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HYBRID SUMMER SCHOOL
STUDENT ESSAYS AND CONFERENCE REPORTS

Hybrid Summer School 2023

PROTEST. UPRISING. REVOLUTION.

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INTRODUCTION

Collective mobilisation is a fundamental element in the process of democratic regime transitions. Its role is crucial in both initiating and sustaining these transitions. Such mobilisation typically involves a wide array of societal actors who, through their co-ordinated efforts, challenge existing authoritarian regimes and advocate for democratic reforms. The effectiveness of collective mobilisation usually hinges on its ability to bring diverse groups together under a common cause, thereby increasing the pressure for political change. Historically, "Mobilisations 'from below' against authoritarian governance have usually functioned as both a first, and necessary, step in the transition from dictatorship to democracy" (Bunce/Wolchik 2010, p. 31). Furthermore, mobilisation not only serves as a tool for expressing public dissent, but also plays a critical role in shaping the post-transition political landscape, often influencing the development of new democratic institutions and practices. Understanding the dynamics of collective mobilisation is therefore essential for comprehending how and why some regime transitions lead to successful democracies while others do not.

Funded by the Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur (Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Eastern Germany), the Deutsche Gesellschaft e. V., the first all-German association dedicated to fostering German and European unity through political and cultural exchange, organised and conducted an interdisciplinary summer academy. This event, held as a hybrid experience in July and August 2023, involved 15 international students and consisted of online lectures by esteemed scholars, as well as a network meeting in Berlin. Entitled '#Protest. #Uprising. #Revolution', the academy focused on the critical role of collective mobilisation in regime transitions. The participating students and early stage researchers, coming from diverse social scientific disciplines, explored three differing dimensions of collective mobilisation in particular: (1) the politics of remembrance; (2) the importance of workers' protests (with a historical focus on former socialist states in Europe); and (3) the role of youth in protests (with a contemporary focus on the Arab Spring and Protest in the Arab Region).

The first key area of focus was the politics of remembrance. The participants examined how protests, uprisings, and revolutions are remembered (and sometimes forgotten). They focused on the political function of the collective memory of uprisings and revolutions for current regimes. Often, the lessons a nation draws from the 'official' narrative of historical events change dramatically over time (e.g. from 'benevolent amnesias' regarding crimes, to patriotic education campaigns, to a turn-around in official rhetoric), or indeed differ compared to the collective memory of other nations. Which narrative, or interpretation, of resistance and uprising against authoritarian regimes and dictatorships is remembered? To what extent do the protagonists of the protests, uprisings, and revolutions feel that their political actions are accurately represented by official museums, monuments, and commemorative practices? How can we remember a past often marked by violence and oppression with the aim of societal reconciliation, without perpetuating existing resentments or stoking-up new enmities?

Secondly, the participants focused specifically on the role of workers' protests and the question of if, and whether, the working-class does occupy a special place among the forces of civil society. The rise of organised labour signalled an unprecedented development in the history of popular protest, especially in Europe. The history of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 is closely linked with the labour force, its organisations and actions, as well as the political parties which attempted to mobilise and lead the workers. What role did the working class for other uprisings in the socialist block, namely the uprising of 17th June 1953 in the GDR, and the uprisings in Poland and Hungary in 1956. How are authoritarian regimes and dictatorships similar or different in their approach to the working-class? What role do labour movements play in their collapse and in their transformation to democracy?

The third and final key area of interest enquired into the importance of another social group, next to the working-class, the youth. Young people have always been at the forefront of (political) protest. The Arab Spring serves as a seminal case-study in understanding the pivotal role of youth protests in regime transitions. This series of uprisings, which began in late 2010, was marked by the significant involvement of young people, who were instrumental in challenging long-standing authoritarian regimes across the Middle East and North Africa. The youth's unique position in these movements raises several critical questions: How did the demographic, technological, and socio-political characteristics of the youth contribute to their central role in these uprisings? What strategies did young protesters employ to galvanise support and articulate their demands for political change? Moreover, how did the response of authoritarian regimes to youth protests influence the trajectory and outcomes of these transitions? Finally, what have been the consequences of these mass protests for the young people and young adults in North Africa and the Middle East?

These broad and diverse questions accompanied the participants over the course of the summer academy, resulting in the following essays structured around our three main research areas.

In 'The Politics of Remembrance: Politicising the Individual', Roberta Bartkutė and Jacqueline Koshorst delve into how historical figures in social and political movements are often remembered, or forgotten, based on prevailing political narratives. Using Rosa Luxemburg and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn as examples from the 20th century, they explore how these figures become symbols, and how their memories are shaped and utilised by current political agendas. The authors question the role of collective remembrance in political discourse, emphasising that public memory is invariably intertwined with politics, often leading to selective remembrance or intentional erasure. Their essay compellingly argues that the politicisation of individual histories is a reflection of ongoing ideological battles, highlighting the complex interplay between historical memory and contemporary political objectives.

In a similar vein, Bereket Hasen, Valentin Ridiger, and Ashenafi Woldemichael explore the intricate ways in which national identity is shaped and manipulated through the 'politics of remembrance,' particularly in the context of Russia and Ukraine. In their essay, 'Politics of Remembrance: Revolutionary Dynamics and National Identity in the Post-World War I Era', the authors critically examine how historical events, especially those related to the communist revolutions of the early 20th century, are used as tools to mould national consciousness and justify political actions in the present. They delve into the Russian-Ukrainian conflict as a case-study, highlighting how each country's interpretation of their shared past significantly influences current geopolitical dynamics. The essay highlights the role of memory politics in the ongoing struggle for national identity and sovereignty, revealing how historical narratives are strategically deployed to reinforce, or challenge, contemporary political objectives.

In their essay, 'Lessons from the Past – The 1948 General Strike in Western Germany, the Dynamics of Workers' Protests, and the Question of Memory', Vincent Paul Musebrink, Adio Dinika, and Moynul Haque examine the significant, yet often overlooked, 1948 general strike in post-WWII West Germany. The authors discuss how this event exemplifies the enduring conflict between labour and capital inherent in industrial capitalist systems. They highlight the strike as a response to the exploitative dynamics of labour as a commodity, where workers mobilised to address economic inequalities and social injustices brought about by neoliberal policies and globalisation. The essay also delves into the historical neglect of this strike, emphasising that its exclusion from mainstream historical narratives accentuates the tendency to diminish the political agency of workers in favour of idealistic progress narratives. By means of this case-study, the authors argue for the importance of recognising and remembering such worker protests, as they offer critical insights into the persistent struggle for fair labour conditions, and the potential for labour mobilisation to enact significant societal changes.

In 'Exploring the Concept of Dignity in the Arab Spring Protests', Hasan Al Haffar, Sam Nadel, and Lara Sorgenfrei analyse the multifaceted role of 'dignity' or 'Karama' in the context of the Arab Spring. They argue that Karama, deeply rooted in the historical, religious, and cultural traditions of the Arab world, was central to the protests, representing not only material demands, but also a call for recognition, justice, and equality. The essay traces the evolution of Karama from a legal and constitutional concept, to a rallying cry for change during the Arab Spring, highlighting how it transcended mere economic grievances to encompass broader human-rights issues. The authors emphasise that Karama was employed by various marginalised groups, including women, ethnic minorities, and the queer community, as a demand for identity recognition and equal rights. The essay concludes by advocating for a non-Western-centric analysis of the Arab Spring, stressing the importance of understanding local concepts, like Karama, to fully grasp the dynamics of social and political change in the Arab region.

The analysis of Karama is accompanied by Teresa Becher and Pamela Chemelil's sobering assessment of the Arab Springs outcomes. In 'Causes and Reforms of the Arab Spring: A Comparison of Tunisia and Egypt', the authors provide a nuanced analysis of the Arab Spring's results, moving beyond the simplified 'Spring' and 'Winter' narrative. They examine the policies implemented by governments in Egypt and Tunisia in response to the protests, which were triggered by economic hardship and limited political participation. In Egypt, reforms included subsidy increases and tax reductions on essential items, along with the Social Fund for Development aimed at poverty reduction. Tunisia implemented similar subsidy reforms, and introduced programmes to boost youth employability. The authors highlight that these policies, although varied in impact, represented a positive alternative to violence and repression. However, while the reforms undoubtedly improved living conditions – and are thus perceived as successful in the eyes of the authors – their long-term consequences still remain to be seen.

Taken together, these essays, in combination with the ensuing conference reports, offer a comprehensive reflection on the processes of collective mobilisation, their actors and how they are remembered.

We would like to thank all the participating students and early stage researchers, as well as scholars and experts, who contributed to the success of the programme and ensured a lively exchange. We would also like to express our sincere thanks to all the participants who provided us with their texts for publication, and to wish all the readers pleasant and insightful reading.

Finally, our gratitude goes to the Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur for enabling the organisation and implementation of the summer academy.

Lukas Zidella
Berlin, December 2023

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CONTENT

ESSAYS

THE POLITICS OF REMEMBRANCE: POLITICISING THE INDIVIDUAL

by Roberta Bartkutė, Jacqueline Koshorst

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Introduction

In the first few decades of the 20th century, labour movements made waves all across the globe. Many of them are still well-remembered to this day, often represented by a few selected faces. Most revolutions have had them, especially in the past century; a Gandhi or Che Guevara, a Martin Luther King, Trotzki, or Luxemburg. However, history tends to be written by its winners. The more influential and long-lasting their effect, the greater the chance of being remembered and, winner or loser, any representative of a movement can be instrumentalised and bent and twisted to fit a narrative or agenda.[1] Political and cultural icons can be powerful tools of mobilisation, both for and against the ideologies they are made to represent. The cases discussed in this essay, both originating in that tumultuous beginning of the last century, but remembered quite differently in the aftermath, prove this succinctly. An individual representation enables a far more emotionalising and polarising discourse. We must therefore keep in mind that public remembrance is always a matter of politics.

'Down with weapons!', or current perspectives on the commemoration of Rosa Luxemburg

Several days after the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, huge letters appeared on the windows of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Berlin, bearing an ambiguous slogan, 'DOWN WITH WEAPONS!' (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung 2022). The ambiguity of this well-exposed motto can imply any of three possible addressees: the two conflict parties – Russia on one hand and Ukraine on the other – or Germany, as it is alluded to in the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation's statement as a reaction to the war begun by Russia: "Germany has learned an important lesson from the World Wars: Never again war! Never again militarism! The deep conviction of the vast majority of Germans was, and is, to always first seek a peaceful solution in conflicts. *Unfortunately, this conviction has been shaken in recent months. <...> The decision to take-up arms, to re-arm, and to supply weapons to Ukraine appears obvious. However, there are, in fact, alternatives*" (Solty, n.d., emphasis by R.B.). The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, just like its mother-party, *Die Linke* (The Left), is highly-critical of the military aid which Germany is providing to Ukraine, and of other measures implemented by Western countries against Putin's regime, including sanctions. Due to the Foundation's affiliation with the German leftist party, the future of the remembrance of Rosa Luxemburg will depend on the internal developments and election results of the party.

Die Linke (The Left) is currently one of the most divided parties in the German political landscape. Its recent split into an old and a new camp was accelerated by the criticism the party faced for its aforementioned lenient Russian policy, with prominent representative, Sahra Wagenknecht, refusing to admit any misconceptions she or the party has had about

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1   The US white majority, for instance, has long reframed the legacy of Dr. King and, in some cases, even used his legacy to 'defend white supremacy' and discredit any attempt at 'direct confrontation' in the name of peace (Byrd 2019).

Russia. Thus, since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, 'The Left' has faced many defeats in the federal state elections, which can be interpreted as voters' estrangement due to its stance on Russia. However, after Sahra Wagenknecht's announcement, on 23th October 2023 about the foundation of the 'Alliance Sahra Wagenknecht', surveys show that about 13% of Germans would vote for it during the next elections to the Bundestag (Wahlkreisprognose 2023). The emergence of this new left party raises the question of whether it will make claims about the heritage of Rosa Luxemburg. If yes, when and how will the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation position itself in regard to such claims?

So far, the remembrance of Rosa Luxemburg has exclusively been a prerogative of an undivided leftist party, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) having no interest in it (Faulenbach 2003). Since Die Linke 'privatised' the memory of Rosa Luxemburg for itself, she has been closely associated with both the party's politics and the opinions of the Foundation. For instance, the aforementioned motto, in the windows of the Foundation in her name, inevitably associates Rosa Luxemburg's person with the Russian-friendly politics of Die Linke. Consequently, the future of the remembrance of Rosa Luxemburg remains closely tied to the successes and failures of the party. This is already becoming clear; surveys about forthcoming Bundestag elections show the centre-right Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) to be the strongest political force, just as it turned out to be the winner after the elections in Berlin in February 2023. The CDU-affiliated Konrad Adenauer Foundation describes Rosa Luxemburg as a model for extreme left-wingers, proving critical of her commemoration: "Rosa Luxemburg can stand for many things – but certainly not for a social, and at the same time, liberal democracy" (Neumann 2023).

Whereas other communist figures, like Ernst Thälmann or Karl Liebknecht, are primarily kept in history books without any relevance to the current political issues, Rosa Luxemburg is frequently brought up in current political discourse. This is because of her model role for Die Linke party and the Foundation affiliated with it. Her name and memory are more susceptible to being instrumentalised for promoting a particular political agenda. It remains to be seen whether her presence in the public and political consciousness will ultimately prove beneficial or harmful to her memory.

The politics of forgetting? Rephrasing history through erasure

On 1st May 2023, the New Hampshire town of Concord installed a historical marker commemorating the life and work of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn at her birthplace. Flynn was one of the leading figures of the labour movement in the United States, beginning her activism at the age of 15. During her life, she was involved in the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), the US Communist Party, and the American Civil Liberties Union, which she co-founded. She was also involved in the suffragist movement and was a fervent fighter for women's health. After her death in 1964, she even received a state funeral in the Red Square in Moscow.

The fear of communism in the United States is well-known and has long been one of the most polarising issues in the country's already divisive public and political discourse. The first nationwide panic over communism, still known today as the First Red Scare, is widely

agreed to have been in response to the 1917 Russian Revolution and similar uprisings that came about prior to, or in the years after, World War I. Following World War II, the Second Red Scare (also known as McCarthyism or Hooverism), was marked by the relentless persecution of suspected communists and socialists, the public rhetoric surrounding the topic being defined by paranoia. The Cold War period, and its proxy wars, also left its traces in US attitudes towards what they understand as communism or socialism, a definition that has been widened beyond reason and weaponised in almost every political debate in US domestic politics.

Exactly two weeks after its instalment, Flynn's plaque was removed by the state's executive council. As quoted in the New York Times article concerning the issue, Republican council member, Joseph Kenney, called the marker a "slap in the face" and hoped that its removal would "teach children a valuable lesson about the history of communism in the United States, and the time when it threatened 'to take the world over and change our way of life'", finally emphasising that they "can't be recognising someone like that in the state's capital" (Tumin 2023).

These statements, and their contradictory nature, raise some excellent points about the politics of remembrance, the censorship of history, and the popular lie of an 'objective' history. The US is an enlightening starting-point for questions like these. For a long time, they have framed themselves, and been framed, by much of the Western world as a nation – perhaps the only nation – that grants its people 'true' freedom. However, censorship has been constant in the country's history of literature, television, news reporting, education, and historiography. Recent headlines about certain books being banned from public or school libraries, and blatant right-wing propaganda being allowed into high-school history classes, only begin to show the way that a warped portrayal of history is being used to shape the national character and identity and further polarise the population through misinformation.

When Kenney claims that the removal of a historical marker is meant to 'teach' children about their country's history, then that is an entirely nonsensical statement. In the two weeks that the plaque was in place, most children in Concord would not have seen it at all, and the ones who did likely do not understand much of its significance – let alone the meaning of its removal. When he says that New Hampshire "can't be recognising someone like that", this is a much more honest statement. The removal of the marker is not a lesson, but an erasure of history. By taking away the source of information, the council takes away the chance to learn and form an own opinion, and they do it for political gain. The National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC), a 'non-partisan organisation dedicated to freedom of speech, thought, and enquiry' wrote a letter to New Hampshire governor, Chris Sununu, expressing its concern about the 'hasty removal' of the marker:

"Acknowledging the birthplace of leading labour and women's rights activist, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, because of her Communist beliefs. (...) We encourage you to reinstate the marker and ensure all visitors and residents to New Hampshire have the opportunity to learn about the relevance of Concord to important activist movements of the 20th Century". (National Coalition Against Censorship 2023)

The letter also strongly suggests that, due to the hasty decision and the lack of documentation regarding a discussion of the marker's removal, no such discussion took place, which would mean that "the State of New Hampshire has failed to follow its own policies on historical place-making in the face of political pressure from outside entities" (ibid.).

The decision to remove Flynn's marker is representative of a larger problem with the politics of remembrance – they are, at the core, a matter of politics. By erasing a piece of history, the State of New Hampshire perpetuates the idea of communism as evil, threats to a 'free' American society. The accomplishments of a woman who dedicated decades of her life to the fight for women's and worker's rights are disregarded because of her political affiliation with communism and the ease with which this term can be weaponised in the US to this day.

Conclusion

While the socialist and communist movements and uprisings in the US and Germany both ultimately failed in their main objectives, their respective long-term impact in their countries' history could hardly be more different.

While communism was persecuted in Nazi Germany, the Social Democratic Party (which was, originally, strongly influenced by Marxism) re-emerged after WWII and became one of the two strongest parties in the Federal Republic of Germany for many decades, even long after the reunification of the German states. The German Democratic Republic, although it self-identified as a socialist worker's state, was internationally recognised as communist. Throughout the century that has passed since the death of Rosa Luxemburg, she has been a symbol for feminism, leftism, and the class struggle. At the same time, she has been instrumentalised by actors across the political spectrum to justify their respective agendas, either in her name, or in opposition to it.

In the US, the communist paranoia has continued to rise and fall throughout the past century, but it has never gone away. Especially recent years have seen an increasingly polarised public discourse which revives a rhetoric reminiscent of debates of the height of the McCarthy Era, or the most tense years of the Cold War period. Communism has become a buzzword which is so deeply rooted in the American consciousness that its meaning has become irrelevant; in fact, many statements made by political figures or news outlets beg the question of whether their speakers do not know what it means, or if they simply rely on their audience's ignorance in the matter. The removal of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's memorial plaque is not only meant to silence her memory, but is a conscious, public statement that it needs silencing. The erasure of her memory is made to be about communism, but erases everything else about her; the feminist, the activist.

None of these choices are coincidence. In an era of mass media, emotionalised debates, and snap judgements, we must always remember that, behind every representation, every account of history, and every public remembrance stand subjective, limited truths and political agendas which must not be disregarded. Die Linke, Sahra Wagenknecht, and the

right-leaning side of the political spectrum all make the memory of Rosa Luxemburg out to mean what they need her to mean, regardless of one's stance on their individual goals. In New Hampshire, the placement and the removal of the plaque served two purposes; one for remembrance, one for erasure. Those representatives we look to for inspiration or to deter – be it Luxemburg, Flynn, or their contemporaries – are not speaking for them-selves, but act as political mouthpieces for others.

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POLITICS OF REMEMBRANCE: REVOLUTIONARY DYNAMICS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE POST-WORLD WAR I ERA

by Bereket Hasen, Valentin Ridiger, Ashenafi Woldemichael

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Introduction

The events unfolding, since Putin's regime started to violently expand its claims on post-soviet space, have highlighted the importance of national identity as a tool of contemporary global politics. The concept of national identity is important in connection with the idea of the national state, and its core idea served humanity well in building the societies which exist nowadays. However, being important for the self-preservation of societies, there should be a fine line when it is misused for rallying citizens in unjustified wars.

The 'politics of remembrance' is the tool for forming and manipulating national identity. A profound understanding of how it is used in politics, and what the consequences of its misuse are, can contribute to security studies and research on development studies.

Since the end of the Cold War, the modern world has entered a multi-polar world system, where the battle of ideologies is substituted by the competition of national interests. In the Russian-Ukrainian war, Russia often cites historical reasons to justify its claims to Ukrainian territories. The idea of the 'Russian World', which is closely connected with Russian propaganda, is very closely connected with the ideas of the national self-identity of post-Soviet countries. The already protracted conflict can be perceived as a conflict between Ukrainian and Russian identities, where the 'politics of remembrance' justifies the conduct of the war on the Russian-side, and the 'politics of remembrance' on the Ukrainian-side strengthens the unity of the country. This is the reason why the aim of this study is to work out how national identity is manipulated in order to fit political objectives.

This study examines the application of the 'politics of remembrance' within two historically intertwined, yet adversarial, nations, namely Russia and Ukraine. Considering the complex nature of their historical relationship, this research intends to elucidate how the manipulation of remembrance serves as a catalyst in fostering national identities which could potentially contribute to conflict between these two countries. Specifically, this paper will focus on analysing the remembrance of their communist past as a significant instrument within contemporary conflict dynamics. This focused investigation aims to discern the nuanced role of remembrance in shaping present-day hostilities between Russia and Ukraine.

The first section examines the concept of the 'politics of remembrance' and highlights its pivotal role in shaping a modern state's national identity. It emphasises the manipulation of history for political gain on the international stage, drawing from academic literature and the idea of institutional memory. This section also explores the intersection between the 'politics of remembrance' and propaganda, highlighting how historical facts can be misused to serve political agendas. In doing so, it highlights the profound influence that the 'politics of remembrance' exercises in shaping discourse and instigating institutional change. Real-world political contexts are examined, with particular focus on their significance in the context of the early 20th century communist revolutions.

The second section of this paper shifts its attention to the February Revolution of 1917 in Russia and its far-reaching implications, especially its impact on the memory and politics of Russia and other communist countries. It highlights the global influence of the Bolshevik model and how it shaped communist movements worldwide. This section also spotlights the complex and multifaceted commemoration of the revolution in contemporary Russia, marked by diverse interpretations and emotional reactions.

The final section takes us into the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917-1920, a transformative period in Ukrainian history that led to the birth of a fledgling nation and the cultivation of a distinctive national identity. It highlights the political, cultural, and artistic repercussions of this revolution, which left an indelible mark on Ukraine's national consciousness. In this context, the 'politics of remembrance' emerges as a critical element in shaping Ukraine's national identity, drawing inspiration from the revolution, while also acknowledging and remembering darker episodes, such as the Holodomor. This section meticulously explores the multifaceted legacy of the Ukrainian Revolution, emphasising its enduring significance in Ukraine's ongoing quest for independence and the construction of a cohesive national identity.

The following section will provide a detailed examination of these themes within the context mentioned in the introductory section.

Researching the Concept: The Politics of Remembrance

Remembrance is an important political issue for a modern state. The international arena is composed of national states, which are built on the concept of 'raison d'état' and are constructed on the basis of national identity. National identity may include different components, for example, common historical experience, culture, language, territory, collective memory, social beliefs, etc., (David & Bar-Tal 2009). History plays a privatising role in culture – these mentioned elements of culture are considered to belong to a culture if they are used by a nation for a long time, or created in it. This is one reason why history is usually a target for national politics, as in through manipulation of the understanding of history, it is possible to manipulate the national identity, thus justifying the current actions of a state in the international arena.

This work's research subject is the 'politics of remembrance', or otherwise, the 'politics of memory'. Due to the evolution of technology and modern media, these politics can be conducted not only by the states themselves, but also by any media platform with an audience. Thus, nowadays, 'politics of remembrance' should be widespread in society and present in different forms, and this makes it a good target for research.

What is the Politics of Remembrance?

In order to assess the influence of the 'politics of remembrance' on modern-day politics, it is necessary to define this phenomenon. Several works in academic literature deal with this problem. As Verovšek (2016) points-out in his work, it is difficult to find the boundaries

of the concept of 'politics of memory'. If it is defined in a broad perspective, i.e. the use of any historical events for political gain, then this concept will be too broad to have any academic meaning (Verovšek 2016). If the concept of 'politics of memory' is defined too narrowly, then it cuts-down the important concepts of public life. Hence, the first issue that we have to address is what we can exclude from the definition of the 'politics of memory' in order to narrow it down.

To do this, it is possible to address several other academic papers whose research topic is related to the notion we seek. The work of Lebow (2006) entitled 'The Politics of Memory in Post-War Europe', mentions the concept of 'institutional memory'. This idea is similar to our understanding of the 'politics of memory'. As Lebow (2006) argues, institutional memory describes efforts by political elites, their supporters, and their opponents, to construct meanings of the past and propagate them more widely, or impose them on other members of society. The concept of 'institutional memory' grasps the purpose of the 'politics of memory' very well. The main idea is that the politically active part of society uses historical events to construct meanings for the rest of the state's population. However, Verovšek (2016) states that the concept of institutional understanding of political memory is too narrow to describe the 'politics of memory' fully, because it fails to include aspects of social life which use this concept unofficially. For example, the author writes as follows: "broader debates in civil society and the cultural sphere play (a role) in influencing political expressions of collective remembrance, and conceptions that are too broad, thus lacking analytical rigour and making comparison across different studies, impossible" (Verovšek 2016).

Political memory includes not only the use of historical context in politics, which is conducted for a power struggle, but it also manifests itself in the civil debate and discussion on the meaning of the past. Schmidt (2008), whose original idea of 'discursive institutionalism' deviates from 'constructive institutionalism', mentioned this aspect by highlighting the importance of discourse for institutional theory:

"Discourse, in other words, refers not just to what is said (ideas), but also to who said what to whom, where, when, how, and why (discursive interactions). Defined in this way, discourse is not just about 'text' (what is said), but also about context (where it was said when, how, and why); furthermore, it is not only about structure (what is said, or where it was said, and how), but also about agency (who said what to whom)" (Schmidt 2008).

In discursive institutionalism, the power of ideas is used not only as content (a declaration of ideals), but as an element of an interactive process through which the ideas are conveyed in institutions. "The interactive aspect of discourse is important because it makes ideas dynamic by showing how, why, and where the carriers of ideas convince others (or not) to take up their ideas" (Schmidt 2008). Schmidt also explained the necessity of discourse for the institutional system: "But whether they emphasise ideas or discourse, such scholars employ a range of methods to demonstrate the transformative power of ideas and discourse, that is, to show how they exert a causal influence in political reality and thereby engender institutional change (or continuity)" (Schmidt 2008).

As can be seen, discourse is used for the adaptation of the institutional system (institutional change) to the current political environment. In this case, the 'politics of memory' can be used as a tool for conducting this discourse, which is aimed at political change.

If we consider the 'politics of remembrance' as a tool, the question is who wields this tool? According to the definition of 'institutional memory' as being close to the concept of 'politics of memory', it can be expected that political elites, their supporters, and opponents will be the ones to use it. Verovšek's (2016) explanation will add cultural and civil actors to it, who are not necessarily involved in the power struggle itself, but are maybe just being a part of the process of institutional continuity. This approach implies that the 'politics of remembrance' in all of these cases is just an attempt to impose a particular meaning on society. The consequential question then arises – what is the difference between the 'politics of memory' and propaganda?

In the work of Stanley (2015), there is a description of several types of propaganda. Among others, the authors mention several classic definitions: "There is a more nuanced version of the classical sense of propaganda. It is a notion that animates, for example, Noam Chomsky's work on propaganda. This is propaganda as biased speech. Propaganda is speech that irrationally closes-off certain options which should be considered. This is related to the classical sense of propaganda, but does not require immediate action as a goal. Action could be reached by several 'propaganda steps', in the sense of biased speech. I shall call this propaganda-biased speech" (Stanley 2015).

How far does this concept correspond with the definition of 'politics of memory'? This depends on the use of historical narrative in the 'politics of memory'. The main aspect of propaganda is that it irrationally chooses facts, so some truth is not considered. The same can be done with 'politics of memory', if the historical facts are misrepresented. Moreover, if we consider the 'politics of memory' as a discourse then, at some point, with an occurrence of a stable contextual mistake, 'politics of memory' can be easily transformed into ideological propaganda. Hence, it is possible to draw the conclusion that 'politics of memory' can exist in the form of propaganda, and be the same.

An example of the usage of 'politics of memory' as a tool of propaganda can be found in the work of Miguel Vázquez-Liñán entitled 'Historical memory and political propaganda in the Russian Federation': "The propagandistic use of the past for identity-building and justifying current policies is far from being a novelty or a practice that can be attributed exclusively to the governments of Vladimir Putin. However, the 'memory wars' that Russia has been waging for the last few years against neighbouring states in Eastern Europe, in addition to the tense relations between Moscow and Washington and Brussels, enhance the relevance of analysing the Kremlin's political discourse; a discourse that, in recent years, has also been channelled internationally through media, such as Russia Today and Sputnik, thus substantially increasing its potential impact" (Vázquez-Liñán 2017).

As it is possible to see in the Russian example, 'politics of memory'' is used as a tool in media warfare. In this case, political discourse, which is happening in Russian institutions, misrepresents the image of the historical facts aiming to build the memory of contemporary citizens of Russia and foreigners in a way that will justify political actions of the Russian government. However, the application of 'politics of memory' for propagandistic purposes does not make this concept inherently flawed. The problem with the usage of 'politics of memory' in politics arises only when it is abused for political purposes. Otherwise, when it is used as a tool for institutional discourse, as Schmidt (2008) described it, it becomes not a problem, but a way of maintaining social organisation.

Given that we now know the definition of 'politics of memory', its limitations, purpose, and extreme manifestations (propaganda), we can assess the use of this concept in the real world: It will be especially useful due to the presence of the concept of discursive institutionalism. The pivotal points in the history of a state are usually widely used in politics and remembered throughout the population. These historical events include uprisings, revolutions, and regime falls. Such events are usually characterised by violence and persecution, to be remembered with the goal of societal reconciliation. These events are associated with profound progress and change, and that is why it is plausible to expect 'politics of remembrance' to be used in this kind of event.

One of the events that is most suitable for study is the communist revolutions of the early 20th century. During this period, several revolutions took place which had a common ideological basis. One can take countries with two different histories of institutional development and compare the 'institutional memory' between them. Therefore, for a comparative analysis of the work of 'politics of remembrance' in an institutional sense, the example of communist revolutions is suitable for our study.

The 'politics of remembrance' of communist revolutions was chosen as the subtopic of this work because the ideology of communism can be a threat to national identity (Walter 1999). The ideology of Marxism considers a nation as a socio-economic structure which developed following the dissolution of the feudal system, a structure that served as the foundation for the capitalist economic system. For example, in the USSR, after its establishment in 1922, some trends were directed against the remembrance of the common past. One of them was the tradition of giving names to children who were not connected with the 'bourgeois' past in the early 1920s (Филина 2017). Such an attempt to break a link with the past could not happen without consequences. It poses an interesting question – how does the 'politics of remembrance' deal with the remembrance of events connected to communist revolutions nowadays? How do modern national states reconcile this part of their history with their national identity? How do the 'politics of memory' play a self-association card for a community after the struggle a hundred years ago?

Probably the best way to contrast 'politics of memory' on the example of contemporary history is on the examples from Russia and Ukraine. These two countries have a common communist past but, since the fall of the Soviet Union, both of them have taken different directions in the geopolitical arena. Since the start of the Ukraine-Russian war,

Russia has been using historical grounds to justify its claims (Vázquez-Liñán 2017) and, given that Ukraine is a newly-established state, it faced the challenge of developing its own institutional system. Consequently, the political discourse in Ukrainian institutional discourse should be intense due to the resistance in media war and the process of institutional development. This situation is very conducive for the case-study of 'politics of memory'.

Case-Study I: Heritage of Russian Revolution

The February Revolution of 1917 in Russia was a momentous event which had far-reaching implications not only within Russia, but also globally (Hesketh 2017). The February Revolution had a significant impact on the political landscape of communist nations, particularly in terms of the memory practices. Notably, it led to the rise of the Bolshevik model as a prominent example. The Russian situation is characterised by its extremity and specificity, and the exerted consequential impacts on other nations (Edele & Gerwarth 2014). This particular essay focuses on how the revolution is remembered, and how it is shaping, or influencing, the current politics of Russia and other communist countries.

The Russian Revolution, through its embodiment of Bolshevik principles, has exerted a profound influence on communist movements and governments in several nations. These political groups and governing bodies aimed to replicate the achievements of the Bolsheviks in toppling the prevailing regime and instituting a socialist framework. The governments of various countries were motivated to implement reformist policies aimed at mitigating working-class radicalism by the perceived threat of communism, as demonstrated by the Bolshevik example (Hesketh 2017). The occurrences in Russia have substantiated the overarching historical principle that revolutions tend to consume their own progeny, as cautioned by a publication with conservative leanings (Thatcher 2020).

The book, authored by Andrei P. Tsygankov, provides a stimulating analysis of Russia's foreign policy, specifically focusing on the February Revolution and its implications in present-day Russia as a communist state (Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity 2013). Tsygankov adeptly analyses the historical backdrop of the revolution, elucidating the complex interaction between domestic and international elements that influenced its ultimate result. Tsygankov sheds light on the lasting impact of historical events on Russia's foreign-policy choices by establishing connections between the revolutionary era and contemporary Russia. The author's nuanced analysis offers valuable insights into the complex dynamics of Russia's evolving global relations, providing a comprehensive perspective on how historical events shape the nation's foreign-policy decisions as it grapples with its identity as a communist state within the contemporary global context.

The present-day commemoration of the February Revolution in Russia is a multi-faceted and nuanced phenomenon that reflects its convoluted historical significance. The previously mentioned notable event, marked by the elimination of authoritarian rule, elicits a combination of admiration for its accomplishment, and criticism for the

ensuing chaos and instability (Zajda 2012). Rather than downplaying its importance, this multifaceted celebration emphasises the complex consequences of the February Revolution. The revolution indicated above had a pivotal and influential role in facilitating the rise of the Bolsheviks and the subsequent establishment of the Soviet Union.

Within the contemporary Russian political environment, the portrayal of the February Revolution is marked by a discernible degree of ambiguity, particularly within educational establishments and media outlets. The task of balancing historical accuracy with the promotion of patriotic sentiments rests with the governing bodies (Zajda 2014; Roobol 1980). The revolution is widely regarded by a significant number of individuals as a seminal point in the progression of democratic principles. However, there exists an alternative perspective that associates it with a period characterised by upheaval and obstacles. The depiction of the revolution contains inherent ambiguity, which serves to underline its significance, as it continues to evoke diverse interpretations and emotional reactions.

Moreover, the Russian Revolution holds substantial ideological importance in countries that have already embraced communism, such as China, Cuba, and North Korea (Zajda 2014). These nations draw inspiration from the Russian Revolution as they strive to address the challenges posed by imperialism and capitalism, placing emphasis on principles, such as equality, class conflict, and the empowerment of the working-class. The Russian Revolution has had a substantial influence on political institutions, social welfare programmes, and international relations in Russia. This assertion is supported by scholarly literature, including Billington's (1966) seminal work entitled 'The Russian Revolution', as well as publications from Verso in London. The Russian Revolution of 1917 has also had a substantial influence on global socialist movements and the geopolitical landscape of the world (Billington 1966).

The issue at hand is a subject of ongoing discussion, with varying interpretations shaped by political ideologies, historical narratives, and individual viewpoints (Zajda 2012; Roobol 1980). Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the lasting remembrance of the revolution still holds considerable sway over contemporary Russia and other nations with a historical association to communism. Numerous academics have posited that it has a significant influence on narratives, identities, political structures, cultural expressions, and societal norms (Zajda 2012; Roobol 1980). Regardless of differing perspectives, it is indisputable that the Russian Revolution has exerted a long-lasting influence on historical occurrences, and continues to shape discussions pertaining to governmental structures and societal transformations (Billington 1966).

It is essential that other researchers with an interest in the subject undertake more research to enhance our comprehension of the impact of the February Revolution in Russia on the politics of commemoration in communist nations worldwide. Russia's perception of the February Revolution differs from that of other communist nations, as it elicits a complex range of emotions. While the latter regard it as a significant turning-point in their revolutionary history, Russia's perspective is characterised by a mixture of sentiments. This matter is deferred for subsequent examination about the intricate and multifaceted characteristics of politics, memory, and ideology.

The February Revolution in Russia is celebrated with mixed emotions, with both appreciative and disapproving sentiments. Educational institutions and media struggle to balance historical accuracy with nationalistic narratives. Influenced by China, Cuba, and North Korea, it has had an impact on political institutions, social welfare programmes, and international relations.

Case-Study II: Reclaiming Ukraine's Past

Ukraine underwent a series of intricate political transformations in the throes of the First World War, culminating in the Communist Revolution. The Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) emerged in 1917, followed by the establishment of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukrainian SSR) in 1919. A relentless struggle for power, economic upheaval, and attempts at societal metamorphosis characterised this period. It was also marked by a resurgence of national identity, a celebration of Ukrainian cultural heritage, and an un-wavering pursuit of sovereignty. The Ukrainian Revolution laid the foundation for the Ukrainian state, leaving a lasting imprint on the national psyche (Reshetar 1952).

In contemporary Ukraine, the 'politics of remembrance' forge a profound connection between these two pivotal events. The memory of the Ukrainian Revolution serves as a source of inspiration, reflecting the nation's resilience and its enduring desire for independence. Simultaneously, the Holodomor remains a sombre reminder of the sacrifices made to safeguard Ukrainian identity and the collective trauma experienced (Reshetar 1952; Walsh 1958; Törnquist-Plewa & Yurchuk 2019).

A comprehensive exploration of the Ukrainian Revolution necessitates a closer look at the works of scholars who have studied this era. Reshetar's (1952) 'The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1920: A Study in Nationalism' emphasises the struggle for autonomy and the intricate alliances and conflicts within the Ukrainian political landscape. Vladyslav Verstiuk (1999) highlights the revolution's role in fostering national structures and cultural renewal. Marko Bojcun, in his analysis of the study of the Ukrainian Revolution (1999), explores the outcomes of the revolution and its influence on subsequent generations of Ukrainians. Steven L. Guthier (1979), examines the popular base of Ukrainian nationalism and its challenges during the revolution, particularly the role of the Ukrainian peasantry. Richard Pipes (1964) provides critical insights into the broader context of the Soviet Union's formation during, and after, the revolution.

Moreover, the works of Wanner, Kappeler, and Shapoval shed light on the evolution of Ukrainian nationalism and identity in the cultural sphere, emphasising the enduring impact of the revolution on artistic expression (Wanner 2004; Kappeler 2003; Shapoval 2003).

The following part of the essay will thoroughly analyse the author's pioneering works, examining each of them separately. This analytical approach facilitates a more profound exploration of the author's impact on the subject. We have opted to analyse each work separately due to the complexities of the topic, aiming to effectively present the author's perspective within the essay.

Nationalism, Revolution, and a Quest for Identity and Sovereignty

Reshetar's seminal work, 'The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1920: A Study in Nationalism', unveils the intricacies of the birth of the Ukrainian Revolution. The immediate cause of the Central Rada's downfall was undoubtedly the debilitating influence of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, and an inability to please the German master (Reshetar 1952, p. 133). Reshetar's meticulous analysis provides an insider's view of the Ukrainian Revolution's early days, marked by the formation of the Central Rada as Ukraine's first modern government (Reshetar 1952, p. 3). This government grappled with challenges, internal conflicts, and the pressures of international treaties, highlighting the fragility of the Ukrainian state in its formative years (Reshetar 1952, p. 133). Reshetar emphasised that the Ukrainian movement in 1919 and subsequent years, was closely linked to the name of Simon Vasievich Petliura, as stated on page 263 of his work.

Moreover, Reshetar's work sheds light on the role of political parties in shaping the revolution's trajectory. The Social Revolutionary Party, for instance, emerged as a unified entity in 1917 and enjoyed considerable peasant support (Reshetar 1952, p. 51). The revolution was not a monolithic movement, but a tapestry of diverse political forces, each vying for influence and power. This internal diversity would eventually impact upon the revolution's outcomes and the formation of the Ukrainian state.

Reshetar's insights reveal the challenges faced by the Central Rada and its struggle for international recognition. The advent of World War I was viewed by some Galician Ukrainians as an opportunity to further the national cause (Reshetar 1952, p. 212). The geopolitical context of the time, with shifting alliances and powerful external actors, played a significant role in the fate of the Ukrainian state. He also scrutinises the Ukrainians' inability to attain enduring and self-reliant nationhood during the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1920, explaining it as follows:

The failure of the Ukrainians to achieve permanent independent statehood during the upheaval caused by World War I was, in large measure, a result of the under-development of the national movement. Prior to the war, their territory had been occupied by powers which, for the most part, were antagonistic to the cause of Ukrainian independence and were more powerful than the active force representing Ukrainian nationalism (Reshetar 1952, p. 319).

Vladyslav Verstiuk's (1999) work, 'Conceptual Issues in Studying the History of the Ukrainian Revolution', explores the cultural and intellectual aspects of the Ukrainian Revolution. Verstiuk emphasises the profound impact of the revolution on Ukrainian education, scholarship, culture, and the creation of a national church. These cultural elements played a pivotal role in shaping and preserving Ukrainian identity during this tumultuous period. Verstiuk's analysis also highlights the multifaceted nature of the Ukrainian Revolution, extending beyond political upheaval into a broader cultural renaissance. The activities of political parties, civic organisations, and mass media were instrumental in energising the Ukrainians and fostering national awareness. The revolution marked the beginning of a

process of cultural renewal, a phenomenon that would leave a lasting legacy in Ukraine's quest for independence (Verstiuk 1999, p. 19). Verstiuk argues that Symon Petliura rose to head the nation and the state (Verstiuk 1999, p. 17). This community's conceptualisation of the revolution's consequences and its experience became the cornerstone of Ukrainian nationalist and statist ideology (Verstiuk 1999, p. 20). The revolution was not merely a political event; it was a cultural awakening which reinvigorated the Ukrainian identity and provided the intellectual and ideological foundation for the nation's future struggles.

Marko Bojcun's (1999), 'Approach to the study of the Ukrainian Revolution', provides a comprehensive overview of the revolution's outcomes and its long-term impact. Bojcun highlights the fact that the Ukrainians failed to secure an independent state in those years, deeply colouring the assessment of the nationalist generation that followed the socialist one. The outcome of the revolution was indeed a military victory for the Russian Red Army's overall domestic forces, leading to the creation, in December 1922, of a Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic as a formally-federated member of a considerably centralised Soviet Union (Bojcun 1999, p. 37). Bojcun's analysis explores the complexities of the Ukrainian Revolution's aftermath, particularly the disillusionment of nationalist aspirations. The compromise that led to the establishment of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic was rooted in the new mass consciousness created by the revolution within Ukrainian society – a consciousness that the ruling Bolsheviks could no longer ignore (Bojcun 1999, p. 37). Bojcun's work provides a critical perspective on the compromises and complexities which characterised the post-revolutionary era.

Steven L. Guthier's (1979) article, 'The Popular Base of Ukrainian Nationalism in 1917', takes us deeper into the societal dynamics of the Ukrainian Revolution. Guthier emphasises that the first year of the revolution is crucial for understanding the evolution of the national movement in Ukraine. The popular base of the national movement, the response of the Ukrainian masses to the national cause in 1917, is equally important for explicating the course of the Ukrainian revolution (Guthier 1979, p. 30). One of Guthier's key insights is the role of the Ukrainian peasantry in the national movement. Social conditions in Ukraine during 1917 provided only one realistic orientation for the nationalist cause – agrarian populism. The Ukrainian peasantry, roused to political consciousness by the revolution, was the single greatest asset of the national movement (Guthier 1979, p. 47). However, Guthier also notes that the peasant constituency presented organisational and material challenges to the national movement. As he highlighted, the Ukrainian revolution did not fail due to the lack of a popular base, but rather through the organisational problems and resource deficiencies arising from its overwhelmingly peasant constituency (Guthier 1979, p. 47).

Unravelling the Nexus of Land, Repression, and Nationalism

Richard Pipes, in his work entitled 'The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism' (1964), offers insights into the broader context of the Soviet Union's creation during, and after, the Ukrainian Revolution. Pipes highlights that, during the first half of 1917, Ukrainian political parties were in close agreement due to the struggle for autonomy against the Provisional Government. However, once the struggle ended, internal

wrangling ensued (Pipes 1964, p. 61f.). Pipes' work illuminates the challenges faced by Ukrainian political parties in maintaining cohesion and direction in the aftermath of the revolution.

Pipes also notes that the Ukrainian political parties were relatively new, and formed under conditions of rapid revolutionary change. Their leaders were young and inexperienced, with little contact with public opinion. This factor contributed to the confusion and vacillations witnessed in the Ukrainian parties during the third-quarter of 1917 (Pipes 1964, p. 62).

Yuri Shapoval's work entitled 'The GPU-NKVD as an Instrument of Countering Ukrainian Identity in the 1920s and 1930s', offers a critical perspective on the Soviet regime's efforts to suppress Ukrainian identity in the aftermath of the revolution. Shapoval asserts that the incorporation of Ukraine into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), following its defeat in the national-liberation struggle of 1917-20, created the conditions required to subject the country to sustained terror with a well-defined direction, a certain internal logic, a set of distinct stages, and a number of consequences (Shapoval 2003, p. 325). Shapoval's work sheds light on the strategies employed by the Soviet authorities to quell Ukrainian identity and resistance. This included repressive measures, and the use of the GPU-NKVD apparatus, to suppress any signs of Ukrainian nationalism. Shapoval's analysis emphasises the enduring impact of the Ukrainian Revolution on the Soviet regime's perception of Ukrainian identity, and its attempts to subjugate Ukraine as part of the greater Russian entity (Shapoval 2003).

Andreas Kappeler, in his work entitled ''Great Russians' and 'Little Russians': Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Perceptions in Historical Perspective', provides an overview of Ukrainian history while referencing various historical works. Kappeler highlights the challenges faced by Ukrainian intellectuals who initiated their national movement, challenging the idea of a unified Russian nation. Ukrainian language and culture faced persecution and endured repressive Russification between 1863 and 1905 (Kappeler 2003, p. 8). Kappeler's work highlights the historical context within which the Ukrainian Revolution unfolded, particularly the evolving dynamics of Ukrainian-Russian relations.

The dynamics of Ukrainian-Russian relations appeared to shift with the February Revolution of 1917, and the establishment of an independent Ukrainian National Republic (1918–1920). A similar transformation was observed during the existence of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic in the 1920s. However, this evolving relationship took a different turn under Stalin, who employed severe repression to subjugate Ukraine and reduce it to a subservient counterpart of the greater Russian entity (Kappeler 2003, p. 8).

In the book, 'Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600–1945)', edited by Andreas Kappeler, Zeno E. Kohut, Frank E. Sysyn, and Mark Von Hagen, it is noted that the Ukrainian cultural renaissance of the 1920s marked the establishment of a genuinely independent Ukrainian culture (Kappeler et al. 2004, p. xiii).

Howard Weinstein's work, 'Land Hunger and Nationalism in the Ukraine, 1905–1917', assesses the role of land and nationalism during the Ukrainian Revolution. Weinstein highlights the demand for autonomy and the promise of land redistribution to the peasants. The Ukrainian Social Revolutionaries leveraged the appeal of granting land to the peasants if Ukraine achieved autonomy, making them the most popular party among the peasantry (Weinstein 1942, p. 34). Weinstein also placed significant emphasis on the following points:

"The agrarian factor in the Ukrainian movement still outweighed the demand for political autonomy and cultural freedom. Indeed, it was upon the land hunger of the peasants that, in 1917, the Ukrainian leaders were able to build a nationalist government. Land-policy then served as the touchstone by which the Ukrainian peasants measured the worth of this government, as well as of the other forces that struggled for control of the Ukraine during the civil war from 1918 to 1921. When the peasants were confronted with any regime, be this the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, the German-supported state of General Skoropadskii, the nationalist government of the 'Petliurians', the White armies of General Denikin and Wrangle, or the 'free communes' of the anarchist Nestor Makhno, the attitude of the peasants was primarily determined by that regime's activities with regard to the land question" (Weinstein 1942, p. 35).

Weinstein's analysis emphasises that the Ukrainian Revolution was significantly shaped by land-policy. The position adopted by any governing body vying for control in Ukraine between 1918 and 1921 was largely determined by its stance on land-related issues. The support or opposition of a regime toward land redistribution and agrarian reforms played a crucial role in influencing the opinions of Ukrainian peasants, as noted by Weinstein (1942).

Art, Nationalism, and Revolution

To gain insight into the dynamics of Ukrainian nationalism, and its struggle through the lens of the arts, I look at the scholarly work of Catherine Wanner. Her article, entitled 'Nationalism on Stage: Music and Change in Soviet Ukraine', examines the pivotal role of music in shaping and expressing the national identity of Soviet Ukraine, with a specific focus on the period leading up to, and following, Ukraine's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Wanner's research brings to the forefront the significant role of music in Ukraine's relentless quest for national identity, and the preservation of its unique cultural heritage throughout the Soviet era. Her work offers valuable perspectives on the intricate interplay between music, politics, and identity within the context of a nation undergoing profound transformation. Wanner's work highlights the historical context of the 1917 Ukrainian Revolution as a pivotal moment in the evolution of Ukrainian nationalism and its artistic expressions (Wanner 2004, p. 249, 255, 257).

To conclude this part, the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1920 was a multifaceted and transformative period in Ukrainian history. It gave birth to a fledgling nation and instilled

a sense of national identity. This revolution had political ramifications and deeply influenced Ukrainian culture, art, and national consciousness. The complexities of the revolution, the role of political parties, the popular base of nationalism, the influence of the peasantry, and the dynamics of Ukrainian-Russian relations have all contributed to the enduring impact of this period on contemporary Ukraine.

The 'politics of remembrance' hold a pivotal role in moulding Ukraine's national identity and its pursuit of independence. The recollection of the Ukrainian Revolution stands as a powerful source of inspiration, a constant testament to the nation's unwavering spirit and quest for autonomy. However, a darker facet exists to this memory, embodied by the harrowing remembrance of events like the Holodomor, which serves as a grim reminder of the immense sacrifices endured in preserving Ukrainian identity, inflicting a collective trauma upon the nation's conscience. The legacy of the Ukrainian Revolution and the 'politics of remembrance' underline the enduring significance of this period in Ukraine's struggle for national identity and sovereignty.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 'politics of remembrance' in Russia and Ukraine, as framed by their respective revolutionary pasts, reveal striking divergences in the shaping of national identity through historical narratives. In Russia, the enduring impact of the Russian Revolution, particularly the February Revolution of 1917, is acknowledged with a tendency towards selectively highlighting aspects which align with contemporary political narratives. The global influence and contribution to political ideologies, such as communism, are emphasised, suggesting a portrayal that extends beyond national borders. The multifaceted influence of the revolution on politics, identity, and memory is presented as an ongoing subject of discussion, highlighting its enduring significance in the modern world. The narrative seems to accentuate the resilience against external challenges posed by imperialism and capitalism.

Conversely, in Ukraine, the remembrance of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1920 takes on a more nuanced and honest approach. The transformative period is seen as playing a pivotal role in forging Ukraine's national identity and inspiring its quest for independence. Rather than emphasising global influence, the narrative centres on the revolution's significance within the context of Ukraine, highlighting its enduring legacy as a testament to the nation's unwavering pursuit of autonomy. The 'politics of remembrance' in Ukraine draw inspiration from the revolution's resilience, whilst acknowledging its darker aspects, shaping the national identity with a focus on internal struggles and the enduring spirit of the Ukrainian people. These highlighted differences underline how the manipulation of historical narratives influences the construction of national identity in distinct ways within the contexts of Russia and Ukraine.

For instance, in the shadow of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the divergent approaches to remembrance assume added significance. Russia's selective framing of the revolutionary past, with an emphasis on global influence and resilience against external challenges, may contribute to a narrative that aligns with present-day geopolitical

goals. The manipulation of historical narratives in Russia potentially serves as a tool to legitimise actions or policies in the context of the contemporary conflict. In contrast, Ukraine's nuanced approach to remembrance, drawing from the transformative period of the Ukrainian Revolution, highlights a national identity rooted in the pursuit of autonomy and internal resilience. This contrasting narrative may fuel the collective spirit of the Ukrainian people in their current struggle for sovereignty, framing the conflict as a continuation of the historical quest for independence. The 'politics of remembrance', therefore, not only shape national identity but also play a dynamic role in influencing perceptions and responses amid the complex realities of the present-day Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

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LESSONS FROM THE PAST –
THE 1948 GENERAL STRIKE IN WESTERN GERMANY, THE DYNAMICS OF WORKERS' PROTESTS, AND THE QUESTION OF MEMORY

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Introduction

Since the earliest days of industrialisation, the working classes of Europe have engaged in strikes, demonstrations, and other forms of protest to demand improved wages, working conditions, and political rights. Although the specific contexts varied across time and place, these protests were fundamentally rooted in the unequal power dynamics between workers and capitalists that are endemic to industrial capitalist systems. As Karl Marx analysed, such systems are predicated on the exploitation of labour as a commodity, with profits flowing to the capital-owners rather than the workers. This fundamental conflict of interest between classes triggered recurrent labour unrest, as workers collectively mobilised to try to shift the balance of power and win concessions from owners and the state.

This long history of labourer protests holds important lessons for understanding the contemporary dynamics surrounding work, economic inequality, and political power. Even though the twentieth century saw many gains for workers in terms of unionisation, the post-war decades have witnessed declining labourer power in the face of neoliberal policies and globalisation. However, recent years have seen a resurgence of worker protests globally, from teacher strikes in the U.S., to the Yellow Vest movement in France. Applying a Marxist lens, we can situate these contemporary struggles as part of the perpetual conflict between capital and labour under capitalism. Just as in the past, workers today find that direct action is often necessary to fight precarity and regain dignity and security in their working lives. Linking the experience of struggles, past and present, thus becomes a question central to both the analytical study of workers' protests and the political projects of organised labour. In this vein, examining some aspects of the 1948 general strike in West Germany – one of the most influential and yet, at the same time, most forgotten labourer actions of post-war Germany – might serve to illuminate how and why the struggle between workers and owners persists through space and time, and why it remains fundamentally relevant today.

Realising such a project of shared cross-temporal experience is no simple task, especially in the case of the 1948 general strike. The historiography of post-WWII West German economic recovery (commonly referred to, in rather fantastical terms, as the Wirtschaftswunder or 'economic miracle'), and of the state's establishment of a so-called social market system, rarely addresses this widespread act of open working-class defiance. In his critical analysis of contemporary historical accounts of West Germany's post-war economic development, Jörg Roesler surmises that the prevailing historical narratives, dealing with the restructuring of the economy during the critical years of 1948 to 1949, predominantly focus on Ludwig Erhard, the then Minister of Economic Affairs, as the supposed sole architect of a miraculously successful transition to this new market system. According to these histories, Erhard, by means of a series of shrewd and forward-looking political decisions, more or less single-handedly ensured Germany's subsequent recovery using both social and market-orientated strategies. Among his initiatives, the 1948 monetary reform, and the establish-

ment of the Deutsche Mark as the new official currency in the western occupied zones, are commonly seen as the most instrumental steps in this development, allegedly creating a spirit of optimism which unified both labour and capital in a revitalising act of collaboration (Roesler 2008).

These accounts, however comforting they may be to the sensibilities of a readership convinced of Germany's national myth of undisturbed post-war restoration, evidently lack the working-class perspective. Indeed, much of Roesler's subsequent elaborations, written in an openly political effort to dispel the argumentative instrumentalisation of this historical time-period by present-day advocates of neoliberalism, demonstrate in detail how Erhard's original reforms did little to address social inequalities, and were instead single-mindedly focused on ensuring an expeditious return to unrestricted pricing and private profit accumulation. Somewhat predictably, following the enactment of the monetary reform and the annulment of most price regulations in June 1948, many people in the West German occupied zones suddenly saw their purchasing power plummet in the wake of rising prices. Over the course of the next few months, the increasingly discontented working-class articulated its frustration through spontaneous riots and demonstrations against Erhard's policies, which ultimately culminated in a general strike on 12th November 1948. With approximately 9.25 million participants, the 1948 general strike was one of the largest political actions in German history. It was this strike, along with fears among those in power of the growing support for socialism, which ultimately tipped the balance in favour of reforms that included basic social protection – protection which, to this day, forms the very basis of Germany's social system.

The lessons that can be drawn from the case of the German workers in 1948 are two-fold. On the one hand, it vividly and clearly illuminates the social and political dynamics which underpin many, if not most, workers' protests. While there are numerous studies on workers' protests which concentrate on their specific characteristics and strategies, the question of what makes workers get involved in protests in the first place remains imperative and warrants serious academic attention. Workers' protests might best be understood as a non-institutionalised form of direct political action by labourers aimed at challenging a situation which is perceived as unfair and unjust. In pursuing its goals, protests might combine a repertoire of both violent and non-violent modes of action. Tilly and Tarrow (2007) argue that workers' protests can be conceptualised as a form of contention in which one party makes a claim upon another. Often, as was the case in 1948, the government is viewed as the object of this claim. However, the initial emergence of workers as involved actors in claim-making protests is itself tied to an underlying logic of grievance and deprivation.

Gurr (1970) observes that when people perceive inequalities in the distribution of income and wealth in their society, and are faced with widened discrepancies and economic injustices, it is frustration and discontent that fuel the flame of protest. Moreover, the direct loss of income, or the condition of unemployment, often aggravate these grievances and feelings of relative deprivation, especially in those burdened the most by economic hardship. Marxist thought points to the functional links between transformative political action and the degree to which those undertaking said action possess an understanding of their

own material condition and interests. In the case of the 1948 general strike, the apparent failures of Erhard's initial reforms (that is, their success in the eyes of capital) were impossible to overlook, penetrating every layer of everyday life, down to individuals' ability to acquire the resources needed to live.

On the other hand, it is not only the specific history of this forgotten strike, but also the history of its forgetting, that might inform our perspective. It is a history which points to the fact that the struggle between labour and capital is itself both an active force in continuing historical development, and an object of historical enquiry. These two aspects of class conflict share significant interconnections, as it is through discursive engagement with the experiences of past struggles that workers' (protest) movements might learn to adapt and to overcome the often antagonistic conditions of the present and future.

To acquire knowledge of not only the long and bloody history of capitalism's ascent to global hegemony, but also of the countless groups who endured and resisted its multiple regimes of exploitation and discrimination, including slaves, wage labourers, reproductive workers, the unemployed, and the colonised, racialised, and socially marginalised, since the advent of industrial modernity – in short, to develop a tangible concept of what progressive political actors ought to oppose, is an invaluable and necessary activity for those seeking to instigate significant social changes within their societies in the present. Furthermore, it might help to break the imposed regimes of differentiation in gender, race, or religion which obscure society's class character far too often.

It follows that interpretations of modern history, which elide the material and social realities of past societies by reducing historical developments to the acts of certain individuals, or by subsuming them under idealistic narratives of progress (the march of democracy, liberalism, etc.), do much to diminish the potential emancipatory power of history. Historians are not apolitical. Despite their often-invoked self-conception as neutral observers of objective fact, they, by necessity, have to present historical information in a highly selective fashion, choosing to highlight certain aspects while de-emphasising others in order to make a coherent argument. This very act of weighing the importance of historical factors is, as Howard Zinn points out in the opening pages of his A People's History of the United States, "more than technical, it is ideological; it is released into a world of contending interests, where any chosen emphasis supports (whether the historian means to or not) some kind of interest, whether economic, or political, or racial, or national, or sexual" (Zinn 2003). Whilst ultimately limited in its scope (an assessment that is only in itself made possible by a more complete perspective on what does, and does not, constitute the actual limits of economic policy), the general strike of 1948 nonetheless secured important gains for the West German workers, demonstrating their inherent political power. The strike's omission from most of Germany's post-war historiography, and the prevalence of historical narratives that reduce the history surrounding the currency reform to the supposed benevolent genius of Erhard, are, as a consequence, more than a simple distortion of historical truth; they also reflect the presupposition of hegemonic (that is, bourgeois) ways of thinking about history and political agency.

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EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF DIGNITY IN THE ARAB SPRING PROTESTS

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Introduction

During the events of the Arab Spring in the early 2010s, people across the Arab world, plagued by decades of authoritarian rule and dictatorship, took to the streets demanding change. Among a range of demands raised by protestors, a common refrain focussed on a fundamental lack of 'dignity', or in Arabic, 'Karama'. Dignity/Karama is a concept loaded with historical, religious, and subjective significance, although is often poorly understood. As such, the concept merits additional exploration, especially since it is often used in discussions regarding other important concepts, such as democracy, equality, and justice.

As we argue, Karama was a central overarching focus during the Arab Spring, being expressed not only as a demand for material security, but also recognition, justice, and equality. In the next section, we place the concept of Karama in a historical context, examining its linguistic and cultural roots within the Arabic and Islamic traditions. We then discuss how the term was specifically employed during the Arab Spring as an articulation of material concerns, demands for human-rights, and as an expression of identity by marginalised groups. We conclude by accentuating the need to move beyond a solely western-centric analysis of the Arab Spring, highlighting the significance of local concepts, such as Karama, to understand the dynamics of social and political change in the Arab region.

Karama in the Arab World

Conventional academic definitions of dignity commonly state it is a 'fundamental form of worth or status that is believed to be inherently possessed by all individuals, serving as the foundation for essential moral or political duties and rights' (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2023). Yet, scholars and the international community have not extensively elucidated a more precise definition (Rodriguez 2015). This lack of a widely accepted definition has given rise to diverse interpretations and understandings, at times resulting in conflicting viewpoints. For instance, the Cairo Declaration on Human-Rights in Islam affirms that 'all individuals share a foundational human dignity', while it specifies that 'only the true religion ensures the enhancement of such dignity along the journey towards human integrity' (Kayaoglu 2020). While much literature has focused on Western notions of dignity, there has been a notable lack of attention given to regional and culture-specific concepts, like Karama. Given the pivotal role of Karama in the events of the Arab Spring, this oversight warrants consideration. In this section, we explore the origins of the term within the Arabic and Islamic traditions, and the history leading to its emergence as a major demand in the events of the Arab Spring.

The concept of Karama began as a legal and constitutional one. Having been under the French and British mandates, and before that the rule of the Ottoman empire, the Arab region has witnessed numerous attempts at defining, positioning, refining, and enacting concepts of democracy, political participation, economic prosperity, and human-rights; concepts which have often been associated with the idea of Karama. As Hashimi (2013) outlines, the 20th century posed significant challenges and hardships for the Arab-Islamic

world. The impact of European colonialism and imperialism disrupted the dreams of countless Arabs who aspired to self-determination. The hope of establishing a unified pan-Arab state from the former Ottoman Empire's Arabic-speaking regions was shattered due to the ambitions of Britain and France. The resulting state system, shaped after World War I, was more aligned with the economic and geostrategic interests of London and Paris, than the preferences of ordinary people in places like Cairo or Damascus. The birth of the modern Arab world left behind painful memories and strained relationships between Muslim societies and Western nations.

Owens (2012, p. 15), draws attention to the connection between the colonial and post-colonial Arab states. He highlights that the structures and mechanisms of political governance exhibited a notable authoritarian continuity, which gradually bred resentment among the populace, and thus demands for Karama. He observes that the newly independent regimes sought to bolster their control over their citizens through the adoption of methods borrowed directly from their former colonial rulers, particularly focusing on policing, security, and the management of elections.

The concept of Karama was also influenced by the actions of authorities and injustices committed almost daily against civilians on the streets and in government institutions. The lesson learned historically then is that, at a certain level, human lives seem to be an unimportant detail in the Arab world, and are prone to sudden erasure, humiliation, repression, and poverty.

Linguistically, the concept of Karama can be traced to the Arabic and Islamic tradition, but also to early post-colonial times. For example, in The Encyclopaedia of Islam (2014), Louis Gardet observes the absence of the term, Karama, in the Quran. He does, however, note that the Arabic language, as it evolves through linguistic roots, gives rise to related concepts. Karama can be considered the linguistic precursor to 'karūma' which, in the Quran, means 'to be generous or beneficent', and it is worth noting that 'karīm' is one of the '99 Most Beautiful Names of God' in Islamic theology. However, as Pin (2016, p. 16) points-out, it is essential to note that while 'Karama' is a prevalent term in Islamic theology, it does not hold the same significance in Islamic law, as terms like Karama or 'Karama' do in contemporary constitutional texts. In traditional Islamic legal contexts, its meaning primarily centers around 'miracle' or 'grace'.

The shift in the usage and meaning came much later on, where the first mention was in the drafting of the Lebanese constitution in 1926. Karama is mentioned in Article 10: Freedom of education is established insofar as it is not contrary to public order and morals and does not affect Karama [karāma] of any of the religions or sects. There shall be no violation of the right of religious communities to have their own schools, provided they follow the general rules issued by the state-regulating public instruction.

The sense in which Karama was used here was the point at which it started gaining political connotations. It was also subsequently used in the Syrian constitution in a similar manner. The idea of Karama stated here pertains to the religious groups which constituted Lebanon, granting them a right of existence, an honour, as well as respect and protection from harm and political domination. This concept later expanded to include not just religious communities and the state, (since Karama in Arabic connotes a certain rank as well), but also individuals, and was utilised in later constitutions up until its emergence as a collective demand in the Arab Spring. According to Pin (2016), the initial instance, in which Karama expresses the idea of 'individual dignity' within a legal document, can be traced back to the Arabic rendition of the United Nations Charter, which predates the Universal Declaration by three years.

Karama during the Arab Spring: jobs or human rights?

As discussed, Karama has found diverse expressions across the Arab world which mirror broader cultural, political, and social dynamics in the region. The concept played a particularly important role during the Arab Spring uprisings in the early 2010s. One prominent aspect of its expression was the articulation of material concerns, particularly economic deprivation, unemployment, and poverty.

Material factors played a key role in the Tunisian Revolution which is commonly understood to have begun with the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old fruit and vegetable vendor who set himself on fire after a confrontation with a municipal officer (Moss 2013). According to Al Jazeera, Bouazizi's self-immolation was "an act that symbolised the frustrations of poor, unemployed Tunisians" (Al Jazeera 2011). These events took many by surprise, occurring as they did in a nation with an apparently stable economy, boasting an average of five-percent annual GDP growth and a very well-educated population. It later became evident, however, that the economic statistics did not reflect the reality: a post-revolution re-evaluation revealed that poverty levels had been underestimated by more than 20 percent (Al-Shamahi 2020).

The economic challenges in Tunisia were emblematic of broader macro-economic issues in the region. Decreases in the manufacturing of various goods, from around 2010, had led to soaring unemployment in Morocco, Egypt, and Tunis (Mushtaq & Afzal 2012; Tucker 2012). Alongside a decrease in production, the region's sizable and growing youth population faced particular challenges, with youth unemployment reaching nearly 25 per cent in 2008, well above the global average of under 15 percent (Drine 2012). As Al-Shamahi (2020) argues, a driving factor of these economic challenges was the implementation of neoliberal reforms that had empowered patronage networks and crony capitalists. Ultimately, economies in the region had failed to create sufficient jobs, leading to a pervasive sense of stagnation among the workforce.

Protesters across the Arab region echoed the material concerns of Tunisians. During the revolution in Egypt, an unemployed protester, who had been living on the streets with his family for over a decade declared, "I want my three-year-old child to grow up with dignity

and to find a job just like the President" (El Bernoussi 2021, p. 113). Another Egyptian protester similarly emphasised the material dimension of Karama, stating, "nothing can be achieved without bread and butter on the dinner table" (ibid., p. 114), while also acknowledging that some might perceive dignity differently, as a more 'pure', non-material concept.

While Karama was frequently invoked to express material concerns, it was also employed as an idea that every individual possesses inherent value and worth. As one young Egyptian protestor put it: "Dignity is a crown over one's head" (El Bernoussi 2021, p. 61). In Tahrir Square in Egypt, protestors invoked human-rights principles, using social media to mobilise and document rights violations. A number of high-profile figures, such as Wael Ghonim, a Google executive born in Egypt, explicitly linked concerns about human-rights abuses to demands for Karama, creating the "We Are All Khaled Saeed" Facebook page to denounce the brutal torture and killing of a young cyber activist. On his release from jail, Ghonim emphasised the need "to restore dignity to all Egyptians" (Tsotsis 2011). Similarly, in an interview study of Egyptian protesters, nearly all respondents agreed that Karama was a fundamental human-right (El Bernoussi 2021).

Like Karama, conceptions of human-rights vary across different regions. Specifically, the interpretation of human-rights rooted in the culture and language of the Arab world tends to differ from foreign Western-originated perspectives. A culturally-grounded understanding of human-rights may draw upon Islamic and Arab cultural values, placing significance on ideas of fairness, equality, and Karama deeply rooted in the region's history. Some interpretations may also give precedence to collective rights and the well-being of communities over individual rights (Britannica, n.d.). These viewpoints often contrast sharply with international notions of human-rights, which prioritise individual rights, such as freedom of speech, assembly, and religion.

While it is important to acknowledge the ways in which human-rights are understood differently in different places, in the case of the Arab Spring, protestors did often make demands that would have been familiar to Western observers. For example, protestors' demands included calls for human-rights protection in law, accountability of new governments, and the implementation of transparent democratic structures (Moss 2013).

So, the concept of Karama played a multifaceted role during the Arab Spring. It served as a powerful expression of material concerns related to economic hardship, unemployment, and poverty, while also representing demands for more intrinsic rights.

Marginalised group's demand for identity recognition and equal-rights

For marginalised groups, the revolutionary spirit of 2011 presented a novel platform to address systemic inequalities (Amrani 2019). Many of these groups joined the calls for Karama, reinterpreting the revolution's motto according to their grievances (Ltifi 2021), and demanded recognition as full citizens of their nations (Johansson-Nogues 2013). Their demands highlight an interpretation of Karama in terms of identity affirmation, and addressing tangible material needs over abstract Western concepts of human-rights and dignity.

The following section seeks to exemplify the challenges and meanings associated with Karama within diverse marginalised groups. Recognising the diverse sub-groups involved in the Arab uprisings, we focus on women, ethnic minorities, and queer communities as three illustrative examples. It is essential to note the heterogeneity and intersectionality of these groups, whilst understanding that the depictions are simplified for illustrative purposes.

Karama, a gendered concept

Women from diverse backgrounds participated in the forefront of protests across the Arab countries, calling for Karama alongside their male co-protesters (Johansson-Nogues 2013). Singerman (2013) points out that Karama needs to be understood as a gendered concept, representing different meanings for men and women in the Arab Spring. For many women, the call for Karama included respect for women's bodies as a core demand. In their interpretation, demanding Karama implied urging the state to respect and safeguard the integrity and autonomy of their bodies (Singerman 2013). This interpretation is influenced by historical constraints imposed by guardianship and public order laws in many Arab countries, regulating women's bodies by restricting their access to public life or prescribing specific dress codes.

Additionally, Karama expressed women's demand for safe public spaces (Singerman 2013). It encompassed protection from gender-based violence in both public and private spheres, accompanied by a call for the facilitation of the prosecution of perpetrators (Cundiff 2017). Amid the protests, the outburst of gendered violence committed by security forces, in an attempt to "break their spirits through attacks on their honour and bodily integrity" (Johansson-Nogues 2013, p. 393), highlighted the immediacy of these calls for Karama. Beyond bodily integrity, the widely shared meaning of Karama, in terms of improved economic conditions, was central for the protesting women, as they had been particularly affected by unemployment and demanded equal economic participation (Labidi 2020). While the revolutions' motto offered an opportunity for women's movements across the region to gain momentum, their struggle for Karama continued after the Arab Spring (Singerman 2013).

Recognition based on sexuality and gender expression

In many Arab countries, homosexuality and gender queerness are societally rejected, and criminalised by law. Before the uprisings in 2011, queer identities were almost exclusively only able to be shown in secure spaces, such as underground bars or cafes. The revolutionary spirit in the region encouraged queer individuals to step into the public sphere and address the long-standing oppression, asserting their status as full citizens. In Morocco, for instance, the 20th February Movement presented an opportunity for queer youths to publicly articulate their need for recognition by visibly participating in the protests. For them, demanding Karama involved challenging repressive criminal codes, securing access to public spaces, and ensuring equal participation in public life (Amrani 2019). However, these protests were not universally considered safe spaces by all queer Moroccans, leading some of them to advocate for their Karama online instead (Tayebi & Bettach 2019). The involvement of queer activists in the Arab Spring has indeed contributed to an affirmation of queer identities within queer communities. However, the rise of political Islam in numerous governments after the Arab Spring has contributed to a regression, rather than an empowerment, of queer communities' rights and recognition, and their aspirations for Karama have largely remained unmet (El Amrani 2019).

Ethnic and religious minorities

Ethnic and religious minorities in predominantly Arab societies played a pivotal role in the Arab uprisings (Mushtaq & Afzal 2017). Their demands for Karama addressed ethnic and religious prejudice and persecution, and called for equal recognition as full citizens of their countries. As an example, black minorities had endured discrimination and structural racism, largely unaddressed by national authorities and the public. Over the course of the Arab Spring, black protesters brought attention to anti-black racism in their countries (Hahonou 2021). In Tunisia, for instance, black protesters aligned their demand for racial justice with the revolutionary motto of national dignity. In their calls, Karama signified a "dignified belonging within the national body politics", meaning recognition as equal citizens, regardless of their skin colour, who are entitled to equal economic, political, and social participation (Ltifi 2021, p. 58). In many cases, this involvement of ethnic minorities heightened the visibility of structural racism, but also led to a substantial backlash in the aftermath of the revolution, and thus to an ongoing lack of Karama in terms of equal belonging to their countries (Hahonou 2021). While the literature has emphasised the participation of minority groups, challenging oppressive systems and economic disparities within majority societies, it is essential to recognise the struggle for Karama of majority groups living in repressive conditions under minority governments, as was the case for the predominantly Sunni population under the rule of the Alawite minority in Syria (e.g. Zahreddine & Di Lorenzo Pires 2022).

Conclusion

Karama is a multifaceted concept with a long and complex history. To understand the concept more fully, we have examined Karama within Arabic and Islamic traditions and its use during the Arab Spring. While demands for political and material reforms were central, the protests were not only about money or politics, but also about recognition, justice, and equality. As such, understanding the cultural and religious dimensions of Karama has been crucial to comprehending the underlying motivations for the Arab Spring.

This exploration highlights the limitations of a purely Western-centric perspective. We have shed light on how local and contextual perspectives shape demands for democratic change, recognising the importance of incorporating diverse cultural and historical perspectives. As we reflect on the events of the Arab Spring, we are reminded of the enduring significance of Karama as a catalyst for political, and social, change.

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CAUSES AND REFORMS OF THE ARAB SPRING: A COMPARISON OF TUNISIA AND EGYPT

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Introduction

Narratives surrounding the Arab Spring often follow a familiar pattern, beginning with high hopes that emerged at the onset of the protests in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in 2011. However, the story quickly transitions to the profound disillusionment that followed the protests, marked by violence, authoritarianism, and widespread suffering, leaving many countries economically and politically worse-off. This portrayal oversimplifies the complex reality of the Arab Spring, dividing it into the inadequate categories of 'Spring' and 'Winter' which are incapable of capturing the complex reality of the protest movement. This paper challenges the simplistic narrative by focusing on the policies that governments developed and implemented to address the underlying causes of the protests. While the motivation behind these government initiatives may be subject to scrutiny, they can be interpreted as a relatively 'positive' response compared to the alternative of violence and repression. Several examples are explored in the ensuing discussion, contributing to the broader debate on the success of the Arab Spring.

The paper will focus on the cases of Egypt and Tunisia. Both countries were heavily involved in the Arab Spring, and both held democratic elections in the aftermath of the protests, meaning that their governments were responsive to the protests to at least a certain degree.[2] Economic, and political aspects before and after the protests will be discussed, as well as the policy changes, to get an overview of how the governments responded.

Protest During the Arab Spring: A Brief Overview

The protests during the Arab Spring were driven by a multitude of factors, with economic hardship and limited political participation opportunities standing-out as significant contributors. The (final) catalyst for the movement was Mohamed Bouazizi, a young street-vendor harassed by the police and left economically helpless. His self-immolation in December 2011 inspired a protest movement that started in Tunisia and spread to Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen, and many other countries[3]. The consequences of the protest differ radically. In some countries, the old leaders had to step-down, in others the protests were choked violently. In Tunisia and Egypt, a regime change took place. The old leaders, Ben Ali, and Mubarak respectively, stepped-down and democratic elections took place. The democratically elected President Sisi in Egypt was later replaced by a military government. Tunisia, which has always been seen as the only country to successfully manage the transition to a democracy, has recently also been showing a growing autocratic trend.

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[2]   Countries like Syria, Yemen, and Libya are not good case-studies for these specific research questions because the civil war distorts their economic and political development. Even so, the civil wars are valid outcomes of the Arab Spring. However, as they are not the focus of our research interest, we will not consider them in our case-studies.

[3]   Among them Morocco, Iraq, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, and Sudan.

In contrast, in Libya and Syria, civil wars broke-out, leading to the death and flight of several million people. In Bahrain, King Hamad managed to stay in power with the support of Gulf Co-operation Council countries. They, together with Saudi Arabia, were also part of the political compromise in Yemen, where President Saleh was replaced by a transitional government. Today, Yemen is experiencing one of the most severe humanitarian situations worldwide due to the ongoing civil war (Basir & Datta 2020).

Causes of the Protests

Socio-economic and political motivations stand-out as the causes of the protests (Ansani & Daniele 2012; Ogbonnaya 2013; Salamey 2015; Basir & Datta 2020). This is somehow counterintuitive, as there was a rise in the standard of living and improvements in the economic and social situation of the people in the years before the protests. This includes improvements in the areas of poverty, income, social and political inequality, as well as the Human Development Index. Despite that, life-satisfaction dropped significantly (Özekin & Akkas 2014; Arampatzi et al. 2018). This phenomenon was especially strong in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya and Yemen, the countries which had also experienced the biggest protests during the Arab Spring.[4] Despite the rise in standards of living, social and economic hardship prevailed. The unemployment rate was high in MENA countries, especially for young people and women.[5] Educated young people were not satisfied with the job market, which did not provide enough opportunities for them. This segment of society became more politically demanding, as they were very aware of the problems (Kuhn 2012; Ansani & Daniele 2012; Campante & Chor 2012). In addition, there was poor quality public services, like schooling and healthcare (Zogby 2005).[6] Furthermore, rising food prices played an important role as a cause of the protests (Ansani & Daniele 2012; Basir & Datta 2020).

Before 2010, people had accepted the way things worked on the condition that the state delivered on certain things, such as economic development, a health system, and schooling (El-Haddad 2020). After 2011, this social contract expired as people were no longer satisfied with what the state provided. As explained before, no drastic changes in the economic situation had taken place just before the beginning of the protest (Ansani & Daniele 2012). The economic situation was similar, or indeed worse, in other (African) countries, where no protests took place (Ogbonnaya 2013). The question then is what changed in that year to make people start going on the streets? Political freedoms and rights are part of another dimension of the causes of the protests during the Arab Spring. In contrast to the economic developments, opportunities for democratic participation had declined in the years before the Arab Spring (Özekin & Akkas 2014), Studies also show that citizens regarded the levels of corruption as more important (Özekin & Akkas 2014; Arampatzi et al. 2018). Inequalities were on the rise, contributing to dissatisfaction (Ansani & Daniele 2012). Another cause of the protests can be seen in the ongoing human-rights violations

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[4]   This phenomenon is known as the 'unhappy development paradox'.
[5]   In 2010, youth unemployment was at 23.4%, and even 31.5% for young women (ILO 2011). This was also due to demographic changes, like longer life expectancy and lower infant mortality rates. The economy was not adequately adapted to these changes.
[6]   This can partly be attributed to liberalisation policies (Ansani and Daniele 2012; Salamey 2015).

(Ogbonnaya 2013). Put together, these factors created the unique set-up that led to the mass protests during the Arab Spring.

Socio-economic Context before the Arab Spring

To explain the causes of the Arab Spring, indicators, such as unemployment, poverty, economy, inequality, and corruption levels, are important. According to the GDP annual growth rate by the World Bank, the Egyptian economy had been on a steady rise of 7% from 200–2011 (World Bank, n.d.). The poverty level was at 75% in 2008, and decreased to 68% in 2010 (World Bank 2018). This demonstrates a relative decrease in poverty levels during the period leading up to the Arab Spring. According to the World Bank reports, unemployment levels were on the rise at around 8.75% in 2010, before the revolution (World Bank, n.d.). In inequality, Egypt recorded a decline in the decade before the revolution. Between 2000 and 2009, the World Bank recorded a decrease from 36.1% to 30.7% (Verme 2013).

Before the revolution, Tunisia was seen as a rising economy, compared to its neighbours, with a 3.7% GDP growth in 2010 at a steady 5% increase in GDP in the previous decade, higher than its neighbours (International Monetary Fund, n.d.). In terms of good governance, accountability, corruption and delivery of public goods were getting worse in the years before the revolution. Looking at the world governance indicator, Tunisia's governance in 2010 was weaker compared to 2000; this could be demonstrated by the intimidation of the public through police violence, tax administration, the rule of law and political stability (Kaufmann et al. 2010). Unemployment was on the rise, despite the government changing its economic policies. By 2010, the unemployment rate had reached 20%, despite the increase in university graduates and skilled labour, highlighting the disparity of demand and supply of workers (AfDB 2011). The Human Development Index (HDI) indicates that Tunisia has been experiencing improved individual well-being since the 1980s and was above the level of other countries in the region before the revolution (UNDP, n.d.).

Post-Revolution Policy Changes

The Arab Spring unmasked the significant economic challenges and highlighted the urgent need for economic and institutional changes (Amin et al. 2012). After the revolution, most countries in the MENA region undertook reforms and policy changes to mitigate the socio-economic challenges that were a major cause of the protests. This can also be seen in the table below:

Table 1: Overview of 'buy-offs' by selected governments (Karshenas et al. 2014)

Bahrain	$100 m to families, proposal for $2,500 for each family; creating 20,000 new government jobs
Egypt	Increase food subsidies; promise to increase civil servant wages and salaries by 15%
Jordan	Salary increase for civil servants and military personnel: tax cuts on fuel and food, more money to National Aid Fund for the poor
Kuwait	$4,000 for each citizen: free food for 14 months
Oman	Minimum wage increase from $364 to $520 a month: 50,000 new government jobs; monthly stipend of $380 for jobs-seekers
Saudi Arabia	15% pay increase for public sector workers; unemployment benefits; affordable-housing subsidies; oil products subsidy
Syria	Consumption tax cut on coffee and sugar; reduced customs duties on food; more money to Social System Fund for poor; increased wages and heating allowances for civil service
Yemen	Increased welfare spending

In Egypt, subsidy reforms were implemented. Subsidies were increased, taxes were reduced on essential items to address the social demands, and social safety-net programmes, such as cash-transfers, were increased. Egypt also implemented the Social Fund for Development (SFD) which focuses on reducing poverty by creating opportunities for the youth and women in businesses, and supporting the development of small enterprises through subsidies and loans. Additionally, Egypt set up the National Strategy and Planning framework, which focuses on sustainable development and providing opportunities to reduce inequalities. After the revolution, the IMF continued to place an emphasis on the neoliberal policies which recommended an increase in investments, focusing on market-orientated solutions (IMF 2015).

Tunisia also implemented subsidy reforms on the prices for basic food products, oil, electricity, and transport. Plans were put in place to expand cash-transfer programmes to lessen the burden on poor and vulnerable groups. Subsidy reforms in both countries were a significant policy change that aimed to address long-term socio-economic challenges. However, these reforms have had varied impacts in different countries (Sdralevich et al. 2014). Furthermore, Tunisia initiated programmes on social and solidarity economy to support social enterprises and associations. Tunisia also introduced the Programme to Encourage Employment (PEE) to promote youth employability through partnerships with employers (Prince et al. 2018). Besides this, the IMF recommended policies that aimed to reduce government spending and market reforms, and deal with the increased youth unemployment which was acknowledged to be a factor in the revolution (IMF 2015). These policies included tax reforms, public sector wages, capacity-building and creating an environment that is good for both domestic and public investments.

This is not a singular phenomenon. Taking a short look at other countries, Saudi Arabia was one of the countries which managed to buy-off the support of its citizens to bring

the expired social contract back to life. In total, they spent $29 million on supporting their population, e.g. by increasing wages in the public sector, provision of housing, and aiding the unemployed (Salih 2013; Khondker 2019). In Algeria, Morocco, and Jordan food subsidies, minimum wages, and pensions were increased, and new jobs were created in the public sector (Ansani and Daniele 2012). The smaller Gulf States also used their profits from hydrocarbons to put more money into the welfare system (Khondker 2019). In contrast, Egypt and Tunisia are two examples of countries, in which the governments were not successful in buying-off the people (Ansani & Daniele 2012).

Socio-economic Context after the Arab Spring

Looking at the indicators in the aftermath of the protests, there has been an improvement in the economic and political situation to a certain degree, however, this only lasted for a short period of time. The UNs' Human Development Index for Tunisia, Egypt and, for comparison, the world, shows a slight improvement from 2011 to 2018 (UNDP, n.d.). Considering the additional challenges[7] caused by the unrest, this can be interpreted as a positive trend. The same can be said for political development. In Tunisia, there was a massive improvement in the quality of electoral, liberal, egalitarian, participatory, and deliberative aspects of democracy. The quality of democracy started to decline again in 2020, but the recent developments after the protests were very positive. In Egypt, the quality of democracy also improved in the direct aftermath of the protest. 2013 holds the record in this regard. After that, the indices show that democratic quality became even worse than before.

Illustration 1: Democracy Indices for Tunisia and Egypt 1982–2022 Varieties of Democracy (Coppedge et al. 2022)
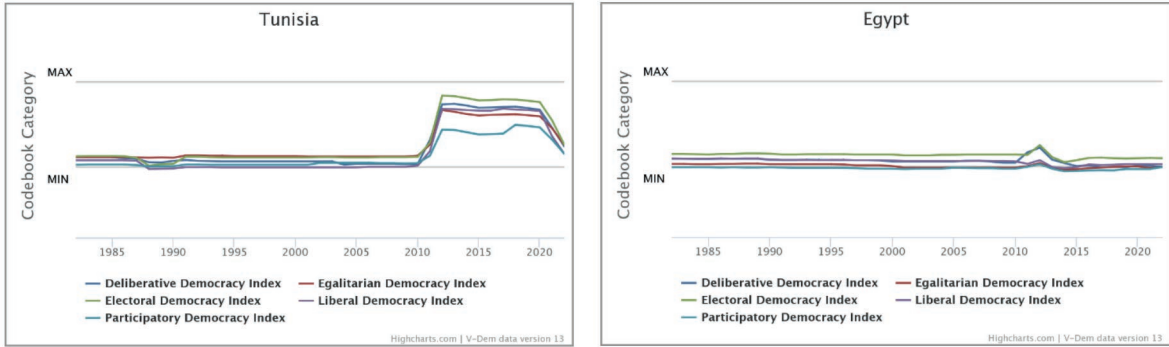
Given the complexity of economic and political development, especially in post-revolutionary countries, it is problematic to rely solely on numerical data as a definitive indicator of a country's efforts in addressing socio-economic development. We will therefore now turn our attention to the examination of policy development as a more insightful and holistic lens through which to assess these efforts. One example is how Egypt and Tunisia improved their policy to combat youth unemployment (Price et al. 2018). The results of

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[7]   Such as, for example, less international investment, an unstable government, economic losses, increased governmental

these policies were very different in Tunisia and Egypt. Whilst Tunisia was trying to find a more inclusive way, Egypt held on to an extractive system in which the government was chief of business (El-Haddad 2020). Overall, the economic effects of the Arab Spring on Tunisia have been negative. This can be attributed mostly to losses in investment, as well as high oil prices (Matta et al. 2016). On the political side, Tunisia was widely considered the only country to transition successfully to a democratic system. In Egypt, on the other hand, a military coup took place after the first democratic election. The elected president, Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood, restricted the work of civil society and consolidated his power. After demonstrations in 2013, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi assumed power and formed a military-led government. He is still in power today, and Egypt is regarded as undemocratic, again. On the other hand, developments can be seen in the fields of civil society and gender-equality (Khondker 2019).

Conclusion

The Arab Spring has been a historic moment in the MENA region, impacting upon governance, politics, and social issues. Economic and political data reveal the challenges faced by many countries, as well as the small steps taken in each case. Both Egypt and Tunisia have implemented a range of policies to address their respective economic and social challenges. However, these policies must be well-prepared and effectively executed, necessitating strong government will and public awareness. Notable progress has been made, but complexities persist in addressing socio-economic issues. Political developments have occurred in democratisation and participation, with democratic elections being held in several countries after the protests. Considering actors, such as international influences, economic considerations, demographic aspects, external actors, and the current power structures, it can be concluded that the result of the protests could also be considered a success. However, the long-term consequences are still to be seen.

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

RESEARCH GROUP POLITICS OF MEMORY – CONFERENCE REPORT

by Bereket Hasen, Valentin Ridiger, Roberta Bartkutė, Ashenafi Woldemichael Yemisirach, Jacqueline Koshorst

Protest, Uprising, and Revolution: Insights from the Summer School

Introduction

This academic conference report presents a comprehensive overview of the Summer School on the themes of #Protest, #Uprising, and #Revolution, held from July to August 2023. The report highlights the structure of the programme, the digital events, and the in-person meeting in Berlin. The report also provides a critical analysis of the lectures, workshops, and discussions that occurred during the event.

The Summer School, organised by the Deutsche Gesellschaft e. V., gathered 15 young academics from diverse backgrounds and disciplines across Europe. The overarching objective of the programme was to explore the significance of mobilisations, such as protests, uprisings, and revolutions in societal transformation processes. This report aims to provide a detailed account of the academic activities, intellectual exchanges, and collaborative efforts during the summer school.

Digital Events

The programme commenced with a series of eight digital events held in July and August. These sessions, led by renowned academics from various countries, set the stage for intellectual discourse. The lectures covered a range of topics, from 'Remembrance of Revolutions Past' by Professor Attila Pók, to 'Researching youth movements, protests, and activism in the Arab World' by Professor Charles Harb. These digital events not only provided a theoretical foundation, but also fostered connections among participants, creating a virtual academic community.

To provide a comprehensive overview, the table below lists the paper presenters' names, and the titles of their presentations during the digital events.

Lecture and Discussion on 'Remembrance of Revolutions Past'

Professor Attila Pók, Deputy Director of the Institute of History, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary, and Chairman of the ENRS Academic Council, delivered a thought-provoking lecture on the remembrance of past revolutions. The ensuing discussion enriched participants' understanding of the historical contexts of revolutionary movements.

Lecture and Discussion on 'The memory of the uprising against the Nazi occupation in France'

Continuing the discourse, Professor Claire Andrieu from Sciences Po, France, explored the memory of the uprising against the Nazi occupation in France. This session highlights the intersectionality of memory and resistance, providing valuable insights into the complexities of revolutionary narratives.

Lecture and Discussion on 'Workers, Strikes, and Revolution in Late Imperial Russia'

Professor Charters Wynn, Associate Professor in the Department of History at The University of Texas in Austin, USA, presented on the dynamics of workers, strikes, and revolution in late Imperial Russia. The session stimulated discussions on the role of the working-class in transformative movements.

Lecture and Discussion on 'Challenging the Socialist Order: The East German Workers' Uprising and the Hungarian Workers' Revolution'

Prof. John Connelly, Sidney Hellman Ehrman Professorship of European History at UC Berkeley, USA, addressed the challenges to the socialist order through the lens of the East German Workers' Uprising and the Hungarian Workers' Revolution. This session explored the intricate relationship between socio-political structures and revolutionary fervour.

Lecture and Discussion on 'Tiananmen Revisited'

Prof. Jens Damm, from the Institute für Sinologie, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, revisited the Tiananmen Square protests. This session offered a unique perspective on a pivotal moment in modern Chinese history, prompting reflections on state power and resistance.

Lecture and Discussion on 'The Forgotten Revolutions'

Professor Aviva Chomsky, Professor of History and Co-ordinator of Latin American Studies at Salem State University, USA, shed light on Central America's forgotten revolution and the roots of migration. This lecture expanded participants' perspectives, emphasising the diversity and breadth of revolutionary movements, with a specific focus on the complexities of Central America's historical context. Professor Aviva Chomsky's lecture prompted significant interest and acclaim from participants during the digital event, leaving a lasting impression on their understanding of overlooked historical revolutions, particularly in the context of Central America, and their impact on migration roots.

Lecture and Discussion on 'Generation Arab Spring'

Professor Kira Jumet, Associate Professor of Government and Director of Middle East/Islamicate Worlds Studies at Hamilton College, USA, highlighted the 'Generation Arab Spring'. The session examined the socio-political impact of the Arab Spring on subsequent generations.

Lecture and Discussion on 'Researching Youth Movements, Protests, and Activism in the Arab World'

Professor Charles Harb, Professor of Social and Political Psychology at Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar, concluded the digital events by exploring youth movements, pro-

tests, and activism in the Arab world. This session provided a nuanced understanding of contemporary movements in the region.

In-Person Meeting in Berlin: A Learning Workshop

The in-person meeting, conducted from 13th to 16th August 13th in Berlin, marked the culmination of the summer school. Participants engaged in parallel workshops, individual research-time, and guided city walks, enriching their understanding of historical and contemporary movements. The involvement of experts from academia, politics, and political education, facilitated by the Deutsche Gesellschaft e. V., enhanced the learning experience.

The lectures during the digital events and in-person meetings covered diverse contexts. All these lectures stimulated thoughtful discussions, encouraging participants to critically examine the complexities surrounding protest, uprising and revolutionary movements. Among the stand-out sessions, participants particularly appreciated Professor Aviva Chomsky's lecture, entitled 'The Forgotten Revolutions', which generated significant interest and acclaim during the digital event. Professor Aviva Chomsky is a Professor of History and Co-ordinator of Latin American Studies at Salem State University, USA, and her presentation shed light on overlooked revolutions.

Group Collaborations and Academic Contributions

The participant, representing the humanities and social sciences, was part of a group focusing on specific themes. Before the in-person meeting, the group independently researched their chosen topic, preparing for the collaborative efforts during the workshop. This collaborative approach was instrumental in fostering a multidisciplinary understanding of protests, uprisings, and revolutions. As a requirement, participants authored essays, articles, and conference reports, contributing to the scholarly discourse on the Deutsche Gesellschaft e. V. website. This report, a product of our collective group effort, further highlights the collaborative nature which defines our work.

The Summer School on #Protest, #Uprising, and #Revolution provided a unique and immersive platform for young academics. It encouraged a multidisciplinary approach, encouraging collaboration and the exchange of knowledge. The culmination of the programme, in the form of an in-person meeting, allowed for deeper engagement with the subject matter and facilitated meaningful contributions to the field.

In conclusion, the Summer School was a resounding success in creating an academic space for the exploration of #Protest, #Uprising, #Revolution, and contemporary movements. The interdisciplinary nature of the programme, coupled with collaborative efforts and insightful contributions, marks it as a valuable endeavour in the academic landscape. The essays and conference reports generated during the summer school serve as a testament to the intellectual depth and diversity fostered by this enriching experience.

RESEARCH GROUP WORKERS PROTESTS – CONFERENCE REPORT

By Vincent Paul Musebrink, Adio Dinika and Moynul Haque, Patryk Borowski

Following a warm welcome by Dr. Lukas Zidella from the Deutsche Gesellschaft e. V., the inaugural day of our summer school's in-person conference in Berlin commenced with an insightful methodological discussion on the 'New Avenues to Protest Research', moderated by political scientist, Francisca Castro. We found the approaches to the visual analysis of protests that she presented showed an interesting new development, augmenting the traditional event analysis approach. While such in-person field visits for protest data-collection may face restrictions during crises, such as the Corona pandemic, new methods allow for the gathering of visual data through pictures, images, and videos as alternative sources.

The day continued with a method talk by Dr. Jasmin Wiefek entitled 'Introduction to Transdisciplinary Research Methods'. Throughout her presentation, we quickly realised that, even within our group, we had quite different understandings of what transdisciplinary research entails. We came to know that 'trans-' refers to the act of looking beyond academia, indicating that a research project is called transdisciplinary when it involves both academic and non-academic actors. When the latter, often including influential figures like business and political leaders, is involved, transdisciplinary research can have both significant scientific and policy implications.

Day 1 concluded with a voluntary workshop on academic writing led by Ellen Klein from English Services Berlin. The workshop's main goal was to assist non-native English speakers in improving both their general and academic writing skills in order to help them with the main assignment of the summer school – a paper of a few pages focused on a subject connected with protests and revolutions. The workshop captured some of our group member's immediate attention, mainly because of its practical utility. The group-work sessions allowed us to improve our ability to identify and correct common mistakes, and practical assignments proved to be an excellent chance to apply the principles of good academic prose to actual writing. Between the particular tasks assigned to us by Ms. Klein, there was adequate space for discussions and individual questions.

The second day of our meeting began with a lecture entitled 'Workers' Protests Today: Practical Insights from IG Metall', given by Jakob Heidenreich, secretary for professional education of the Berlin branch of the IG Metall union. Stressing the important role of trade-unions in the German economy, particularly, as in the case of IG Metall, in the industrial sector, Mr. Heidenreich offered a general overview of the union's structures and activities. As not only the largest trade union in Germany but, at the same time also the largest industrial trade union in Europe, IG Metall organises metal workers throughout Germany and works to represent their interests. In addition, we gained first-hand insights into how the work of the organisation is carried out, how it takes care of workers, how communication between workers, the trade-union, and businesses is carried out, and what the general steps of the collective bargaining process in Germany look like.

Following Mr. Heidenreich's talk, we enjoyed the great privilege of engaging in yet another insightful lecture delivered by Joshua Kwesi Aikins, research assistant at the University of Kassel's Department for Development and Postcolonial Studies, and political activist

involved in the interconnected struggles against racism, the violation of human-rights, and the still-persistent effects of European colonialism, both on a local and international scale. Under the title of 'Indelible Imprints of Colonialism and Resistance – Coloniality, Multidirectionality and the Politics of Memory and Decolonisation', Mr. Aikin's talk explored the multifaceted history of European colonialism and how its legacy still, to this day, permeates the physical make-up of German cities. Even today, countless monuments, statues, and other architectural edifices, as well as street names throughout Germany, commemorate German colonialism in Africa and the South Pacific, whether knowingly or unknowingly, to local residents. At the same time, this colonial cityscape has, as Mr. Aikins highlighted with reference to contemporary struggles, always been an inherently political space, where the master narratives of European modernity are actively challenged by diverse communities and individuals – often by those most affected by its discriminatory hierarchies – in an effort to unite different experiences in a framework of multidirectional memory.

Furthermore, Mr. Aikins' talk also delved into the topic of how European modernity, often mystified as some miraculous achievement of civilisation, has been, since its very inception, based on the violent exploitation of colonised populations. This exploitation, the theft of resources, and the colonial appropriation of knowledge and technologies formed the material basis for European industrialisation and economic development. Consequently, it also majorly impacted upon Europe's capacities for cultural production. From the literary salons of 18th and 19th century Europe, to the wealthy patrons of writers, such as Goethe, Mr. Aikins astutely highlighted that a significant portion of the financial backing for European 'high' culture was, in fact, derived from the profits generated by colonial enterprises and the institution of slavery. Connecting this violent past to the neo-colonial patterns which structure today's systems of economic and international politics, Mr. Aikins wrapped-up his talk, having instilled in his listeners an urgent awareness of today's struggles to confront colonialism and its enduring legacy.

As per the theme of the summer school programme, we concluded the second day of our in-person meeting with a guided city walk along Berlin's many historic sites of revolution and rebellion, leaving the comfort of our conference-room behind to seek out some of the marginal imprints of past emancipatory struggles still detectable underneath the glossy surface of Berlin's modern totality of tourist shops, shopping centres, and carparks. Accompanied by a tour guide of Rebellious Berlin City Tours, we had the unique opportunity to trace a history of the groups and individuals whose rebellious efforts left a mark upon Berlin's cityscape: From the revolutionaries of 1848, and the first suffragettes, to the revolutionary workers who put an end to the First World War and the Kaiser's reign in 1918, to the Herbert Baum group, an underground resistance network of mostly Jewish communists and antifascists which attacked a Nazi propaganda event taking place in Berlin's Lustgarten in 1942, to the protestors of 17th June 1953, and the different local movements and initiatives that fight for better working conditions and against precarisation in the present.

While fascinating on their own, each story and each site also revealed to us the inherently political nature of memory and remembrance. In some instances, memorials and plaques had been put in place to commemorate the events that had transpired there – often in an effort, by means of emphasis, elision, and reinterpretation, to reconcile past political upheavals with the particular status-quo of the time. At other times, only the narration of our tour guide allowed us to form a connection between the past and present of a locality, as no directed attempt had been made to engender the space with historical meaning. By engaging with these dynamics of remembrance and forgetting, with their many paradoxes and conflicts of interest and ideology, we gained a newfound appreciation for how the political character of memory extends throughout time and space.

The third and final day of our meeting in Berlin offered each individual working-group the chance to present their planned essay project (or projects). This included sharing the group's underlying thought process and methodology, highlighting the current state of research, and giving a brief outline of the piece's planned structure to all the assembled participants of the summer school. Listening to, and discussing, the projects of other teams allowed us to reflect upon how we, as a group, had thus far approached the collective writing task in question, stimulating a fruitful internal exchange on how to organise our essay/s and our overall writing process. Moreover, our own presentation, and the feedback we received, proved to be instrumental in not only strengthening our confidence in our plans up to that point, but also in helping us to narrow-down the thematic focus of our project.

RESEARCH GROUP 'ARAB SPRING' – CONFERENCE REPORT

by Hasan Al Haffar, Lara-Sabina Sorgenfrei, Pamela Chemelil, Sam Nadel, Teresa Becher

Introduction

Protest and civic activism have been a feature of society for centuries. Yet from the Arab Spring, to the School Strikes for Climate, to more recent Palestinian solidarity protests, people in more countries are engaging with mass movements (Global Protest Tracker 2023; Jackson & Lamb 2021). Today's protests display many distinct qualities, including a deep yearning for system changes, an active role for young people, and widespread use of digital technologies, with social media enabling movements to mobilise rapidly and in ways that are often geographically-boundless (Timms & Heimans 2018).

In this context, the Deutsche Gesellschaft's summer school, '#Protest. #Uprising. #Revolution', could hardly have come at a more appropriate time, providing an opportunity for students and young academics to share knowledge and reflections on emerging trends in the field of contentious politics. Over the course of eight digital events in July and August 2023, and a three-day in-person meeting in Berlin, 20 students and academics from a variety of disciplines came together to discuss the role of protests and uprisings in transformation processes, and to look at how narratives of resistance and rebellion are remembered (and forgotten). The Academy began with eight digital events covering (1) Remembrance of revolutions past; (2) Workers' uprisings in Russia, Germany and Eastern Europe; (3) The Forgotten Revolutions, and (4) The 'Arab Spring' and the revolutionary power of youth. Attendees were assigned to groups to work on one of these four topics, with this group covering the Arab Spring. The subsequent in-person meeting in Berlin in August built on initial discussions with a collection of lectures and learning workshops, concluding with presentations from groups on their assigned topics. This group delivered two talks on (1) The humanitarian consequences of the Arab Spring, and (2) Interpretations of democracy during the Arab Spring.

Input on the Arab Spring

During the in-person meeting, a range of scholars and activists were invited to give input to the group. Scholars came from many different countries, among them Hungary, France, USA, Germany, and Qatar. There were historians, regional specialists, psychologists, political scientists, and activists. This also reflected the diverse background of the participants.

Two talks focused on different aspects of the Arab Spring. First, Professor Kira Jumet, Director of Middle East/Islamicate Worlds Studies at Hamilton College, USA, talked about the 'Generation Arab Spring', focusing on the protests in Egypt in 2011 and 2013. After introducing us to Cairo, her research area, she explained the reasons why people engage in protests, including economic hardship, police brutality, and corruption. She also discussed the transnational dimensions to the protests that had started in Tunisia. The ability to spread information and express one's opinion online played a further important role. Her research interest is the protesters' motivation and their connection with emotions. Spending an extended research period in Egypt, she shared insights into ethnographic research methods, including approaches to sampling, conducting interviews, researcher positionality, financing,

and threats for researchers in autocratic regimes and during protests. Professor Jumet's insights into the experience of everyday people and their lives during the Arab Spring really helped us to better understand the situation.

The other talk relating to the Arab Spring was held by Professor Charles Harb from the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Qatar. His main focus is on the Levantine region. He first discussed the socio-economic background of the region, which has faced high youth unemployment, high rates of illiteracy (especially for women), and violent conflicts and wars, for example, in Palestine and Israel, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Yemen and Syria. For Professor Harb, there were two waves of uprisings, one starting in 2011 with Egypt, Libya, Tunis, Yemen, Morocco, Syria, Bahrain, and Jordan, and one starting in 2019 in Sudan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, Yemen, and Jordan. All this leads to a complicated present, with ongoing conflicts and wars, deep socio-economic challenges, and geopolitical competitions. We then went on to talk about the challenges of doing research in the region, which include the nature of donor-cycles, the limited usability of western scientific research and concepts, linguistic restrictions, and more.

Lecture and Discussion on "The humanitarian consequences of the Arab Spring"

Our group opted to split into two sub-groups to each present a research proposal on a topic relating to the Arab Spring. The first sub-group delivered a presentation on the humanitarian consequences of the Arab Spring. The presentation began with an overview of the events and triggers that led to the eruption and spread of protests in the Middle East and North Africa regions, whilst specifically highlighting the varied outcomes in Tunisia and Egypt. We then proceeded to highlight various factors which motivated people to attend the protests, including unemployment rates, poor public services, inflation, suppressed political freedom, corruption, and inequality.

The presentation highlighted the initial optimism surrounding the Arab Spring with regard to democracy and human-rights. However, it also delved into humanitarian challenges, including issues like violence, displacement, security risks, resource limitations, and the urgent demand for humanitarian aid. Despite these challenges, the presentation looked at the opportunities which had emerged from creating a space for civil society groups to create awareness of human-rights issues, especially among vulnerable groups, the majority affected being women and children who faced great risks of violence and exploitation. The presentation also highlighted the increase in the political will to create reforms, as well as a change in the policies influenced by international actors. This came with political change and the governments' prioritising of social issues, ultimately supporting humanitarian and civil society organisations to increase their reach and impact. Finally, the presentation emphasised the lessons learned, provided recommendations, and acknowledged that the enduring effects of the Arab Spring are still unfolding, underlining the ongoing need for research in this field.

Lecture and Discussion on "Interpretations of democracy during the Arab Spring"

The second sub-group began with a series of general enquiries posed to our colleagues. We sought to understand their perspectives on democracy, whether they had a specific definition in mind, and if they believed the concept could be definitively characterised at all. We later explicated the factors that had led us to select our specific topic concerning democracy and its interpretation in the Arab world, particularly during the Arab Spring.

Our exploration revealed that democracy, its definition, understanding, and aspirations, constituted a contested field in the Middle East. This conclusion became evident as we delved into prominent cases, such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Syria, where various groups held differing conceptions of democracy. We began to categorise various identity groups which engaged in the protests, culminating in an exhaustive list of stakeholders and factions, each attributing distinct meanings to democracy.

Furthermore, we endeavoured to uncover a common underlying theme, sentiment, or belief that resonated across these diverse groups. We elucidated that the concept of 'Dignity' or 'Karama', in relation to democracy, protests, and the general demands of protestors from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, emerged as a recurring and unifying demand. It became strikingly clear that many of these protests were driven by the profound need for dignity, a fundamental element that highlighted the urgency of their actions.

Our transition from the general conception of democracy, to its association with dignity in the Arab world, was substantiated by the fact that all these groups, whether before, during, or after the protests, had experienced various forms of humiliation – be it physical, mental, economic, social, or ethnic.

We subsequently outlined our plan to gather secondary sources which explored how protestors perceived their movement and its connection to the core principle of dignity. The objective was to demonstrate that this concept of dignity, that aspired to become a force for change, was closely tied to the desire for the proper implementation of the rule of law, economic prosperity, and equality.

In our concluding remarks, we addressed our chosen methodology, acknowledged our limitations, and emphasised our commitment to avoid imposing a rigid, predefined version of democracy. Instead, we emphasised the importance of recognising that the definition of democracy is highly context-dependent, emerging from internal beliefs and experiences throughout history, rather than being dictated by external conceptions and beliefs.

Overall reflections on the summer school

The Deutsche Gesellschaft's ‚#Protest. #Uprising. #Revolution.' summer school was an enriching and rewarding experience, combining thought-provoking lectures with engaging social activities to create an environment of deep learning, collaboration, and personal growth.

The online lectures and in-person workshops encompassed a diverse range of theoretical perspectives, regional foci, and methodological approaches, encapsulating the interdisciplinary spirit of the programme. This approach resonated deeply with the diverse group of participants hailing from various academic disciplines. It challenged us to explore revolution from different angles, broadening our horizons, and transcending the boundaries of our individual perspectives.

A unique aspect of the programme was the participants' active role in shaping it through their preferences for workshop topics, turning the summer school into a collective effort where individual interests and questions were considered and accommodated. While online lectures addressed theoretical perspectives, the in-person Berlin segment added a practical dimension. The workshops provided participants with fresh inspiration for innovative methodological approaches to their research, and emphasised the importance of understanding resistance and protest as lived experiences of social groups, not just abstract academic concepts. What truly set this summer school apart was the depth of the discussions it ignited. The knowledge gained in lectures and workshops catalysed ongoing, vibrant discussions among participants, extending well beyond the structured sessions.

In addition to the workshops, social activities were at the heart of the experience. Gathering for shared meals not only lifted everyone's spirits, but also encouraged an environment of candid and enthusiastic discussions. The activities offered the perfect setting for cultivating personal relationships and exchanging knowledge and experiences. As a highlight, the guided city tour to explore Berlin's history of resistance movements vividly illustrated the rich mosaic of historical events, providing participants with a connection to the very subjects they had been studying. Informal activities, where we explored Berlin, further enriched the experience.

In retrospect, the in-person component of the summer school, although valuable, felt too short. Furthermore, the remote lectures, while intellectually stimulating, were marked by a relatively low level of participant engagement. This experience would have been improved if the lectures had occurred in-person. A few more days of in-person interaction may also have allowed us to delve deeper into the subject matter, research methodologies, and sparked further camaraderie among attendees.

Overall, what made this summer school truly invaluable was the formation of a social network which was not only professionally meaningful, but also personal. The common interest in researching protest movements kindled a profound sense of community. Within this supportive environment, each participant was able to share their unique expertise and experiences, thus creating an empowering atmosphere. This group experienced a particularly strong sense of camaraderie. Collaborating as co-authors on a joint essay posed unique challenges, but ultimately nurtured valuable collaboration skills that we are sure will set us up well for the future.

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