the curfew could be used as an excuse to arrest or more harshly crack down on protesters that continued to mobilize, particularly those that were occupying Tahrir Square. In fact, an anonymous police sergeant told Daily News Egypt that according to the law, the army is allowed to shoot anyone who breaks curfew.

In addition to imposing a curfew and increasing repression against protesters on January 28, that is the day that police forces were withdrawn across Cairo and the military was deployed to major protest sites. The government increased their threat posture on January 30 by deploying new, more powerful tanks and sending fighter jets to circle over Tahrir Square. Other examples of nonviolent repression that the regime

engaged in to deter mobilization was issuing a ban on demonstrations on January 26, putting people under house arrest, and setting the Al Jazeera Cairo office ablaze.[41]

The data collected on the size of protests across the Egyptian protest episode shows that both violent and nonviolent repressive measures had little effect on restraining people from joining protests; other than a few days with sporadic participation counts, the data shows that the number of protest participants was sustained and grew to higher and higher levels after January 25 in spite of the variety of repressive tactics used. With regard to the *spaces* of protests and repression, it is necessary to review more closely individual protest events. Ketchley's reconstruction of protests on January 25 notes the difficulty of police to intercept protesters descending on Tahrir Square from many different streets; protesters' ability to evade police and break through security cordons allowed for greater numbers of people to amass in Tahrir Square. In short, the spatial dynamics of the area surrounding Tahrir Square decreased the cost of collective action and facilitated mobilization

Other examples from Cairo and Alexandria lead to a complementary finding. The many bridges that cross the Nile River are emblematic of the geography of Cairo. Those leading to Tahrir Square, like the Qasr al-Nile bridge, acted as natural chokepoints for protesters, allowing security forces to easily block access of those on the other side of the bridge from entering Tahrir Square. The *space* of the city was aiding police's attempts to engage in repressive crowd control measures, increasing the cost of collective action, and impeding further mobilization. In contrast, the *space* of the coastal city of Alexandria

[41] No casualties were reported in the Al Jazeera office fire (hence its classification as nonviolent), but the bureau chief and a correspondent were arrested.

differs from Cairo in that it lacks a comparable series of bridges connecting one part of the city with another at the heart of its downtown. Demonstrators there certainly encountered other roadblocks, both literally and figuratively, in response to their mobilizing for protests, but police there lacked the ability to use the same natural spatial feature as part of their repertoire of repression.

Largely absent from this discussion so far has been mention of concessions. The narrative overview of the protest episode in Egypt at the beginning of this chapter highlighted a number of the concessions offered by the Mubarak regime in response to the demands of masses of protesters. These most often took the form as political moves or policy reforms, like dismissing government or party officials and vowing to discuss and implement reforms. Unfortunately, the extent and quality of data on concessions that I was able to collect was more limited than originally anticipated. In addition, the data that was collected was difficult to link to particular protest events and difficult to connect to spatiality in a meaningful way. However, by adopting an expansive understanding of the term concession, I was able to investigate, albeit in a more limited scope, the hypothesis that protest *spaces* conceded to demonstrators reduced the cost of collective action and facilitated greater mobilization.

Looking at a variety of protest events in my database for which detailed spatial information was available, there is at least anecdotal evidence to support this hypothesis. One of the most straightforward and large-scale examples of conceding *space* was when police withdrew from the streets after January 28 and discontinued their attempts to directly confront and manage protests. Protesters and police had continuously contended

for control over Tahrir Square for days, but the unexpected decision of police to concede that *space* to demonstrators arguably had a significant impact on the trajectory of the protest episode. The immediate effect of conceding the *space* of Tahrir Square to protesters was to make it safer for people to join the demonstration there, effectively lowering the cost of collective action and facilitating mobilization. But the larger effect, which is unique to the case of Tahrir Square, was that once protesters were able to maintain a continuous occupation of Tahrir Square, the *space* began to take on new strategic significance as the focal point of the protest episode for many across Egypt and the world. It should also be mentioned that as the police conceded the *space* of Tahrir Square, they also began implementing other forms of repression, including increased use of *baltagiya* and digital censorship in the form of restricting Internet and mobile access.

Having reviewed cases of government repression and concessions in the Egyptian uprising, it is important to know how these practical examples fit into the theoretical literature on the subject. There is a large body of research on the relationship between repression and protests, some of which was discussed in Chapter 2. One of the most important conclusions from this literature is that there is no simple one-way causality between mobilization and repression. "Results have shown that repression increases conflict, decreases conflict up to a certain level of repression and then increases it…, decreases some forms of dissent while increasing others, and has no impact whatsoever" (Davenport and Inman 2012, 624). In other words, it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe a simple, generalizable theory of mobilization and repression.

Charles Tilly (2005) identifies four possible causal paths between repression and mobilization: repression decreases mobilization, repression increases mobilization, mobilization decreases repression, and mobilization increases repression. This may seem like a useless model where anything can happen in any direction. But the point of the mechanistic model of contentious politics that Tilly contributed to for decades is that by adding complexity, in the form of underlying mechanisms, to the simple lines leading from repression to mobilization or from mobilization to repression, we can gain a more nuanced picture of their relationship and the causal chain that leads from one to the other in any unique situation or episode of contention. When taking a broader view, it is important to remember that there is a complex and iterative relationship between repression and mobilization, especially in the medium- to long-term.

While it is true that every particular instance of mobilization and repression is unique, it would still be useful to have some model of what can be expected when certain factors, or mechanisms, are at play in certain combinations. To that end, Goldstone and Tilly (2001, 190-192) identified five different possible scenarios, with examples from history for each, for the variety of pathways that can emerge in a situation of protest mobilization.

- Mounting protest and severe repression leads to protests declining (e.g., Tiananmen Square in 1989)
- Mounting protest, repression initially leading to greater protests, but then damped down by much greater repression (e.g., Russia 1905)
- Mounting protest, repression initially leading to greater protests, then further repression and/or concessions leading to still greater protests, and so forth: the classic “spiral” of revolutionary conflict (e.g., late-1970s Iran under the Shah)
- A spiral of protest, repression, and expanding protest, but ending in massive concessions (e.g., British India late-1940s; South Africa 1980s)

- Protests leading to concessions (e.g., Depression-era Workers' Rights Movement)

These scenarios also incorporate concessions as a key intervening factor, a useful addition when considering the case of Egypt in 2011. As described at the beginning of the chapter, there was a steady trend of the Egyptian government from the beginning of the protests offering various types of concessions at the political or policy level meant to persuade the mobilized masses to discontinue their participation in demonstrations. The majority of these concessions consisted of superficial changes, replacing existing government officials and NDP leaders with other loyal political insiders, and promising electoral reforms for future elections. The only concession directly related to Mubarak, before his eventual resignation, was his pledge to not run for reelection. Despite, or perhaps in spite of, new concessions nearly every day over an 18-day period, the Egyptian protest movement continued to grow in size and scale.

Considering the totality of repression and concessions, where do the Egyptian protests of January-February 2011 fit within the scenarios outlined by Goldstone and Tilly? Looking at just 18 days of protest ending in Mubarak leaving office, one could argue this is an example of a spiral of protests and repression ending in massive concessions. But, having more than eight years of hindsight, we know that this protest episode was only the beginning of a years-long series of political changes that have yet to be resolved. As recently as September 2019, there were reports of large-scale protests taking place across the country calling for President el-Sisi, who ascended to power in a military coup that deposed the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi, to step down from power. This suggests the "classic" revolutionary spiral is the

more accurate scenario to describe the long-term mobilization-repression situation in Egypt.

Networks, Diffusion, and Contentious Politics in Egypt

With the nationwide mass mobilization beginning simultaneously on January 25, organizers and participants felt an "initial optimism and sense of urgency to network across the country in order to expand their revolutionary base" (Alexandrani and Frisen 2016, 169-170). Networking and networks did, in fact, play a critical role in the expansion and endurance of the protest movement in Egypt. After all, relationships area the heart of networks as well as collective action. In general, networks "are crucial for sharing knowledge about strategies and tactics, and developing common political identities and alternative imaginaries…through face-to-face interaction as well as in virtual space with the help of diverse contemporary communications technologies" (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008, 162). And this proved true in Egypt for a variety of diverse personal, religious, occupational, and online networks. There are important spatial dynamics in the interactions within and between networks that are relevant for many of the mechanisms of contentious politics underlying mobilization and scale shift. Both *space* and *place* influence the diffusion of contention and repertoires of contention, often through networks of individuals and organizations, both in person and online. In continuing my inquiry into the Egyptian protest episode in 2011, there are two hypotheses in particular related to spatiality and diffusion that I seek to examine:

- Hypothesis 3a: Protest *spaces* that are accessible, expansive, and centrally located will decrease the cost of collective action, thus enabling diffusion and facilitating upward scale shift.

- Hypothesis 3b: *Places* of protest with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance add meaning to phenomena that are diffused and to collective action, thus facilitating mobilization.

To begin this portion of my investigation, I will discuss three networks in particular that came together during the 2011 uprising that played critical roles in diffusion and increasing the size and scale of mobilization: the Muslim Brotherhood, labor movements, and youth movements.

As mentioned above, Egypt had seen a fair amount of demonstrations and work stoppages since the 2000s. Labor unions were the main source of protests in Egypt before the uprising, with more than 1.7 million workers conducting more than 1,900 strikes between 2004 and 2008 (Langohr 2014, 183). During the 2011 uprising, individual union members certainly participated in demonstrations, but official participation of unions in the form of factory strikes only came four days before Mubarak stepped down, bringing out some 300,000 workers after February 6. By one count, there were "forty-two workers' protests in January 2011, while considerably more than that took place between 7 and 11 February alone" (Alexander and Bassiouny 2014, 200). Though they largely supported economic, not political, demands, the surge in strike action changed the dynamic of the uprising and made the popular revolution unstoppable (Langohr 2014, 183). Worker movements from all over Egypt participated in strikes in January and February 2011, including Suez fertilizer and steelworkers, municipal cleaners in Giza, spinning and weaving workers in Mahalla, telecom workers in Cairo, textile workers in Kafr al-Dawwar, health sector workers in Assyut, railway and public transport workers, even workers in military-run factories in Helwan (Alexander and Bassiouny 2014, 200-

201). Lawyers, judges, university professors, doctors, and journalists also staged workers' protests. The combined effect of these individual networks of workers was multiplicative in that when occurring all at the same time, and combined with the mass protests taking place across the country, the country was heading to "a state of total civil disobedience" and essentially an economic standstill (Shehata 2012, 120-121).

Workers movements in Egypt have a long history and serve as strong networks for Egyptians, but the Muslim Brotherhood is the oldest and most established social movement in the country. Since its creation in 1928, it has evolved from a religious organization to one that also engages in political, economic, and social activities. The relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian government has ebbed and flowed over the decades between times of harsh restriction and times of relative amicability. Under Mubarak's rule, the Brotherhood was tolerated at first, but as they gained popularity in the political space, they were once again severely repressed until the end of the Mubarak era (Tadros 2012, 6-7).

The Brotherhood didn’t officially participate in the first day of protests in January 2011 (though individual Brotherhood members certainly did). They intentionally stayed away from assuming a leadership position in the protest movement for a number of reasons. With the outcome of the uprising still very uncertain, they understood the potential costs, like another crackdown on the movement and even harsher repression, if the protests eventually fizzled out. If the Brotherhood appeared to lead the demonstrations, it would make it easy for the government to label the protesters as religious fanatics, a tactic the government has used in the past. One of the biggest

contributions made by Muslim Brotherhood members and leaders to maintaining the momentum of the protests, particularly in Tahrir Square, was their logistical support. In addition to providing participants, they manned security checkpoints at entrances to Tahrir Square to keep out government supporters, they supplied food and water, and posted information about the protests on their website (Muedini 2014).

While unions and the Muslim Brotherhood are both dominant groups in Egyptian social and political life and played important roles in growing and sustaining the 2011 uprising, one network that was arguably at the center of its organization and leadership is youth movements. As the youth population has grown in Egypt, with more one-third of the country's population aged 15-24, so has their increased participation in political activism (Shehata 2012, 107). Despite greater educational opportunities and attainment than previous generations, youth unemployment remains high and salaries low. When combined with political exclusion, dissatisfaction with the political and economic situation in Egypt has contributed to activist youth movements expressing their grievances in the streets through public demonstrations.

The Egyptian Movement for Change, unofficially known as Kefaya (meaning *enough* in Arabic), held their first rally in 2004, during which they demanded President Mubarak step down (Lim 2012, 235). Youth for Change was a subgroup of and an important player in the Kefaya movement and helped to organize peaceful protests in the ensuing years, innovating existing mobilization and dissemination strategies by using digital technologies like blogs, YouTube, and text messages. The founder of the April 6 Youth Movement, Ahmed Maher, was originally a labor activist who had hoped to

expand workers' protests into a broader, more popular, pro-democracy movement. In the face of government suppression, Maher turned to Facebook as a tool to mobilize support for a worker strike in El-Mahallah El-Kubra planned for April 6, 2008. Maher and a number of other April 6 leaders actually began their political activism as part of Kefaya Youth for Change, and learned from their experiences there; they expanded on Kefaya's use of digital tools to include Facebook and Twitter, making them the first social movement in Egypt to do so (Lim 2012, 239-240).

Another new group (mentioned briefly above) was started on Facebook in June 2010. The We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page started as a platform to shed light on the brutal killing of Khaled Said by police in Alexandria and to call for the prosecution of his murderers. The page morphed into a forum for voicing grievances against corruption, unemployment, and freedom of expression, and, after an explosion of popularity following the overthrow of Ben Ali in Tunisia, it page became one of the main tools for publicizing the January 25 protests around Egypt (Gerbaudo 2016, 262-263).

All three of these youth movements differed from older generations of activists and social movements in a few important ways. Twenty-first century youth activism emerged outside of existing networks, like the Muslim Brotherhood. Their approach to the regime was also more antagonistic, calling for comprehensive political change from the ground up rather than top-down reforms. These movements also were able to attract a more diverse and inclusive base of supporters than older, more ideologically homogenous social movements. Finally, they were increasingly sophisticated in their use of digital

technologies, particularly social media, for political organizing and mobilizing, but also as a means of self-expression (Shehata 2012, 117-118).

Building on the information about these networks described here, I will turn my focus to instances of diffusion that were pivotal to growing the size and scale of the Egyptian protests. Much that has been written about diffusion in the context of the Arab Uprisings has focused on transnational diffusion, or the spread of mass demonstrations and protest tactics from one country to another. This is indeed an important factor to consider when talking about diffusion in the case of Egypt in 2011, and will be discussed below, but this is only one aspect of diffusion that will be addressed here. Tilly and Tarrow (2007) offer a broad definition of diffusion as the "spread of a contentious performance, issue, or interpretive frame from one site to another" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 215). A more specific explanation that includes examples of what can be diffused where is "the transfer of an innovation—for example, a new product, policy, institution, or repertoire of behavior—across units, such as enterprises, organizations, sociopolitical groups, or governments" (Patel, Bunce, and Wolchik 2014, 58). So, as discussed above, a repertoire of behavior, like the protest strategy of occupying a city's central square, can be transferred from protesters in Cairo to protesters in a small city in Upper Egypt, for example.

In the case of Egypt, it is not only what was being diffused that is noteworthy, but the means through which that diffusion took place. There are three main pathways of diffusion that are identified in the academic literature: direct (relational), indirect, and mediated (Tarrow 2011, 192). Direct diffusion is when repertoires are transmitted

through personal contacts, like through organizational linkages or associational networks. Indirect diffusion is when communications are transmitted that lead to demonstration effects among otherwise unconnected actors. For example, footage of demonstrations in Tahrir Square was broadcast on television and emboldened others to join the protests. Finally, mediated diffusion happens when a third party connects two otherwise unconnected parties.

The case of the 2011 protests in Egypt includes examples of all three pathways of diffusion at work. Youth movements, labor unions, and political parties like the Muslim Brotherhood played various roles throughout the uprising, from organizing to logistics to mobilizing participants. These networks were facilitators of direct diffusion, acting as the means through which information about protests or tactics were shared and individuals were recruited or motivated to action. Indirect diffusion, most often exemplified through the demonstration effect, has become an especially potent pathway of diffusion of contentious politics in the Internet age. The possibility of instantaneous global communication means that a small, local protest event can gain national attention and potentially garner supporters among actors that otherwise would have been unlikely to even become aware of the issue.

Patel and Bunce's "Tahrir Model," the strategy of activists continuously occupying a city's central square, describes how Egyptian protesters were able to overcome one of the main constraints of collective action while at the same time facilitating indirect diffusion and scaling up the level of protest in Tahrir Square and across the country. Rather than different groups of protesters gathering in different spaces

around the city, the Tahrir model provided a central location for all groups of protesters to gather. This allowed people to gauge how many others shared their opposition to the regime, and it was possible to see the crowd growing from day-to-day. The visibility of this occupation was magnified by continuous broadcast and online media coverage. In combination, these factors allowed for the "revolutionary bandwagon" over the following days and weeks as protests continued, allowing people who were usually not involved in protests to see the scale of opposition to the regime and the potential for success (Patel 2013, 5-6).

The potential for success was especially palpable for Egyptians in light of the overthrow of Tunisia's long-time ruler after a few weeks of mass demonstrations. In addition to Egyptians, one of the most popular discussions in the media and academic literature in the wake of the protest movements that arose across the Middle East and North Africa since 2011 was the role of transnational diffusion. Though Egypt was one of the first countries in the region to experience mass protests, Egypt's revolutionary predecessors in Tunisia played at least some role (other than an inspirational one) in the immediate success of the protesters. In the years leading up to the anti-government mobilizations in 2010-2011, Tunisian and Egyptian activists and protesters collaborated to share their experiences with repression and strategies of how to counter various police tactics, like how to use barricades in protest spaces to their advantage and how to avoid surveillance. Other international actors provided training sessions, playbooks, and technical assistance to help Egyptians build successful protest strategies. Young Egyptians developed their own innovative strategies as well, such as doing "fieldwork" to

test out the level of dissatisfaction and willingness of people to protest in different neighborhoods. They staged weekly processions through the slums while shouting anti-regime slogans, observing whether people would join and their level of anger. The results of this "fieldwork" also tracked with the dissatisfaction of young, educated Egyptians observed on Facebook and other digital media (Patel, Bunce, and Wolchik 2014, 65).

In addition to overt signs of unrest and inspiration from Tunisia, there were also important underlying, structural factors and other similarities to Tunisia that contributed to conditions that were favorable to mass protests. Both countries had a history of a centralized, corporatist political economy; a shift toward a more liberalized economy since the 1970s and some political liberalization, albeit half-hearted and short-lived; a relatively homogenous population with a strong national identity within defined, uncontested borders; and strong civil society and labor movements with a rich history of protests and strikes (Patel, Bunce, and Wolchik 2014, 63-64).

In hindsight, when viewed against the backdrop described above, it may seem obvious that Egypt was on the brink of revolutionary action in early 2011. But the eruption of mass protests in Egypt and around the region in 2011 was a surprise to many observers and experts. The United States State Department's assessment of the Egyptian regime on January 25, 2011 was that it was stable (El-Ghobashy 2011, 2). However, recent events had primed Egyptians to rise up in protest, including: the brutal murder of Khaled Said in June 2010, the subsequent outrage directed toward police over the murder, and publicizing it on the We Are All Khaled Said Facebook group; the parliamentary elections in November and December 2010, widely viewed as rigged, that

resulted in 97% of seats going to Mubarak's NDP; and the Alexandria church bombing that occurred on January 1, 2011. And after the overthrow of Tunisia's long-time ruler Ben Ali, Egyptians were even more motivated to mobilize en masse. Each of these events sparked sporadic protests across the country, and the newly designated upcoming holiday marking Police Day on January 25 afforded political activists the opportunity to channel Egyptians' anger in protest (El-Ghobashy 2011, 5).

In the above discussion about diffusion in theory and in practice in Egypt, I have identified multiple pathways and instances through which diffusion contributed to protest mobilization. In doing so, I also described how the spatial dynamics of diffusion played a role in the ability of the protest movement to grow in size and scale. Both *space* and *place* were influential factors in the outcomes of increased mobilization and scale shift. The Tahrir Model speaks directly to my hypothesis regarding protest *spaces*; as an accessible, expansive, and centrally located *space* of protest, the continuous occupation of Tahrir Square acted as a locus of contention in Cairo for individuals, organizations, and other networks of Egyptians demanding change. Securing the square for protesters to engage with one another and participate in demonstrating lowered the cost for others to join the protest; as participation increased and the expansive square was filled, the visibility of the occupation was magnified by coverage on broadcast and online media platforms. These factors amplified the perception of the success of this strategy and the Tahrir model was diffused across Egypt, thus shifting up the scale of contention in the country.

Drawing from Asef Bayat, both the *space* and *place* of Tahrir Square contribute to its identification as an insurgent space—having historical and symbolic significance and being located near mass transportation and cultural spaces (Bayat 2017, 126-127). Its history as a site of protest enhanced the appeal of Tahrir Square as a *space* of protest; Egyptians have long gathered to protest in Tahrir Square since at least the early 20th century, and it was officially named Tahrir, or Liberation, Square after the 1952 revolution. The significance of the sense of community and the relationships that were developed and strengthened in Tahrir Square during its occupation cannot be understated. For many of those who resided in the square for weeks, it became a new model of the potential of what Egyptian society could be; Tahrir Square during this protest episode had its own versions of border security and infrastructure, medical stations, democratic governance, even places to get food and haircuts. The *place* of Tahrir Square itself was a revolutionary phenomenon, and, as with the Tahrir model, the slogans and tactics and ideas that were diffused to new protest locations as the mobilization increased and the scale of contention spread were imbued with a sense of meaning that emerged from within Tahrir.

In the case of Tahrir Square but also other protest *spaces* and *places* across Egypt, the pathways of diffusion, or the means by which phenomena were diffused, should not be understated. In addition to discussing in-person relationship building among established and new networks and organizations participating in protests, an analysis of diffusion and mobilization in Egypt would be incomplete without exploring the role of digital tools. The Internet and social media have become central to discussions about

diffusion, both indirect and mediated, of contentious politics in the media and academic literature. The potential strength or impact of indirect and mediated diffusion compared to direct diffusion has been questioned by some, including Tarrow (2011). "Although diffusion through the Internet may have greater "reach" than direct diffusion or diffusion through traditional media, it lacks the interpersonal ties needed to create trust between initiators and adopters; thus coordinated contention that spreads through the Internet may be less easily sustained than contention that diffuses through these more traditional forms" (Tarrow 2011, 192-193). However, as it skyrocketed in popularity among Egyptian Internet users in 2010, the Facebook group We Are All Khaled Said became a public square for disaffected youth dissatisfied with the social, economic, and political status quo in Egypt. The connections made through this Facebook group, which ended up being one of the main organizing and mobilizing tools throughout the uprising, were in fact strong enough to grow and sustain the protest movement until their primary goal was achieved. Undoubtedly, the fact that contention was spread and sustained through multiple interpersonal and indirect networks contributed to the strength of diffusion.

Younger, more digitally connected populations had found new public spaces for discourse on sociopolitical issues and grievances that also bridged people across space and activated otherwise disengaged individuals. Their use of technology and social media networks was one aspect of youth movements' strategies that set them apart from other networks, and has received a great deal of attention in the media and academic scholarship. Especially in the early days of the Arab Uprisings, many went so far as to call them Facebook Revolutions. As the years have passed since the initial outbreak of

mass protests in 2011 and more research has been done, there has been some reconsidering and readjustment with respect to how we understand the relationship between social media networks and protests. I will briefly address some of the data and research on social media use in Egypt during the 2011 uprising.

As of January 2011, 30% of the Egyptian population were Internet users, and 50% of Internet subscribers in Egypt were in Cairo. After Google, Facebook was the most visited website. There was a drastic increase in Egyptian Facebook users when the platform became available in Arabic in January 2009, from 900,000 to 5 million in January 2011. While Egypt's 5 million Facebook users accounted for 22% of Facebook users in the entire Arab world, it still only amounts to about 6% of the total Egyptian population. Notably, 58% of Egypt's Facebook users were under the age of 25 (Lim 2012, 235, 241). Given these data, it is reasonable to surmise that the Internet in general, and Facebook in particular, were influential among only a certain subset of protesters, especially younger and middle- and upper-class Egyptians. Mobile phones, on the other hand, another digital technology that was utilized by protesters and organizers, were ubiquitous throughout Egypt (Howard and Hussain 2013, 20).

How exactly was Facebook used during the 2011 uprising? At that time, online conversations were dominated by liberal and civil society voices, and so Egyptian Facebook users could find like-minded individuals (both Egyptian and non-Egyptian) and find solidarity in their shared experiences and grievances about social, economic and political conditions, from unemployment to dealing with police violence. Facebook was also used as a platform for sharing photo and video evidence of protest crowd sizes,

police brutality, and other forms of government repression with other Egyptians and people around the world. Information about when and where protests were happening, as well as tactics and strategies for how to deal with riot police and crowd control tactics, were shared across the country and the region. For example, Tunisians activists shared tips on treating exposure to tear gas (Rane and Salm 2012, 104). The We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page is actually an example of where all of these activities were carried out.

Twitter was another social media network that was used by Egyptian protesters and organizers for many of the same functions as Facebook, in terms of mobilization and dissemination of information. Though a smaller portion of Egyptians used Twitter in January 2011, around 1.1 million, it was still a popular medium for sharing protest images and information. By the time Mubarak was removed from office, nearly 2 million tweets from around the world had used the hashtag #Jan25 (Kharroub and Bas 2016, 1981; Rane and Salem 2012, 104). As such, it was an important tool used for mobilization and documentation purposes. Tahrir Square, in particular, was a hub for filming and uploading pictures and videos online, which were then picked up by television media sources, such as Al Jazeera, thus greatly expanding the content's audience and reach.

One sign that social media was perceived to be having an impact on protest mobilization was that the Egyptian government sought to block all Internet and mobile phone networks across the country after a few days of protests. However, technologically savvy youth were able to overcome such blocks thanks to workarounds shared by

Tunisian and other activists (Rane and Salem 2014, 104). In addition, shutting down the information infrastructure not only affected protesters, but government agencies and many middle-class Egyptians not involved in the protests as well, leaving them to take to the streets to find out what was going on (Howard and Hussain 2013, 22). An important and related issue that will be discussed later in this chapter is how the Egyptian government itself used social media against the protesters.

Given this brief overview, it is reasonable to conclude that social media networks played an important role during the 2011 uprising in Egypt. Kharroub and Bas describe social media tools as having played "a vital role in triggering, organizing, facilitating, accelerating, documenting, and broadcasting the protests in Egypt" (Kharroub and Bas 2016, 1976). More broadly, social and digital media provided "the fundamental infrastructure for social movements and collective action" (Howard and Hussain 2013, 118). Howard and Hussain, speaking about their study of 22 countries across the Middle East and North Africa, succinctly summarize the role of digital media as it relates to mobilization in the context of other important factors relevant to the 2011 uprising in Egypt.

> *"It is difficult to say whether the revolutions would or would not have happened without digital media. Indeed, other sociological factors, such as widespread poverty and governmental ineptitude, had created the conditions for extensive public anger. However, the networks of people who did mobilize did so with the direct application, initiation, and coordination of digital media tools. Counterfactual scenarios are important, but the overwhelming evidence of what did happen concretely illustrates that the patterns of political change in these protests were digitally enabled, both in the short term, but also over time since the early 2000s."* (Howard and Hussain 2013, 116)

Place **and the Mechanisms of Scale Shift**

A considerable portion of this chapter has been dedicated to examining various aspects and instances of diffusion in Egypt. Not only is diffusion a rich and complex concept with clear connections to spatiality, it is also a constituent part of both of the processes of contentious politics at the center of this dissertation, mobilization and scale shift, the latter of which deserves further explanation at this time. Scale shift is, simply, a shift in the scale of contention, or an "increase or decrease in the number of actors and/or geographic range of coordinated claim making" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 217). Understanding how scale shift happens, on the other hand, is a more complicated process that involves multiple subsidiary mechanisms. Tilly and Tarrow identify a variety of mechanisms that are often involved in the scaling up of contention, including relational diffusion, brokerage, emulation, and the attribution of similarity (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 95). Before proceeding, it is important to know how these mechanisms are understood in the contentious politics literature, as described in Tarrow and McAdam (2005, 127-128):

- Relational diffusion – the transfer of information along established lines of interaction
- Emulation – collective action modeled on the actions of others
- Brokerage – information transfers that depend on the linking of two or more previously unconnected social sites
- Attribution of similarity – actors in different sites identifying themselves as sufficiently similar to justify common action

Though the terms may be new to the discussion thus far in this chapter, the concepts are familiar. Each of these four mechanisms has actually been discussed above in some form in the context of diffusion. Relational diffusion is another term for direct diffusion; emulation is part of the demonstration effect process; brokerage facilitates

mediated diffusion; and attribution of similarity plays a role in strengthening ties between the transmitters and adopters of diffused repertoires of contention. It would be an oversimplification to say that scale shift results from diffusion in all cases. Using these analytically distinct but diffusion-related concepts, and building on important background information, analyses, and findings from earlier in this chapter, allows for a more nuanced approach to understanding how scale shift happens. In addition to identifying if and how the mechanisms of scale shift were activated in the Egyptian protest episode, I delve into the influence of the *place* of protest on each of the three mechanisms yet to be discussed. More specifically, I examine if the *places* of protests with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance add meaning to collective action and facilitate upward scale shift by: helping build and strengthen relations among individuals and organizations; helping develop common identities among individuals and organizations; and providing a model for how contentious activity in similar *places* can be emulated.

The oft-cited chapter by Tarrow and McAdam (2005) on scale shift in transnational contention explains how these mechanisms combine to lead to scale shift. "Localized collective action spawns broader contention when information concerning the initial action reaches a distant group, which, having defined itself as sufficiently similar to the initial insurgents (*attribution of similarity*), engages in similar action (*emulation*), leading ultimately to *coordinated action* between the two sites" [emphasis in original] (Tarrow and McAdam 2005, 127). In the Egyptian case, the demands of the January 25 protests made known the participants' grievances over the repressive security state, the

desperate economic situation, and restrictive political freedoms. The widespread media and social media coverage of these events informed people otherwise disengaged in protests and activism that they shared the same discontent over the unjust status quo. As more and more people could see how many others were also opposed to the regime, mobilization increased and more people emulated those already in streets and squares across the country. The potential individual costs or risks of participation continued to decline as more people joined the protests, thus facilitating a bandwagon effect.

Though this story seems relatively straightforward, it can be further dissected. Tarrow and McAdam (2005) actually identify two different pathways through which attribution of similarity can lead to emulation and scaling up. Figure 25 incorporates brokerage and relational diffusion as potential intermediary mechanisms.

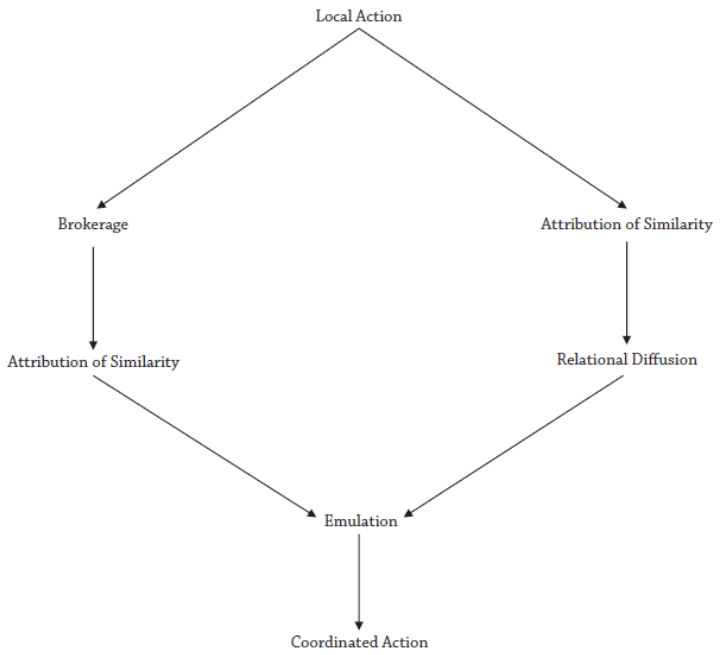

Figure 25: Alternative Routes to Upward Scale Shift
Source: Tarrow and McAdam 2005, 128

If both pathways lead to emulation regardless of whether it takes place through relational diffusion among individuals or groups with established relationships or through brokerage between previously unconnected parties, the distinction may not seem to matter other than for the sake of descriptive accuracy. However, Tarrow and McAdam make this distinction between the two different paths because they can, in fact, have significantly different impacts on scale shift: "movements that spread primarily through [relational] diffusion will almost certainly remain narrower in their geographic and/or institutional locus than contention that spreads through brokerage" (Tarrow and McAdam 2005, 128). The explanation they offer is essentially that, due to the nature of relational diffusion as between actors with established interactions, contention is less likely to span diverse geographic or institutional networks. Brokerage, on the other hand, "results in

new relations across traditional geographical and social boundaries, enhancing the potential reach and effect of collective actors" (Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013, 10).

The protest episode in Egypt scaled up through both pathways, benefiting from the strengths of both relational diffusion and brokerage. The youth movements that took the lead in organizing the January 25 protests were themselves a product of both brokerage and relational diffusion. As explained above, many of the youth movements grew out of labor movements, but also used social media networks to expand their support through previously unconnected individuals. As the youth-led protests in January 2011 grew, other established networks, like political parties and labor movements, participated in greater numbers. The expanded sets of participants (and leaders) from usually siloed groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood, could then leverage the networks of people in those newly added groups. Masses of both strongly tied and newly connected individuals and networks unified their demands that emerged from shared grievances and emulated tactics of contention across the country, while continued repression and refusal of the regime to make meaningful concessions only reinforced the resolve of the protest movement.

To elaborate on this brief summary of the pathways to scale shift and contextualize with regard to spatiality, the case of Tahrir Square, once again, offers a prime example of how the *place* of protest, and the meaning ascribed to protest there, was able to bring together diverse individuals and groups that would otherwise likely have remained unconnected. The physical *space* allowed by protesting in Tahrir, combined

with the meaning of that *place*—protesting at the site named Liberation Square after the 1952 revolution, protesting in the midst of the ruling NDP's headquarters, experiencing a microcosm of the cosmopolitan and democratic vision of a future Egyptian society that evolved in the square—made it a meeting place for Egyptians of all backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, religions, and ideologies. The diversity of meaning imbued by the *place* of Tahrir Square attracted a diversity of Egyptians. But this phenomenon is bigger than just Tahrir Square; it was also the fact that the *space* of cities like Cairo, Alexandria, and Suez can accommodate large numbers of people from a variety of political, religious, occupational, and social groups, affording people the opportunity to overlap and interact, to broker new relationships, and strengthen weak ties. Youth, the Muslims Brotherhood, public sector workers, labor unions, and others participating in protests with aligned demands based on common grievances fostered these relationships. Utilizing existing networks connections, leveraging new relationships, building coalitions, coordinating strategies, and combining and deploying resources to enhance the effectiveness of organizing networks, in concert with the other mechanisms, contributed toward shifting up the size and scale of contention across Egypt (Miller and Nicholls 2013, 459-460).

Another key part of the process toward upward scale shift is the attribution of similarity. Recognizing the similarities of life experiences and hardships, injustice and inequality, and lack of legitimate political representation and economic opportunities is an important vehicle for building solidarity. Again, drawing from Asef Bayat's insights is instructive. The everyday experiences of social nonmovements of urban subalterns

represent contentious activities. Out of the necessity of their circumstances, the lives of poor city dwellers—from street vendors to the homeless—that often transpire in public spaces frequently consist of negative interactions with the state and police. Their regular engagement in street politics were relocated to public squares in protest of some of the same grievances of many other Egyptians. The political and economic limitations of and overt oppression inflicted upon participants of social movements and networks organizing demonstrations in January 2011 were not dissimilar to those of social nonmovements. Though such negative interactions with power holders were experienced at very localized levels, the authority of police, local political leaders, and economic elites was derived from the national level; national-level solutions, especially the removal of President Mubarak from power, to begin to address the many injustices experienced by the diversity of Egyptians participating in demonstrations was a point of agreement among protesters. And the repressive treatment by police in response to these protests provided an additional grievance around which they could identify with one another. This expanded population that was activated to action in and from different neighborhoods and cities, in part motivated by the common injustices they faced in public spaces and *places* of protest, contributed to shifting up the scale of contention in Egypt.

Perhaps the most obvious example of the significance of the *place* of protest from the Egyptian protest episode, or arguably from any of the 2011 MENA uprisings, is that of the occupation of Tahrir Square. This example has been discussed at length throughout this chapter and this dissertation, and thus a brief summary here will suffice. Tahrir Square has a century-long history as a *place* of protest; surrounded by government

buildings, political headquarters, international hotels, national museums, universities, and countless shops and restaurants, it is a social and cultural hub in central Cairo. This history and social significance, in addition to the physical *space* of the location, made Tahrir Square an ideal site to stage an occupation and an obvious place to go for Egyptians wanting to participate. The meaning of the ongoing demonstration that took place in Tahrir Square was enhanced as the *place* of protest evolved into "a microcosm of the alternative order the revolutionaries seemed to desire" (Bayat 2017, 115). The protest in Tahrir Square became a model that was emulated in cities and towns across Egypt as the scale of the protest episode shifted upward.

Conclusion

To conclude, I will summarize the main findings from this chapter, identifying the key mechanistic factors that played a role in increasing the size and scale of mobilization in Egypt and assessing the influence of *space* and *place* on those mechanisms. These summary findings will be used in Chapter 6 to explain how the activation of these mechanisms combined to facilitate a protest episode that grew in size and scale.

Regarding the Egyptian regime's tactics of repression and concessions, both anecdotes and empirics show that they played a role in mobilization. Violent repression by the regime was relatively consistent during the period from January 25 through February 11, with a spike in violent clashes and deaths on January 28. Following this spike there was a notable increase in the number of protest participants across the country, from thousands to hundreds of thousands. There were also clear spatial dynamics to repression tactics. The wide open *space* of Tahrir Square at the intersection

of many major roads and side streets hindered repression and decreased the cost of collective action. Police would strategically block off certain protest *spaces* and use crowd control tactics to force demonstrations into areas that were more easily policeable; blocking access of protesters from Giza via narrow bridges leading to Tahrir Square, as well as using water cannons and tear gas against them, increased the cost of collective action and temporarily impeding mobilization. *Spaces* around government buildings, like the Interior Ministry and presidential palace, were more heavily populated with security forces and adapted, with barricades for example, not just for practical purposes of maintaining the territorial integrity of those areas and facilitating repression, but also because of the symbolic significance of those spaces to both protesters and the regime, which alludes to *place* also playing a role. The regime's digital repression tactics that were aimed at impeding the protest movement seemed to have the opposite of its intended effect and actually increased mobilization. Digital networks acted as key organizing and mobilizing tool, but shutting down the Internet and mobile networks affected more than just protesters and in fact helped push more people out onto the streets.

Protesters also incorporated spatiality into their counter-repression tactics. Using their previous interactions as a guide, protest organizers could anticipate to which spaces police would be deployed on January 25. They intentionally disseminated misleading information about protest locations and times so security forces would be amassed far from the actual protest sites, leaving other spaces less obstructed, thus giving protesters an advantage in their attempt to convene in Tahrir Square. Protesters in Alexandria, a city

without a Tahrir-style central square, normally confined their demonstrations and marches to the city's winding alleys; Alexandrians used the spatiality of the city to their advantage as they emerged onto the city's main streets, overwhelming the unsuspecting security forces and their attempts to restrain and repress protests.

It was difficult to draw a strong causal influence between spatiality and concessions, likely due to the more abstract, policy-oriented nature of the concessions offered by the regime. After three days of mass protests, Mubarak began offering a series of concessions, but they did little, if anything, to appease protesters, as they consisted almost entirely of limited, disingenuous reforms and opportunities. If anything, the nominal concessions actually encouraged protesters to stand firm and persist with their demands for the ouster of the Mubarak regime. When looking at particular protest *spaces* that were conceded to protesters, for example when police were withdrawn from Cairo and allowed protesters to control access to Tahrir Square, it decreased the cost of collective action and facilitated mobilization.

Regarding the diffusion of ideas, tactics, and other repertoires of contention into and across, there is strong evidence that diffusion played a significant role in the causal processes of mobilization and scale shift. Young, educated, unemployed, and digitally-connected Egyptians used social networks like Facebook to commiserate over shared grievances and organize against the political and economic status quo of the Mubarak regime. Protest strategies and counter-repression tactics were also shared among Tunisian and Egyptian activists and protest organizers through online networks in the days and months preceding protests in January 2011. The capacity for Egyptians and others in the

MENA region and across the world to connect with one another despite vast geographic distances between them was a growing phenomenon, as Internet connectivity was rapidly becoming more available during this period. This online diffusion of ideas and activism across space directly influenced an increase in the mobilization of protest participants.

The Tahrir Model brought together networks of different social, professional, demographic, and religious groups to all protest in one central location, a *place* with a shared sociopolitical significance as a protest site. Media and social media coverage of protest events showed the combined size of opposition to the regime in Tahrir Square and other locations; this decreased the perceived risks for non-participants to join the demonstrations, creating a revolutionary bandwagon and catalyzing more Tahrir-style protests across the country, and later the region and the world. The persistent occupation of Tahrir Square also gave protesters the space and time to reimagine the form that Egyptian political and social relations could take; occupants of Tahrir Square created a cosmopolitan microcosm of an alternative Egypt, with its own systems of governance, infrastructure, and security based on cooperation, altruism, and collectivity. In these ways, the *place* of Tahrir Square added meaning to and facilitated the diffusion of strategies of protest locations, as well as goals and ideals for a future Egypt, thus increasing the size social mobilization across the country. The physical *space* itself—accessible, expansive, and centrally location—decreased the cost of collective action; this made the Tahrir model a popular and effective tactic, receiving wide media and social media coverage, thus facilitating its diffusion across the country and upward scale shift.

Finally, a combination of mechanisms—attribution of similarity, brokerage, diffusion, and emulation—all activated to shift up the scale of contention in Egypt to an increasing number of protest sites. Government policies and security issues were diffused to different geographic and political scales across the country. National policies and issues, for example regarding subsidies or freedom of expression, had significant negative effects at the local level, contributing to growing anger and public dissatisfaction with the political and economic status quo. As dissatisfaction turned into threateningly large-scale anti-government demonstrations, contention at the local level prompted a response from the national level, often in the form of repressive police and security forces.

The activist youth movements who organized the January 25 protests mobilized their networks of supporters who had built strong ties with each other both online and through other social or political networks. The large *spaces* of cities and individual protest sites, like Tahrir Square, brought together participants of diverse backgrounds, ideologies, and socioeconomic statuses and provided them with opportunities to interact, create new relationships, broker agreements about their goals and overall vision for Egypt. These new, meaningful connections shared between demonstrators in *places* of protest allowed them to leverage their new relationships and the potential for increased resources and effectiveness to shift contention up to new protest sites. As mentioned above, the demonstration effect from the media and social media coverage of the protest in Tahrir Square increased the scale of protests through emulation, facilitated by the historical and social meaning associated with Tahrir Square and the protest that

developed there. The Tahrir Model was scaled to different levels and locations across Egypt: "In every village and every hamlet of every village was another square like Tahrir" (Abu-Lughod 2012, 25).

The growing use of social media networks and other digital technologies among even a minority of Egyptians fostered a situation where online public spaces were used as tools for framing discontents, like the lack of employment opportunities and repressive or abusive interactions with police. This attribution of similarity among a diverse array of Egyptians was critical in scaling up anti-government contention to new protest spaces. Facebook, and the We Are All Khaled Said page in particular, was instrumental as a source of solidarity for shocked and outraged individuals at police brutality in Egypt; the Facebook page was also critical infrastructure for organizing and disseminating information about protests. With over 1.2 million fans by the time Mubarak was removed from power, this page linked Egyptians across space and activating mechanisms of attribution of similarity and brokerage. Aggrieved Egyptians were able to come together around shared *places* of injustice, repression, and protest in physical as well as digital space. This allowed them to recognize their aligned struggles and aims. The *places* of protest in which such attribution of similarity occurred added meaning to collective action and facilitated upward scale shift. Considering all of these spatial dynamics of both direct and digital actions and interactions among protesters, there is a clear connection between these factors facilitating mechanisms of attribution of similarity, emulation, brokerage, and diffusion, and thus the outcome of an increase in the scale of protests in Egypt.

To recapitulate the main findings from this chapter and concluding section, my research and analysis of the Egyptian protest episode in this dissertation has shown that the relationships between the process of mobilization and its underlying mechanisms—repression and concessions and diffusion—and the process of scale shift and its underlying mechanisms—attribution of similarity, brokerage, diffusion, and emulation—were confirmed as has been documented in the literature on contentious politics. In testing my hypotheses on the causal influence of the *space* and *place* of those mechanisms on the resultant process outcomes—the size of protests for mobilization, and the scale of protests for scale shift—evidence was found to suggest, with varying degrees of strength, the following: a relationship between the *spaces* of protest, the cost of collective action, and repression, concessions, and diffusion; a relationships between the *places* of protest, each of the mechanisms of diffusion, attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation, the meaning of collective action, and scale shift. Additionally, potential links were found between the *places* of protest and repression, as well as the *spaces* of protest and brokerage.

CHAPTER 5: JORDAN

In September 2019, the Jordanian Teachers' Syndicate organized a national strike of more than 85,000 teachers from some 4,000 schools demanding a salary increase that teachers were promised five years ago. On the first day that teachers took to the streets to protest, security forces fired tear gas and water cannons at them for protesting at an unauthorized site, the traffic circle in Amman near the Interior Ministry. Video footage shows a security official making an announcement saying "there is no freedom of expression in this location."[42] If the teachers had protested at a site authorized by the government, would have been met with similar force and or would they have been permitted to freely protest? What about that location in particular led police to respond with repression that has historically not been common in Jordan?

For a country known for its liberal stance toward public demonstrations and rarely using force against protesters, the response from Jordanian security forces to this protest event stood out. That specific location, the Interior Ministry Circle, had significance for both the demonstrators and the state, harkening back to the attempted sit-in by the March 24 Youth Movement at that same traffic circle in 2011. This teacher strike was part of a years-long struggle for higher wages, but also should be understood in the context of a renewed protest movement that emerged in 2018 in the wake of the 2011 protests. The

[42] https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/teachers-protest-challenges-jordanian-status-quo/.

protest episode that occurred throughout 2011 in Jordan included some of the largest and most widespread protests in the country in decades. However, the size and scale that the protest achieved brought about limited, often superficial concessions. Years later, the diverse demographic of Jordanians that participated in protests were left with unfulfilled promises of political reform and little improvement, if any, in the economic situation. In many ways, the ongoing turmoil in surrounding countries, especially Syria, has made the situation more difficult for Jordan.

Given that many of the conditions and grievances that gave rise to the protest movement in Jordan in 2011 were not sufficiently addressed, why did protests not increase in size and scale as in Egypt and other MENA countries? What role did spatiality play in this? This chapter proceeds toward answering these questions by investigating the protest episode as a whole that occurred in Jordan in 2011, details of individual protest events, the key mechanisms associated with the processes of mobilization and scale shift that are directly related to the size and scale of protests, and the dynamics of spatiality that are relevant to each of these factors.

Overview: the 2011 Uprising

Studies of protests in Jordan since the 2011 uprisings often turn to 1989 in search of historical parallels. Protests in response to austerity measures as part of an IMF stabilization program in 1989 began in the south of the country and devolved into riots. Participants in this series of demonstrations included not just leftist, Palestinian, and Islamist activists, but also East Jordanians, a group that has historically consisted of loyal regime supporters. Those protests quickly expanded to include calls for anticorruption

measures and democratic reforms. Then-King Hussein dismissed the Prime Minister and ushered in moderate political and electoral reforms, including legalizing political parties and holding parliamentary elections.

Since that time, the country has experienced occasional periods of unrest that often coincide with regional events that have posed potential threats to Jordan's security. Especially considering the large portion of Jordanians of Palestinian origin, demonstrations in Jordan have taken place in response to signing a peace treaty with Israel, the 2000 Palestinian Intifada, and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. The kingdom has also experienced intermittent periods of reform, with attempts such as appointing a Deputy Prime Minister for Reform, releasing a National Agenda for Reform, and numerous economic and political development and liberalization programs. Pressure from domestic parties and activists were often counteracted by hardline elite pushing back against proposed reform measures.

A variety of opposition parties participate in Jordanian politics and, at times, contentious politics, including leftist parties, pan-Arab nationalist parties, and most prominently, the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and their political wing, the Islamic Action Front. After the succession of King Abdullah to the throne in 1999, the dissolution of parliament, delayed elections, and new electoral laws, meaningful political contestation was still far from being realized. After blatantly rigged elections in 2007, the Islamic Action Front boycotted the 2010 elections, and opposition parties that did participate saw little success (Ryan 2011). In the context of rising costs and unemployment, an educated and youthful population, widespread mistrust and corruption

among political and economic elites, and an unresponsive political and reform process, Jordanians were primed to mobilize in protest of the system that continued to fail them.

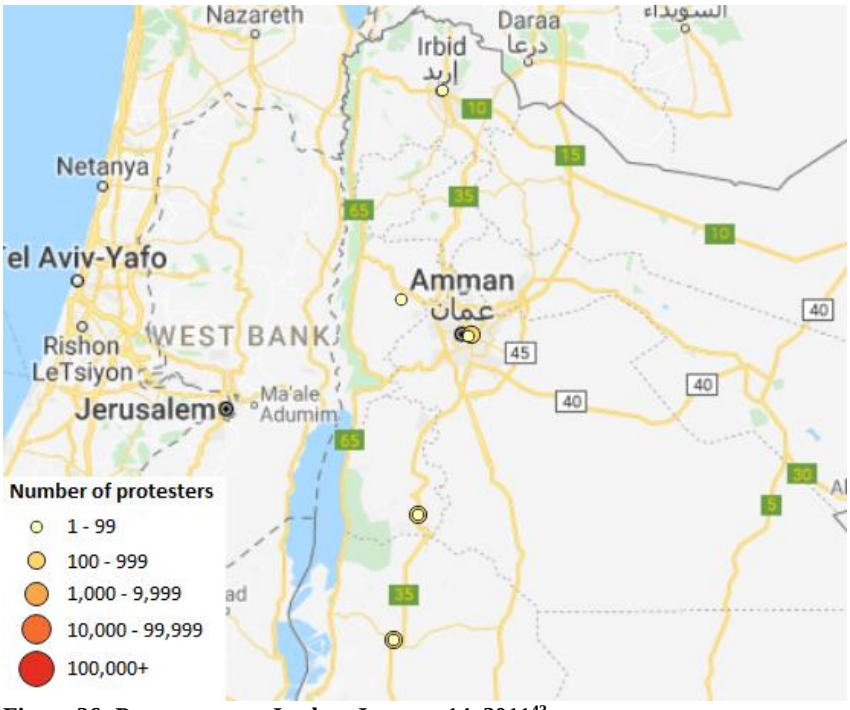

Figure 26: Protest events, Jordan, January 14, 2011[43]

The emergence of protests in Jordan in early 2011 took a similar trajectory to those in Tunisia, beginning as a spontaneous act of protest in a small peripheral town. Within a week, by January 14, protests of a few hundred to a thousand people, from Islamists to leftists, had taken place in at least six cities against rising prices, unemployment, and other economic concerns. The Jordanian government was prepared to take steps to preempt the demands of domestic actors before protests increased in size

[43] For protest events with conflicting counts for the number of protesters, I used the more conservative estimates.

and scale, and almost immediately they reduced the cost of fuel and food staples, like rice and sugar, and capped the prices of certain goods.

Ahead of protests that were scheduled for Friday, January 21, the Prime Minister Rifai offered further concessions in an attempt to ease economic hardships, including increasing civil servant and military wages, pledging no new taxes for the rest of the year, and ending a hiring freeze in some state sectors. Those concessions did little to appease protesters, however, and over 5,000 people to took to the streets in Amman on Friday, January 21; more protests also took place in big cities like Irbid and Zarqa as well as in much smaller ones like Karak, Madaba, and Tafileh. A number of political parties and former ministers participated in these demonstrations calling for comprehensive political and economic reforms, including that the prime minister and his government be dismissed.

Figure 27: Protest events, Jordan, January 21, 2011

By the following Friday, January 28, the world was watching massive political unrest spreading across the region; Tunisia's president had fled the country and tens of thousands of Egyptians had taken to the streets calling for the downfall of President Mubarak. After another Friday with thousands of Jordanians in the streets denouncing the government and demanding economic reforms, King Abdullah sacked the prime minister and his government on January 31 and appointed Marouf Bakhit as the new prime minister. Over the next two weeks, the king continued to take actions aimed at appeasing protesters. He met with representatives from the Muslim Brotherhood for the first time in nearly a decade; a new cabinet was installed, though the Brotherhood declined the offer to participate in it; and the Interior Minister announced a proposal to amend the Public

Gatherings Law so that protesters would no longer require permission to hold demonstrations or other such events.

Throughout February and March, protests of a few hundred to a few thousand people continued every Friday, as did calls for economic relief and electoral and constitutional reforms. Many other sporadic protests also occurred, but participants more often numbered in the range of dozens to hundreds. The sizes of protests remained relatively stable over this period, as did the scale of demonstrations and labor strikes, which occurred regularly in the same dozen or so cities and towns. A new youth movement attempted to stage a Tahrir Square-style occupation at the Interior Ministry traffic circle in downtown Amman, but, in a rare show of force, police and pro-regime supporters violently dispersed the sit-in. Still, the new Prime Minister, Marouf Bakhit, and his cabinet established a national dialogue committee, comprised of representatives from government, political parties, professional associations, civil society, youth, and others, to discuss political and electoral reforms dealing with issues of corruption, press freedom, and social justice, among others.

The government was willing and able to manage the smaller-scale protest events by conceding to the very specific, and often facile, demands of groups of workers and others that conducted sit-ins or strikes. For example, there were a series of sit-ins in Aqaba whose participants demand that day laborers be made full-time employees, and their demand was met. A sit-in among residents of various villages outside of Zarqa succeeded in getting the Greater Amman Municipality to provide water and electricity to their villages. After a series of protests and sit-ins by Jordan Press Foundation employees,

their demands for improved financial benefits were agreed to. Workers from the National Cable and Wire Manufacturing Company ended a six-day strike after receiving an increase in their monthly salaries in a deal worked out with company management and several lawmakers.

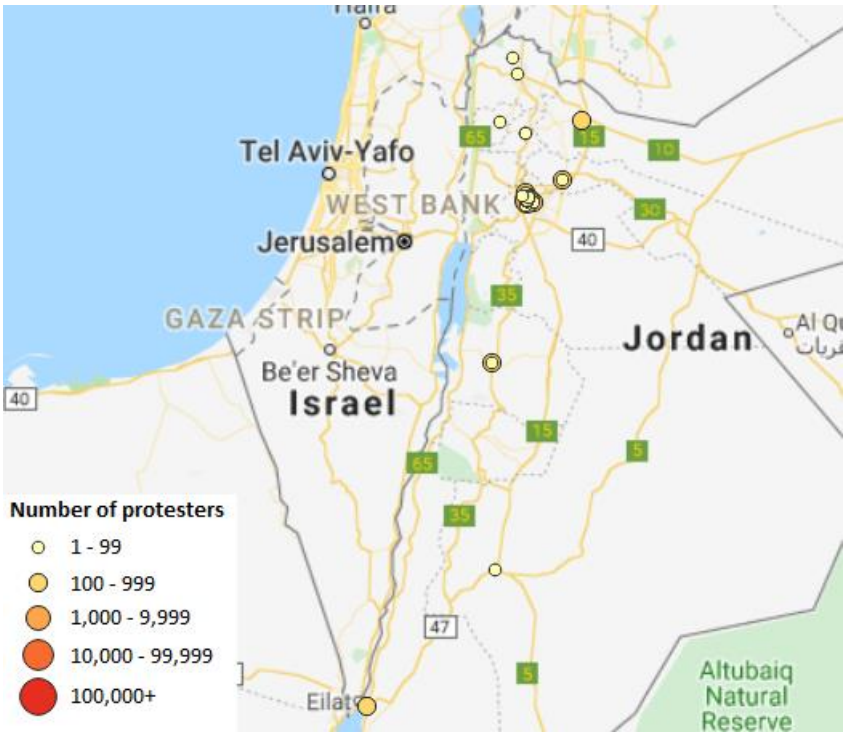

Figure 28: Protest events, Jordan March 2011

Other than a handful of demonstrations whose participants numbered in the thousands, most protest events numbered in the dozens up to a few hundred throughout July 2011 and consisted of distinct and limited participants and demands. As the scale of protests targeting large-scale political and economic reforms declined, so did government concessions. In July, the King announced another cabinet reshuffle. This type of political

restructuring gave the Jordanian monarchy an avenue of concession unavailable to leaders of republics in the region. Political leaders like prime ministers and cabinet officials gave the king an additional buffer layer of insulation between power and decision making, something unavailable to non-monarchical leaders like in Egypt. Though I only collected data through July 2011, secondary sources indicate that a similar dynamic between protests and government concessions continued; between 2011 and 2012, Jordan had four different prime ministers. Persistent calls for reform among disjointed opposition groups, through regular but more limited protests, were met with mostly superficial changes, with power ultimately remaining concentrated in the monarchy.

Reviewing the events of the seven month period investigated in this dissertation provides a broad picture of the overall trajectory that the protest episode took. Figure 4 and Figure 5 in Chapter 3 show how the size and scale of protests in Jordan changed over time. During the first three months of 2011, there were at least seven days where protest events across the country were attended by thousands of people, with the largest individual event having approximately 5,000 people. When considered in context of protests in Jordan, these are some of the biggest mobilizations in decades. The frequency of these events with thousands of people decreased over the months, with most days of protest consisting of a few dozen to a few hundred people. In short, there was an initial period of protest activity with more people participating than had been seen in a generation; that level of mobilization declined beginning in April 2011 until the end of July, the end of the period of the data collection period.

The scale of protests in Jordan did not vary significantly across the seven month period studied. There were a few weeks with documented protests at approximately ten different sites, but most weeks saw an average of less than four protest sites. These data show the scale of protests in Jordan to have fluctuated from week to week throughout this period, with no significant jumps or outliers. The only notable trend is the relatively steady decline over the last two months, with only five unique protest sites documented in July. Taken together, the level of protests exhibited across Jordan, as measured by my dependent variables, was more significant in local, historical context than any other time in the previous 20 years; however, in comparison to protest movements seen across the MENA region, and particularly in Egypt for the purposes of this dissertation, both the size and scale of protests in Jordan throughout the first half of 2011 were negligible. With the benefit of hindsight, we also know that there was no significant change in the dynamics of protest and politics following the time period investigated here, at least not until years later.

While the above chronological overview of the Jordanian protest episode established an important baseline of knowledge for what happened and when, summarizing some of the data collected from news media sources of individual protest events offers additional insights.[44] Figure 29 breaks down the proportion of different

[44] The database includes approximately 250 accounts of protest events and reports of repression and concessions in Jordan. This is not a comprehensive count of the total number of protest events that occurred throughout Jordan in the time period investigated (January 1, 2011 through July 31, 2011); due to a number of resource constraints, this database includes a limited, but representative, sample of protest events. Because this dataset does not contain a comprehensive accounting of protest events and their associated data (number of participants, injuries, etc.), the visualizations below use percentages rather than raw data. This will allow me to provide an overall and representative portrayal without misrepresenting the scale of what transpired. An additional complication with using the raw data is that certain categories of the data

types of protest events that occurred in Jordan based on the data I collected. The majority of the protest events, 58%, consisted of demonstrations, rallies, marches, and the like. More than two-thirds of demonstrations occurred in the capital city of Amman, with most of the remainder spread out between other large cities, like Zarqa and Irbid, and smaller ones, like Karak, Maan, and Tafileh. These protest events took place in a variety of locations, such as outside of embassies, mosques, government buildings including parliament and the Prime Ministry, union and professional association headquarters, and in downtown Amman. The sizes of these protest events generally ranged from a few dozen to over 5,000 participants, and consisted of a range of groups, from youth and leftist activists to members of the Islamic Action Front (the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan) and other Islamists

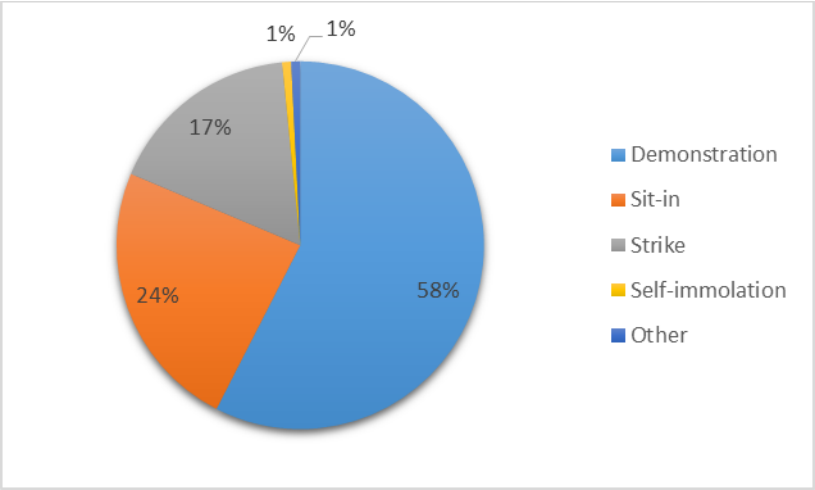

Figure 29: Type of protest event, Jordan, January-July 2011

may be counted multiple times. For example, a single protest event could be coded as demanding both the removal of the prime minister from office as well as increased rights, or coded for multiple types of repression used against protesters.

Sit-ins accounted for nearly a quarter (24%) of protest events cataloged in the database, three-quarters of which took place in Amman. Like the demonstrations, sit-ins mostly took place in front of government buildings, workplaces, or embassies. Many sit-in participants were public sector workers, from teachers and doctors to municipality employees and journalists; various Islamist groups and youth organizations also held a number of sit-ins, as did expatriates (e.g., Libyans or Syrians protesting against their own governments outside of their embassies). Sit-in participants made a variety of demands, most of which centered on general political reforms (e.g., combatting corruption, calling on certain politicians to step down) or improvements in working conditions, salaries, and/or other workplace policies.

Seventeen percent (17%) of protests events in Jordan in this period were strikes. There were two significant work stoppages cataloged in this period, one by teachers in March 2011 that took place across the country to pressure authorities to establish a teachers' professional association and raise salaries, among other demands. This strike lasted only a few days and took place in big cities, like Amman and Zarqa, as well as smaller cities and towns, like Jerash and Maan. A strike by public sector doctors demanding higher wages took place in April 2011 for more than two weeks across the country. Other more limited work stoppages, also taking place because of inadequate wages, were organized by municipality employees, bus company drivers, university staff, electric company workers, and water fee collectors, for example, and were very limited in duration, mostly one to two days.

The remaining 2% of protest events were self-immolations, a candlelight vigil in solidarity with protesters in Syria, and the resignation of three lawmakers over "unfair management" of a corruption case in parliament.

Looking at the reasons for protest in Figure 30 below across all of the various types of protest events, from demonstrations to strikes to sit-ins, shows that, where specified, policy changes were the most demanded type of action in 39% of protest events. The most common policy demands were for general political and economic reforms, as well as better benefits and working conditions for a wide variety of public sector workers. Some protest event participants had very specific legislative demands, for example, to guarantee press freedoms, to establish a professional teachers association, and to amend the Landlord and Tenants Law after substantial rent increases on merchant shops in downtown Amman.

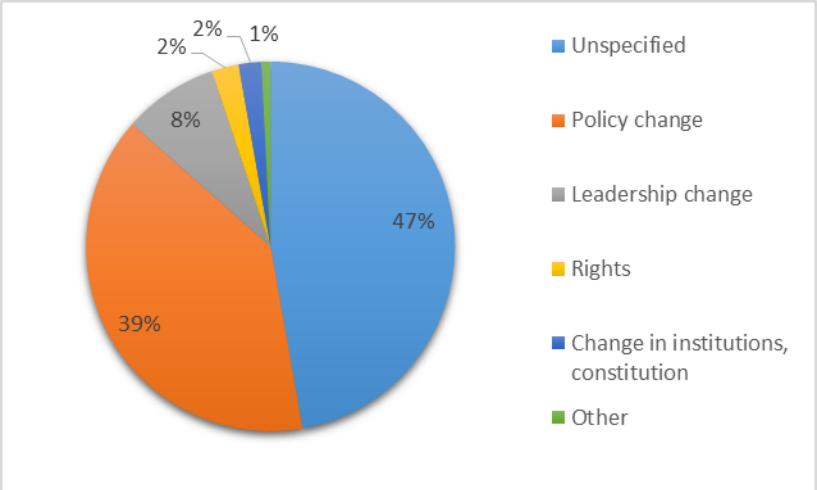

Figure 30: Reason for protest event, Jordan, January-July 2011

Nearly all of the calls for leadership change, which accounted for only 8% of protest event demands, were for the dissolution of parliament or for the prime minister and/or his ministers to step down from power. Constitutional changes and changes to governmental institutions accounted for the primary reasons for another 2% of protest events. Among the demands were a series of constitutional changes to allow for an elected Senate, a government formed from the parliamentary majority, establishing a constitutional court, overhauling electoral laws, and ending the role of the General Intelligence Department in the public and political life. One especially notable point about the many various political and constitutional demands was that there were no documented calls for King Abdullah to step down from power or any other demands regarding the nature of the monarchical system in Jordan. Any calls for changes to the government were mostly focused on the prime minister or parliament.

As previously mentioned, the government and a portion of those who initially participated in protests were open to implementing, or at least engaging in discussions on how to implement, some of the immediate demands that many protesters had coalesced around. As the protest episode continued, however, the size and scale of protests declined. The remainder of this chapter seeks to better understand the dynamics of and reason for this trajectory, despite the activation of key mechanisms of mobilization and scale shift. As with the previous chapter on Egypt, I probe the case of the Jordanian protest episode to identify the influence of certain spatial characteristics of protest sites on those key mechanisms. The next section provides important background information

on Jordan, its spatial dynamics, and particular protest events, all of which will be drawn on in the analyses that follow.

Spatiality of Protests in Jordan

While much of the remainder of this chapter is structured around the mechanisms and processes of mobilization and scale shift being investigated in this dissertation, I first provide an overview of some of the spatial dynamics of protests in Jordan. This background introduces some important themes, locations, and events from the Jordanian protest episode that will be drawn from in the ensuing analyses.

After more than two months of regular protests in Amman, a group of young Jordanians organized largely through a Facebook group to hold a permanent sit-in at the traffic circle near the Interior Ministry beginning on March 24. Like many of the recent protest events preceding it, the March 24 Youth movement was calling for bold anticorruption action and changes to electoral and tax laws. These youth were inspired by and hoped to imitate the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo, but the layout of the traffic circle they chose exhibited some critical spatial differences to Tahrir Square that impacted the violability of the sit-in. Al-Dakhiliya Circle, also known as the Interior Ministry Circle, is not a standard traffic circle. Rather it consists of three overlapping levels, with a lower road passing underneath the circle, the traffic circle itself connecting to multiple roads, and then an upper-level bridge perpendicular to the lower road. Figure 31 below shows the complexity of this layout. From this description and image, it is clear that the Interior Ministry Circle is not conducive for gathering large number of people in one space, especially in comparison to the vastly larger and wide open spaces of Tahrir

Square (see Figure 32). But, "as an intersection of multiple Amman neighborhoods, streets, and major overpasses, the site was chosen because it was located in an area central to daily life in Amman," and thus the disruption from a sit-in there would have maximal impact (Ryan 2018, 28). Not only is this space not pedestrian friendly, but its many levels and entrance and exit points makes it difficult to establish a secure protest site whose boundaries can be controlled, and also makes it easily policeable.

Figure 31: Interior Ministry Circle, Amman
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amman#/media/File:Jamal_Abdul_Nasser_Circle_Amman_Jordan.jpg

Figure 32: Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt
Source: https://egyptianstreets.com/2015/01/31/tahrir-square-redevelopment-kicks-off-with-new-garage/

The sit-in was attended by a variety of opposition groups with common, specific demands that were consistent with those of the protests that had been active across the country for more than two months. Youth groups from the south of the country were present, as were leftist and Islamist groups. But it was not just a demonstration of activists, but also a patriotic rally that was attended by Jordanians across ethnic, class, gender, age, and religious lines. Pro-reform and pro-Jordan chants were heard, and the crowd was dotted with displays of national colors, flags, and traditional *keffiyahs* (male head scarves) (Yaghi and Clark 2014, 254). This was on March 24. The following day, the situation turned in a very different direction.

Barricades that had been put up to contain the sit-in protesters. Police began firing tear gas at the participants as *baltagiya* began throwing rocks at them from the upper bridge, as well as attacking and beating them. Some police stood by, while others partook in the violence. Before long, the sit-in had been dispersed, and more than 100 people were injured. The willingness of the regime to use such violence to break up a protest event was not taken lightly by many youth activists and seen by many as a turning point in the Jordanian protest episode of 2011. Though demonstrations continued after this event, participation of many secular and liberal protesters waned, and thus so did some of the ideological diversity and mobilizational resources and support of the protest movement at large.

One particularly important aspect of Jordanian politics—the division between Jordanians of Palestinian origin and Transjordanians, or East Jordanians (people from east of the Jordan River)—was referenced in one activist's recounting of the events of March 25. An activist was told by both a security officer and a regime supporter that the protest was supposedly an attempt by Palestinians to commit a coup against the king (Yaghi and Clark 2014, 254). This type of rumor or conspiracy theory was a tactic often used to create distrust and division among opposition factions and dissuade coalition building. The reality of the East Jordanian and Palestinian-Jordanian division permeates many aspects of Jordanian life, including politics, and is important to be understood in historical context.

Jordan's current estimated population is just over 10 million people, about double the country's population in 2004, just 15 years ago. The protest episodes that spread

across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in 2011 emerged in a period of significant population growth in Jordan.[45] More than two-thirds of the population live in and around Amman, the capital, Irbid, and Zarqa in the north of the country.[46] About one-third of residents are non-Jordanian, a result, in part, of the country's location surrounded by countries that have sent large numbers of refugees into Jordan over the years. And that doesn't account for about half of Jordanians who are of Palestinian background, many of whom came to Jordan as refugees after the 1948 and 1967 wars with Israel.

This distinction between Palestinian-Jordanians and the East Jordanians is actually one of the primary divisions in Jordanian politics, and one that has manifested itself economically and spatially as well. Generally speaking, the army and public sector consist primarily of East Jordanians while Palestinian Jordanians have dominated in the private sector (Ryan 2018, 24). Many Amman neighborhoods are also often concentrated with one group or the other, which can have implications for the quality of services they receive or how they are treated by police. Palestinian Jordanians are among the "usual suspects" of political opposition, and thus often treated differently in different spaces. According to a longtime Jordanian activist, "“You can yell ‘*Yoskut Abdullah*’ in places like Hay Tufayleh” – a neighborhood in southern Amman that is settled largely by members and relatives from the East Bank town of Tufayleh – “but do it in [Palestinian] Jebal Hussein and you will get teargassed”" (Schwedler 2018a, 203). This idea of

[45] Data from 2013 and 2019 reports, available at: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/vitstats/index.cshtml#previous. Estimated 2011 population: 7.4 million https://data.worldbank.org/country/jordan.
[46] https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/population-stands-around-95-million-including-29-million-guests

variations in repression across space will be discussed further below, but the point here is that the *space* and *place* of protests mater.

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, *space* refers to the actual physical geography of an area, whereas *place* refers to the symbolic or socially significant meaning of a location. Amman is a city built on a series of hills and valleys. Its downtown area sits amidst ancient ruins and narrow, winding, steep streets, and extending west are a series of seven traffic circles that roughly divide the city's north and south. Though the city has multiple large roundabouts that could be the site of protests, like the Interior Ministry Circle mentioned above, it does not have a parallel to Tahrir Square, a location with shared historical and social meaning among Egyptians. The *space* of the Interior Ministry Circle in Amman directly influenced key dynamics of the attempted occupation of that location, including the extent to which protesters could congregate and move into and out of the area, as well as the way counter-protesters and police could surround and attack protesters from all sides as well as from above. But another reason the protest movement was unsuccessful in maintaining a Tahrir Square-like occupation, at the Interior Ministry Circle or anywhere else, was the *place* of protests, or rather the lack of shared symbolic meaning for protest spaces among Jordanians. As David Patel explains, a "Jordanian might see a parallel [to Tahrir Square] with a particular public space in Amman, perhaps the downtown square in front of al-Hussein Mosque, but he has no confidence that other Jordanians would see the same parallel" (Patel 2013, 7).

Despite the lack of preexisting shared meaning of the *place* of the Interior Ministry Circle as a site of protest, the act of occupation had the potential to establish

meaning on such a location. Similar to how Tahrir Square had become an idealized, enclosed, and miniaturized model of a state—including participatory self-government, security, borders, healthcare, infrastructure—the occupation of a public space was seen as "very dangerous for the regime, because through occupation you could raise the notion of liberation. If you occupy a public space and say ‘This space designates a space of liberty and freedom, where we can say whatever we want and demand the future we want’—it’s as if you’re liberating that space from a certain occupier, which is the regime" (Amis 2016, 180). The threat of occupation, especially of a critical thoroughfare in downtown Amman, was likely a contributing factor to the regime's uncharacteristically violent response to protest.

Is Amman's lack of a central square with shared meaning among Jordanians simply a product of how the city naturally expanded and evolved over the past century? Patel provides a possible explanation. He argues a broader point that republics, like Egypt, and monarchies, like Jordan, tend to have different spatial layouts. Republics that were formerly monarchies that were overthrown have often built or expanded large public squares to commemorate a revolution or celebrate the nation, giving such spaces a shared meaning among citizens. Patel is not making a deterministic argument, but rather showing that it is the combination *space* and *place*, of focal squares and "how citizens collectively understand and imagine elements of that urban built environment," that make sites like Tahrir Square obvious, unifying, and potentially powerful spaces for protests (Patel 2013, 22-23). Schwedler notes that the Interior Ministry Circle in Amman has not traditionally been a site of protests, but "its location near the Ministry of the Interior

suggested that the protesters were attempting to inscribe new meaning on the location" (Schwedler 2018a, 207).

Whatever the reason for Amman's lack of central squares, there are elements of Jordan's urban development that have impacted traditional sites of protests. For example, Schwedler and Fayyaz note that as new areas are built up and some aspects of existing neighborhoods are reconstructed, the government has transformed these spaces in such a way to limit the potential impact or relevance of protests in these spaces. Existing barricades set up around a number of important government buildings, particularly those which have been the site of protest events before like parliament and certain embassies, have been expanded (Schwedler and Fayyaz 2009, 5). Traffic circles have been replaced by or augmented with high-speed overpasses or underpasses, both increasing vehicular traffic routes while often limiting pedestrian-friendly public spaces, thus having the effect of limiting the potential impact of protests in these spaces. As Schwedler aptly points out, "efforts to create or maintain order are not imposed on the spaces of the city, but rather they are directly built into it" (Schwedler 2018a, 197).

Another example of how both *space* and *place* play important roles in Jordanian protests can be seen in protests that have taken place with some regularity for years outside of the Kaluti mosque in west Amman. The mosque itself is less important as the site of protest than its proximity to the Israeli embassy, which is the target of the protests. The mosque also sits adjacent to an empty lot that is a useful space for protesters to assembly. Especially since Kaluti protests became almost weekly occurrences in 2011, protesters and various security forces developed a routine of how these events transpire,

which is detailed in Schwedler 2018b. The protests rarely actually tried to march to the Israeli embassy, but rather engaged in a ritual of back and forth contentious actions with police. Protesters would gradually move closer to the police, who would stand in line with shields raised, but anyone "can easily walk freely around the back and sides of the police line. The appearance is one of the protesters performing an effort to march on the Israeli embassy more than actually trying to do so" (Schwedler 2018b, 80).

For the protesters, "reaching the embassy was not the objective as much as protesting against it" (Schwedler 2018b, 82); in other words, the *place* of the protest (near but not actually in front of the Israeli embassy) was less important than the *space* (sufficient open space for gathering groups of people) and message (various anti-Israeli, pro-Palestinian agendas) of protests. On the contrary, the *place* of the protests mattered greatly to the regime. When asked what would happen if they tried to protest up the street closer to the Israeli embassy, an independent activist quickly replied "“They would arrest us and beat the shit out of us”…The protests would be shut down, he said, and they would not be able to protest at all" (Schwedler 2018b, 82). Permitting the Kaluti protests allows the Jordanian regime to demonstrate that it allows political dissent with little risk, so long as the established routine is maintained (Schwedler 2018b, 84).

Analyzing the *space* and *place* of protests above has focused on the capital city, but it is also important to look further afield to other cities and governorates outside of Amman. Such a geographic expansion naturally takes us to southern Jordan, where the first protests of the 2011 uprising took place. As discussed above, the divide between East Jordanians and Palestinian Jordanians has been a fixture in Jordanian politics for

decades. East Jordanians, who claim roots in the tribes and clans that have lived in the area for at least the last century, have been a critical source of support for the regime, but actually comprised most of the protesters in Jordan's southern cities. Both young and old pushed the boundaries of confronting the regime beyond what had been done in the past. The tribal youth activist network known as Hirak went so far as to directly criticize and even mock the royal family; a group of retired service members and a group of 36 tribal leaders each issued manifestos claiming the regime was "anti-democratic, myopic, corrupt, and in danger of turning Jordan into the de facto Palestinian state" (Ryan 2018, 27-28).

Coming from the most historically loyal and influential tribes and families, these challenges to the regime could not be dismissed as the "usual suspects" of opposition, namely Islamists, leftists, and Palestinian-Jordanians. In fact, East Jordanians in southern towns to Islamist and Communist groups in Amman were unified in one of the initial demands of the 2011 protests, for Prime Minister Samir Rifai to step down. Rifai was actually the fourth in his powerful pro-regime family to serve as Prime Minister, but many East Jordanians still questioned the family's Syrian and Palestinian roots. In the view of many East Jordanians, Rifai and his government were neoliberal and technocratic Palestinian businessmen. To some East Jordanians, their tribal backgrounds make them the true, pure Jordanians, whereas the refugees, immigrants, and others are simply "guests." Rifai was fired and replaced with a former military officer from an influential East Jordanian tribe, Marouf Bakhit, which may have temporarily appeased some military and tribal leaders (Ryan 2018, 105-106). But these territorially-based identities

intersect with political, economic, and social identities and discontents in multiple ways, and without meaningful changes with respect to the underlying grievances of most East Jordanian and other protesters, demonstrations in southern cities like Kerak, Maan, Tafilah, and Dhiban continued unabated.

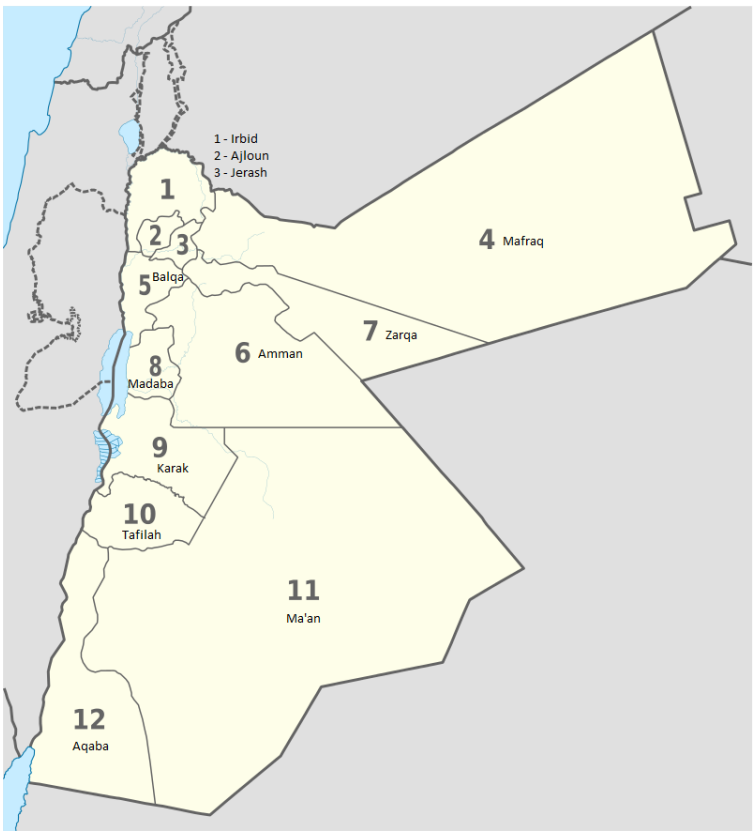

Figure 33: Map of Administrative Districts of Jordan
Source: Adapted from Governorates of Jordan, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governorates_of_Jordan

When discussing different regions aspects of protests in Jordan, it is useful to explain how I am talking about different areas of the country in this dissertation. Figure 33 shows a map of Jordan's administrative districts. The capital, Amman, which contains

a significant portion of the country's population and is unique in many ways compared to the rest of the country, can be considered its own region. Everything south of the capital is what I am considering southern Jordan, discussed in the paragraphs above. And everything to the north and east of Amman can be considered northern Jordan. These distinctions are not just important for descriptive purposes, but analytical ones as well. There was some regional variation in the locations of protests. In Amman, most protests took place in downtown and eastern Amman, the commercial hub and residential neighborhood, respectively, of many poorer Ammanis; in contrast, most protests in southern Jordanian cities took place in front of government buildings (Yaghi and Clark 2014, 245). There were also notable regional differences in the organizers of protests. Curtis Ryan (2018) points out that "demonstrations in Irbid and Zarqa were often led by Islamists, those in Amman by Islamists at times allied with leftist and nationalist parties, and those in Dhiban, Kerak, Tafilah, Ma'an, and elsewhere often by the Hirak" (Ryan 2018, 73). Some of these differences are reflective of the demographics of the regions, but despite these differences, there was significant overlap in the demands of many of the protests that took place. Unlike past episodes of protest, protesters across ideological and geographic divides could agree on their desire for meaningful economic reforms and actually linked them with political demands, namely the removal of Prime Minister Rifai and his government (Yaghi and Clark 2014, 244).

This seeming confluence around the aspirations of those disparate groups organizing protests was an indicator of the potential for protests to scale up in size. However, there were some disagreements among youth and Islamist organizers during

the failed March 24 sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle in Amman, and apparent attempts by security forces to sow divisions between Palestinian Jordanians and East Jordanians. Some protest leaders decided they would prefer that "activists of the governorates in southern Jordan to take the lead, as this would end the regime's rumors that the opposition is mainly composed of Palestinians" (Yaghi and Clark 2014, 255). This was where Hirak was able to be a key player in terms of scaling up protests horizontally, spreading them to cities and towns across the country. Composed of a few dozen tribal youth activist groups, Hirak was dominant in the south but also played an important role in coordinating protests across the country. Their diffuse nature allowed activists to coordinate with Hirak groups in other cities so that protest events took place on the same day and time while otherwise acting independently (Ryan 2018, 73).

Though Hirak groups in more prosperous communities, such as those in and around Amman, were focused predominantly on political reforms, some southern Hirak groups linked political reforms with much needed economic ones. They made a clear link between "economics as inextricable from politics in the chain of causation: *national* corruption drove *regional* privatization causing *local* impoverishment" (Yom 2014, 246). Whether it was the removal of subsidies acting as a regressive tax on poor southern communities, or privatization of phosphate mines causing long-term unemployment, neoliberal policies at the national level had significant negative impacts at the local scale, and southern Hirak activists demanded comprehensive reform.

How Do *Spaces* of Repression and Concessions Impact Mobilization?

State repression in Jordan differs from many other countries in the MENA region; Jordan is generally more permissive of contentious political activities and security forces are much less likely to use violence. There were very few instances of violent repression among the hundreds of protests that took place in Jordan in 2011. I include in this section a summary of the types of repression documented in my database from the 2011 protest episode in Jordan; I also take a broader look at the Jordanian regime's strategy of repression, including how it differs across various spatial dimensions, how different police and security forces are deployed at protest events, and how repression is balanced with concessions. I situate this discussion in the literature on contentious politics, specifically addressing the critical role of repression and concessions in the process of protest mobilization. In discussing these issues, I assess the role of the mechanisms of repression and concessions in the process of mobilization, and additionally seek evidence to prove or disprove two hypotheses related to the spatiality of those mechanisms: 1) Protest *spaces* that hinder repression will decrease the cost of collective action and thus facilitate greater mobilization. 2) Protest *spaces* that are conceded to demonstrators reduce the cost of collective action and thus facilitate greater mobilization.

The violence that occurred at the March 25 sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle, as described above, stands out as a deviation from the norm of policing at protest events in Jordan. The lack of violent repression by security forces is one of the few norms of policing protests in Jordan, however. There is an apparent variation in policing practices

across Jordan, between different types of neighborhoods within a city like Amman as well as between northern and southern cities in general. In more upscale neighborhoods, like in West Amman, police presence in daily life is mostly invisible. But when protests take place in these more affluent neighborhoods, security forces come out in large numbers to send a message to protesters. They generally try to disperse protesters quickly or just block their movement before reaching protest sites. In refugee camps, campuses, and many southern towns, policing looks very different. Police are much more visible in daily life and are much more likely to be seen patrolling the streets. Protests that take place in these spaces are often tolerated, with police mainly attempting to contain protests from growing too large or turning to violence rather than disperse them. These variations in tactics are "in part a function of the space, visibility, and potential for disruption, but they are more significantly a function of class and proximity to high-valued neighborhoods or commercial districts" (Schwedler 2018a, 203-204; Schwedler and Fayyaz 2009, 4).

Although I have spoken generally about "police" or "security forces" in this chapter, there are actually multiple distinct security services that have unique roles during protests. Understanding these different roles will help in understanding the regime's overall approach to repression and protests. The Public Security Directorate, or PSD, who are in charge of routine policing, have a more casual and familiar role at protests. They are often seen walking in small groups throughout crowds of protesters, even chatting with them and handing out water bottles. There are instances, however, like an attempted sit-in on July 15, when the PSD attacked protesters and even journalists (Ryan 2018, 32).

The darak forces are Jordan's militarized police that play the role of riot police, equipped with riot gear and armored vehicles. Riot police will often act as a physical barrier as they line up shoulder-to-shoulder with shields raised blocking protester movements, which can result in mild confrontations that are usually limited to pushing. But, depending on the situation and spatial layout, darak do not need to hold the line and will allow protesters and other passers-by to move through and around them (Schwedler 2018b, 77).

The General Intelligence Directorate, known as mukhabarat or secret police, generally play a passive role in protests, monitoring protest leaders and participants. But they play a much larger role in Jordanian public and private life, engaging in what could be called "soft security." This can take the form of calling political activists and journalists to come to the intelligence headquarters "for a cup of coffee" to "harassing and intimidating citizens, threatening them with physical, financial, or professional retaliation," with the intention of individuals to censor themselves (Ryan 2018, 157; Schwedler 2018b, 77). Mukhabarat are also alleged to sow divisions between opposition groups in order to dissuade broader cooperation. For example, activists argue that the GID tried to get Hirak groups to withdraw from participating in joint protests by claiming Islamist or Palestinian influence (Ryan 2018, 66-67). Mukhabarat also infiltrated social media groups to monitor and influence online political activities of opposition groups, leaders, and individual participants (Ryan 2011, 386).[47]

[47] The role of the *mukhabarat* in Jordanian politics and society is so extensive that even high-ranking government officials have decried them as the major obstacle to reform in the country: "This country is ruled by the intelligence services…Nothing happens without their knowledge, or consent, or both" (Ryan 2018, 158).

Finally, there are the *baltagiya* or thugs, plain-clothed regime loyalists who are brought in, sometimes by the busload, to engage in direct confrontations with protesters. Though the baltagiya are not an official police force, they are often seen coordinating with darak before or after protests, and generally thought to be on the government payroll (Ryan 2018, 32). In the case of the March 25 sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle, darak stood by as baltagiya threw stones and beat protesters with clubs (Schwedler 2018a, 207). The use of these pro-regime thugs increased as the incidence of protests did in 2011, giving the regime a way to aggressively constrain demonstrations without uniformed security forces being seen and recorded engaging in violence against peaceful protesters.

Despite the diversity of active security forces in Jordan and uncommon use of force at the Interior Ministry Circle, instances of repression used against protesters in Jordan were fairly infrequent in 2011, reported in less than 6% of documented protest events. Of the cases where there was repression, 43% included fighting between anti-government protesters and police or security forces, as shown in Figure 34 below. These clashes most often took place at events with a few hundred people and involved fighting with no weapons or unsophisticated ones like rocks, sticks, batons, or knives. Approximately two-thirds of the protest events that were repressed occurred in Amman, the rest in Zarqa, Maan, and Karameh. Crowd control tactics like tear gas and water cannons were used by police in 26% of reported repression, and many of these events saw dozens of police and protesters injured. In a number of instances where crowd control tactics were used, there were also clashes between protesters and regime supporters. Some activists suspect that at least a portion of these regime loyalists are

government-supported baltagiya and actually coordinate their actions with police (Ryan 2018, 32). In a small minority of cases of repression, the government established curfews or attempted to restrict political freedoms by banning demonstrations in certain "vital intersections" like the traffic circle near the Interior Ministry in Amman.

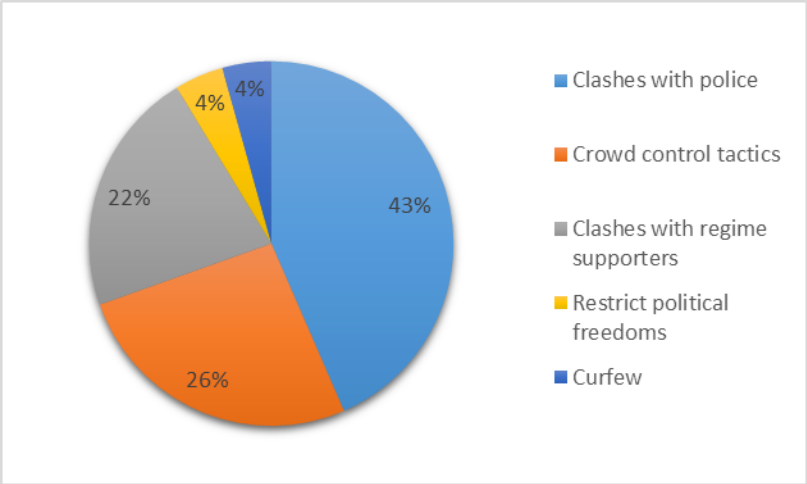

Figure 34: Types of repression used against protesters, Jordan, January-July 2011

Included in the data I collected from news media articles was information on the numbers of people arrested, injured, or killed during protest events in Jordan. Arrests or detentions of anti-government protesters were only documented in less than 2% of protest events, with numbers ranging from several up to 37. A violent protest took place after a funeral in Maan where angry protesters set fire to dozens of vehicles and buildings, resulting in three injuries and 37 arrests.[48] In response to the March 24 sit-in calling for political and constitutional reforms, at the Interior Ministry traffic circle in Amman

[48] "Government threatens tough measures against Maan rioters." *The Jordan Times* (January 5, 2011).

described above, 21 people were arrested and more than 150 injured, including police, after government loyalists attacked the protesters with sticks and stones. This was also the only event in my database that documented the death of a protester, though there was some debate about whether the man's death was the result of police brutality or a heart attack.[49] The space of the traffic circle where this protest event occurred, especially its three overlapping levels, made it difficult for protesters to secure and easy for police and counter-protesters to infiltrate and attack.

Unsurprisingly, there was almost complete overlap between protest events with repression and protest events that resulted in injuries. Nearly three-quarters of protest events with injuries had 20 or more injuries, with a handful tallying over 100. A sit-in among up to 1,000 Salafi Islamists in Zarqa that started out peacefully ended in violence; there are conflicting reports, but clashes broke out between the protesters and either a rival group, police, thugs, or locals displeased with the Salafi demonstrators' message. Police tried to disperse the groups with tear gas, and in the end, at least 85 people were injured, many of them police. Another notable event took place in downtown Amman where protesters clashed and pro-government counter-protesters clashed; 20 journalists and at least a dozen others were injured.

Given the above discussion on the overall approach to the use of police and security forces at protests and across different geographies, the Jordanian regime's response to protests in 2011 could be characterized as "soft security." Protests were allowed to take place and were rarely met with violence from state security forces, with a

[49] "Gov't determined to enforce law as opposition escalates campaign." *The Jordan Times* (March 27, 2011).

few exceptions. But the increasing utilization of baltagiya to attack protesters was a notable and worrisome trend. This trend, which could certainly be considered an increase in the use of a form of repression, coincided with a decrease in the level of participation at protest events following the use of violence by police and baltagiya at the Interior Ministry Circle sit-in. The pervasive presence of secret police in Jordanian life, from online surveillance and monitoring of protesters and opposition leaders to intimidation and threats, exemplifies the "soft security" approach of the government. These tactics of repression were combined with swift concessions by the regime as an attempt to signal to protesters that their demands were being heard and addressed. Such concessions included short-term economic relief from the rising cost of living in the form of lowering fuel and food prices and raising public sector and military salaries, some of which were implemented mere days after the first protests began in January 2011. In addition, the one demand in common between nearly all of the opposition groups at the outset of protests was that Samir Rifai and his government be dismissed, which the King acquiesced to by the end of January 2011 (Abu-Rish 2012, 240-241).

The Jordanian regime was attempting to find a balance in their response to protests between repression and concessions. Figure 35 shows a diagram of a state's potential options plotted in two dimensional space. The state is aiming to find a point on the graph, a certain level of repression and concessions, that is sufficient to discourage protests. Point A represents a strategy of using only concessions that that is sufficient to discourage protests, and Point B represents a strategy of using only repression that is sufficient to discourage protests. Thus any strategy that combines repression and

concessions at a point that falls below the AB line would be insufficient to discourage protests, and any strategy that falls above line AB would be sufficient to discourage protests. Part of deciding on a strategy involves considering the various costs of both repression and concessions. If repression is cheap, the cost line will be relatively shallow and intersect the AB line at point C, meaning a strategy that relies mostly on repression will be sufficient to discourage protests. If concessions are cheaper, the cost line will be steeper and intersect the AB line at point D, resulting in a concessions-heavy strategy (Goldstone and Tilly 2001, 86-87).

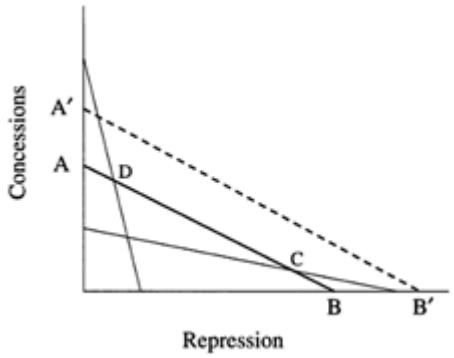

Figure 35: Concessions and Repression
Source: Adaptation of Figure 7.1 in Goldstone and Tilly 2001, 187

Of course, the reality is much more complicated and governments face innumerable complex factors when implementing strategies of repression and concessions. A choice of strategy is not a one-time fixed decision. In practice, decision makers are constantly reassessing the situation and how they should respond to it. Government responses can also influence the costs and threats to governments and

protesters. "Weak repression or concessions can increase perceptions of state weakness, or raise popular support for an opposition movement…Excessively strong repression can raise the perceptions of current threat, and also cause the opposition to gain allies…meaning higher levels of concessions and repression will be needed to suppress protests. Thus the effect of state actions in response to protest may be to shift the suppression line AB outward to A′B′" (Goldstone and Tilly 2001, 189).

While this diagram presents a useful model for understanding regime strategies, governments are working with imperfect and ever-changing information means and so governments don't always respond in ways that end up discouraging protests. Unsurprisingly, cycles of protest episodes and regime responses often lead to other scenarios.

In Chapter 4, I described five different pathways that are likely to result from various combinations and levels of repression and concessions in response to protests. The situation in Jordan in 2011 does not seem to fit any of these ideal types very well, except perhaps the final one. Protests were not met with severe repression; protests were not met with repression that led to greater protests and then severe repression; protests did not lead a series of repression/concessions and then more protests in a classic "spiral" of revolutionary conflict; and a series of protest, repression, and expanding protests did not end in massive concessions. The most similar scenario to the Jordanian situation is probably that protests led to concessions, albeit not significantly consequential ones.

The concessions referred to in this chapter—including installing a new prime minister and cabinet, the king agreeing to meet with the Muslim Brotherhood for the first

time in a decade, proposals to amend the Public Gathering Law, increased public sector wages, price controls, local or sector-specific demands, and establishing a committee to discuss political and electoral reforms—were all political or policy decisions that are difficult to connect to individual protest events, let alone spatiality of protests. In reviewing my database of protest events for instances that lend credence to the hypothesis that protest *spaces* that are ceded to demonstrators reduces the cost of collective action, I did not find protest events where that was the case. On the contrary, there were multiple cases of protest where the police were rather rigid in their adherence to managing the *spaces* where protests were permitted.

As discussed above, Jordan is relatively permissive with regard to protests compared to its regional peers, and so both security forces and activists have a mutual understanding about what types of activities and protest *spaces* are within the permitted bounds, such as downtown Amman near the Al Husseini Mosque, in front of parliament, or at the Greater Amman Municipality headquarters. When protesters deviated from those accepted norms of protest, particularly in terms of the *spaces* of protest, there were a few instances of police responding with violence and crowd control tactics. One prominent example already discussed was the attempted sit-in at the Interior Ministry circle that was violently disbanded. Its location in Amman and function as a major traffic intersection meant that a demonstration there, particularly a permanent sit-in, would be extremely disruptive; before 2011, that location was not historically a protest site, and so staging a demonstration there could have been considered breaking the norms of protests in Amman. In terms of the physical *space* of protest and repression there, the multi-level

structure of the traffic circle and inaccessibility to pedestrians made it especially difficult for the protesters to secure, and likely facilitated the ease with which *baltagiya* and police were able to attack and disperse the protest. It is impossible to dissociate this event from the *place* of the protest. The March 24 Youth movement was explicitly attempting to emulate a Tahrir Square-style demonstration, and given the outcome of the protests in Tahrir and around Egypt, the symbolism of successfully occupying that space was considered an unacceptable threat.

This example speaks to the inverse of my hypothesis; rather than the *space* of the Interior Ministry circle hindering repression and decreasing the cost of collective action, it actually facilitated repression. Given the extent of repression at this protest event, its coverage in the media, and that such violent repression is unusual in Jordan, it likely dissuaded people from engaging in subsequent protest activity. Indeed, there were reports of liberal and secular activists discontinuing or lessening participation in protests after this event, and data collected on the size of protests also showed a decrease in the level of protest participation.

Protests related to Israel often elicit complicated tensions in Jordan, where there is a sizeable population of Jordanians of Palestinian origin; Jordan is also one of only two Arab countries with a peace treaty with Israel. As discussed above, regular protests take place in proximity to the Israeli embassy, but never venture too close for fear of almost certain repression. In May 2011, protests took place in the town of Karameh near the Israeli border to mark the anniversary of the Nakba, when Palestinians fled or were expelled from land that became part of Israel in 1948. There were multiple reports of

various security forces using tear gas to disperse the crowds, as well as attacking protesters and journalists with batons. In addition, some protesters attempted to cross the bridge leading into the West Bank and were also tear gasses by police. These cases demonstrate the significance of the *place* of protests, the meaning associated with demonstrating in a *space* near the Israeli embassy or the Israeli border itself.

To summarize, beginning in January 2011, Jordan experienced a surge of protests that were large in size and scale for the country. They were met with a series of concessions and a few cases of repression, after which the frequency and size of protests slowly declined. Both the *space* and *place* of protests appear to have been a factor in when repression was used, and subsequently affected the cost of collective action and the level of mobilization. The combination of regular concessions with strategic but limited repression seemed to have the effect of defusing the situation in the short-term. The perceived superficiality of the concessions meant that the level of protests ebbed and flowed, though with overall decreasing frequency, size, and scale.

Networks, Diffusion, and Contentious Politics in Jordan

One aspect of the series of pro-reform protests that took place in Jordan throughout 2011 that stood out to participants, observers, and the regime alike was the addition of historically loyal regime supporters to the side of the opposition. Jordan went through a period of political and economic liberalization in the early 1990s that led to a new era of opposition networks and political parties engaging in activities ranging from participating in elections to participating in protests. Secular leftist and pan-Arab networks and political parties, some of which were linked to Palestinian movements, that

had been popular since the mid-twentieth century have since lost much of their support. The most popular and influential opposition networks in Jordan in the past three decades have been Islamists, especially the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and their political wing, the Islamic Action Front (Ryan 2018, 45-46). Electoral reforms that were instituted after a period of unrest in southern Jordan in 1989 heavily favored representation of the monarchy's East Jordanian and tribal support base, who were also given preferential access to military and government jobs. So when fissures emerged in 2010 and 2011 between the regime and retired military and tribal leaders that aligned their demands for reform with those of traditional opposition networks, the regime knew attempted to move quickly to address the newly expanded opposition that was taking their grievances to the streets.

Understanding the similarities and differences, areas of agreement and disagreement, and instances of cooperation and division between networks—both those that function primarily face-to-face as well as digitally-enabled ones—provides an important base to understand the influence these actors and their relationships played in social and political life in Jordan, especially during protests in 2011. Understanding *networks* as "structures that permit the flow of information, ideas, and emotions among activists in different places" allows for more traditional, often more localized or place-based networks, such as professional associations or political parties, as well as digitally-enabled networks that can bring together diverse individuals across spatial, ideological, and other restrictive boundaries, to be examined and contrasted together (Nicholls,

Miller, and Beaumont 2013, 10-11). I focus on Muslim Brotherhood supporters, East Jordanians, and youth groups, all of which populated protests across the country.

The Muslim Brotherhood is a network that transcends many boundaries, not just across space but also into many aspects of social and political life. The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan dates back to the times of the country's independence in the 1940s and has long had a cooperative relationship with the regime. The Jordanian Brotherhood supported the regime against multiple threats over the decades, and was in return granted influential positions in the government and thus the opportunity to establish religious, charitable, and educational programs and institutions. As Jordan began liberalizing its electoral system and signed a peace treaty with Israel in the early 1990s, the Jordanian Brotherhood and its newly formed political wing, the Islamic Action Front, began to compete in parliamentary elections and cooperate more with other opposition groups. Despite decades of support from the regime and many Jordanians, multiple factors—including an intentionally unrepresentative electoral process, numerous rounds of boycotting elections, and growing security concerns of the regime—meant that the IAF struggled to gain a meaningful or lasting leadership role in parliament (Yitzhak 2018, 34-35).

The Muslim Brotherhood initially remained uninvolved in an official capacity when protests began in January 2011, though individual members were free to participate. As momentum built over successive weeks of demonstrations, and the potential for serious change was exhibited in other countries, the Brotherhood mobilized their supporters to join the protests and calls for reform. In addition to significant

economic grievances over the price of food, fuel, and the cost of living, the Muslim Brotherhood and its many Palestinian-Jordanian constituents were negatively impacted by the existing electoral law, which underrepresented urban areas heavily populated with Palestinian-Jordanians and Brotherhood members.

The alignment of pro-reform, anti-corruption aspirations of Jordanians across typical identity or ideological divides allowed for a modicum of cooperation and coordination among disparate opposition groups, leading to some of the most well-attended protest events. But existing antagonism and distrust between Islamists and other opposition groups were evident at certain joint events. Activist leaders recounted disagreements between Muslim Brotherhood and youth activists at the March 25 sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle. Brotherhood activists brought loudspeakers and attempted to dominate the sit-in. They began asking for demands that had not been agreed upon by all of the organizing groups, leading youth and leftist activists to leave the sit-in. It was also a known tactic of the regime to use identity politics to divide opposition groups, often around Palestinian-Jordanian and Islamist identities, asserting their ulterior motives. In fact, the day after the attempted sit-in, "national media used the demands of the MB…as a pretext to depict the sit-inners as Palestinians while most of them were in fact of Transjordanian origin" (Yaghi and Clark 2014, 255).

Notably absent from the Interior Ministry sit-in was Hirak, the decentralized tribal youth network that began in the south and spread across the country. Hirak prided themselves as the most popular-based of the protesters and set themselves apart from the March 24 Movement of "newer elite-driven East Bank activism in Amman" who were

"out of touch with tribal realities" (Yom 2014, 246). They were also hesitant to organize with the Muslim Brotherhood for fear that their secular messages would be obscured or dominated by more divisive Islamist ones. Understanding some of Hirak's background can help inform the bases of these decisions.

An impromptu march in Dhiban of a few hundred youth from local tribal families took place in early January 2011. Despite having no leader or ideology, the group coalesced around calling for the dismissal of Prime Minister Rifai. News of this protest spread on social media and inspired similar groups to mobilize in cities and towns across the country. Hirak did not have any formal leadership or organizational structure; rather each group in each location acted as "dispersed and autonomous social networks that were heavily flavored by their local communities" that soon developed a set of common goals: "imposing constitutional curbs on royal power, holding new elections under a fairer Elections Law, and uprooting endemic corruption from state institutions " (Yom 2014, 233-234). As previously mentioned, the nature of Hirak as a diffuse but connected network of activists allowed them to coordinate with branches around the country so that their protests occurred simultaneously and with common messaging. But their loose structure also ended up being a weakness for the network. Their flexibility and locality hindered a more cohesive national opposition network from emerging and prevented cross-ideological or cross-organizational coalitions with leftist, Islamist, or other opposition groups (Ryan 2018, 70).

I have mentioned briefly above the significance of large numbers of East Jordanians, a historically loyal constituency of the monarchy, confronting the regime and

participating in protests. It was not only tribal youth, but tribal elders as well that began speaking out against the regime leading up to the 2011 protests. But when thirty-six tribal leaders issued a condemnation of corruption and privatization, they largely blamed Palestinians and even went so far as to accuse Queen Rania of cronyism. Tribal youth differed from the older generation in that they did not exhibit the same anti-Palestinian sentiments. The East Jordanian youth were also not simply lobbying for economic benefits, but rather were interested in pushing for genuine reforms that would alleviate both political and economic grievances. They "were not indigent tribesmen pleading for jobs and services. The majority were educated and employed citizens advocating constitutional monarchism, a fairer electoral system, and an end to corruption" (Yom 2014, 231, 246).

There are numerous other networks of opposition that participated in protests in 2011 and beyond, including leftist groups, the March 24 Coalition, employment-based associations (journalists, teachers, doctors, taxi drivers, etc.), and other Islamist groups, to name a few. This section has focused on the most influential and established of the "traditional" opposition groups, the Muslim Brotherhood, who had begun organizing with other opposition groups; and a new addition, as of 2011, to the opposition scene, Hirak, who was demonstrating the potential of a new model for activism in the country, and who generally avoided cooperation with other opposition networks.

Part of the strength of established networks lies in their ability to reach and influence their supporters around the country, and their ability to mobilize them to action if and when needed. The Muslims Brotherhood has long been active in Jordanian life and

is able to use existing infrastructure, such as mosques in part due to the group's basis in Islam, as a means of communication and coordination across the country. Though new youth networks like Hirak may not be equipped with comparable organizational structures, their use of digital social networks and ability to tap into other overlapping identities and networks provided them with alternate pathways for diffusion of their message, their model, and mobilization. One of the reasons these societal networks are pertinent to this discussion of protest mobilization and scale shift is because of the centrality of relationships to collective action. The remainder of this section digs further into the protest episode with a focus on the diffusion of contention and repertoires of contention, as well as aspects of spatiality that influence diffusion. With regard to spatiality and diffusion, this dissertation seeks to assess two hypotheses: Hypothesis 3a) Protest spaces that are accessible, expansive, and centrally located will decrease the cost of collective action, thus enabling diffusion and facilitating upward scale shift; Hypothesis 3b) *Places* of protest with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance add meaning to phenomena that are diffused and to collective action, thus facilitating mobilization. But first, I situate this discussion of diffusion in a theoretical framework for understanding how diffusion acts as a critical mechanism in growing and sustaining protest movements over time.

It is important to reiterate what I mean when using the term diffusion before continuing with this analysis. Tilly and Tarrow (2007) offer a broad definition of diffusion as the "spread of a contentious performance, issue, or interpretive frame from one site to another" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 215). This definition would encompass

many aspects of the Jordanian protests that have clear connections to protests in Egypt and Tunisia: leaders of and participants in contentious performances (demonstrations themselves) made clear references to their inspiration from and solidarity with protesters in those Egypt and Tunisia; the issues of corruption, unemployment, high cost of living, and the need for overall political and economic reforms were identified across the region as grievances of motivating mobilization; popular slogans were shared among protesters in different countries and adapted to fit their framing of their demands (e.g., the chant widely used in Egypt which translates to "the people want the overthrow of the regime" was changed in Jordan to "the people want the reform of the system"). Another definition includes a more specific explanation of what can be diffused and where: "the transfer of an innovation—for example, a new product, policy, institution, or repertoire of behavior—across units, such as enterprises, organizations, sociopolitical groups, or governments" (Patel, Bunce, and Wolchik 2014, 58). This specification of diffusion among not just organizations and sociopolitical groups but also governments is an important mention in the context of the Arab Uprisings, throughout which authoritarian regimes have been able to learn from the experiences of other countries and adapt their tactics and strategies.

How exactly are contentious actions and frames spread? As mentioned in Chapter 4, there are three main pathways of diffusion: direct (relational), indirect, and mediated. Direct diffusion involves transmission through personal contacts, like organizational linkages or associational networks. Indirect diffusion is when communications are transmitted that lead to demonstration effects among otherwise unconnected actors.

Finally, mediated diffusion happens when a third party connects two otherwise unconnected parties (Tarrow 2011, 192).

In Jordan, opposition groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and Hirak were facilitators of direct diffusion, acting as the means through which information about protests and tactics were shared and individuals were recruited or motivated to action. Diffusion within these networks took place both in-person and online. The Muslim Brotherhood's network and influence in Jordan are expansive, extending not just to religious domains, but to professional associations, political parties, educational institutions, and more. As one of the "traditional" opposition groups in Jordan with a sophisticated and structured network in place, their ability to mobilize hundreds to thousands of supporters on short notice is a significant resource to be able to draw on. Networks like Hirak used Facebook, mobile phones, and in-person meetings as fora for public discussions and debates about contentious political, economic, and social issues; as organizing and mobilizing tools for protests; for connecting with affiliated or other like-minded groups, and spreading their model and message; and as a means to publicize repression by various security forces.

One of the primary examples of indirect diffusion in the Jordanian protests was through media coverage of protest events in the region, especially in Tunisia and Egypt. Just the knowledge of protests happening around the region afforded the Jordanian protesters, some of whom had been involved in contentious politics for years, renewed strength. "Participants in the early protests recall the sense of invulnerability provided by the seemingly unstoppable march of events abroad" (Amis 2016, 175). For example, a

Jordanian man set himself on fire "as a protest against his inability to support his family," directly imitating Mohamed Bouazizi whose self-immolation is recognized as one of the instigators of the Tunisian uprising (Yitzhak 2018, 28). Despite not having direct connections with protesters in Tahrir Square, for example, Jordanian activists had a shared understanding of the situation they faced in pressing their government to reform. During the Egyptian protests in January and February 2011, Al Jazeera had constant coverage of the events in Tahrir Square. In Jordan, the March 24 Youth movement adopted the Tahrir Square model in their attempted sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle.

Though the March 24 Youth movement attempted to replicate the Tahrir model, there were important differences with the *space* of the protest in Amman. The Interior Ministry traffic circle was not expansive as the wide open area in and around Tahrir Square; it was also not easily accessible to pedestrians, given the high-speed overpass and underpass that criss-crossed above and below the main traffic circle. The circle is, however, located near downtown Amman, multiple government offices, and several major international hotels; it is also at the intersection of main thoroughfares used to get traverse northern parts of the city and West Amman. The *space* of the protest was not convenient for Jordanians to access and made it difficult for organizers to maintain, which increased the cost of collective action. Though the occupation of Tahrir Square stood as a model for Jordanian activists in other cities to attempt to replicate, the failure of the sit-in in Amman at the Interior Ministry Circle made it an unlikely strategy to be adopted at other protest sites.

Aside from the *space* of the protest, the *place* of the Interior Ministry Circle, or rather the lack of shared meaning associated with that protest site, did little to facilitate mobilization. The traffic circle itself is potentially significant as a *place* of protest because of the symbolism of protesting in proximity to the Interior Ministry building and as a *space* of protest because of the potential for disrupting a major traffic circle. But there is no historical association with that site as a *place* of protest; Amman has no comparable site of protest as Egypt's Tahrir Square that would stand out to Jordanians as an obvious or naturally convenient location to congregate for a demonstration. This example demonstrates the inverse of my hypothesis, rather showing that the lack of historical and cultural significance of the Interior Ministry traffic circle as a *place* of protest failed to add meaning to collective action there, and thus did not facilitate mobilization.

During the protest episode in 2011, a series of similar protest events were held in a variety of locations, not just in Amman but across the country. Strikes, work stoppages, and other work-related sit-ins and demonstrations that took place in front of place of employment, or sites that symbolized or were associated with their occupation, accounted for more than 25% of protest events in my database. These included taxi drivers at the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority headquarters, teachers at the Zarqa Public School for Girls, journalists in front of the Jordan Press Foundation headquarters in Amman, members of the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions, workers at the Aqaba Ports Corporation, employees at Al Albayt University in Al-Mafraq, Jordan Water Company employees in front of their Amman headquarters, merchants in downtown

Amman, and nurses in front of the Jordan Nurses and Midwives Association headquarters. These types of protests—employees going on strike to demand higher pay, better working conditions, improved hiring practices, etc.—are by no means unique to this protest episode. And, though these types of protest events were not often among protests with the most participants, the *place* of these protests adds meaning to the demands of the participants and supporters and to the events themselves. In a few cases, strikes in particular sectors spread across the country, for example among public sector doctors. These types of protest events provide strong evidence that the *place* of protest adds meaning to the phenomena that are diffused (the protest events themselves, the demands, the tactic) and to collective action, thus facilitating mobilization.

Until this point, diffusion has been discussed with respect to protesters and with regard to protest events and related phenomena spreading from one site to another. However, diffusion could also have more nefarious effects, as protesters were not the only ones connecting, learning, and sharing strategies in light of the emerging protests in 2011. Research on authoritarian learning argues that some "adaptive authoritarian regimes in the Arab world began to converge around a shared constellation of tactics and practices designed to maximize their probability of survival" (Heydemann and Leenders 2014, 87). Regimes recognized the importance of the support of powerful regional actors, like Saudi Arabia is Iran. In Jordan's case, joining the Gulf Cooperation Council in May 2011 was seen as a way to boost the country's economy.[50] The sectarianization of protest movements was another tactic MENA regimes saw as a useful tool to help maintain their

[50] Middle East Policy Council. 2011. "Amid Turmoil, GCC Extends Invitation to Jordan and Morocco." Available at: https://mepc.org/commentary/amid-turmoil-gcc-extends-invitation-jordan-and-morocco.

power. Emphasizing divisions between opposition groups had been a long-time strategy of the Jordanian regime in weakening potential threats to the formation of broad political coalitions. Opposition from segments of society normally loyal to the regime, like East Jordanians and tribal and military leaders, created new challenges to the political system but also afforded another possible division to exploit.

The strategic use of violence was another tactic of authoritarians to suppress protests. Different regimes "can deploy certain levels of coercion without incurring significant diplomatic costs" depending on various historical, social, and geopolitical factors. Jordanian police and military have been with using violence repression against protesters. When episodes of violence did occur, like on March 25 at the Interior Ministry Circle sit-in, there was a subsequent decline in protests, demonstrating how even the limited, strategic use of violence can be effective. Coming up with possible exit strategies was another tactic that some regional leaders considered. In Jordan, however, there was little to no indication that the regime itself was significantly threatened. Nearly all of the demands of the protest events were for reform and not the overthrow of the monarchy and political system. While Jordan did implement some of the tactics similar to those adopted by other regimes in the region in response to emergent protest movements, it is difficult to determine if and when certain tactics were the result of learning from another country's leaders, an effect of other structural and situational factors and similarities, or simply the continuation and adaptation of strategies already in use (Heydemann and Leenders 2014, 87-88).

Something that connects multiple aspects of the mechanisms underlying mobilization discussed so far in this chapter—repression, concessions, and diffusion—with the mechanisms of scale shift to be discussed below that has yet to be discussed in detail is the use of digital technologies. The Internet was becoming increasingly accessible to Jordanians in 2011, and being used for political purposes more and more. Jordan had a comparable level of Internet penetration as Egypt and Tunisia, and relatively broad freedoms in terms of accessing content.[51] Jordanians had unrestricted access to websites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and various national blogs to share their political opinions online. Not only were these digital platforms important spaces for public debates on political, economic, and social issues, but "these networks enabled activists to create content, spread messages, coordinate the timing of demonstrations, and recruit participants" (Yitzhak 2018, 27). The March 24 Youth movement used Facebook to bring together a coalition organize the sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle, and also Hirak used social media to spread their message and organizational model to youth in cities and towns around the country. The Internet was an important medium for connecting individuals and groups across identity and spatial divides who were feeling similarly marginalized by the economic and political status quo. These digital networks have become critical tools for many in everyday Jordanian life as well as in political activism, such as organizing and mobilizing protests.

[51] According to Freedom House, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan had internet penetration rates in 2011 of 39%, 36%, and 35%, respectively. Jordan had the 2nd best *Freedom on the Net 2012* score in the MENA region, though threats, complaints, hacks, and attacks against news websites, journalists, and bloggers increased in 2011. Country reports are available at: https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/freedom-net-2012.

Internet and social media use in Jordan, as in much of the MENA region, was growing significantly around the time of the Arab Uprisings. The level of Internet penetration in Jordan in 2011 was around 30%, an increase of 28% from the previous year (Alkhatib 2017, 18). About 55% of the Internet-using population in Jordan (around 1.2 million people) was on Facebook, and more than 70% of Jordanians on Facebook were under the age of 25, which was more than any other country in the MENA region (MENA Facebook Demographics 2010, 5, 7). Though Twitter became known to have been used in Egypt during the 2011 protests there, Jordan had less than 40,000 registered Twitter users (Alkhatib 2017, 18).

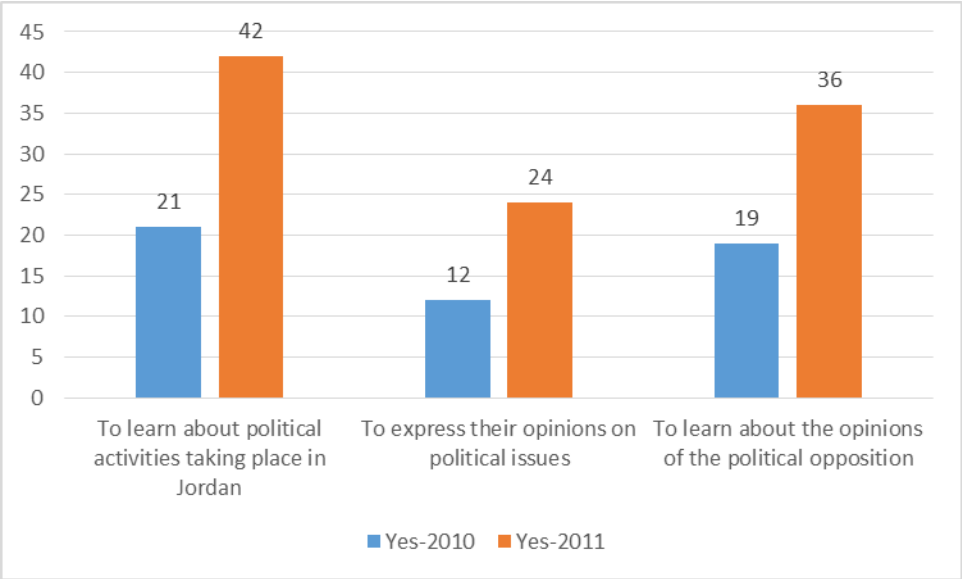

Figure 36: Percentages of Jordanians Using the Internet for Political Purposes
Source: adapted from Alkhatib 2017, 16

While this baseline of Internet and social media user data is insightful, the way that these platforms were increasingly being used is especially notable. Figure 36 shows

the increase in Internet use for political activities and information. The number of people in Jordan using the Internet to express political opinions, learn about political activities taking place, and learn about political opposition groups have all doubled between 2010 and 2011. It is not coincidental that this increase in Internet and social media use for political purposes coincides with a time when more than 60% of the population is under the age of 30 and Internet access is becoming more readily available and (Department of Statistics Interactive Database).

Tech-savvy, educated youth coming of political age in a time of economic and political disillusionment, both with the ruling regime and also with some established opposition groups that have routinized contentious actions against the state to the extent of ineffectiveness and even co-optation, have turned to new tools organize and mobilize. According to one activist, "the parties are not near people's hearts and minds. That's why they have these Facebook groups. That's their political parties. It is like an election, people signing up and 'liking' and agreeing to support a figure or group or demonstration. Social media is their device to convert and share their aspirations" (Ryan 2011, 386).

The March 24 Youth movement originated and announced their call for a sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle on Facebook. The attempted sit-in on March 25 and another in July (at a different traffic circle) were met with threats of violence from secret police and actual violence from *baltagiya*; though protesters abandoned their presence in these physical public spaces, they returned to online public spaces like Facebook to share photos and videos documenting these police abuses (Amis 2016, 177-180). It was not just

Amman-based groups like March 24 Youth that utilized online social networks, but southern youth networks like Hirak used Facebook to spread their model and message across the country. "Even in towns where social media had scarcely featured before the Arab Spring, it became a vital tool for increasingly outward-looking East Bank reformist groups: according to Mohamed al-Dabbas, a regional coordinator for popular movements, ‘Facebook brought the *hirakiin* 53 together’" (Amis 2016, 185).

Youth groups like Hirak and the March 24 movement didn’t only connect through social media, but also through mobile phones and meetings in person. Social media networks did not take the place of other means of communicating and networking, but rather became an alternative public space, and a crucial one for "developing common political identities and alternative imaginaries" and "sharing knowledge about strategies and tactics" (Leitner, Sheppard, and Sziarto 2008, 162). Blogs and online communities also played important roles as digital public squares. The online citizen journalism project 7iber hosted "hashtag debates" as a forum for open discussions on important and sometimes controversial topics, like reform, the constitution, and the role of the secret police in Jordanian life. Le Café Politique were coffee house style informal meetings for political discussions. Debates and discussions were often live-streamed and fielded questions from Twitter, and groups' Facebook pages also featured discussions on political and social issues (Ryan 2018, 81). Digital tools and in-person activities and interactions complemented one another in ways that facilitated new avenues to participate in politics.

Though often used as a means of fostering mobilization, media and social media also influenced some Jordanians to discontinue their participation in protests. Coverage

of protests in countries that were being more severely repressed, like in Libya, Yemen, and Syria, showed Jordanians the potential for violence and instability as a response to popular mobilization. In particular, the juxtaposition of the chaos and descent into civil war in bordering Syria compared to the relative stability in Jordan was certainly a factor in Jordanians' decisions to increasingly stay home (Amis 2016, 186). Growing instability to Jordan's north also had more tangible impacts on the country as refugees began streaming across the border. This influx put significant strain on already struggling economic, education, social service, water, and political systems (Ryan 2018, 187).

Diffusion here has been shown to be a complex and multifaceted mechanism that interacts with *space* and *place* as well as the processes of mobilization and scale shift. Throughout this section, I have demonstrated instances of diffusion that has both fostered and hindered mobilization. Unlike in Egypt, the *spaces* of some of the most prominent protest events in the period studied did little, if anything, to decrease the cost of collective action and facilitate diffusion and mobilization; in fact, in the case of the attempted sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle, the *space* of the protest seemed to increase the cost of collective action. At that same protest event, the lack of meaning associated with the *place* of protest The *places* of some protests, however, especially labor strikes and sit-ins, conferred a level of meaning for the protest participants, their demands, and the protest events themselves; where some of these phenomena were diffused, the significance of those *places* added meaning to collective action that facilitated mobilization. The foundation of information and analysis laid out in this section is important for the

discussion that follows on the mechanisms, in addition to diffusion, that contribute to shifting up the scale of contention.

***Place* and the Mechanisms of Scale Shift**

Compared with past protest episodes in Jordan, protests events in 2011 had expanded to include participants and organizers from social sectors normally associated with regime loyalists. Previously it was "engineers, doctors, lawyers, and journalists who used to be at the forefront of the opposition," but more and more protests in 2011 were being organized by teachers and laborers, which in turn encouraged other public sector employees to organize hundreds of strikes (Yaghi and Clark 2014, 245-246). Public sector employees were another formerly reliable source of support for the regime—along with leaders of military, East Jordanian, and tribal communities—that was becoming much more vocal and public about their discontent with the economic and political status quo.

This expansion of protest to include new social groups is one example of how a protest episode can shift scales. Along with mobilization, understanding scale shift is critical to learning how protest episodes are able to grow in size and scale or not. Scale shift is a "complex process that not only diffuses contention across space or social sectors, but creates instances for new coordination at a higher or a lower level than its initiation" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007, 94). Diffusion is part of that complex process, but scale shift involves multiple other subsidiary mechanisms, including brokerage, emulation, and the attribution of similarity. In the contentious politics literature, the type of diffusion involved in scale shift is direct, or relational, diffusion, as discussed in the

previous section. Emulation refers to collective action modeled on the actions of others; brokerage is information transfers that depend on the linking of two or more previously unconnected social sites; and attribution of similarity occurs when actors in different sites identify themselves as sufficiently similar to justify common action (Tarrow and McAdam 2005, 127-128).

I explained in Chapter 4 how these mechanisms combine to lead to scale shift. "Localized collective action spawns broader contention when information concerning the initial action reaches a distant group, which, having defined itself as sufficiently similar to the initial insurgents (*attribution of similarity*), engages in similar action (*emulation*), leading ultimately to *coordinated action* between the two sites" [emphasis in original] (Tarrow and McAdam 2005, 127). Figure 37 shows the alternative routes through which these mechanisms interact to lead to shifting the scale of contention. Depending on the pathway through which coordinated action is reached, the impact on the scale of the shift in contention can be geographically and socially narrower (via diffusion) or broader (via brokerage).

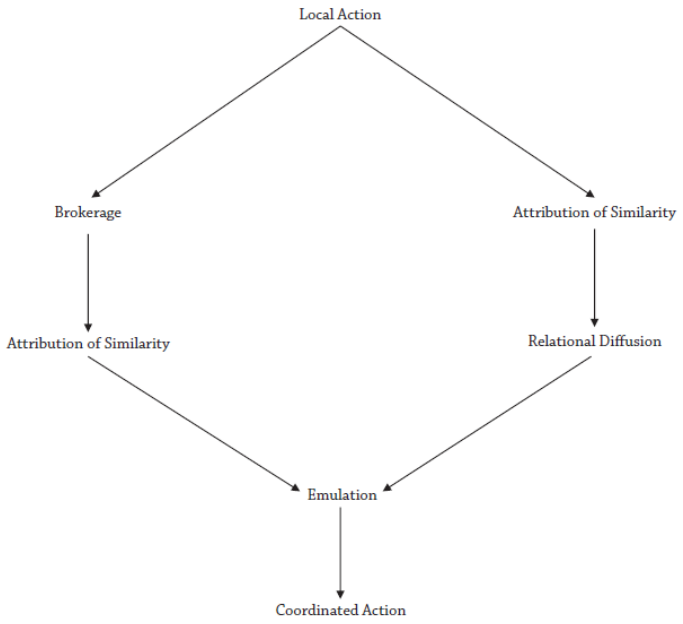

Figure 37: Alternative Routes to Upward Scale Shift
Source: Tarrow and McAdam 2005, 128

As described in the previous section, there was most certainly direct diffusion taking place in the 2011 Jordanian protests. Well-established, hierarchical organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood used their networks to diffuse information and mobilize supporters to join protest events. Muslim Brotherhood and other "traditional" opposition groups also had experience organizing and engaging in protest activity and thus came into 2011 equipped with established repertoires of contention. New, decentralized networks like Hirak use interpersonal ties and digital technology to connect with other youth, organize, protest, and inspire other localized groups in other cities and towns to do the same. Hirak and other new groups, like the March 24 Youth movement, were able to frame their complaints and demands of the government in ways that tapped into political and economic grievances that resonated among Jordanians across the ideological

spectrum. One popular sentiment, especially among East Jordanians, for the economic situation in 2011 traces back to the economic liberalization and reform policies implemented since 1989; these policies shifted the Jordanian economy more toward the private sector, which is associated with Palestinian-Jordanians and thus was largely seen as taking money away from East Jordanian sectors. This anti-neoliberal attitude was a potential avenue of solidarity for disparate political groups, including Islamists, leftists, and secular nationalists, to call for "reform *away* from privatisation and towards a revitalisation of the social welfare role of the state. Yet the ethnic tensions inherent in the same controversial issue carry the potential to tear that very coalition apart" (Ryan 2011, 385).

Indeed, attribution of similarity among social groups that previously would not have coordinated with or would even be at odds with one another was a significant means of focusing the people's anger at pressuring the regime for certain meaningful reforms. However, it was not long into this period of allied opposition that ideological and operational divisions grew and interests diverged. The spirit of solidarity that was ignited in the early months of 2011 soon retrenched into historical disagreements between opposition groups (e.g., Islamists and secular leftists). Issues relating to national identities that had long been associated with economic and political injustices, like the division between Palestinian-Jordanians and East Jordanians, were increasingly complicated and exacerbated by the growing diversity of refugees, which included hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and Syrians.

Despite these complex divisions among Jordanians, there were serious efforts to broker agreement about the demands of protesting opposition groups. The National Coalition for Reform was an attempt to bring together the Islamic Action Front, leftist parties, the Jordanian Women's Union, youth groups, independent activists, and representatives of pro-democracy NGOs, convened by former Prime Minister Ahmad Ubaydat. This coming together of a diverse range of opposition actors in a unified reform coalition came with clear policy proposals, specifically around electoral reforms. However, it was still ineffective in achieving policy reform. "Despite months of opposition activism, reform proposals, and extensive discussions across the Jordanian public sphere, the state issued the new electoral law, with the same gerrymandered districts, and no party lists or proportional representation whatsoever" (Ryan 2018, 55). Though the failure of this pressure campaign likely has a multifaceted explanation, the ineffectiveness of this coalition's democratic reform efforts may have had less to do with weak ties between a broad range of opposition groups than the reality that most political parties in Jordan are actually quite weak and have little support in society.

After the failed attempted occupation of the Interior Ministry Circle led by a network of Amman youth with sometimes clumsy coordination with ideologically diverse groups, there was a notable shift in the geographic center of contention. As smaller leftist and secular activists and organizations, followed by others, decreased or discontinued participation in protests, the size of protest events overall in Amman seemed to diminish, the activity and popularity of the southern Hirak movement increased, especially among youth (Debruyne and Parker 2015, 453-454). The Hirak youth movements that started in

Jordan's southern towns and spread to practically every community across the country was essentially a story of emulation at work. The flexibility of the Hirak model meant that groups that emerged—like the Kerak Popular Youth Movement, the Free Tafilah Movement, the Maan Popular Movement for Change and Reform, and the Popular Movement in the North—were all different and open to change, which allowed for its spread and growth (Ryan 2018, 70). Though Hirak groups were open to diverse, cross-ideological members, they were predominantly made up of East Jordanian youth, and saw themselves as being a true grassroots group representing "the people." Still, they were arguably more successful at mobilizing across ideological lines than previously mentioned Amman-based coalitions. The earliest protests that took place in Jordan were indeed grassroots, spontaneously starting with seven youth in Dhiban, but concurrent news of protests occurring across the country and protests in other countries across the MENA region combined to amplify the enthusiasm of reform activists. "The roots of the Jordanian movement were there before the Arab Spring, but the Arab Spring gave it strength" (Amis 2016, 176).

A variety of coalitions were seen during the protest episode period among quite an ideologically diverse assortment of individuals, networks, and organizations. At different times in the protest episode and in different parts of the country, these coalitions were led by different networks, from Islamists in the urban north to youth from small cities in the south. Despite some level of historical animosity and stark ideological cleavages between secular leftist groups in Amman and Palestinian-Jordanian Islamists in Zarqa and tribal-affiliated young people in Maan, they found reasons to broker new

relationships and partnership, recognizing similarities among their goals of economic and political reform and the potential of their cooperation. Despite the incentives, opportunities, and attempts at sustained cooperation, a number of factors which have been discussed at length above—including a strategic combination of repression and concessions used by the regime, as well as noted spatial, economic, and ethnic divisions among the participating populace complicated by historical distrust and disagreements—left the overall protest movement fractured and stunted, constraining their ability to shift up the scale of protests. The lack of one or many *places* of protest with shared meaning for protesters to converge around was not likely the primary factor inhibiting greater mobilization and scale shift, but, as I argue in this dissertation and evidence from the case study of Egypt shows, such *space*- and *place*-based factors can indeed be influential on the mechanisms of attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation.

Conclusion

To conclude, I will summarize the main findings from this chapter regarding the key mechanistic factors that played a role in increasing the size and scale of mobilization in Jordan, pointing out where spatial dynamics were particularly relevant in the causal chain. These summary findings will be used in Chapter 6 in comparison to the findings from the Egypt case study to explain how spatiality affects the activation of these mechanisms and the resultant processes of mobilization and scale shift in ways that influence the size and scale of protests.

This chapter interrogated how the Jordanian regime's tactics of repression and concessions played a role in mobilization. Overall throughout the period of time

investigated, repression against protesters in Jordan was reported in only 6% of documented protest events. Among these cases, fighting between protesters and police or regime supporters was the most common (65%), followed by the use of various crowd control tactics, such as tear gas (22%). One of the few instances of violent repression being used against protesters was during the attempted sit-in on March 24-25, 2011 at the Interior Ministry Circle in Amman. The spatial dynamics of this space are starkly different from those of Tahrir Square, for example: it is much less accessible to pedestrians, with its multi-level, high-speed overpass and underpass; this spatial structure makes the space more vulnerable to repression, as it would be exceedingly difficult to secure and maintain an occupation given the multiple overlapping dimensions of the space; the Interior Ministry Circle also does not have any social, political, or historical significance as a protest site. Indeed the spatial dynamics of many urban environments in Jordan, especially in Amman, has evolved to make large protests difficult to sustain and to minimize the impact of large protests; these same spatialities also facilitate policing, increase the cost of collective action, and, in rare instances like the March 25 sit-in, violent repression. There were also anecdotes and instances of the *places* of protest, for example those associated with Israel, like near the Israeli embassy and Israeli border, being associated with threats and use of repression.

Despite the infrequent but increasing occurrence of violent repression, there are relatively broad political freedoms in Jordan compared to most other MENA countries. However, the *mukhabarat*, or secret police, have a pervasive role in public and private life. The *mukhabarat* are known to regularly harass and threaten Jordanians, especially

activists and journalists, with the intention of getting individuals to self-censor. Since the beginning of the Jordanian protest episode, there has been a pronounced increase in the manifestation of pro-regime thugs, or *baltagiya*, attacking protesters with limited intervention by, and at times apparent coordination with, police forces.

By balancing their response to protests with a combination of soft security measures—through the *mukhabarat* and indirectly through *baltagiya*—and limited concessions, the Jordanian regime was able to diffuse the situation it faced in 2011 that had the potential to escalate and threaten the political and monarchical status quo. This combination of active and passive intimidation and repression likely had the intended effect of dissuading individuals from participating in protest events. After the first instance of violent repression in this protest episode, in response to the attempted occupation of the Interior Ministry Circle, the incidence of protests numbering in the thousands of participants decreased; though protest events continued to take place with some regularity, their size was much more likely to be a few dozen to a few hundred participants. As with the case of Egypt, it was difficult to find a connection between the spatiality of protests and broader policy and political concessions. There was no evidence in the case of Jordan supporting the hypothesis that protest *spaces* that are conceded to demonstrators reduce the cost of collective action and facilitate greater mobilization; rather, some signs of the inverse were observed, with security forces ensuring they maintain control over protest *spaces*. While the impact of repression and concessions on mobilization is evident, as with the results from the Egyptian case study, the evidence only supports a strong causal link between spatiality and repression, but not concessions.

There are multiple examples from this chapter analyzing the protest episode in Jordan of the diffusion of ideas, tactics, and other repertoires of contention into and across the country that facilitated mobilization. There is also additional evidence from this case of a causal effect between the *spaces* and *places* of protest and diffusion. Jordanian protesters expressed solidarity with and inspiration from Tunisian and Egyptian protesters who brought about massive political changes through mass mobilization in their own countries. Jordanian protesters adapted popular protest chants (e.g., the chant widely used in Egypt which translates to "the people want the overthrow of the regime" was changed to "the people want the reform of the system") and attempted to replicate a Tahrir Square-style occupation at the Interior Ministry Circle in Amman. The Tahrir model did not translate well to the *space* of that protest location in Jordan, however. Neither expansive nor accessible, the protest *space* made it difficult for the demonstration to be maintained and increased the cost of collective action there; the failure and notoriety of the protest event at the Interior Ministry Circle made it an unlikely tactic to be replicated at other sites in Jordan.

The lack of shared meaning of the Interior Ministry Circle as a *place* of protest for Jordanians comparable to the *place* of Tahrir Square for Egyptians detracted from the ability to draw on such spatial significance as an additional source of meaning to collective action and facilitator of mobilization. In contrast, *places* of protest, especially occupation-related strikes and sit-ins, that occurred at or near places of employment added meaning to collective action there. There were examples of these types of protests among public sector doctors that added meaning to the diffused phenomena, including

the protest demands, tactics, and events themselves, that facilitated their increased participation.

The Internet and social media were becoming increasingly accessible to many Jordanians, especially youth, in 2011. In addition, the percentage of Jordanians using the Internet to express political opinions, learn about political activities taking place, and learn about political opposition groups all doubled between 2010 and 2011. Newly emergent youth movements like Hirak took advantage of these increasingly accessible digital networks, as well as in-person meetings, to express their discontents, connect with like-minded Jordanians, gain supporters, and spread their model and message to protest for political and economic reforms. Established opposition groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and other political parties used their networks throughout many facets of Jordanian society to organize and mobilize their supporters to protest for political and economic reforms. The diffusion of information and ideas related to contentious politics, through both existing and new social movements, in a variety of spaces, both across the Internet and in mosques around the country, directly led to an increase (relative to protests in recent years) in the number of participants in protests in Jordan.

The group of mechanisms related to scale shift in contentious politics include the attribution of similarity, brokerage, diffusion, and emulation. Protests in Jordan in 2011 expanded beyond the "usual suspects" to include participants and organizers from social groups normally associated with regime loyalists—not only doctors, lawyers, and journalists but now teachers, laborers, and other public sector employees as well. The regime's often-used strategy of scapegoating protesters as simply Palestinians seeking

power was made much more difficult as their usual support base—tribal communities, former military leaders, and many other East Jordanians—spoke out and mobilized in opposition of the political and economic status quo.

Established opposition groups, as well as newly established youth movements who organized protests throughout 2011, mobilized their networks both online and through other social or political networks. Through ad hoc coordination and formal coalitions, these groups attempted to grow and spread their base of support to pressure the government to implement their reform proposals. Networks and organizations with historical differences and antagonism—for example between Islamist, secular, leftist, and nationalist political parties—were able to find commonality among their grievances and goals around the need for political and economic reform, though not linked to particular *places* of protest with shared historical or social meaning. Many diverse protest movements' demands did coalesce in early 2011 into one immediate demand—for Prime Minister Samir Rifai to step down. The attribution of similar grievances and goals among disparate groups was a powerful signal of the potential to unify opposition groups in pressuring the Jordanian government for more comprehensive changes to the political and economic system. Indeed Rifai was removed and replaced rather quickly, but diverging interests and other divisions (re)emerged and complicated the continued cohesive coordination of claims making. In this sense, the attribution of similarity fostered collective action and possibly increased participation for a time, but it was not sustained after this initial success.

That those more typically associated with protest activity are, broadly speaking, more likely to be Jordanians of Palestinian origin is a consequential factor, and one that embodies spatial significance. The geographic-cum-ethnic division between East Jordanians and Palestinian Jordanians has long been a fixture of Jordanian politics and, as noted, used by the regime to suppress the formation of a unified opposition. Despite some attribution of similarity and coordination among diverse and historically non-cooperative groups of Jordanians, the spatial significance of their differences overtook their potential to work together toward common political goals.

The Hirak network played an important role in spreading and coordinating protests across the country, from small towns and cities in the south to large, urban centers in the north to nearly every community in Jordan. Their flexibility allowed emerging groups around the country to emulate the Hirak model and engage new Jordanian youth in politics, and the loose affiliation between groups allowed activists to coordinate with Hirak groups in other cities so that protests took place on the same day and time while otherwise acting independently. The nature of the Hirak network and the manner in which they engaged in contentious politics as summarized here demonstrate how the attribution of similarity, brokerage, emulation, and diffusion were activated to increase the scale of protests in Jordan. But the fact that Hirak networks generally avoided developing cooperative relationships with other established movements organizing protests across the country, like the March 24 Youth network or the Jordanian Muslims Brotherhood, likely contributed to the limited extent of the growth of protests.

Though there is evidence of the activation of each of the mechanisms associated with scale shift—the attribution of similarity, brokerage, diffusion, and emulation—in the case of the Jordanian protest episode, the character of the spatial dynamics of those mechanisms hindered the extent to which protests increased in scale. The historical and political dynamics of the ethnic division in Jordan, which is derived from a spatial differentiation, impeded the sustained brokerage of cooperation of new movements composed of East Jordanians with traditional opposition groups associated with Palestinian Jordanians, despite the attribution of similarity of their aligned political and economic reform goals. As related to the hypotheses proposed relating spatiality to these mechanisms, there was no evidence found that *places* of protest with shared significance among protest participants played a role in adding meaning to collective action and facilitating an increase in the scale of protest activity to new locations. The Hirak movement itself, however, was successful in increasing the scale of protests across the country. Though they originated in southern Jordan as an activist youth group, their dynamic organizational model allowed for the emulation of their structure among emerging groups in cities and towns all over Jordan; the network was able to coordinate protests across the country among their network while maintaining independence and flexibility in membership. The non-hierarchical nature of Hirak, however, hindered the ability of the network to further increase the scale of protests through a more cohesive organized national chapter.

In summary, the investigation of this case study has shown that the mechanisms of repression and concessions, diffusion, attribution of similarity, brokerage, and

emulation were all identified and resulted in processes of mobilization and scale shift. The extent to which social mobilization and scale shift increased, as measured by the size and scale of protests, was modest and not sustained for the duration of the protest episode. My analysis of the spatial dynamics showed that: protest *spaces* did impact repression and thus the cost of collective action and level of mobilization, but not concessions; the *space* of protests influenced diffusion and scale shift by increasing the cost of collective action, and the *place* of protest, in particular cases, added meaning to diffused phenomena and increased the size of protests; *places* of protest with shared social significance were largely absent in the mechanisms of attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation. Additionally, potential links were found between the *places* of protest and repression.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This dissertation has been focused on attempting to answer one central question: Why do protests grow in size and scale in some places but not in others? In collecting and analyzing data on protest events in Egypt and Jordan over discrete periods of time, I have developed a set of evidence that shows how key mechanisms in contentious politics produced the processes of mobilization and scale shift that are critical to increasing the size and scale of protests. The conclusion sections in Chapters 4 and 5 summarized and compiled examples that illustrate the activation and spatiality of each of these mechanisms. But in order to determine an answer to my research question and draw conclusions on my proposed hypotheses about the role of spatiality in the mechanism-process chain, this chapter first completes the steps of the mechanism-process approach, explained in Chapter 3, to explain the resultant processes and outcomes under investigation in each case study.

In this chapter, I begin by reconstructing the processes into which the mechanisms compound in each country in narrative form. The next section compares and contrasts how the mechanisms produced the processes of mobilization and scale shift and the causal role that spatiality played. I discuss some of the lessons learned for future research, as well as the practical significance of my dissertation's findings with regard to a broader understanding of contentious politics. Finally, I summarize these findings and address

how they are instructive for better understanding spatiality and contentious politics, including in a few new cases.

Mobilization and Scale Shift in Egypt and Jordan

This section focuses on identifying and explaining whether and how a set of mechanisms compounded to result in significant changes in mobilization and scale shift in the Egyptian and Jordanian protest episodes. The analyses of these mechanisms were conducted with the additional purpose of assessing the causal influence of spatiality on the mechanisms and their associated process outcomes. The Egyptian protest episode took place from January 1, 2011 to February 11, 2011, and the Jordanian protest episode was from January 1, 2011 to July 31, 2011. Much of the information detailed here draws from my discussion, analysis, and summary findings from Chapters 4 and 5, which highlight the inherent spatial influence on the mechanisms—for mobilization, the mechanisms of repression, concessions, and diffusion; for scale shift, the mechanisms of diffusion, attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation. Throughout the following narratives that reconstruct the processes of mobilization and scale shift in each case, I mention (in-text or parenthetically) the mechanisms and impacts that the preceding sentence(s) describe(s).

The uprising in Tunisia that brought down Ben Ali's decades-long rule was undoubtedly a catalyst for the mass mobilization in Egypt that eventually led Mubarak to resign. But protests and strikes had been increasing in Egypt for years, with demands for higher wages, increased employment opportunities, and other policies to alleviate poverty. Increasingly brutal repression was often the response of police and security

forces to these and any public criticisms of the government. The burgeoning youth population, well-educated yet underemployed, were victims of both the poor economy and the regime's repression. The growing use of social media networks and other digital technologies among even a small fraction of Egyptians fostered a situation where online public spaces were used as tools for commiserating over these shared grievances. Facebook, and the We Are All Khaled Said page in particular, was instrumental as a source of solidarity for shocked and outraged individuals at police brutality in Egypt, and later as critical infrastructure for organizing and disseminating information about January 25 and subsequent protests (**attribution of similarity**). This sense of anger among a diverse array of Egyptians was critical in framing discontents in ways that helped build up popular anti-government sentiments across the country to a newly heightened level.

The activist youth movements who organized the January 25 protests mobilized their networks of supporters who had built strong ties with each other both online and through other social or political networks. Many of the youth movements grew out of labor movements but also used social media networks to garner support through previously unconnected individuals (**brokerage**). As the youth-led protests in January 2011 grew, other established networks, like political parties and labor movements, participated in greater numbers. The expanded sets of participants (and leaders) from usually siloed groups, like the Muslim Brotherhood, could then leverage the networks of people in those newly added groups, thus continuing to increase the size and scale of protests (**diffusion**). Masses of both strongly tied and newly connected individuals and networks unified their demands that emerged from shared grievances and emulated

tactics of contention across the country, while continued repression and refusal of the regime to make meaningful concessions only reinforced the resolve of the protest movement.

One of the most successful innovations of the protesters in Egypt was to bring together different social, professional, demographic, and religious networks and groups to protest in one central location, most notably Cairo's Tahrir Square with its unique spatial characteristics and significance, rather than having different opposition groups protest in separate locations. Through widespread media and social media coverage, videos and photos of these protests showed the combined scale of opposition to the regime, contributing to a "revolutionary bandwagon" effect and mobilizing greater numbers of people to join the protests (**diffusion**). This Tahrir model was scaled to different levels and locations across Egypt, and across the MENA region and the world in the ensuing weeks, months, and years. "In every village and every hamlet of every village was another square like Tahrir" (Abu-Lughod 2012, 25) (**emulation**).

Other protest strategies and counter-repression tactics—like how to use police barricades to protesters' advantage and how to avoid surveillance—were shared among Tunisian and Egyptian activists and protest organizers through online networks in the days and months preceding protests in January 2011 (**diffusion**). This online diffusion of ideas and activism helped start, grow, and maintain protests in Egypt. Such cooperation proved useful as protesters were met with violent repression by the regime immediately upon mobilizing toward Tahrir Square and across the country. Various means of repression—from using tear gas to beating protesters to firing live ammunition—were

implemented relatively consistently throughout the period of the protest episode. Police would strategically block off certain spaces and use crowd control tactics to force demonstrations into spaces that were more easily policeable (**repression**). After three days of mass protests, and a spike in the number of deaths of both protesters and police on January 28, Mubarak began offering a series of concessions over the following weeks, including forcing his cabinet to resign, establishing a constitutional reform committee with opposition parties and protester representatives, and vowing not to run in the next election. However, these and other concessions did little, if anything, to appease protesters, as they consisted almost entirely of limited, disingenuous reforms and opportunities (**concessions**).

Some of the regime's digital repression tactics aimed at impeding protesters' ability to coordinate actually had the opposite effect of increasing mobilization. Digital networks were a key organizing and mobilizing tool, but Mubarak's decision to shut down the Internet and mobile networks affected more than just protesters (**repression**). The loss of digital access impelled many middle-class Egyptians who were not involved in the protests to the streets to find out what was going or to voice their own discontent against the government's actions. The repressive tactics themselves were also somewhat ineffective, as tech-savvy Egyptians, diaspora and international supporters, and even companies like Twitter took measures to help protesters figure out ways around the restrictions.

Protests continued to be met by a combination of harsh repression and weak concessions, which did little to dissuade and appease Egyptians; on the contrary, more

and more Egyptians were mobilizing against Mubarak as the protests continued. This trend continued until hundreds of thousands to millions of people in Cairo and across the country were protesting for an end to the Mubarak regime. The size and scale of this opposition not only posed a threat to the regime but also the risk of bringing the country's economy to a standstill. Eighteen days after the first large protest on January 25, it was announced that President Mubarak was removed from power.

This brief summary of the protest episode in Egypt highlighted how the activation of key mechanisms related to mobilization and scale shift increased the size and scale of protests between January 25 and February 11. The processes of mobilization and scale shift are related in many respects, and so there was some similarity and overlap between the underlying mechanisms in this protest episode. When viewed as a coherent episode through the lens of the underlying mechanisms, it is clear that these two processes were critical in the Egyptian protest movement's ability to increase in size and scale. With regards to the causal influence of spatial dimensions on each of those mechanisms, spatiality was found to have a clear causal influence on each of the mechanisms of repression, diffusion, attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation, thus impacting the overall size and scale of protests, while there was insufficient evidence to claim a significant causal role of spatiality on concessions. The specific hypotheses relating *space* and *place* to each mechanism will be discussed in conjunction with the findings from the Jordanian case study overview below.

Jordan has more significant political freedoms compared with most other MENA countries and faces similar struggles of high unemployment, poverty, and corruption. So

it was unsurprising that Jordan, along with nearly every country in the region, followed Tunisia and experienced a wave of popular protests beginning in January 2011. This period coincided with the coming of age of an increasingly large and educated youth population and the expansion of Internet and social media accessibility and use. Information and ideas were spreading across the country and the region, and Jordanian protesters expressed solidarity with and inspiration from Tunisian and Egyptian protesters who brought about massive political changes through mass mobilization. Jordanian protesters adapted popular protest chants (e.g., the chant widely used in Egypt which translates to "the people want the overthrow of the regime" was changed to "the people want the reform of the system") and attempted to replicate a Tahrir Square-style occupation at the Interior Ministry Circle in Amman (**diffusion**), though the spatial dynamics of that protest site differed greatly from those Tahrir Square and contributed to the failure of the sit-in.

Newly emergent youth movements like Hirak used digital networks like Facebook and in-person meetings to express their discontents, connect with like-minded Jordanians, gain supporters, and spread their model and message to protest for political and economic reforms (**attribution of similarity, diffusion**). The Hirak network played an important role in spreading and coordinating protests across the country, from small towns and cities in the south to large to urban centers in the north and nearly every community in Jordan. Their ideological and structural flexibility allowed emerging groups around the country to emulate the Hirak model and engage new Jordanian youth in politics, and the loose affiliation between groups allowed activists to coordinate with Hirak groups in

other cities so that protests took place on the same day and time while otherwise acting independently (**emulation**).

Established opposition groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and other political parties also used their networks throughout many facets of Jordanian society to organize and mobilize their supporters to protest against the government's leaders and policies. Through ad hoc coordination and more formal coalitions like the National Coalition for Reform, these groups attempted to grow and spread their base of support to pressure the government to implement their reform proposals. And protests in 2011 did expand beyond the "usual suspects" to include participants and organizers from social groups normally associated with regime loyalists—not only doctors, lawyers, and journalists but now teachers, laborers and other public sector employees as well. The scapegoating of protesters as simply Palestinians seeking power was made much more difficult as the regime's usual support base—tribal communities, former military leaders, and other East Jordanian communities—spoke out and mobilized in opposition of the political and economic status quo (**brokerage**).

The demands of these many diverse protest movements, some of whom were working in coordination with one another, coalesced in early 2011 into one immediate demand—for Prime Minister Samir Rifai to step down. The similar grievances and goals among disparate groups was a powerful signal of the potential to unify opposition groups in pressuring the Jordanian government for more comprehensive changes to the political and economic system (**attribution of similarity**). Indeed this unified demand was quickly acceded to and Rifai was removed and replaced by February. Throughout the first

half of 2011, multiple other concessions, albeit moderate ones, were implemented, including: increasing public sector wages, the king meeting with the Muslim Brotherhood for the first time in a decade, loosening restrictions on protests, forming a national committee with broad representation to discuss political and electoral reforms, and numerous other small-scale concessions in response to particular trade group protests (**concessions**).

In terms of repressive responses to these diverse and expanded displays opposition and activism, the Jordanian regime was somewhat restrained. Throughout the period of this protest episode, repression against protesters in Jordan was reported in only 6% of documented protest events. One of the only instances of violent repression being used against protesters was during the attempted sit-in on March 25, 2011 at the Interior Ministry Circle in Amman. In general, there had also been a noticeable increase in the occurrence of pro-regime thugs attacking protesters, with limited intervention by, and at times apparently coordination with, police (**repression**). But overall, the levels of arrests and violence at protest events were quite low.

By balancing their response to protests with a combination of soft security measures and limited **concessions**, the Jordanian regime was able to diffuse a situation that had the potential to escalate and threaten the political and monarchical status quo.

This brief narrative has demonstrated the multiple ways and instances in which the mechanisms of repression, concessions, diffusion, attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation were activated throughout the Jordanian protest episode from January through July 2011. Despite the presence of each of these mechanisms and the processes

of mobilization and scale shift in Jordan, there was only a very modest increase in the size and scale of protests. I argue below that the *space* and *place* of the mechanisms of repression, diffusion, attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation in Jordan influenced the dynamics of the mechanisms and resultant outcomes, contributing to the more limited size and scale of protests. The role of other important contextual factors is also be considered.

The Spatiality of Revolution and the Status Quo

Having reconstructed the mechanisms and processes in both Egypt and Jordan in the narratives above, this section will draw out the significant differences between the two cases that explain the diverging outcomes of the size and scale of protests in each country as the. It is not only the presence or activation of each of the mechanisms underlying mobilization and scale shift, but also the spatiality of certain mechanisms, that accounts for the difference in the outcome of the dependent variables—the size and scale of protests—in Egypt and Jordan. As mechanisms are one of the main organizing and analytical categories of this dissertation, the following section will compare and contrast each mechanism in Egypt and Jordan while incorporating relevant spatial and other structural factors, as well as general observations about each country and their protest episodes. To begin, I will restate each of my hypotheses about the relationships between the *space* and *place* of protest and note whether or not evidence was found in each case study to support them.

Hypothesis 1: Protest *spaces* that hinder **repression** will decrease the cost of collective action and thus facilitate greater mobilization.

Hypothesis 2: Protest *spaces* that are **conceded** to demonstrators reduce the cost of collective action and thus facilitate greater mobilization.

Hypothesis 3a: Protest *spaces* that are accessible, expansive, and centrally located will decrease the cost of collective action, thus enabling **diffusion** and facilitating upward scale shift.

Hypothesis 3b: *Places* of protest with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance add meaning to phenomena that are **diffused** and to collective action, thus facilitating mobilization.

Hypothesis 4: *Places* of protest with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance help develop common identities among individuals and organizations, thus adding meaning to collective action and facilitating **attribution of similarity** and upward scale shift.

Hypothesis 5: *Places* of protest with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance help build and strengthen relations among individuals and organizations, thus adding meaning to collective action and facilitating **brokerage** and upward scale shift.

Hypothesis 6: *Places* of protest with shared social, cultural, political, and/or historical significance provide a model for how contentious activity in similar *places* can add meaning to collective action that can be **emulated** elsewhere, thus facilitating upward scale shift.

There was evidence found in both the Egypt and Jordan case studies to support Hypothesis 1. There was insufficient evidence from Jordan to support Hypothesis 2,

though some evidence from Egypt was identified. Examples from both Egypt and Jordan were found to support both Hypotheses 3a and 3b. I found evidence from the case study of Egypt to support each of Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6; while no evidence from Jordan supported these hypotheses, this lack of evidence actually lends some credence to my argument. In addition to these hypothesized relationships, in the course of analyzing the protest episode in Egypt and Jordan, potential causal relationships were identified between the *places* of protest and the mechanism of repression, as well as the *spaces* of protest and the mechanism of brokerage.

Egypt and Jordan experienced many similar economic and political problems, especially high unemployment, rising prices, and corruption. Each public's growing frustration with these issues and the unsustainable status quos they engendered brought the countries to the brink. The catalyst that arguably pushed both Egyptian and Jordanian publics over the edge was the uprising in Tunisia. Growing discontent was manifesting itself in protests in both Egypt and Jordan before the Tunisian protests, but there was a documented escalation of contention across the MENA region in direct response to Tunisia, particularly after President Ben Ali was forced out of office.

As has been discussed at length throughout this dissertation, despite certain similarities and instigating factors, the paths that the protest episodes in Egypt and Jordan took varied significantly. In assessing the regime's responses to initial protests, with regard to repression and concessions and influence of their spatial dynamics, there appears to be a complex process at work. In both Egypt and Jordan, there were efforts to coordinate large protests around the country on the same day, but the responses of police

to these efforts differed greatly. In Egypt, security forces responded to the first day of mass protests on January 25 with violence and repression, including beatings, arrests, selectively blocking mobile networks, and firing tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition in some cases. In Jordan, there were only a handful of reports of violence at protests in the first three months of 2011, and when there was violence it consisted mostly of clashes between protesters and groups of regime supporters. These pro-government thugs, or *baltagiya*, are believed to be on the government payroll and are alleged to coordinate their activities with police. In fact, police are reported to have actually handed out water to Jordanian protesters in Amman. These scenarios were not simply isolated responses to the immediate protests, but rather the history and culture around protests in these countries differ greatly; protests are permitted in Jordan (when special permits and permission is received ahead of time), and, especially among opposition groups like the Muslim Brotherhood who regularly stage protests, there is an implicit understanding between police and protesters about what is permissible; the Egyptian regime has historically had a much stricter and more repressive approach to protests.

In addition to the difference of political culture and permissibility of protests in each country, the spatiality of repression differed in Egypt and Jordan. The first significant instance of violence against Jordanian protesters was during the attempted sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle in Amman on March 25. This was an intentional attempt by protesters to replicate a Tahrir Square-style occupation, which was seen as a more significant threat than daily or weekly protests. The *space* of the protest site itself actually

facilitated the repression used by security forces and increased the cost of collective action. Following the uncharacteristic repression used against protesters at the Interior Ministry Circle, the attempted sit-in was broken up within a day. The fact that Jordanian police resorted to violent repression had a lasting impact on mobilization of protests in the subsequent months, which saw decreased frequency of protests with thousands of participants.

In Egypt, the occupation of central squares in Cairo and other cities gave protesters a certain momentum, longevity, and acted as a mobilizing tool. Tahrir Square is a vast open space that protesters were able to maintain control over; this hindered the ability of security forces to infiltrate and break up the Tahrir Square demonstration, and the effect of this combination was a decrease in the cost of collective action. It also afforded protesters an extended opportunity to create a shared vision for a new Egyptian social and political community, one that upheld the ideals of democratic, participatory, and altruistic governance. The inability of Jordanian protesters to occupy such a *place* of protest and create a comparable vision for an alternative Jordanian system detracted from the enhanced mobilizational capacity that such an experience could have created. Instead, the *space* of the overpasses and underpasses through the Interior Ministry Circle, similar to other central spaces in Amman, had the effect of making large protests difficult to maintain and easier for police to break up. While it is unclear whether or not this type of spatial design was intended to have this effect, it aligns with and reinforces their attempt or desire to minimize the need for repression. The increased use of *baltagiya* allowed the

various police forces to remain mostly non-violent while the plain-clothed thugs attack protesters.

The Jordanian regime balanced its soft security approach to managing protests with a series of concessions that were made both early and often. This actually mirrors in some ways the Egyptian regime's attempt to offer limited concessions to protesters, but to very different outcomes. Both Mubarak and King Abdullah forced government Cabinet members to resign and established committees with government and opposition group representatives to discuss political reforms, among taking other actions. King Abdullah's tepid concessions seemed to temporarily appease some, or at least did not result in the same level of anger and resentment that Mubarak's comparable concessions caused. To understand these different responses, it is important to point out that these concessions occurred on different timelines and in the midst of very different contexts of violence being committed against protesters. In addition, and perhaps more consequentially, the protesters' primary demands in Egypt and Jordan differed, as did each regime's public perspective toward the protests. With regard to spatiality and concessions, the abstract nature of these largely political and policy offers or changes made it difficult to relate concessions to *space* or *place*. At the level of individual protest events, however, in Egypt it was found that when the *space* of protest was conceded to demonstrators, the effect was a decrease in the cost of collective action and opportunity for increased participation.

On the first day of mass protests in Egypt, protesters were calling for the president himself to step down from power. So any of Mubarak's attempts to provide alternative

concessions were viewed by most as insufficient. In contrast, rarely, if at all, throughout the protest episode in Jordan were there any calls for King Abdullah to be removed from power; the earliest demand that was shared among many of the protesting opposition groups was for the resignation of the prime minister, which was conceded by the end of January 2011. Subsequent demands involved policy changes and even limiting some of the executive powers of the king, but the status of the monarchy itself was never directly under threat. This difference hints at another intervening factor, namely regime type. One of the tactics King Abdullah had at his disposal was not available to Mubarak—the ability to plausibly deflect criticism to government ministers and politicians, thus remaining removed from unpopular policies and outcomes. Mubarak, on the other hand, was universally seen as the primary authority and decision maker in the Egyptian government, not to mention in power for the previous 30 years and thus unambiguously viewed as responsible for the country's economic situation. King Abdullah's ability to deflect some of the anger and blame from protesters likely helps explain the more moderate size of protests in Jordan despite the presence of mechanisms of mobilization.

In his first speech in response to protests, Mubarak spoke somewhat condescendingly to and about protesters, especially youth, and made multiple references to the threats of rioters and those seeking to cause chaos and instability. He ostensibly vowed support for those wishing to express their political opinions within the law, but the actions of the police and security forces implied differently.[52] In stark contrast, King Abdullah spoke of his own frustrations with "the system" in previous reform efforts and

[52] An English translation of this speech is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCqI9JuOa44.

referred to protests in Jordan and around the MENA region as a renewed opportunity for reform and "to move the political process forward" (Ryan 2018, 21). Again, the King's ability to frame himself as pushing for progress as part of the political decision-making process as opposed to being the supremely powerful ruler of the country affords him the chance to, at least nominally, distance himself from the popular complaints about the political and economic system.

When viewed together, these factors—the different protester demands, the different levels of government repression, and the different public stances of leaders toward protests—influence each regime's "optimal" strategy of repression and concessions necessary to dissuade further protests. So where a certain level of limited repression and limited concessions in Jordan played a role in discouraging protests, more severe repression with limited concessions in Egypt actually contributed to a spiral of protests and repression. In both countries, the *spaces* of protests and repression and these key contextual and mechanistic differences influenced the trajectories of the process of mobilization, and ultimately the size of protests.

The mechanisms of diffusion, emulation, and attribution of similarity that were activated in Egypt and Jordan shared a number of similarities. While these similarities can account for the activation of scale shift in both countries, it is the spatial differences of these mechanisms discussed above that in part explains the difference in the scale, or number of protest sites, that were active in each country. Protest organizers and participants in both countries benefited from the diffusion of ideas, tactics, and other information that were shard within each country and also across international borders.

Both Jordanian and Egyptian protesters acknowledge the inspiration they drew from Tunisians who overthrew the regime there through mass mobilization. Tunisians and Egyptians used social media to connect and share counter-repression strategies. Both television and social media coverage of the Tahrir Square protest allowed Egyptians around the country to see the scale of opposition to Mubarak; this helped reduce the cost of new participants to join the demonstrations and also catalyzed more Tahrir-style protests. Emulating the Egyptians and hoping to replicate their success, Jordanians attempted their own Tahrir Square-style sit-in in Amman. The lack of shared significance of this *place* of protest, and of most of the *places* of protest that were active in the Jordanian protest episode, hindered the ability of participants and organizers to add critical meaning to their collective action. The implications of the hypotheses I put forth in this dissertation assert that it is the enhanced meaning shared among the protesters derived from the *places* of protest account for at least a part of the results of attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation on scale shift in Egypt

In addition to media and social media as sources of diffusion, existing opposition groups and political parties in both countries played important roles in spreading information and mobilizing their bases of support to protest. Newly activist youth groups lacked the same established networks, but they took advantage of the increased accessibility of the Internet and social media to connect with like-minded individuals. The We Are All Khaled Said Facebook page started as a platform to shed light on the brutal killing of a young man by police in Alexandria, but it soon became a forum for Egypt's young Facebook users to share their discontents and criticize the government, and

then one of the main tools for organizing and publicizing the January 25 protests. Jordan's increasingly digitally-connected youth used Facebook, but also in-person meetings, for sharing and discussing experiences and opinions about political and economic issues and protests taking place in Jordan and around the region. Youth groups like Hirak acted at both local and national scales; cities had their own local groups that operated independently, but they coordinated protest dates and times with Hirak chapters in other cities to present as a nationwide movement.

These online and offline tools helped youth in both Jordan and Egypt find solidarity and similarities with others from different cities, economic backgrounds, religions, and social groups. Egypt is an extremely homogenous country, with approximately 97% of the population consisting of ethnic Egyptians. Jordan, on the other hand, has a more complicated demographic makeup. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, the distinction between Jordanians of Palestinian origin and East Jordanians has played a role in politics and the economy for decades, with some older generations of tribal East Jordanians not considering Palestinian-Jordanians as "true" Jordanian. Many East Jordanian youth do not have the same xenophobic notions of identity politics as older generations, which meant that youth networks like Hirak were more welcoming to Jordanians of various ethnic and ideological persuasions. Still, other preconceptions among Jordanians persisted. However, youth movements alone were not sufficient to pressure the government toward the types of significant changes they were protesting for. The Muslim Brotherhood, leftist parties, secular nationalist parties, and other political opposition groups organized and participated in protests in 2011, and there was even

coordination of demands, protest locations, and tactics for a time. However, brokering agreement and coordination among these networks with historical biases and disagreements, in part based on a geographic factor of country of origin, proved unsustainable and, combined with a lack of shared meaning around *places* of protest in which these diverse groups could connect with one another and create deeper bonds, hindered the ability to scale up protests to the same extent as in Egypt.

Implications for Theory and Lessons Learned

This dissertation was designed to investigate questions about the differences in the size and scale of protests in Egypt and Jordan and the role that spatiality played in accounting for those differences. Though the analyses have focused on two case studies in the Middle East and North Africa region, the intention and hope is that the findings identified as a result of this research would be of informative of and applicable in other countries and contexts. This section looks at the implications of my research findings for the broader literature on contentious politics and the role of spatiality. I discuss some of the lessons learned from this research project, consider what integrating spatiality into the mechanism-process model of studying contention means and looks like for future research, and briefly test the tentative conclusions of my hypotheses in other cases.

I have identified throughout this dissertation that the existing corpus on contentious politics in theory and practice suffer from a lack of sufficient and sophisticated treatment of spatiality. Research on spatiality in studies of geography, sociology, anthropology, and some corners of political science exists, though its overlap with the literature on contentious politics is slim. Nevertheless, my literature review in

Chapter 2 discussed a variety of research that has been done toward incorporating various elements of spatiality into studies of protests, revolutions, and the like. The piecemeal addition of analyzing individual spatial elements with individual mechanisms of contentious politics by focusing on individual protest events or episodes has been important for laying the foundation of the current understanding of how these issues intersect. However, an approach that synthesizes the existing body of knowledge and paves the way forward to a more comprehensive embrace of spatiality has been needed. There are multiple important and overlapping levels of spatiality that are worthy of exploration, but *space* and *place* are core elements of spatiality and as such act as the base of spatiality's integration into contentious politics research.[53]

At the very least, this dissertation has put forth and reasonably concluded that spatiality can influence the mechanisms of contentious politics in significant ways that can alter the process outcomes. Of course everything that comes in between gets more complicated. The endeavor of political science in dealing with complex social phenomena is inherently messy; it can be exceedingly difficult to draw clean divisions or connections between any two phenomena in seeking to better understand their relationship. Dealing with spatial concepts is no different. Though *space* and *place* are two dimensions of spatiality that are conceptually distinct, distinguishing between their separate influences on mechanisms of contentious politics proved difficult. Because of the relationship and overlap between these spatial dimensions, assessing my hypotheses that singled out *space* and *place* sometimes uncovered more complex dynamics at work.

[53] See edited volume by Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013 for one of the most comprehensive treatments of spatiality and contentious politics published to date.

For example, my analyses of both repression and brokerage in Egypt pointed to clear signs that both *space* and *place* were at work influencing these mechanisms. Diffusion was also a constituent mechanism of both mobilization and scale shift, and had both *space*- and *place*-based implications

Clearly delineating the proposed causal mechanism associated with each dimension of space was a particularly useful organizing tool for my hypotheses. And being able to assess the relationship between *space* and repression, for example, in a structured, comparative framework allowed me to be reasonably confident with the results. Even though some of the findings of my hypotheses were not particularly innovative, for example that the *space* of protests does in fact influence repression and subsequent mobilization, a study of this scale attempting to incorporate new conceptual and analytical features to the well-established contentious politics literature and mechanism-process approach does best to proceed tentatively.

With caution in mind, there was one particular factor that played an important role in the protest episodes in both Egypt and Jordan, and was an important factor in the mechanisms and processes at work, but was not able to be adequately dealt with using a spatial lens because of the limited resources and scope of this dissertation. The relationship between online and physical space, and the role more broadly of digital space in contentious politics, is certainly worthy of consideration, and was in fact discussed in my analysis of both Egypt and Jordan. A huge amount of analysis and commentary is available on these topics, both in general and with reference to protests in the MENA region and my case studies. Though there are spatial dimensions that could analytically

incorporate digital spaces, one of the central principles of this dissertation that, especially regarding Egypt which received much attention as a digitally-enabled revolution, physical space matters too. Future research certainly could, and should, endeavor to more systematically bridge the divide of research on physical and online spaces.[54]

In attempting to demonstrate the causal significance of spatiality on the mechanisms linked to mobilization and scale shift in contentious politics, this dissertation both tested the existing consensus that the activation of certain key mechanisms would result in the same processes in different contexts and, after showing the presence of all of the underlying mechanisms in both Egypt and Jordan, turned to spatiality as an explanatory factor. This approach did allow me to provide a comprehensive overview of the protest episodes in both case studies, but it also expanded the scope beyond and, at times, distracted from the centrality of spatiality. Acknowledging non-spatial factors did not weaken the overall analysis, as there were obviously important factors outside of the spatial dimensions at the center of my inquiry. For example, compiling and analyzing data on different types of repression included tactics that were not inherently spatial, or at least not directly connected to *space* or *place*; though there can be spatial dimensions to shutting down Internet and mobile phone networks or instituting curfews, treating those phenomena with a spatial frame is not necessarily applicable depending on what is being investigated and how.

[54] For examples of studies that explore the interactions between physical and digital spaces, see: Turner and Davenport 2005; Herrera 2007; Aurigi and De Cindio 2008; Ash, Kitchin, and Leszczynski 2018; and Gairola and Roth 2019.

Part of the challenge of undertaking a dissertation with this dual purpose was the associated dual levels of analysis they required. This dissertation was designed to look at both protest events at the individual level in order to scrutinize spatiality as well as the trajectory of the broader protest episode to get a comprehensive picture of all facets of the mechanisms involved. As a result, the data collection and analysis necessary to be able to jump back and forth between these two scales was demanding for this project of limited resources. Diving deep into the specifics of where an individual protest march began, what streets and neighborhoods it traveled through, the location of security forces that intercepted them, and the surrounding environs could provide rich detail that spoke directly to the *spaces* of protest, for example. Though data from news media sources had some drawbacks, the nature of the medium meant that where detailed reporting of protest events was available, it was abundant. Still, secondary sources that included after-the-fact interviews with protest organizers and participants were instrumental in supplementing the news media data.

Unfortunately, such detail was not available in the data collected from news sources for the majority of protest events. One effect of this limitation was that detailed spatial assessments of protests were contained to a few events and anecdotes, for example the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo and the attempted sit-in at the Interior Ministry Circle in Amman. Thus the conclusions of some of my hypotheses were based largely on a few of the same protest events. By no means does this invalidate my findings; the empirics and evidence marshalled in this dissertation toward better understanding the spatiality of mechanisms of contentious politics are compelling. However, further

research that focuses on different protest events could provide additional weight toward the broader applicability of my hypotheses. In addition to doing further research on the relationships between spatiality and the mechanisms posited in my hypotheses, other mechanisms and processes should also be tested; exploring different causal mechanisms than those I proposed—that spatiality influences the cost of collective action and the meaning of collective action—would also be a worthwhile endeavor.

While future research can lend additional support for the more external validity of my findings, a return to the theoretical implications of my findings, as well as brief demonstrations of their applicability in other cases, can provide more immediate affirmation here. One of the biggest takeaways from this dissertation is the recognition and explication of additional factors influencing the mechanisms and processes used to explain contentious politics, namely spatiality. The mechanism-process approach was developed to be a framework that could be applied to a variety of different phenomena and contexts; mechanisms and processes were useful concepts in that they had the same effects across different events, and that certain combination of mechanisms would result in certain outcomes. Some level of influence of existing structural conditions, for example, are accounted for in this explanatory model, but the intention was for this framework to be easily transported and utilized to understand everything from social movements and revolutions to civil wars and democratization processes. Revealing the influence of something like spatiality, which has both structural components as well as dynamic, socially-influenced ones, on mechanisms like repression and diffusion and

brokerage that can change the outcomes of resultant processes complicates the simplicity of the somewhat automated mechanism-process model.

As explained at length in the case studies and this concluding chapter, spatiality had a causal influence on most of the mechanisms related to the processes of mobilization and scale shift. The figure below is a revised version of Figure 7 from Chapter 3 that presented the hypothesized relationships between *space* and *place* and each of the mechanisms of contention studied in this dissertation. In its original formulation, *space* influenced repression, concessions, and diffusion—the mechanisms of mobilization—and *place* influenced diffusion, brokerage, attribution of similarity, and emulation—the mechanisms of scale shift. The causal mechanisms that I proposed at work between spatial dimensions and the mechanisms were related to collective action, with *space* either increasing or decreasing the cost of collective action and *place* adding meaning to collective action. What I found from examining the cases of Egypt and Jordan were slightly more complicated relationships—*space* was not solely influential of mechanisms of mobilization, and *place* was not solely influential of mechanisms of scale shift. Evidence was also found that the *space* of protest influenced brokerage and the *place* of protest influenced repression. The following generalized explanations of all of these spatial relationships show how they are applicable in other cases and contexts besides Egypt and Jordan.

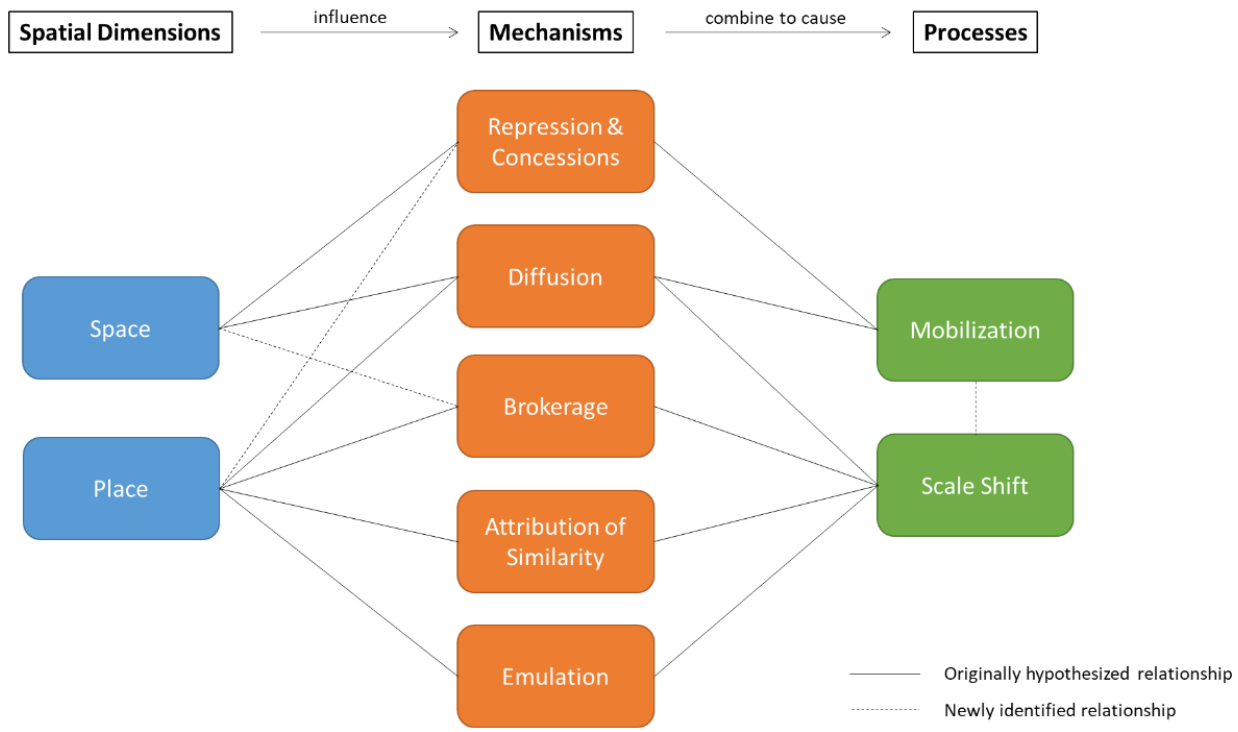

Figure 38: Revised diagram of hypothesized relationships between spatiality and mechanisms and processes of contention

If protest *spaces* make it difficult for police to use repression against protesters, they are less likely to use repression; if the threat of repression is lowered, the cost of joining a demonstration is reduced for potential protest participants; a lower cost of collective action means more people are likely to join the protest, leading to an increase in mobilization. This causal chain is rather simple, but spatiality rarely is. *Spaces* of protest that hinder repression do not all look the same. *Space* can be adapted and utilized in different ways by different actors to their own ends. So a *space* that facilitates repression in one situation may hinder repression in another. A narrow alley leading to a site where a large demonstration is supposed to take place can easily be blocked off by security forces on one end; if a group of protesters attempts to use the alley to reach the

demonstration, they could easily be stopped and arrested, forced to retreat, or violently attacked. That same situation but with a much larger group of protesters could have very different implications for police and their ability to use repression if the protester group was large enough to overpower and push past police. Inversely, a *space* that is more difficult for police to exert control over and use repression in, like a large city square, can be adapted to facilitate repression, for example by using barricades to restrict movement and access of protesters.

Spaces that are conceded to protesters can increase mobilization in different ways. If a protest *space* was fought over and resulted in police retreating, this would decrease the likelihood of repression and decrease the cost of collective action, as above. Ceded *space* could also be framed as a victory for protesters, which could be pointed to as a sign of strength and momentum toward achieving the demands of the protest. For people who support the protests but have yet to participate, the perception of increased likelihood of success decreases the cost of collective action and facilitates mobilization.

Looking at the example of protests in Ukraine that took place there in 2013-2014, drawn from Cybriwsky (2014), actually speaks to the *spaces* of both repression and concessions and verifies similar spatial dynamics and outcome as was found through my research. Maidan Nezalezhnosti, or Independence Square, in Kyiv was named as such in 1991 after declaring independence from the Soviet Union. The Square, commonly referred to as Maidan, consists of two large open spaces that straddle Khreschchatyk Street, one of the main streets in the city. A large monument and multi-level shopping center sit on one side of Maidan, and many political and cultural buildings surround it,

from parliament and the head of the national government to a concert hall and large sports stadium. Though it did not become a frequent site for protests until 2000, it has developed into a contested space between protesters and various government officials that have been the target of protests. On November 21, 2013 protests against then-president Viktor Yanukovich erupted and grew to tens and hundreds of thousands within a few days. Police tried to storm and retake Maidan after it had been occupied for more than one week; in spite of many injuries, protesters maintained control of the square and erected more permanent barricades to ensure Maidan's thousands of new inhabitants.

Figure 39: Maidan Nezalezhnosti, Independence Square, Kyiv, Ukraine
Source: Flickr: https://flic.kr/p/P7e6LD

Demands for Yanukovich's ouster grew after this display of force, and the occupation of Maidan continued for months. A community developed in the occupied square that included places to get food, medical attention, Internet access, and even books and clothing. Just as protesters in Maidan clearly delineated the territory under their control with barricades, government forces established their own area of occupied space nearby.[55] After a period of calm, fierce clashes began taking place regularly beginning on February 18, 2014. Protesters marched to parliament and were met by rubber bullets, tear gas, and live ammunition; additional repressive measures, including police checkpoints and transportation restrictions, were enacted. On the night of February 22, 2014, more than 100 people were killed in Maidan. Government snipers perched behind nearby hilltop trees and on hotel rooftops; there were also reports of gunfire coming from within protest territory. Both police and protesters set walls of tires on fire as both offensive and defensive maneuvers. After months of political crisis and protest, Yanukovich fled Ukraine and parliament voted to relieve him of the presidency.

This example shows evidence of similar spatial dynamics that were found from investigating my hypotheses in this dissertation. The *space* of protest in Maidan was used at various times by both protesters and security forces to their advantage; at times, the *space* of Maidan hindered repression, like when protesters adapted the *space* to erect barricades and security checkpoints to control access to the square; but security forces also used surrounding *space* of rooftops and hilltops as strategic points from which they could shoot protesters in the square. When protests first emerged in Maidan, clashes

[55] See detailed map of the division of space between protesters and police, available at: https://geovisualist.com/tag/kyiv/.

between protesters and police carried on for over a week until security forces largely retreated, ceding the *space* of the square to protesters. Immediately following this repression and concession there was a surge in protest participants, which ebbed and flowed over the months of the occupation of Maidan; there was a permanent occupation of thousands housed in tents and nearby buildings, as well as a number of useful features of society that had developed in the square. The *place* of protest also played a role, with Maidan as a symbolic location of protests from recent history and marches to nearby parliament building to demand political change.

As with repression and concessions, *space* and *place* influence diffusion, which is a complex mechanism that is important for both processes of mobilization and scale shift. *Spaces* of protest with certain physical characteristics, both in terms of layout and location, can decrease the cost of collective action. Open, expansive *spaces* that can fit more people in them and are easy to move around, and *spaces* that are accessible to people, for example being located in a downtown area or near public transportation, make it easier and more convenient for people to join a protest and decrease the cost of collective action. As the cost of collective action goes down and participation goes up, the tactic of protesting in this particular type of *space* is more likely to be seen as successful and thus spread to new protest sites with similar spatial characteristics, whether in large urban cities or small rural towns. Diffusion itself is a strong sign of scale shift, especially scale shift as measured by the number of sites of protest, in that it means contention or a repertoire of contention has, by definition, spread to another site.

This causal chain brings up an important dynamic reflected in the figure above, which is that of the relationship between mobilization and scale shift. Mobilization and scale shift seem to be mutually reinforcing processes, in that mobilization can increase scale shift and/or scale shift can increase mobilization. Though this is not a relationship that has been discussed at length in this dissertation, it is an important finding that requires deeper investigation to unpack more precisely how each process influences the other, and if/how spatiality directly influences them.

Shifting attention to the *place* of protests highlights a different aspect of collective action, one that is enhanced with meaning and significance that is imbued by spatiality. It is especially important to remember that while these hypotheses stand alone with regard to each mechanism, it is the combination of mechanisms that lead to scale shift. Though somewhat more abstract and thus potentially harder to measure or identify precisely, understanding the influence of the *place* of protest is arguably more straightforward concept to grasp. With regard to my findings and the mechanism of diffusion, *places* of protest that have a historical or social significance that is shared among all of or a large portion of a population can imbue that shared meaning onto collective action that takes place there. A slogan, a demand, a tactic, and any other repertoire of contention that is used at or associated with a *place* of protest can be diffused with the additional meaning of that *place*. A demonstration at a site that was also the location where historically significant protests took place adds meaning to that collective action; the meaning imbued on those repertoires of contention can resonate with supporters of a protest who

are not yet active participants. The symbolism of *place* thus has the potential to increase mobilization.

The protest movement that emerged in Algeria in 2019 in response to the announcement that then-president Bouteflika would be running for a fifth term in office offers an example of how the spatiality of the diffusion of protests and repertoires of contention increased the size and scale of social mobilization there (Volpi 2020). The impetus for this protest episode, and the fact that large demonstrations continued for months even after Bouteflika resigned, spoke to a broader issue among the Algerian population, which was the entrenchment of military-elite in the country's political and electoral system. The first signs of protest came from northern Algerian towns in mid-February 2019 and included peaceful marches and other protest activities, like tearing down posters of the president in government buildings or public squares. Youth and activists used social media to organize and disseminate information about protests in Algeria's larger cities, including the capital Algiers. Many protests were organized to take place after Friday prayers beginning in front of mosques; protests in these *spaces* decreased the cost of collective action, as they were both accessible and conveniently located (and timed) for many people. This was an intentional strategy that actually differed from protest events that took place in Algeria in 2011, many of which were organized by secular activists to take place on Saturdays in order to differentiate them from religious or Islamist protesters.

To increase the visibility of protests and facilitate mediated diffusion, feminist, leftist, and student protesters would rally in large public spaces earlier on Fridays; after

the completion of afternoon prayers, mosque attendees, which included a diversity of age and socioeconomic groups, would join the growing crowds of protesters. The ideological and religious diversity of the protesters was reflected in protest slogans that were popularized and diffused across the country; rather than slogans calling for an Islamic state, what became the rallying cry of the protest episode translated to "a civilian state, not a military one." Though many Friday protests started in front of mosques, the strategy of protests being organized in larger, more centrally-located *spaces*, and major public *places* with non-religiously affiliated shared meaning, facilitated their diffusion and played an important role in increasing both the number of participants and sites of protest.

By March 1, merely two weeks after the initiation of regular protest activities, over two million people were reported to have participated across the country. That number grew to an estimated five million just one week later on March 8. Despite government attempts at providing limited concessions, millions of Algerians continued protesting in the streets for weeks, until Bouteflika announced he was resigning on April 2. The diffusion of protest activities, like tearing down posters of the president, to protest slogans that avoided religious connotations, to activist strategies of when and where to stage protests, who to attract to them, and how, all had varying degrees of *space* and *place*-based elements that increased the size and scale of protests.

The remaining three mechanisms of scale shift—attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation—and the means by which spatiality influences them, are all closely related and so will be discussed together. Similar to with diffusion, the *place* of

protest has the potential to infuse meaning to various dynamics of contention. Perhaps more so than any of the other mechanisms discussed, relationships are absolutely central to attribution of similarity and brokerage. When new relationships are established through brokerage, the strength of the connection is important for the trajectory of the relationship and whether those individuals and organizations are able to continue cooperating toward shared goals. The attribution of similarity among new or existing relationships helps strengthen those bonds; creating a basis of solidarity through similar life experiences and grievances can help align their allegiance to one another and the causes for which they protest. A *place* of protest that has cultural or historical significance shared among the inhabitants of a particular neighborhood, city, or country can bring together a diverse array of people across ideological, religious, political, age, occupational, and/or socioeconomic lines. The power of *place* does not stop with its convening potential, but also imbues the meaning associated with that *place* onto newly established relationships. In addition, the shared experiences at *places* of protest help strengthen those relationships and provide a backdrop in which protest participants can find commonality with one another, at times through shared experiences of repression and injustice in response to their protest activity.

It is through diffusion and/or emulation that meaning-imbued attribution of similarity and brokerage leads to scale shift. In practice, emulation is not dissimilar to diffusion, but perhaps a more active, intentional mechanism in that it is the deliberate repetition or adaptation of a contentious performance. Like diffusion, emulation is a strong sign of scale shift given that contention or repertoires of contention are being

emulated in new settings, presumably protest sites. The significance of a *place* of protest can act as a model for protests elsewhere in similar types of *places*. Symbolic *places* of protest need not be unique; a demonstration staged in front of a police station demanding accountability for police brutality, for example, can be emulated at any similar *place* and import with it the same sense of meaning.

To gain a better understanding how the *place* of protests influence mechanisms of scale shift in a different setting than explored in this dissertation, I turn briefly to Iran (Sydiq 2020). Protests that begin in Iran's second largest city, Mashhad, at the end of December 2017 calling for economic relief initially spread to dozens of locations, mostly in rural areas and small towns, and demands escalated to include social changes and political reforms, even to the point of criticizing the Supreme Leader. However, the scale of protests lasted for only a few days, though a series of related but more limited protests continued intermittently in subsequent years. These protests included a large diversity of Iranians, including feminist protests against wearing veils, protests against anti-Arab racism in the south, labor protests, environmental protests, and Sufi protests in Tehran. Historically, participants of protests in Iran largely include middle-class urbanites; in contrast, these protests included mainly less urbanized, more disenfranchised Iranians. With such a diversity of protest participants, locations, and purposes, this was a leaderless effort whose coordination was additionally hindered by government shutdowns of Internet and mobile services. Still, the diversity of backgrounds of participants meant opportunities for new connections and cooperation toward aligned goals, and the

potential attribution of similarity based on common experiences of oppression and disenfranchisement.

The Iranian government had taken steps to implement *place*-based restrictions that resulted in the limited ability and opportunity of protesting Iranians to build and strengthen new relationships with one another. Besides using security forces and limiting public movement to restrict protests, the government designated a number of particular *spaces* in Tehran as authorized protest sites. This severely limited the ability of protesters to congregate in symbolic, meaningful *places*, but also meant that "any unforeseen development that could propel alliances beyond the original organizers, by bystanders or through spontaneous participation, was thereby rendered virtually impossible" (Sydiq 2020, 61). These restrictions only compounded the inherent spatial impediments to coordination that already existed as the result of the minority- and lower socioeconomic status-nature of these protests, namely that they took place in far-flung, isolated neighborhoods and towns with infrequent intersecting interpersonal contact. In addition, these spatial dynamics and communications restrictions meant there was little media coverage of protest events, thus further hindering the potential of emulative protests or other repertoires of contention.

The case of this protest episode in Iran functions as an equally significant negative or contrasting example to show how the lack of important spatial dynamics of protests influences the mechanisms of contentious politics involved and limits the process outcome, much like the case study of Jordan in this dissertation which showed that the lack of shared, *place*-based protests inhibited coalition building and relationship building.

The above examples and explanations show how the findings of my research augments the existing understanding of the mechanisms and processes of mobilization and scale shift in general terms, demonstrates their applicability to other cases and contexts, and complements, if not complicates, the mechanism-process model itself. It is when the above mentioned dynamics of spatiality are present in protest events and episodes that qualitative differences in the outcomes of mobilization and scale shift manifest. One possibility that should be further explored in future research is that it is the meaning imbued through *places* of protest on the relationships and repertoires of contention, more than the *space*-based influence on mobilization, that has the more impactful consequences on process outcomes.

As mentioned above, while the findings in this dissertation are demonstrably useful and add value to our understanding of both these cases as well as the relationship between spatiality and contentious politics, further study is still required, both to verify as well as question what has been learned. One final lesson to share from this project is a reflection on the mechanism-process approach itself. Used as a framework within which to organize various relationships and various other factors, the mechanism-process approach can be quite an effective tool. But adhering too rigidly to the clearly delineated causal pathways and relationships can distract from, oversimplify, and obscure the messy complexity of the reality of social and political relations we hope to better understand.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has summarized and compared the key findings from this dissertation on the mechanisms involved in the processes of mobilization and scale shift

in the 2011 protest episodes in Egypt and Jordan, as well as what they mean for progressing the understanding of contentious politics in these and other cases. Spatiality and other contextual factors in each case study had significant implications for particular mechanisms, how they were activated, and the resultant impact on the size and scale of protests.

In both countries, there was evidence of all of the mechanisms and an increase in both mobilization and a scaling up of contention. However, in Egypt, these processes were not only initiated but also escalated to much higher levels. Protests on January 25 occurred in many cities around Egypt, continued in all major cities and many smaller cities and towns, and continued to expand the number of participants throughout the protest episode. In Jordan, mobilization (represented by the size of protests) peaked early and never escalated above a certain threshold of a few thousand people at an individual protest event. Even relative to total population size, the Jordanian protests were nowhere near as large as in Egypt. Like in Egypt, there were protests in cities big and small across the country. While many cities continued to experience regular protests, fewer protests were occurring at fewer locations as the protest episode continued. The case study chapters as well as summaries and comparisons above explained and demonstrated how the spatial dynamics of the mechanisms of repression, diffusion, attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation accounted for part of the difference in the dependent variables—the size and scale of protests.

The mechanism-process approach that was used to analyze these protest episodes is rather straightforward in its assertion that the presence of mechanisms across a variety

of situations should produce the same immediate effects. While this was found to be technically true—there was evidence of each of the mechanisms, which combined to produce both processes in both of the case studies—the significance of spatiality on the mechanisms of contention hypothesized in this dissertation combined with certain conditions and contexts in each country to explain the divergent outcomes of mobilization and scale shift. My analysis did also confirm the set of mechanisms that, when combined, were crucial to producing the processes of mobilization and scale shift as hypothesized in this dissertation and found in the contentious politics literature.

This dissertation's findings have contributed to a better understanding of the spatial dynamics of key mechanisms and processes of protests. Applying Protest Event Analysis in a new way, by using data collected from news media and qualitative data from secondary sources, has helped demonstrate the inherent role of spatiality in contentious politics. More specifically, my spatial analyses of protests in Jordan and Egypt have shed light on some of the nuances that are often overlooked in political science research on protests in these countries. Using a spatial lens to investigate the *space* and *place* of mechanisms and processes in contentious politics has proved to be a valuable tool that can be applied in diverse contexts, both in the MENA region and elsewhere in the world, to shed new light on and explain, in part, differences in social mobilization and protest scale shift.

Looking back after nine years since the beginnings of the protest episodes analyzed in this dissertation, there have been many developments in Egypt and Jordan, but little progress has been made with regard to the political and economic situations.

Egypt underwent an attempted democratic transition in post-Mubarak Egypt, but the country is once again ruled by an authoritarian leader who has enacted even harsher restrictions on political freedoms than Mubarak. Sporadic protests continue to emerge despite significant security and repressive measures taken by the Sisi government. After low-level protests continued to decline in Jordan through 2012, reform efforts stalled. The country has experienced renewed protest episodes since 2018, with protesters adjusting some of the strategies that failed to bring about desired changes in 2011. The Jordanian regime has resorted to increased measures of repression that were mostly absent in 2011. It is impossible to predict the future course of events in these countries, but with increasingly large youth populations, persistently high unemployment rates, and rising poverty, combined with stagnated reforms or regressions in their political systems, it is safe to assume that the Egyptian and Jordanian publics will continue to protest for their freedoms, their rights, and their dignity.

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BIOGRAPHY

Jay C. Colburn II graduated from La Salle College High School, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, in 2003. He received his Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Loyola University Chicago in 2007 and his Masters of Arts in International Relations from the Brussels School of International Studies, University of Kent in 2008. He has over a decade of experience working in communications for international and non-profit organizations.