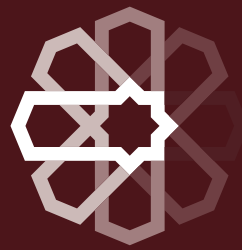**MENA** Trinity Middle East
& North Africa Review

MENA
Trinity Middle East
& North Africa Review

Editor's Note

Welcome to Volume V. of the MENA Review. It has been a pleasure to work alongside a wonderful and enthusiastic team to bring about this year's volume, and we've received some incredible work. Thank you very much to everyone who has contributed!

The Review has focussed on engaging students and the wider community with stories and issues pertaining to the MENA region. This year's singular volume has been accompanied by much work from all in hosting weekly coffee mornings and cultural events alongside Trinity's Arab Society. We have read poetry, learnt Palestinian embroidery, and ultimately celebrated the MENA community at Trinity and in Ireland. We hope this volume is the culmination of that effort.

Special thanks go to Nooran Al-Rubaiee, who has been my right-hand woman and the visionary behind much of the Review's work this semester.

Editor-in-Chief

Miranda Gallacher

Layout Designer

Aoife Hick

PRO and Social Media

Nooran Al-Rubaiee

Events Officer

Eliza Heaslip

Treasurer

Nathan Besch

Section Editors

Amir Sallachi

Elisa Zito

Francesca Cronin

Isabelle Slentz

Sophia Alloui

Grace Phillips

INDEX

The Jews of Algeria: Caught Between Two Worlds

Douce d'Andlau

Edited by Sophia Alloui

The quote, 'To sound Jewish, you need a Polish accent, and I don't know how to do that. Yes, because people aren't really interested in a Jew from the Maghreb, it's complicated for them,' spoken by El Rebibo, the rabbi's nephew in Joann Sfar's Le Chat du Rabbin (The Rabbi's Cat), encapsulates the complex identity struggles faced by Algerian Jews during the colonial era.

These individuals found themselves at the intersection of two distinct cultural spheres: European colonialism and their own deep-rooted Maghrebian heritage. Positioned between the demands of their French colonisers, who sought cultural assimilation, and the realities of their indigenous Jewish traditions. Their experiences reflect broader themes of cultural conflict, colonial influence, and the negotiation of identity in a society where they were often marginalised by both the ruling colonisers and the local Muslim majority. The Jewish community in Algeria provides a critical lens through which to understand the broader socio-political dynamics of colonial Algeria.

From Ancient Presence to Ottoman Rule

Jews have been present in Algeria since antiquity, with evidence of their early settlement found in first-century AD archaeological findings following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD. The details of their earliest presence are debated, but by Late Antiquity, there was a significant migration from the East to the West, along with some Berber conversions to Judaism. The exact nature of these migrations remains unclear, but the Judeo-Berber community coexisted with local populations, experiencing both cultural exchanges and tensions.

The 7th-century Muslim conquest of North Africa introduced the dhimmi system, granting Jews and Christians legal and administrative rights while also imposing restrictions. This system provided protection, freedom of worship, and some administrative autonomy, but Jews were still considered inferior in the legal system and faced fiscal and discriminatory restrictions. Despite these challenges, Jews in Algeria managed to integrate socially, maintaining their presence and influence in the region.

In the 12th century, the Almohad regime forced many Jews to convert to Islam or face exile. This resulted in a near-erasure of the Jewish community in Algeria, which was only revived in the 14th century. The revival was largely due to Jewish refugees who fled from Spain after the 1391 and 1492 expulsions. Under Ottoman rule from 1519, particularly in Algiers, Jews maintained their dhimmi status, playing a vital role in trade and the economy. Jewish leaders, or moqaddems, managed community affairs under Ottoman oversight, allowing the Jewish community to continue flourishing despite their subordinate status.

> "The Jewish community in Algeria provides a critical lens through which to understand the broader sociopolitical dynamics of colonial Algeria."

Impact of the French Conquest on Jewish Society

The French conquest of Algeria, which began with the landing at Sidi Ferruch Bay in June 1830, was a pivotal moment for the local Jewish community. Before the conquest, Algeria's Jews, numbering around 25,000, were organised in a clan-based system with community leadership held by chiefs called muqaddam, akin to the millet system in the Ottoman Empire. These Jews, mostly poor and Arabic-speaking, served as intermediaries between the colonists and the indigenous Muslim population.

However, following the conquest, France began to dismantle the traditional Jewish leadership structure. By 1842, France had abolished the clan chiefs and rabbinical courts, centralising Jewish religious authority within the colonial administration. This was formalised in 1845 with a royal decree that established four Jewish consistories in Algiers, Oran, Constantine, and one for the entire colony. The new consistory system, modelled after the French approach, shifted authority from traditional rabbis to a distant elite. The rabbis in charge were often from metropolitan France, such as Michel Aaron Weill in Algiers, Lazare Cahen in Oran, and Gédéon Ephraim Netter in Constantine. This reform effectively dismantled the previous clan-based structure and redefined the governance of Jewish communities in Algeria.

Under the influence of Enlightenment ideals, French Jews romanticised the Jewish community in Algeria, seeing them as 'redeemable' and capable of achieving 'civilisation.' They advocated for improvements in the Jews' moral condition' and viewed the French conquest as a form of liberation for the local Jewish population. This perspective contributed to the French assimilationist agenda, which sought to integrate Jews into French society while also promoting colonial rule in Algeria.

Jewish Responses to Colonialism and Efforts at Integration into French Algeria

Reactions to colonial development were mixed: while the Constantinois nomads resisted, the Jews of Algiers and later Oran were among the first to accept the French presence. The Muslim population largely withdrew, but the Jews of Algiers sought to engage with French soldiers, hoping to trade with them.

The government of Louis Philippe, recalling the assimilation of European Jews during the French Revolution and their neutral stance during the conquest of Algeria, closely monitored this minority, hoping to gain their support. The sénatus-consulte of 14 July 1865, which allowed both Jews and Muslims to apply for French citizenship, was largely unsuccessful among the Jews. Only 137 out of nearly 34,000 applicants were naturalised between 1865 and 1870, highlighting resistance to the imposed 'regeneration' project and revealing the disconnect between the colonial administrators' intentions and the reality faced by the indigenous population. During his second visit to Algeria in 1865, Napoleon III responded to a speech by Chief Rabbi Mahir Charleville in Oran, saying: 'Soon, I hope, the Algerian Israelites will be French citizens,' underscoring the ongoing efforts at assimilation and integration.

Impact of the Crémieux Decree on Algerian Jews

The Crémieux Decree, issued on 24 October 1870 by Justice Minister Adolphe Crémieux, marked a crucial turning point for Algerian Jews, granting French citizenship to around 35,000 individuals. This decree abolished their distinct Jewish personal status and aligned their marriage and divorce laws with French civil law, thereby granting them greater civil and political rights, such as the right to vote and hold office. It also promoted 'francisation,' encouraging the adoption of the French language and customs.

However, the decree intensified tensions with the Muslim communities, who saw it as colonial favouritism, deepening the social divide between Jews and Muslims. Religiously, it centralised Jewish worship under the control of a central consistory, often led by rabbis from metropolitan France, such as those from Metz, replacing local leaders. During the entire colonial period, only one chief rabbi was Sephardic, David Askénazi (1958-1962). This centralisation met passive resistance, as many Jews continued to practice their religion privately.

The decree also spurred ongoing efforts by the colonial administration and the Consistory to assimilate and centralise the Jewish community, facing both cultural and community resistance. Politically, it enabled Algerian Jews to influence local politics, with many supporting Republican candidates and thereby impacting the colonial power balance.

However, the rise of conservative leader Adolphe Thiers in 1871 led to efforts to curb the decree's impact, as seen with the Lambrecht Decree.

Anti-Semitism, Tensions, and Integration in Colonial Algeria (1880–1940)

From 1880 to 1940, colonial Algeria, predominantly inhabited by European 'pieds-noirs', experienced notable socio-ethnic tensions and pervasive anti-Semitism. In 1895, Paul Badiane, a French Belgian, led an anti-Semitic campaign in Oran, which resulted in his party gaining control of the city council from 1896 to 1905. This period of influence saw harassment and the cultivation of an atmosphere of hatred, culminating in the violent riots of May 1897. In 1898, Max Régis, an Italian immigrant known as Massimo Milano, became the mayor of Algiers and headed the Anti-Jewish League, while Édouard Drumont, the founder of La Libre Parole and a key anti-Semitic figure, was elected to parliament.

In Constantine, tensions were exacerbated by Mayor Émile Morinaud, who dismissed Jewish municipal workers, further inflaming inter-communal animosities. Under the Third Republic, anti-Semitism took a more organised form, leading to political and social strife. This was particularly evident during the

deadly 1934 Constantinople riots, which resulted in the deaths of 23 Jews and 3 Muslims, highlighting the deep divisions between the communities.

Despite these challenges, Jewish integration in Algeria made progress, particularly through education and the administration of the Consistory. However, the 1905 law separating church and state raised concerns among some Jewish leaders about losing control over local consistories. Between 1900 and 1907, the Alliance Israélite Universelle played a significant role in reshaping the Jewish community, establishing schools that gradually diminished the influence of traditional rabbinic authority.

World War I further underscored the ethnic divisions within Algerian society, with 13,000 of Algeria's 70,000 Jews serving, mostly in Zouave regiments. This participation highlighted the complex tensions between the Jews' French citizenship and the ongoing ethnic divisions in the country. While some regions, like the Kabylia mountains and southern Sahara, remained largely unassimilated, the overall trend toward greater Jewish participation in the colonial society continued to unfold.

> " **Under the influence of Enlightenment ideals, French Jews romanticised the Jewish community in Algeria[…]This perspective contributed to the French assimilationist agenda, which sought to integrate Jews into French society while also promoting colonial rule in Algeria.** "

Vichy Laws, WWII, and the Rise of Nationalism: Shifts in Jewish Identity in Algeria (1940–1943)

In October 1940, the Vichy regime repealed the Crémieux Decree with the Statute of the Jews, stripping Algerian Jews—previously assimilated as citizens of metropolitan France—of their French citizenship. This move relegated them to a quasi-indigenous status, though they remained subject to French civil law. The change was accompanied by the imposition of numerous clauses in educational institutions and the exclusion of Jews from many professions, including restricted access to public office and liberal professions, starting on 7 October 1940. The Allied landings in North Africa in November 1942, particularly in Algeria, marked a critical turning point. Although initially General Giraud, supported by the United States, did not challenge Vichy's anti-Semitic laws, pressure from President Roosevelt led Giraud to announce the repeal of these laws in March 1943. By October 1943, the Crémieux Decree was reinstated.

Research by Serge Klarsfeld reveals that during the war, around 80,000 Jews were deported from France, including approximately 1,500 from Algeria, underscoring the widespread impact of the Holocaust even in regions far from Europe's centres of conflict. This period of war and the harsh policies of the Vichy regime contributed to a profound shift in Jewish identity within Algeria. Growing solidarity between Jews and Algerian nationalists emerged as both groups began to unite around common demands for equal rights and an end to colonial rule. This shift played a significant role in fueling post-war nationalist movements, signalling the beginning of the end for French colonial rule in Algeria.

Algerian War of Independence: The Decline of Jewish Presence and Coexistence (1954–1962)

Between 1954 and 1962, during Algeria's war of independence from France, the Jewish community experienced profound upheaval. The temporary repeal of the Crémieux Decree by the Vichy regime in

October 1940, followed by its reinstatement in 1943, had already eroded Algerian Jews' trust in France, particularly among World War I veterans. As the conflict escalated, violence surged, with notable events such as the February 1962 attack on Algiers' Maillot Hospital, which resulted in 28 deaths, and the Oran massacres in July 1962, where 95 lives were claimed. The assassination of Jewish activist Raymond Leris in June 1961 further intensified tensions, acting as a catalyst for a mass exodus of Jews from Algeria. This marked the end of a long era of coexistence between Jews, Muslims, and French settlers in Algeria, as the Jewish community sought safety and a new future outside the country.

Post-Independence Exodus: The Decline of Algeria's Jewish Community (1962–1968)

After Algeria's independence in 1962, the Jewish community faced a rapid deterioration of their situation, leading many to leave the country. Younger Jews, facing increased uncertainty, leaned towards political ideologies like communism and Zionism, which reflected their changing sense of identity in a newly independent Algeria. The 1963 Nationality Code, which required proof of Muslim ancestry before 1830 for citizenship, effectively marginalised many Jews, leaving them further alienated from the country they had once called home. The political and economic instability, exacerbated by French colonial policies and tensions with the ruling FLN (National Liberation Front), fueled the exodus. Attempts by the FLN's Coordination and Execution Committee in 1956 to rally Jewish support for independence had little success.

The 1961 assassination of prominent Jewish figure Cheikh Raymond and subsequent attacks prompted many Jews to flee. By 1962, following the Evian agreements, approximately 110,000 Jews — or about 15% of the repatriates — migrated to France. The nationalisation of land in 1963 and the growing instability contributed to the massive decline of the Jewish population in Algeria. By 1968, the Jewish population had plummeted from 140,000 in 1956 to fewer than 1,000. In 1961 alone, 5,333 Jews moved to Israel, seeking refuge in a community they felt a stronger cultural connection with, though most ultimately chose France as their destination.

Zionism in Pre- and Post-War Algeria: Struggles and Disillusionment (1897–1963)

Zionism made its first appearance in pre-1940 Algeria when Jacques Bahar represented the Jewish community at the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897. However, it was only after the 1917 Balfour Declaration that the movement gained significant traction, leading to the formation of Zionist organisations in towns such as Tlemcen, Médéa, Mostaganem, and Philippeville, and the creation of the Algerian Zionist Union in Algiers in 1920. Despite this growth, Zionism struggled to gain a foothold among the local Jewish elites, many of whom were deeply assimilated into French culture and viewed Zionism as a foreign ideology. The absence of a local Zionist press and the status of Jews as French citizens further hampered the movement's appeal.

Early fundraising initiatives by Zionist organisations received only moderate support, reflecting a more charitable approach rather than militant activism. The arrival of the Vichy regime in 1940, alongside the repeal of the Crémieux Decree and the imposition of anti-Semitic laws, led to renewed interest in Zionism. Disillusioned by their treatment under French rule, Algerian Jews became more receptive to the idea of Zionism, but their activities were largely constrained by the harsh realities of survival under Vichy's policies.

After 1944, under leaders like Benjamin Heller and Robert Brunchvig, and with emissaries from the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine), Zionist activities in Algeria grew. However, many Algerian Jews still saw Algeria as a temporary stepping stone, with their eyes set on Israel, rather than viewing Algeria as a permanent home. Efforts to organise aliyah (Jewish immigration to Israel) continued up until Algeria's independence in 1962, competing with other political movements, but often without a clear distinction.

Despite efforts, including the publication of the Zionist newspaper Hagueshem, youth participation in the movement remained low. The 'public trial' held in Jerusalem on January

23, 1963, presided over by Professor Shalev Guenossar, symbolically examined the reasons behind the relatively low emigration of Algerian Jews to Israel after independence. The trial criticised the lack of mutual support within the community and underscored the tension between the high expectations of Zionism and the reality of Jewish emigration from Algeria. This event highlighted the difficulties in mobilising Algerian Jews for aliyah and revealed the gap between the Zionist ideal and the actual migration experience.

In conclusion, the Jewish community in Algeria has undergone profound transformations and faced significant challenges since the country's independence. Historically, Jews were granted the same rights as other religious groups and integrated into the national religious administration. However, from the late 1960s onward, the community began to experience increasing difficulties. These challenges were compounded by Algeria's nationalisation policies under President Houari Boumediene, which led to a mass migration of Jews and the gradual disappearance of their presence in the country. Many Jewish synagogues were closed or repurposed, and by the early 1970s, actions such as the destruction of the Jewish cemetery in Oran and the conversion of synagogues into Islamic centres highlighted the community's eroding presence.

The establishment of a local steering committee in place of the French Central Consistory in 1972 further isolated Algerian Jews from their cultural and religious heritage. Despite a brief acknowledgement in the early 2000s by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of the Jewish contribution to Oran's cultural heritage, the community continued to decline. This decline was further exacerbated by regional tensions, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which heightened local sensitivities regarding the Jewish presence in Algeria. The protests in 2014 against the reopening of synagogues, driven by concerns over 'Judaisation,' underscored the ongoing complexities surrounding the Jewish community's legacy in Algeria, reflecting broader regional and historical conflicts that have shaped the country's approach to its Jewish heritage.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Assan, Valérie. Les Juifs En Algérie. Avancées Récentes de La Recherche. Hespéris-Tamuda, 2016.

Assan, Valérie. "Synagogues d'Algérie, Du Cliché Orientaliste à L'effacement." Tsafon, no. 81, 1 July 2021, pp. 109–124, doi:10.4000/tsafon.3849. Accessed 4 Dec. 2022.

Ayoun, Richard. "LES JUIFS D'ALGÉRIE DANS LA TOURMENTE ANTISÉMITE DU XXe SIÈCLE." Revue Européenne Des Études Hébraïques, no. 1, 1996, pp. 57–99. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/23492354. Accessed 2 May 2024.

Blévis, Laure. En Marge Du Décret Crémieux. Les Juifs Naturalisés Français En Algérie (1865 - 1919). Vol. 45, no. 2, 5 Nov. 2012, pp. 47–47, doi:10.3917/aj.452.0047. Accessed 2 May 2023.

Charvit, Yossef. "Le 'Procès Public' Des Juifs d'Algérie à Jérusalem (1963). Un Nouvel Examen." Pardès, vol. 56, no. 2, 2014, pp. 285–294,

www.cairn.info/revue-pardes-2014-2-page-285.htm, doi:10.3917/parde.056.0285. Accessed 3 May 2024.

Dermenjian, Geneviève. "Les Juifs d'Algérie Dans Le Regard Des Militaires et Des Juifs de France à l'époque de La Conquête (1830-1855)." Revue Historique, vol. 284, no. 2 (576), 1990, pp. 333–39. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40955239. Accessed 2 May 2024.

Goldberg, Sylvie-Anne, editor. Histoire Juive de la France. Illustrated, Éditions Albin Michel, 11 Oct. 2023.

Grimaud, Nicole. "Les Juifs d'Afrique Du Nord, Leur Situation - et Leurs Problèmes En 1968." Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de La Méditerranée, vol. 8, no. 1, 1970, pp. 273–296, doi:10.3406/remmm.1970.1050. Accessed 3 May. 2024.

Guedj, Jérémy. "Juifs et Musulmans d'Algérie En France. Cinquante Ans d'Exil Partagé, Entre Mémoire, Échanges et Déchirements." Hommes & Migrations, vol. 1295, no. 1, 2012, pp. 144–154, www.cairn.info/revue-hommes-et-migrations-2012-1-page-144.htm, doi:10.4000/hommesmigrations.1081. Accessed 3 May 2024.

Laloum, Jean. "La Déportation Des Juifs Natifs D'Algérie." Le Monde Juif, vol. 129, no. 1, 1988, pp. 33–48, www.cairn.info/revue-le-monde-juif-1988-1-page-33.htm. Accessed 4 May 2024.

Le Foll-Luciani, Pierre-Jean. "'À Moins de Nier Notre Qualité de Juifs…'. Les Juifs d'Algérie Dans Le Mouvement 'Libéral' de La Guerre d'Indépendance (1955-1960)." Archives Juives, vol. 49, no. 2, 2016, pp. 128–144,

www.cairn.info/revue-archives-juives1-2016-2-page-128.htm, doi:10.3917/aj.492.0128. Accessed 3 May 2024.

Luciani, Pierre-Jean Le Foll. "Les Juifs d'Algérie Face Aux Nationalités Française et Algérienne (1940-1963)." Revue Des Mondes Musulmans et de La Méditerranée, no. 137, 12 May 2015, pp. 115–132, doi:10.4000/remmm.9057. Accessed 4 May 2024.

Moumen, Abderahmen. "De l'Algérie à La France. Les Conditions de Départ et d'Accueil Des Rapatriés, Pieds-Noirs et Harkis En 1962." Matériaux Pour L'Histoire de Notre Temps, vol. N° 99, no. 3, 2010, p. 60, doi:10.3917/mate.099.0060. Accessed 2 May. 2024.

Nadjari, David. "L'émancipation à 'Marche Forcée': Les Juifs d'Algérie Et Le Décret Crémieux." Labyrinthe, no. 28, 21 Dec. 2007, pp. 77–89,

journals.openedition.org/labyrinthe/2893, doi:10.4000/labyrinthe.2893. Accessed 3 May 2024.

Renucci, Florence. "Les Juifs d'Algérie Et La Citoyenneté (1870-1902). Les Enjeux d'Un Statut Contesté." Shs.hal.science, Publications de l'Université Saint-Louis de Bruxelles, 2013, shs.hal.science/halshs-00953215/. Accessed 4 May 2024.

Saadoun, Haïm. "Le Sionisme En Algérie (1898 - 1962): Une Option Marginale." Archives Juives, vol. 45, no. 2, 2012, p. 68, doi:10.3917/aj.452.0068. Accessed 4 May. 2024.

Scioldo-Zürcher, Yann. "'L'affaire Du Cimetière D'Oran' (1970-1974). Les Juifs Oranais, Inclusions et Exclusions d'Une Population Entre Deux Rives." Archives Juives, vol. 41, no. 1, 2008, p. 120, doi:10.3917/aj.411.0120. Accessed 2 May 2024.

Shurkin, Michael. "L'émancipation Des Juifs d'Algérie, Une Déclinaison Du Modèle Alsacien?" Archives Juives, vol. 45, no. 2, 2012, p. 14, doi:10.3917/aj.452.0014. Accessed 2 May. 2024.

Sfar, Joann. Le Chat du Rabbin - Tome 3: L'Exode. Poisson Pilote, Dargaud, Oct. 2003. Bande dessinée.

Stora, Benjamin. "Regards Croisés Sur Les Relations Judéo-Musulmanes à La Veille de La Guerre D'Algérie." Archives Juives, vol. 45, no. 2, 2012, p. 129, doi:10.3917/aj.452.0129. Accessed 2 May. 2024.

Tartakowsky, Ewa. Juifs Maghrébins et Anticolonialistes.

Yossef Charvit. "La Première Guerre Mondiale et Le Yishouv." Tsafon, no. 67, 1 June 2014, pp. 125–142, doi:10.4000/tsafon.9691. Accessed 3 May. 2024.

"Les Juifs d'Algérie." La Marche de l'Histoire. Prod. Jean Lebrun. Dir. Jacques Sigal.

Collab. Frédéric Martin, Camille Poux-Jalaguier, Franck Olivar. Narr. Raphaël Draï. France Inter, 19 Nov. 2012,

[https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/podcasts/la-marche-de-l-histoire/les-juifs-d-algerie-3 2

84208](https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/podcasts/la-marche-de-l-histoire/les-juifs-d-alg erie-3284208).

Grimaud, Nicole. "Les Juifs d'Afrique du Nord, Leur Situation - et Leurs Problèmes en 1968." In: Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée, n°8,

1970.unica. pp. 273-296.

The Echoing Heartache of the Iraqi Diaspora
How generational trauma manifests among second-generation immigrants of the Iraqi diaspora.

Yasmin Nazar Rasheed

Edited by Sophia Alloui

The Iraqi diaspora is burdened with trauma from the past, conflicted identity in the present, and apprehension for the future. For those born into Iraqi diasporic families, the Iraqi experience brings with it a unique array of challenges, discoveries, and questions. Iraq, like much of the Arab world, bears a legacy of hardship. Despite not experiencing this hardship firsthand, children of the diaspora cannot escape it – it is entrenched in the Iraqi subconscious and perpetuates itself from one generation to the next.

There is no word more apt to describe this emotion than the Arabic word: qahr (قهر). Qahr is described by author Saeed Teebi as 'the feeling of being overwhelmed by injustice. It's a desolate, frustrated, unsolvable feeling.' The diaspora lives in a perpetual state of qahr, qahr for the state of their home country, qahr for the fragmentation of their people, and qahr for the loss of their culture that displacement imposes.

This article will examine how generational trauma manifests among second-generation Iraqi immigrants to understand how past trauma affects diasporic Iraqis psychologically, socially, and culturally. I will examine the trauma and hardship endured by the first generation of Iraqi migrants to observe how this trauma maps onto the psyche of later generations, or as I will refer to them, the children of the diaspora. Before this discussion may begin, I will detail Iraq's history to add context to the foundations upon which the modern Iraqi identity has been built.

A History of Hardship

Modern-day Iraq is built on the soil of Mesopotamia, an ancient region known as 'the cradle of civilisation.' As antiquity's beacon of intellectualism and innovation, ancient Iraq produced advancements in astrology, mathematics, language, and philosophy that laid the foundations for further scientific and linguistic development to flourish. To use one such example, Mesopotamia was the birthplace of the Arabic numerical system that catalysed all subsequent mathematical and scientific advancements, and that is used in most of the world's countries today. However, ancient Iraq did not maintain indigenous rule. The region was conquered by various neighbouring empires, including the Babylonian, Roman, Persian, and Mongolian Empires, culminating in its last and longest rule by the Ottoman Empire, which successfully ruled Iraq's territory from the 16th century until after World War I.

It seems that the end of indigenous rule in Mesopotamia condemned the region to a gradual yet destructive fall from grace. Iraq was exchanged from the clutches of the Ottoman Empire to the hands of Britain, after Britain's successful 1917 invasion. In this era of Iraqi history, the country was known as 'Mandatory Iraq' after the League of Nations granted a British Mandate of Mesopotamia. The British appointed a monarch in King Faisal, previously King of Syria. Independence was ultimately granted to Iraq in 1932, and shortly afterwards, the country evolved from a kingdom to a republic.

Iraq's society underwent restructuring under the rule of nationalist Prime Minister Abdul-Karim Qasim in 1958. Qasim sought to establish a strong Iraqi-nationalist identity as opposed to the pan-Arabism of previous rulers. As such, Qasim believed in the equality of all ethnoreligious populations in Iraq, leading to the reintegration of the previously marginalised Jewish, Kurdish, Assyrian, and Turkmen populations. His rule also brought with it the nationalisation of oil, as well as the forcible redistribution of underused land.

Qasim's regime established relative stability in Iraq for a time, which promptly ceased in 1961 after he attempted to annex Kuwait, which led to high levels of animosity between the two countries that came to a head some decades later. Abdul-Karim Qasim was ousted in a coup following this ordeal, and ultimately the Ba'athist Party claimed power.

This period of Ba'athist rule in Iraq brought with it the leadership of Saddam Hussein in 1979, and the Iran-Iraq war lasting eight years, leading to the brutal killing of one million soldiers and civilians across both fronts. It was this conflict which ignited the first of three waves of the Iraqi diaspora.

The second wave is said to have begun in 1990, when Iraq invaded and annexed Kuwait, commencing the first Gulf War. Throughout this period, Iraq also found itself in strained and often violent relations with Israel and Kurdistan. Towards the end of 1998, Britain and the U.S. launched Operation Desert Fox, a bombing campaign purporting to target Iraq's nuclear, chemical, and biological weapon stocks. This continued into 2002, post-9/11, when U.S. President George Bush infamously claimed that Iraq had 'weapons of mass destruction' which posed a 'grave threat to peace.'

The subsequent U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq from 2003 until 2011 catalysed the third and final wave of the Iraqi diaspora. Saddam, and by extension the Ba'athist regime, were removed from power. The number of Iraqis killed by the U.S. during this time is disputed; however, it is understood to have been around the 600,000 mark. This era represents one of the lowest points in modern Iraqi history. The country was destroyed economically, socially, and physically – and those who could leave, did.

Features of the Diaspora

Each wave of the Iraqi diaspora has its defining features. The first wave of pre-1990 tends to consist of many ethnoreligious minorities such as Assyrians and Chaldeans, due to their marginalisation within Iraq at the time. The period from 1991 to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 marked the second wave, which was largely driven by the harsh economic conditions and low socio-political security created by British and U.S. interference, as well as tensions arising from the Gulf War. The third and current wave of the Iraqi exodus is post-U.S. occupation and can be explained for a broad array of reasons, central to each being the general desire for a more secure quality of life. The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees reported on the scope of the Iraqi diaspora in the early 2000s, finding that it consisted of over four million Iraqis displaced across over ninety countries.

To adequately assess the generational trauma inherited by second-generation immigrants of the diaspora, it is first necessary to understand the experiences and challenges faced by first-generation immigrants, the pioneers of the Iraqi diaspora. The first wave of emigration, as mentioned above, is of great significance, as this cohort sowed the seeds of the Iraqi diaspora and set the precedent of Iraqi identity outside the country's borders. In many ways, they were ambassadors for their country and their cause, and in doing so, contributed to the heightened humanisation and acceptance of Iraqis around the world, which ultimately encouraged and aided the integration of later diasporic waves.

Nevertheless, all phases of the diaspora endured the same core struggles. Before diasporic groups could even leave Iraq, they suffered psychological and emotional trauma from life in war. Living in a war zone exposes individuals to persistent threats, such as fear of death, fear of losing a loved one, or fear of displacement. This causes the nervous system to revert to a state of chronic hyperarousal, where sleep and concentration are impaired, and emotions become deregulated.

> "**Ancient Iraq produced advancements in astrology, mathematics, language and philosophy that laid the foundations for further scientific and linguistic development to flourish.**"

Upon leaving the pressure zone of Iraq, further issues present themselves to immigrants of the diaspora. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is reported in witnesses to war, symptoms of which include feelings of helplessness, fear, and anxiety, as well as nightmares and intrusive flashbacks of the traumatic period. Furthermore, emotional desensitisation arises as a trauma coping mechanism in the psyche of those living in war zones, and manifests itself as social withdrawal, decreased empathy and reduced expression.

Lastly, those living in war zones display damaged interpersonal trust. As families are fragmented and scattered across the world, immigrants can suffer isolation and a lack of community, leading to heightened feelings of racial and cultural inferiority, mistrust of others, and high levels of stress.

Coupled with the psychological challenges faced by displaced Iraqis are sociocultural challenges. Strong homeland ties are strained under the requirement to assimilate and integrate into new, culturally opposite environments. There is a constant battle between 'home' and 'away', a conflicted hybrid identity that does not seem to belong anywhere. Where Iraqis find themselves as a cultural, racial, and oftentimes religious minority within a host society, this can lead to an internalised inferiority complex, symbolic annihilation, and social alienation.

"There is a constant battle between 'home' and 'away', a conflicted hybrid identity that does not seem to belong anywhere."

These characteristics of first-generational diasporas are well-established and thoroughly proven within the literature. However, the effect of post-war trauma on second-generation immigrants in the diaspora is immensely under-explored by comparison. I submit that there exists a narrative that Iraqis born into the diaspora live free of the trauma of the past. In many respects, this is true. Iraqis born into economically developed and democratic host societies are

privileged in that they are afforded a peaceful and secure upbringing that was simply not possible for earlier generations of Iraqis.

However, children of the diaspora have their own unique set of challenges, as well as generationally inherited challenges. With no direct ties to a homeland, the hybrid identity crisis is intensified. In feeling too Iraqi for the culture of the host country, yet too western for Iraqis, children of the diaspora find themselves in a cultural purgatory, which El Mekaui describes as a form of 'hesitancy'; a hesitancy which 'reveals the invisible heaviness of belonging that we carry.'

Intergenerational Trauma

Intergenerational trauma relates to how psychological effects of trauma are transferred from parents to their children, through behaviour, beliefs, and collective memory. This transfer is largely subconscious – a quiet diffusion of trauma-induced values and belief systems within the family unit that exist below the surface but are manifested outwardly in everyday life.

Palestinian-American author Edward Said was concerned with how historic traumas are continued in present generations of the diaspora, described as an 'uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms.' Flowing from this concept are feelings of paranoia, cynicism, and distrust. Under Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in 1990s Iraq, any person reported to speak unfavourably of Saddam, or his reign, was subjected to persecution or imprisonment. The incessant use of 'spies' and 'secret police' meant that no one could be trusted, and 'even the walls had ears.' As such, first-generation immigrants have warped understandings of privacy and live with hypervigilance, paranoia, and distrust, which gets passed to their children.

Silence and emotional avoidance are further aspects of the trauma shared intergenerationally within the Iraqi diaspora. The evidence shows that most diasporic communities feel a stigma towards the discussion of emotional struggle and mental health. The literature speaks of a 'culture of silence' which is

perpetuated within Iraqi diasporic families, whereby parents refuse to speak of the trauma they endured to their children, leaving the children with confusion, emotional illiteracy, unresolved displacement, and an inherited stigma towards mental health issues. Where mental health is stigmatised, trauma is not acknowledged or processed, and therefore, the generational chain of trauma transmission cannot be broken.

Finally, as parents of the diaspora practice Iraqi culture and traditions with their children, an 'imagined home' is created. Thus, second-generation immigrants develop a 'postmemory' of Iraq, described by Hirsch as '"memories transmitted so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right.' In this way, Iraq falsely feels like home to children of the diaspora, leaving them with a longing for somewhere they have never been. Where one longs for a faraway, idolised home, it becomes difficult to ever feel grounded or satisfied in the present. This deepens the cultural isolation of the Iraqi diaspora, who feel that the place they most belong exists as a mere figment of their heart

Conclusion

As renowned Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish wrote, 'I don't decide to represent anything except myself. But that self is full of collective memory.' Second-generation immigrants of the diaspora inherit psychological trauma from their parents, despite not experiencing the trauma-inducing hardships firsthand. To be an Iraqi in the diaspora is to have a heart burdened with the weight of war, dictatorship, and death from a land so familiar in memory yet truthfully non-existent.

When war, occupation, and dictatorship are waged on a country, the resulting trauma does not cease upon a ceasefire, or a truce, or a rebuilding of ruins. The trauma, in many ways, never ceases. It remains incubated in the subconscious of the oppressed people and is silently inherited by each subsequent generation. Invisible in nature, generational trauma looms over children of the Iraqi diaspora, echoing within them the heartache of the past.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bahmani, Medhi and Javad Etaat. "Diaspora Identity: A Profile of Iraqi Immigrants in the USA." Journal of World Sociopolitical Studies 4, no. 1 (2020): 95-132.

Burch, Kurt. "Iran-Iraq War." EBSCO, 2023. https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/iran-iraq-war.

Bush, George, W. "Iraq: Denial and Deception." transcript of speech delivered at the Cincinnati Museum Center, Ohio, 7 October 2002. https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html.

Danieli, Yael. International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma. New York: Springer, 1998.

El Mekaui, Lara. "Hesitant Belonging: Understanding Generational Traumas of Forced Migration in Black and Palestinian Diaspora Contemporary Transnational Fiction." Doctorate thesis, University of Waterloo, 2024. http://hdl.handle.net/10012/20569

Gary, Faye. "Stigma: Barrier to mental health care among ethnic minorities." Issues in Mental Health Nursing 26, no. 10 (2005): 979–999.

Hirsch, Marianne. "The Generation of Postmemory." Poetics Today 29, no. 1 (2008): 103–128.

Kets de Vries, M. "Entering the Inner Theatre of a Despot: The Rise and Fall of Saddam Hussein." INSEAD, 2003.

Kevers, Ruth, Sofie de Smet, Peter Rober, Cécile Rousseau, Lucia Da Haene. "Silencing or silent transmission? An exploratory study on trauma communication in Kurdish refugee families." Family Process 63, no. 4 (2024): 2324-2346.

Litz, Brett T. "Emotional numbing in combat-related PTSD." Clinical Psychology Review 12, no. 4 (1992): 417–432.

Manzo, Lyanne C. "Beyond house and haven: toward a revisioning of emotional relationships with places." Journal of Environmental Psychology 23, no. 1

(2003): 47–61.

Palestine Children Relief Fund. "What Is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?" https://www.pcrf.net/information-you-should-know/what-is-post-traumatic-stress-disorder.html.

Said, Edwad. Culture and Imperialism. New York: Vintage Books,1993.

Summerfield, D. "A critique of seven assumptions behind psychological trauma programmes in war-affected areas." Social Science & Medicine 48, no. 10 (1999);1449-62.

Teebi, Saeed. "Opinion: To Be Palestinian Is to Constantly Have Basic Facts of Your Existence Denied." Globe and Mail, 17 October 2023. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-to-be-palestinian-is-to-constantly-have-basic-facts-of-your-existence/.

Yehuda, Rachel and Joseph LeDoux. "Response variation following trauma: A translational neuroscience approach." Neuron 56, no. 1 (2007): 19-32.

Middle Eastern Feminism: The Fight for an Identity

Scarlett Glynn

Edited by Francesca Cronin

The feminist movement has been a critical factor in the history of the modern Middle East. Feminism has shaped the region's post-colonial trajectory, even as activists struggled to articulate a distinctly Eastern feminist identity. Feminist groups have been instrumental actors within nationalist movements during revolutionary periods across the region, even with conservative governments attempting to co-opt feminist movements for their own gain.

Additionally, internal strife within the movement has hindered its progress, as Western feminism has simultaneously aided and restricted feminist issues in the East. These unique dynamics in Middle Eastern feminism illustrate the movement's importance to the broader history of the region while also highlighting the differences in how feminism materialises across individual societies in the modern Middle East.

Feminism and revolution are intertwined in the history of the modern Middle East, as exemplified in Yemen. Nationalist movements have empowered women to become politically active, and in turn, women brought feminist issues to the core of revolutions. Aida Yafai, a member of the General Command of the National Liberation Front in South Yemen, commented in an interview with Maxine Molyneux that "women's emancipation needs the existence of a progressive revolutionary regime."

During the Yemeni revolution, women's groups became political platforms and were considered "good recruiting grounds" for the National Liberation Front. Women in these groups became a powerful force in the fight for independence by lobbying against British school curricula and smuggling grenades and documents. Additionally, women in rural areas fought against the British army while delivering food to their husbands. Following Yemen's independence from Britain, the New Constitution in 1970 granted women equal legal status, familial rights, and educational opportunities. Women also achieved equal wages and 50 to 70 days of paid maternity leave. A new family law was established in 1974, which limited polygamy, gave divorced women rights to their children, and banned child marriage. The contributions of feminist revolutionaries to the establishment of the new republic made feminist principles integral to the foundation of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

Feminists played a crucial role in the Turkish nationalist movement that shaped the early republic. The nationalists established secondary schools and teaching colleges for women, and by 1921, the University of Istanbul had completely ended sex-based segregation. At the end of World War I, the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed VI signed a treaty with Europe to partition Turkey among the powers, which triggered a rebellion that removed the Sultan. Women participated actively in the revolution, and the new President, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, publicly advocated for gender equality between the sexes and women's participation in the workforce.

Turkey was the first Muslim country to formally adopt feminist issues on a political level, and Atatürk was outspoken on the topic. In a speech in Izmir in 1923, he declared that "the weakness in our society lies in our indifference to the status of women."However, there was criticism from feminists at the time who wanted to develop their own sense of feminism and not be at the mercy of the nationalists who controlled their agenda. While feminists had fought in the rebellion and advocated for greater educational rights, their movement had fallen into the hands of men who remained focused on nationalist goals.

Feminism is a crucial element in the modern history of the Middle East, as it symbolizes the conflict between Western and Eastern cultures, particularly in the unique context of Northern African countries. Huda Sha'arawi, the founder of the Egyptian Feminist Union, advocated for modest reforms, focusing on Quranic principles at the heart of these changes. Supporters of Sha'arawi have argued that her conservatism was solely for political reasons and was essential to the progress achieved in Egypt. However, critics say that Sha'arawi's conservative position ultimately failed the feminist movement in the Middle East by not condemning the systemic oppression of women in Egypt.

These views are emblematic of a considerable conflict between feminism and some elements of traditional Muslim culture. Despite advocating for reforms based on Quranic beliefs, feminism has not been well received by many Muslims, who viewed the movement as an assault on their tradition and culture. Many feel particularly protective of traditional norms after having been subjected to imperial rule. An Algerian novelist described this reaction as a response to the recent freedom from colonialism in their homes and how people interpreted feminism as a new form of colonial intrusion on their family. Conservatism as a response to colonial rule is an important factor in the social history of the modern Middle East, as evidenced by the significant resistance to feminist reforms.

Feminism is also an essential factor in the contemporary history of the Middle East due to its complex relationship to international powers. Literature and public opinion in the Middle East criticise feminism for being too heavily influenced by Western culture. However, this criticism fails to consider the lack of support shown by Western powers and Western feminist ideology to Middle Eastern feminism. This resistance towards Middle Eastern feminism is evidenced by the differences in women's liberation between North Yemen and South Yemen.

North Yemen experienced considerably more Western influence than its southern counterpart, due to investment from Saudi Arabia and its pro-Western, capitalist stance. However, women in North Yemen experienced traditional forms of discrimination, and the government made no changes to their legal rights. Women in South Yemen achieved significantly greater advances in society and the law compared to their Westernised peers.

Western feminism throughout history has overlooked the unique challenges of Eastern feminism and, therefore, has not been a faithful ally to the movement. Foundational texts of Western feminism, such as Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and John Stuart Mill's The Subjection of Women, include harsh anti-Muslim sentiment. These texts have influenced Western feminist ideology and historically failed to recognise Middle Eastern religions, cultures, and customs. Feminists in the Middle East have fought to establish their own identity, thereby leading the movement to take on an essential role in shaping the region's history.

Feminists in the Middle East used global connections to advance their agenda and are emblematic of the soft power Western states exercised over the region. An example of this is the Iranian Women's Party. When a proposal for women's suffrage failed in the Electoral Law Committee, the Party wrote a letter in 1945 stating it would be "a great disappointment if Iranian women's rights were granted us by foreign hands as in Japan." This situated the fight for women's suffrage in a globalised context in hopes of influencing male officials. It also reflects how colonialism and Western dominance reshaped the political landscape of the Middle East.

Iran and Turkey sought validation from Western powers while maintaining patriarchal rule. An example of this was the Women's Awakening Project in Iran from 1936 to 1943. This project included forced unveiling, expanded education for women, and media campaigns presenting a modernised state while allowing only modest reforms. Women were notably denied the right to vote. Neither Iran nor Turkey allowed independent feminist groups to operate, reinforcing a paternalistic view of women and limiting their agency.

State control and Western influence prompted Middle Eastern feminists to establish their own identity. Breaking away from these powers marked an important moment in the history of the modern Middle East. The Eastern Women's Congresses of 1930 and 1932 exemplified these aims. While highly regulated by male officials, these congresses marked the first time Eastern women gathered to discuss feminist reforms. A Greek delegate from the International Alliance of Women was invited to demonstrate connections between Eastern and Western feminisms.

Feminist leaders condemned patriarchal interpretations of Islam that ignored the Quran's egalitarian messages. Nour Hamada criticised men for exploiting Islamic law to justify polygamy, divorce, and unequal inheritance. These congresses marked a turning point, positioning Middle Eastern feminism as both independent and internationally connected.

In conclusion, feminism has been a key factor in the development of the modern Middle East due to its influence on nationalist movements and its effort to carve out an independent identity. Feminists in the region navigated patriarchy, colonialism, and international marginalisation to achieve vital freedoms. Despite limited support from both nationalist groups and Western feminism, Middle Eastern feminists laid the foundations for international and intersectional feminism today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahmed, Leila. "Feminism and Feminist Movements in the Middle East, a Preliminary Exploration: Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen." Women's

Studies International Forum 5, no. 2 (January 1982): 153–68. https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(82)90024-3.

Amin, Camron Michael. "Globalizing Iranian Feminism, 1910–1950." Journal of Middle East Women's Studies 4, no. 1 (2008): 6–30. https://doi.org/10.2979/mew.2008.4.1.6.

Amin, Camron Michael. "Propaganda and Remembrance: Gender, Education, and 'The Women's Awakening' of 1936." Iranian Studies 32, no. 3 (1999): 351–86.: https://www.jstor.org/stable/4311268

Badran, Margot. "Between Secular and Islamic Feminism/s: Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond." Journal of Middle East Women's Studies 1, no. 1 (2005): 6–28.https://www.jstor.org/stable/40326847

Fay, Mary Ann. "Early Twentieth-Century Middle Eastern Feminisms, Nationalisms, and Transnationalisms." Journal of Middle East Women's Studies 4, no. 1 (2008): 1–5. https://doi.org/10.2979/mew.2008.4.1.1.

Hamid, Shadi. "Between Orientalism and Postmodernism: The Changing Nature of Western Feminist Thought Towards the Middle East." Hawwa 4, no. 1 (2006): 76–92. https://doi.org/10.1163/156920806777504553.

Molyneux, Maxine. "Women and Revolution in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen." Feminist Review 1, no. 1 (March 1979): 5–20. https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.1979.2.

Weber, Charlotte. "Between Nationalism and Feminism: The Eastern Women's Congresses of 1930 and 1932." Journal of Middle East Women's Studies 4, no. 1 (2008): 83–106. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/230205.

Woodsmall, Ruth Frances. Moslem Women: Enter a New World. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936. http://archive.org/details/dli.csl.8252.

A Critical Analysis of Western Portrayals of Conflict in the Middle East

Almha Fitzpatrick

Edited by Elisa Zito

This essay uses the US and NATO invasion of Afghanistan and the US led invasion of Iraq as case studies to critically analyse Western portrayals of conflict in the Middle East. It argues that Western mainstream media failed to critically assess claims made by their governments and did not present their audiences with informed, objective information. It is contended that instead, the content of their reporting was largely aligned with the rhetoric of the US government and NATO allies, at the expense of the Afghan and Iraqi people.

It is maintained that this reporting was negligent and represents a failure of Western mainstream media in fulfilling their role as a provider of objective, analytical information with which to inform citizens. This failure can be argued to have undermined the democracies of the West, and perpetuated misperceptions about the wars and the people of the Middle East, with real tangible consequences.

The Afghan Occupation: Analysis

Shortly after 9/11, US President George W. Bush authorised the invasion of Afghanistan in a supposed act of defence against the attack on 9/11, beginning their 'war on terror', insisting that the Taliban give up the leaders of al-Qaeda. For much of the war, Western media paid relatively little attention to it, as they assumed the audiences lacked interest in the topic. Bergman and Liu (2022) identified various themes within Western media coverage of the war. The first is the narrative that the war was waged with the intention of liberating Afghan women.

Stabile and Kumar argue that the US government and NATO allies instrumentalised the atrocities suffered by women under the Taliban to garner support for the war. The life of Afghan women prior to 9/11 was one of extreme oppression, and yet, it hardly received any coverage in Western media, and received little

government attention, arguably indicating that the US and NATO realised they could exploit women's struggle to justify their war. The claim of liberating Afghan women was corroborated by the Western press, which widely published pictures of Afghan women taking off their veils and burqas after US and NATO occupation, supposedly signally liberation. However, since the hijabs and burqas are explicitly religious symbols, this implies that it is the religion of Islam itself that is oppressive to women, rather than the brutal Taliban regime. This false but widespread misconception led to feelings of Western cultural superiority and also a gross misunderstanding of the plight of Afghan women.

Press coverage of Afghan women under the Taliban increased exponentially after 9/11, which illustrates the alignment of mainstream media with the agenda set by Western governments. In addition, the media celebrating the fall of the Taliban neglected to note that the US backed Northern Alliance had a similarly violent history, with the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) contending that they should be tried as war criminals, for offenses including war rape. By observing the status of women today in Afghanistan and during the war, it can be argued that the US and NATO did not prioritise the genuine liberation of Afghan women to the extent that they claimed to.

For instance, women are still judicially punished under Islamic law, millions of girls do not attend school, and one year after the invasion of Afghanistan, the country had the world's second highest maternal mortality rate. Furthermore, it is likely that these statistics have worsened since the Taliban's most recent takeover. The Afghan Transition Government had 2 female members out of 34, and the 2003 US budget allocated no funds to the rebuilding of Afghanistan, despite the outbreak of diseases such as polio and measles, in addition to chronic hunger

and poverty.

This is despite claims made by the administration, and often echoed by the mainstream media, that the US would provide food and medicines to Afghan civilians. However, the US did manage to ensure many of their other goals such as re-installing Unocal oil corporation consultants to powerful roles, and organising the construction of an oil pipeline. This perhaps suggests a lack of genuine political will to improve the circumstances of Afghan women. Finally, the coverage of the plight of Afghan women has drastically decreased since the end of the war.

The second theme of Western media coverage that Bergman and Liu identify is the glorification of US and NATO soldiers. The attention of the Western media was reserved for the perspectives of Western soldiers. Mainstream media across the US, Europe, and Australia endorsed governmental narratives for justifying the war, which included revering soldiers and exhibiting Western military superiority by portraying soldiers as heroes, also echoed in Ryan. American media mostly ignored the plight of Afghans after the fall of the Taliban and the accusations against Western soldiers.

The third theme found is Orientalism. Said understands Orientalism to be the "othering" of the 'Orient' by the West (the 'Occident'), and that this perpetuates feelings of Western superiority. Western mainstream media portrayed Afghanistan through an Orientalist lens. These depictions of Afghanistan aligned with pre-existing biases of the Middle East, and thus reinforced them in the minds of their audiences. Symbols of traditional Afghan culture and religion, such as the burqa, were depicted as extreme and uncivilised. The various horrors committed by the US-backed Northern Alliance went largely unreported as they conflicted with the US/NATO narrative that legitimised the war by claiming to liberate the people of Afghanistan.

> **"Stabile and Kumar argue that the US government and NATO allies instrumentalised the atrocities suffered by women under the Taliban to garner support for the war."**

Additionally, civilian casualties in Afghanistan were mentioned in very few media reports. Governments either refused to confirm the number of casualties or else contested them. There was little to no reporting on the harassment of Arabs or Muslims living in the West, the unexplained detention of countless people or the many unjustified deportations using tiny incidents, such as traffic or old visa violations as justification. The many instances of Western media portraying Islam as a violent religion have created a feeling of fear and suspicion of Muslim people. Ryan echoes this by contending the US media has depicted Arabs as uncivilised, ignorant, stupid and brutal for decades.

The period after 9/11 saw a stark increase in acts of violence towards Muslims in the US, accompanied by an increase in claims of discrimination against Arabs and Muslims when applying for jobs, housing, and instances of police harassment. Ryan provides more context to this, arguing the war promoted a view of the world as binary, with Americans as the so-called "good guys" and Arabs as the "bad guys".

It is the role and the responsibility of the media to take the information that the administration is presenting and to critically analyse it, so that the public are presented with accurate information that they can use to make informed decisions that strengthen their democracy, not simply to be a mouthpiece for the state. The failure of the media in fulfilling this responsibility undermined the country's democracy by neglecting to critically assess the decisions of the US government. This position is echoed in Ryan, where it is concluded that the US media failed to fulfil its role as an objective analyst for citizens, and not only neglected to effectively analyse the administration's rhetoric on the war, but in fact promoted and legitimised it.

It must be recognised that the media did publish a wide array of views and included voices concerned with civilian safety, but the overarching narrative largely aligned with the Bush administration. This is evidenced by the absence of reporting contending that the acceptance of civilian casualties is necessary to the war, until Bush perpetuated this view in the middle and later parts of the war. Similarly, rhetoric surrounding humanitarian aid and understanding the 'enemy' were largely absent from reporting until Bush's rhetoric began to include them during a similar time period.

Iraq 2003

Unlike Afghanistan, the challenge of justifying the invasion of Iraq was a constant issue for the Bush administration, as the war was not against any direct attacks or harm to the interests of the US, and vitally, was not supported by the UN Security Council. Despite this, after President Bush authorised the invasion, the public was broadly supportive of the war.

The popularity of any government decision, regardless of the country's democratic status, will be partly cultivated by the administration and the mainstream media, and the support of the Iraqi war was a product of misperceptions regarding the facts of the war. Those who misperceived aspects of the war were 4.3 times more likely to support it than those who possessed accurate knowledge of it. Misperceptions were investigated with regards to whether participants thought Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (WMD), what they perceived world public opinion of the war to be, and whether or not they believed that Saddam Hussein had links to al-Qaeda. Significantly, Kull et al. found that people who followed the war on the news "very or somewhat closely" were 1.2 times more likely to support the war than those who did not.

 This illustrates a general trend during the war where the mainstream media, much like the case in Afghanistan, did not question the administration's claims. Indeed, an investigation into the occurrences of pro-war or anti-war positions taken by news networks found that the vast majority took pro-war

stances, aligning with their governments, which is similar to Ryan's findings during the invasion of Afghanistan.

Western media and the US administration portrayed the Iraq war as a 'war on terror' and largely ignored the number of civilian deaths. In contrast, reporting done by Qatar-based Al Jazeera questioned the 'war on terror' and continuously documented civilian deaths, illustrating the biases of Western media.

The failure of mainstream media to challenge the administration's claims led to misperceptions among their viewers regarding the war. This is supported by the fact that the two networks that provided the most biased and least critical commentary on the administration, Fox and CBS, were also the networks with viewers who were most likely to hold these misperceptions. Additionally, the transition of news media from educational to entertainment led to the public frequently hearing claims that the discovery of WMD was imminent, while the subsequent failure to locate them went underreported, as these stories were deemed insufficiently 'entertaining'.

An important distinction between the Iraqi war and the Afghan war is that there was significantly more global support for the invasion of Afghanistan than there was for the invasion of Iraq. Therefore, the findings of Hayes and Guardino can be contrasted interestingly to those of Ryan. Hayes and Guardino contend that while domestic opposition to the war may have been limited, there was significant international condemnation and criticism that was widely reported.

Therefore, it can be argued that the mass media overall did not fail to analyse the war critically. However, it remains maintained that the US mainstream media did fail in their objectivity, with Hayes and Guardino finding results parallel to those of Ryan , illustrating a pattern of consistent citations of Bush administration officials, alongside the consistent promotion of a pro-war viewpoint.

Hayes and Guardino furthermore recognise the likelihood that the international mainstream media holds less credibility to American citizens than US mainstream media does, thus potentially undermining the impact of the criticisms.

Conclusion

This essay argues that Western portrayals of disaster and conflict in the Middle East are uncritical of Western governments and militaries, and are presented through the lens of Western superiority. Additionally, Western mainstream media, especially US media, failed to fulfil their responsibility to publish objective, critical analyses of their governments' policy decisions and claims.An analysis of the Western portrayal of both the Iraq and Afghanistan wars yields similar illuminating results

regarding the irresponsible, inaccurate and uncritical portrayal of these conflicts by Western media and governments, although they exhibit some differences. These differences notably relate to the absence of broad global support for the US invasion of Iraq, in contrast to that of Afghanistan.

Ultimately, it is the view of this paper that these media portrayals came at the expense of Iraqi and Afghan civilians, whose plight was often largely ignored by the powerful US mainstream media and thus Western citizens. The significance of this argument lies in the questions it raises regarding the potential impact this media negligence had on the democracies of their societies, alongside the possible effect it had on the public's perception of the wars and whether or not a more critical public understanding of the events in the region could have impacted the actions of the US and NATO allies there and thus the outcomes of Iraqi and Afghan civilians.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bergman, T. and Liu, F. (2022) 'The Western Media on the War in Afghanistan', in Hearns-Branaman, J.O and Bergman, T. (eds.) Journalism and Foreign Policy: How the US and UK Media Cover Official Enemies. 1st edn. London: Routledge, pp. 164–179.

Hatem, M.F. (2003) 'Discourses on the "War on Terrorism" in the U.S. and its Views of the Arab, Muslim, and Gendered "Other"', The Arab Studies Journal, 11/12(2/1), pp. 77–97.

Hayes, D. and Guardino, M. (2010) "Whose Views Made the News? Media Coverage and the March to War in Iraq," Political Communication, 27(1), pp. 59–87. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600903502615.

Kull, S., Ramsay, C. and Lewis, E. (2003) 'Misperceptions, the Media, and the Iraq War', Political Science Quarterly, 118(4), pp. 569–598

Overholser, G. and Jamieson, K. H. (2005) The Press. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ryan, M. (2004) "Framing the War Against Terrorism: US Newspaper Editorials and Military Action in Afghanistan," Gazette (Leiden, Netherlands), 66(5), pp. 363–382. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0016549204045918.

Said, E.W. (1977) 'Orientalism', The Georgia Review, 31(1), pp. 162–206.

Sarwar, I., Gul, S. and Asghar, M.F. (2021) "An Exploratory Study of the Political Abuse of Women in Afghanistan," Review of Applied Management and Social Sciences, 4(2), pp. 381–391. Available at: https://doi.org/10.47067/ramss.v4i2.138.

Seib, P. (2005) 'Hegemonic No More: Western Media, the Rise of Al-Jazeera, and the Influence of Diverse Voices', International Studies Review, 7(4), pp. 601–615. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2005.00535.x.

Stabile, C.A. and Kumar, D. (2005) 'Unveiling imperialism: media, gender and the war on Afghanistan', Media, Culture & Society, 27(5), pp. 765–782. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443705055734.

Western, J. (2005) 'The War over Iraq: Selling War to the American Public', Security Studies, 14(1), pp. 106–139. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410591002518.

Rentier State Dynamics and Systemic Corruption

A Political Economy Analysis of Algeria's Hydrocarbon Dependence

Douce d'Andlau

Edited by Francesca Cronin

Establishing foundational concepts characterising the intricate relationship between Algeria's political system and the oil industry is essential. Transparency International defines corruption as the abuse of power for personal gain, with decision-making power often treated as a tradable commodity (El-Kadi 2008). The issue of corruption in the public sphere encompasses private interests gaining access to public goods, services, and state power. As a result, funds are diverted away from intended development projects in areas such as education, infrastructure, and healthcare.

Another significant element in Algeria's political system is the concept of the rentier state, characterised by a regular influx of significant external rents, with the government as the primary beneficiary. This positions the state as the pivotal actor in development, influencing resource distribution and power dynamics, regardless of whether viewed through classical, neoclassical, or Marxist perspectives. Rent shapes the interplay between resources, power, and the political system. This article delves into the complex interplay between Algeria's political landscape and the oil sector, analysing the impact of corruption on decision-making, governance structures, and power dynamics.

Colonial Dependency and the Pre-Independence Economy

Before independence in 1962, Algeria was an agricultural society, with viticulture as the primary sector. Tax incentives and a lack of social regulation allowed a small number of settlers to own an extensive number of vineyards. This resulted in a two-tier economy, with the European elite on one side and the dependent and impoverished native population on the other. Viticulture accounted for approximately 30% of Algeria's agricultural income in 1954 and 60% of its exports. However, this specialisation led to a

need for other crops and significant imports of necessary products. The similarity between the dependency of wine production during French colonization and the oil industry today is noteworthy. Both activities followed an economic pattern that relied heavily on rentier profits without any clear financial plan or desire for industrialization. The colony became heavily dependent on fluctuations in the wine market, much as it is today with hydrocarbons.

The Shift to Hydrocarbons and De-Industrialisation

Between 1967 and 1984, Algeria enjoyed a rapid industrial boom, profoundly altered by the repercussions of the 1979 oil crisis. During this period, industrial production grew at an annual rate of 8%, leading the country towards modernisation. The oil crisis of 1979 led to a sudden setback and halted industrialisation efforts funded by hydrocarbon profits. The consequences were severe, with rising unemployment and, in 1998, the sale of more than 200 state-owned companies, putting some 180,000 jobs at risk. Today, industrial employment has fallen from 40% in 1973 to almost 10% in 2023.

Erosion of Legitimacy and Governance

The political history of Algeria has been turbulent, with a series of legitimacy and political stability crises since the military coup d'état of Colonel Houari Boumediene in 1965, leaving Algeria ripe with corruption. Political instability peaked in 1992 with a second military coup, followed by a wave of armed violence. This period of uncertainty encouraged corruption, allowing the embezzlement of funds within a climate dominated by conflict, with interests between armed groups, the ruling elite, and wealthy private investors.

The crisis of legitimacy has also paved the way for money laundering and heavy spending on arms. Simultaneously, the weakness of civil society contributed to the spread of corruption, with a lack of effective popular political participation. Weak civil institutions and the fact that power was held by wealthy elites, the military, and industrialists created a favourable climate for corruption in various forms, such as clientelism and authoritarianism. Mistrust of the electoral process has persisted since colonial times, leading to low political participation and declining voter turnout.

The Systemic Nature and Consequences of Non-transparent Governance

Algeria has a long history of corruption, often viewed as a "national sport". This relationship is characterised by a lack of transparency that fosters repression of opposition and provides the state with the financial capacity to buy apparent social peace. Since 2003, a sizeable proportion of oil taxes has been allocated to social welfare grants, creating an illusory consensus. The lack of effective democratic institutions reinforces authoritarianism, hindering economic performance and development. The Revenue Regulation Fund (FRR), initially created to regulate the management of oil rents, has become an obscure instrument, encouraging corruption to spread further.

The Al-Khalifah Affair: A Case Study in Impunity

Scandals such as the al-Khalifah affair, which broke out in Algeria in the early 2000s, clearly revealed the complexity of systemic corruption within the political system. The al-Khalifah affair involved an extensive web of corrupt practices that led to the amount of 1.5 to 5 billion dollars being owed to the state. The case highlights massive misappropriation of funds, significant financial losses, and allegations of collusion between political power and private interest

groups. Despite reports of a lack of transparency in the transactions, the authorities deliberately dissociated the political dimension of the affair from the acts of corruption, thereby protecting the political elites from any criminal liability.

This desire to separate the government sphere from corrupt practices has helped to maintain relative impunity, reinforcing the systemic nature of corruption in Algeria. Corruption networks are weakening the state in an unprecedented way, and observers consider that corruption is not limited to certain actors or sectors but is widespread, hindering any reform and raising doubts about the political backing for this corrupt system.

Measuring Institutional Quality and Competitiveness

Various economic indicators indicate that Algeria's economy is at a critical turning point. According to the World Economic Forum's 2018-2019 report, Algeria ranks 89th out of 141 countries for global competitiveness, highlighting the need for reforms. The country's institutional fragility is also a concern, ranking 111th globally with a score of 45.5 out of 100 for institutional quality. One of the most significant concerns regarding Algeria's institutional fragility is its ability to handle corruption. The country ranks 91st out of 141 countries, with a low score of 35 out of 100. This situation raises issues for conflict management, the state's systemic flexibility, and its ability to respond to crises. The Index of Economic Freedom, published by the Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal, ranks Algeria second-to-last in the Arab world and 169th out of 180 countries worldwide in 2020. These indices reveal the institutional and policy challenges that are hindering economic development.

Economic Dependence and the Vulnerability to Global Markets

The rise in oil prices from 1973 onwards led to the

> "Scandals such as the al-Khalifah affair, which broke out in Algeria in the early 2000s, clearly revealed the complexity of systemic corruption within the political system."

introduction of the concept of a rentier state. A rentier state regularly collects substantial external rents from foreign parties. Due to the non-perennial nature of fossil fuels, the stability of this regular income is being questioned. We need to differentiate between rentier and producer states. The former collects rent directly, while the latter does so indirectly through taxation. Algeria's reliance on oil revenues is alarming, with figures showing that in 2008, 97% of total export revenues, 60% of tax revenues, and 54% of GDP came from hydrocarbons. A decade later, in 2021, hydrocarbon exports still accounted for an average of 93% of all exports, 43% of tax revenues, and 21% of GDP.

Those statistics highlight the vulnerability of the Algerian economy to global oil market fluctuations. Furthermore, Algeria's industrial sectors are facing a deep crisis, with their contribution to GDP value added falling to just 5% in 2015, from over 7% in the early 2000s. This is a significant decline, placing the Algerian industry well below the 15% observed in neighbouring countries. The economic challenges Algeria faces have brought the issue of its oil revenues to the forefront.

Theoretical Applications of Resource Disease

The resource curse theory establishes a correlation between oil revenues and financial underdevelopment, explaining the low rate of economic growth observed in oil-producing countries. This correlation is critical to the analysis of Algeria's economic situation, where oil rents have had an undesirable impact on economic growth. The Dutch disease is relevant to Algeria; it is an aspect of resource disease theory, which was observed in the Netherlands after the discovery of gas in 1959, according to Corden and Neary. Growing revenues from hydrocarbons have increased national income and created excessive dependence.

This dependence, characteristic of a rentier state, has led to financial underdevelopment, a rentier oligarchy, weak economic diversification, and banking instability due to fluctuations in resource prices. The impact of Dutch disease was felt in the early 2000s

with the rise in oil prices between 2003 and 2014. By demonstrating the principles of Dutch disease, the Algerian case raises issues about the reasons for the lack of economic prosperity despite abundant natural resources. The exploitation of hydrocarbons has concentrated the Algerian economy solely on this resource, reducing the competitiveness of exports from specific industrial sectors in international markets.

Accountability, Governance, and Financial Development

Institutional efficiency is emerging as a defining factor, influencing whether abundant natural resources are a blessing or a curse. The level of governance experience also contributes significantly, as illustrated by the case of Norway, where experienced governance has led to positive spinoffs from natural resources. The fragility of governments associated with a rentier economy has profound implications. Large rents from the oil sector can lead to less reliance on a tax-based financial system, weakening the need for transparency and government accountability. This low public accountability leads to weakened and dysfunctional institutions, reducing social trust and hampering investment in various sectors.

This dynamic has a direct impact on financial development. Less investment in diverse sectors leads to less innovation and entrepreneurship. The generalised quest for oil rents diverts attention from the creation of industries, thereby contributing to a decline in financial development. Moreover, abundant resources create distrust in society's stability, diminishing social capital and reducing investment and financial development.

Algeria is facing a political dilemma. On one hand, the country's democratic setup and diverse political parties demand greater transparency to promote financial development. On the other hand, the abundance of oil rents has led the government to limit political freedom to maintain a stable, rentier state, fearing any potential counter-powers from powerful industries. While democracy can help promote financial development, the country's wealth of

resources can also act as a hindrance, creating a delicate balance between democracy, oil rents, and economic growth in Algeria.

Revenue Management and Import Dependency

The proper allocation of income generated by oil rents is primordial. Initially, these inflows are used to repay debt early to avoid potential interest rate hikes. According to the Bank of Algeria's 2006 figures, there was a noticeable decline in debt. The debt decreased from $21,821 million at the end of 2004 to $17,192 million at the end of 2005, and further declined to $5,612 million at the end of 2006. However, this proactive management raises the question of the country's structural dependence on such financial inflows and their impact on its debt policy. Oil rents are also used to stimulate imports, a crucial economic asset.

The Bank of Algeria's data from 2003 to 2011 reveals a direct correlation between the strength of oil rents and the scale of imports, with imports rising from $9,345 million in 2000 to $38,886 million in 2010. The drop in revenues in 2014 led to a significant decline in import values until 2020, highlighting the Algerian economy's vulnerability to fluctuations in oil prices. This connection between financial receipts and import requirements underscores the country's

economic dependence on oil. Moreover, the creation of the Revenue Regulation Fund (FRR) in 2000 has added another layer to the management of oil revenues. The FRR was initially designed to regulate revenues, but it quickly evolved to meet debt and budget deficit requirements.

The corrupted Algerian rentier state poses a serious threat to political stability and economic development, perpetuating a significant gap between economic growth and human development. The systemic issues traced throughout this article—from historical dependence to institutional fragility require comprehensive reform. For long-term success, significant political and institutional reforms are mandatory, focusing on transitioning to democratic governance, strengthening state institutions, and upholding fundamental freedoms.

Economically, this requires diversifying the economy beyond the oil sector and accelerating industrial growth. Practically, reform must entail improving bureaucracy, establishing rigorous monitoring, and implementing effective horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms. While the regional challenge of separating public and private resources persists, the creation of the Arab Anti-Corruption Organisation in 2004 signals a positive step toward mitigating the influence of corruption.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agharmiou-Rahmoun, N., & Moulai, K. (2023). "Éléments de lecture de l'économie algérienne : quelques référents historiques." Revue Tadamsa d'UNEGMU, 3(1), 05-19.

Alouache, O., Chikh, S., & Ait Taleb, A. (2022). "La rente pétrolière constitue-t-elle un levier de الجمالة الجزائرية للتنمية الاقتصادية, (9)2(,381-398 "? Algérie en économique croissance

Bendahmane, A., Boulahbel-Bachari, A. (2021). "L'effet conditionnel des ressources naturelles sur la croissance économique." Les Cahiers du MECAS, 17(2), 120-131.

Guendouzi, B., & Amnache - Chikh, S. (2013). "De la rente pétrolière et de son usage en Algérie." Revue d'économie et de statistique appliquée, 10(2), 3-21.

Guendouzi, B., & Amnache Chikh, S. (2021). "Impact des spécificités de l'État rentier sur le développement économique en Algérie." Revue Tadamsa d'UNEGMU, 1(1), 173-210.

Hadjadj, D. (2007). "Violence et corruption: cas de l'Algérie." Bulletin de l'APAD.

Kara, R. (2017). "Le développement financier de l'Algérie: quels effets de la dépendance à la rente pétrolière?" Les Cahiers du MECAS, 13(2), 97-107.

Limam, M.H. (2012). "Detailed Analysis of the Phenomenon of Political Corruption in Algeria: Causes, Repercussions and Reform." Contemporary Arab Affairs, 5(2), 252–78.

Ouchene, B. (2021). "L'exploitation des hydrocarbures en Algérie : de la richesse à la gouvernance défaillante et à la corruption." CIRIEC INTERNATIONAL.

State of Insecurity
The Consequences of Israeli Checkpoints on Palestinians' Access to Healthcare

Sorcha Sullivan Garner

Edited by Amir Sallachi

Introduction

Checkpoints typically mark the position in which one sovereign power ends and another begins. In contrast, checkpoints in the West Bank are spaces in which the Israeli state exerts power and sovereignty on both sides of the border: by restricting Palestinians' freedom of movement through the use of checkpoints and other obstacles to movement. Achille Mbembe argues in Necropolitics that the "ultimate expression of sovereignty largely resides in the power and capacity to dictate who is able to live and who must die." Through the restrictions on Palestinian rights, Israeli 'necropower' is justified as a necessary response to ensure the safety and security of Israeli citizens, while framing the restrictions as temporary measures.

However, these restrictions are often permanent, creating a system in which life is made unliveable for Palestinians through a system of calibrated chaos. The calibrated chaos of checkpoints limits the ability of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to carry out healthcare and restrict the effective functioning of the Palestinian healthcare system. Moreover, the fragmentation of the West Bank into areas A, B and C and the division of authority between the Israeli state and PA during the Oslo Accords has both led to the recognition of the PA as sovereign while simultaneously undermining its authority as a sovereign power.

This essay, using Necropolitics by Mbembe, examines the connection between power, sovereignty,

> **"The calibrated chaos of checkpoints limits the ability of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to carry out healthcare and restrict the effective functioning of the Palestinian healthcare system."**

health and checkpoints in the West Bank. This examination underlines the effects Israeli checkpoints have on Palestinian health, how this is justified and the broader effect on Palestinian sovereignty.

Necropolitics

Mbembe's central theory in Necropolitics builds on Michel Foucault's ideas of biopolitics and biopower as well as Giorgio Agamben's theory of the state of exception. Mbembe diverges from Foucault, who argued a sovereign's power is expressed through the ability and the right "to make live and to let die." Instead, Mbembe argues that sovereigns use power to make life unliveable for populations which they believe to be inferior. This is what he calls necropower. Central to this necropower are race and racism which, as argued by Foucault, create "the condition for the acceptability of putting to death." It is this process of racialisation and Othering that allows for violence to be acceptable.

Colonialism marks a state of exception as "colonies could be ruled in absolute lawlessness […] due to the racial denial of any common bond between the conqueror and the native." Sovereignty under necropower, Mbembe argues, means "the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is disposable and who is not." Mbembe argues that the Israeli occupation of Palestine is the "most accomplished form of necropower." The denial of the freedom of movement is thus part of a systemic process to make life for Palestinians in the West Bank unliveable. This is demonstrated by the restrictions on movement, encapsulated by the spaces of checkpoints.

Checkpoints and the right to health

Restrictions on the freedom of movement are a key factor in the stress on healthcare in the West Bank. Checkpoints operate as spaces in which Israeli necropower is exerted over Palestinians through chaos and unpredictability. The use of permits and checkpoints creates "a general prohibition" of freedom of movement; and thus restrictions on movement are normalised to the point where movement is considered an exception or a privilege. Julie Peteet uses the term "calibrated chaos" to refer to the control exercised over Palestinians through the "changing of rules and procedures with no warning or explanation," which "is enacted daily at checkpoints and in applying for permits."

By limiting movement, the Israeli authorities are also able to prevent access to healthcare, restricting the right to health. This is evident in the system of obstacles made up of checkpoints, roadblocks and permits, which cause delays in accessing healthcare in both non-emergency and emergency situations.

For both patients and healthcare workers, the system is challenging to navigate and has severe health outcomes. For healthcare workers, journeys to hospitals and medical facilities often involve navigating "an ever-changing maze of obstacles", and as of June 2024, there were at least 760 obstacles preventing access to medical services. Delays crossing checkpoints have led to healthcare workers not being able to reach patients in time with life-threatening if not deadly consequences, despite international law stating that healthcare workers' passage be expedited.

The Palestinian Red Cross Society recorded 132 incidents of delay and 129 attacks against ambulances in the West Bank between 7 October 2023 and 30 September 2024. Furthermore, healthcare workers often experience abuse, harassment and degradation by Israeli soldiers at checkpoints, with many reporting that the abuse occurs precisely because they are healthcare workers

For patients, the vulnerable are most greatly affected by the delays and restrictions of movement. Given that many Palestinians have to travel across zones to access medical services, the system of permits

prevents access to treatment. As highlighted by B'Tselem, the permit system is paradoxical: in order to obtain a permit, patients must demonstrate medical documentation proving their illness, which they can only obtain through attending a hospital with the required permit.

After the Second Intifada in 2000, it was reported that 68 Palestinian women were forced to give birth at checkpoints, "leading to 35 miscarriages and the death of five women." Moreover, journeys that took 15-30 minutes in the past were reported as taking 2-4

> **"A central mechanism that renders life 'unlovable' in the West Bank is the denial of Palestinian agency through "territorial fragmentation"."**

hours in 10% of cases and more than four hours in 6% of cases. Freedom of movement thus becomes a privilege within the system of checkpoints, which seek to hinder and prevent movement.

Ignoring international humanitarian law, these checkpoints negatively impact both healthcare workers and the vulnerable with devastating consequences. This demonstrates Israeli necropower over Palestinians in the West Bank as the latter's access to healthcare is determined by their ability to pass through checkpoints.

Justification of restrictions

The state of exception allows for the suspension of basic rights through the justification of security threats. Ronit Lentin argues that Israel is the "textbook example" of Giorgio Agamben's state of exception. This state positions Israel "above and outside both domestic and international laws" in relation to Palestinians. Terrorist threats and security are used as justification for restrictions that are rarely lifted. The Israeli state inherited the Emergency Regulations from the British Mandate, which allowed for the suspension of the law and "all citizens' rights,

including freedom of movement" for reasons of security.

Thus there has been a perpetual state of emergency in place since 1948. Prior to the Second Intifada in 2000, there were approximately 30 checkpoints in the West Bank. After, the number of barriers to movement increased dramatically. In 2015, there were over 500 barriers including 70 checkpoints. These checkpoints and others set up in response to threats have been criticised for whether or not they carry out their stated objective in any effective way. Checkpoints are often only staffed at peak hours of the day, while at night "anyone can pass through."

Similarly, at the Jaba' checkpoint outside of Ramallah, vehicles entering the city are checked but those exiting and "theoretically head[ing] toward Israel or a settlement to carry out an attack, pass through with almost no trouble at all." This is part of a wider system of chaos and unpredictability: checkpoint procedures relating to searches and how they are conducted are only based on verbal orders from "the commander or the Israeli Security Agency (ISA), and sometimes, so it seems, on the mood of the soldiers at the checkpoint."

As there is no written record of these restrictions and checkpoints, there "is no order precisely specifying the restriction's purpose, scope, or duration." Combined with the arbitrary rejection of permits, the inefficiency of checkpoints as 'terror deterrents' and the harm they inflict on the Palestinian population, restrictions appear less as a response to security threats and more as a form of collective punishment.

Checkpoints as markers of sovereignty and power

Movement restrictions at checkpoints have wider consequences for Palestinian authority, sovereignty, and the functioning of the healthcare system for Palestinians. Checkpoints are often described as border crossings, and function to demarcate where Israeli sovereignty ends through the "appearance of a Palestinian sovereignty on the other side". Rather, checkpoints do not represent spaces where Israeli authority ends and Palestinian authority begins, but

instead spaces where Israeli sovereignty is enacted over Palestinians.

A central mechanism that renders life 'unliveable' in the West Bank is the denial of Palestinian agency through "territorial fragmentation". Under the Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided into three areas. Governmental powers including civil and security affairs were transferred to the PA in Area A. In Area B, the PA has limited authority, as the Israeli military maintains control over 'security' and has the power to restrict movement. In Area C, no power was given to the PA and instead, the Israeli government maintained control over all aspects of life. Therefore, around 62% of the West Bank is under Israeli control.

By limiting PA authority to islands surrounded by Israeli control, Palestinian authority and agency is thus nullified through its fragmentation. Moreover, the distinction between the three areas is more ambiguous, as a military correspondent stated: "there was no longer any difference between Areas A, B and C: The IDF is doing as it pleases in all of them." Rema Hammami notes that although Israeli settlements only make up 2% of the land, the control over Area C results in 43% of the West Bank being "unavailable for Palestinian mobility and life." Movement from one area to another almost always requires travelling through Area C, significantly limiting the authority of the PA. This too has effects on Palestinian health, as responsibility for healthcare is shifted from Israel to the PA, the latter being severely limited in its ability to deliver any such healthcare.

As Merav Amir argues, by the PA's recognition as a legitimate authority, Israel was able to disassociate from its obligations like healthcare as the occupying power in the West Bank "since, presumably, this Palestinian sovereignty should be the bearer of these responsibilities." However, as Amir argues further, the PA constitutes "nothing more than a void sovereignty," as with the example of checkpoints, "the Israeli regime has full control on both sides of these checkpoints." By recognising the PA as sovereign, the Israeli authorities were able to relinquish responsibilities such as providing healthcare while still maintaining necropower over Palestinian populations.

Conclusion

Checkpoints are spaces in which agency, sovereignty and authority are denied in order to reaffirm Israeli sovereignty and power over Palestinians in the West Bank. Through Mbembe's theory of necropower, the relationship between checkpoints and sovereignty is made clear: "At the checkpoints, Palestinians are both audience and subject to the Israeli enactment of sovereignty, real and symbolic, over space and the Palestinian body." This process of making life unliveable is explicitly obvious for Palestinians, as quoted in Peteet, "If they close one road, we find another. But we are dying a slow death. From the inside, I feel myself slowly dying. We are being deprived of our basic and practical needs." These restrictions are justified as temporary measures and responses to security threats, whereas it is clear that the calibrated chaos is inefficient and functions as a form of collective punishment.

Checkpoints and restrictions on the freedom of movement have effects on both a micro and macro level. On a micro level, these restrictions prevent or delay Palestinians from accessing healthcare services at times with devastating consequences. On a macro level, checkpoints theoretically function to both recognise the point in which Israeli sovereignty ends and Palestinian begins. In reality, checkpoints and the Israeli recognition of the PA as a sovereign power benefits Israel: through its recognition, the Israeli authorities cede their responsibility while still maintaining necropower over Palestinians. Checkpoints are thus spaces in which the theatre of Palestinian sovereignty is performed, without having any real agency to look after the health of its people.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abujidi, Nurhan. "The Palestinian States of Exception and Agamben." Contemporary Arab Affairs 2, no. 2 (April 21, 2009): 272–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/17550910902857034.

Amir, Merav. "The Making of a Void Sovereignty: Political Implications of the Military Checkpoints in the West Bank." Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 31 (2013): 227–44. https://doi.org/10.1068/d19810.

B'Tselem. Rep. Ground to a Halt: Denial of Palestinians' Freedom of Movement in the West Bank. Jerusalem: B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 2007.

Foucault, Michel. "Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the collège de France, 1975-1976. Edited by Mauro Bertani, Alessandro Fontana, François Ewald, and Arnold I. Davidson. Translated by David Macey. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2003.

Hammami, Rema. "Destabilizing Mastery and the Machine." Current Anthropology 60, no. 19 (February 2019): 87–97. https://doi.org/10.1086/699906.

Joronen, Mikko, and Mark Griffiths. "Ungovernability and Ungovernable Life in Palestine." Political Geography 98 (2022): 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2022.102734.

Lentin, Ronit. "Palestine/Israel and State Criminality: Exception, Settler Colonialism and Racialization." State Crime Journal 5, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 32–50. https://doi.org/10.13169/statecrime.5.1.0032.

Mbembe, Achille. Necropolitics. Translated by Steve Corcoran. Durham North Carolina, NC: Duke University Press, 2019.

Medecins Sans Frontières. Rep. Inflicting Harm and Denying Care: Patterns of Attacks and Obstructions of Healthcare in the West Bank. Geneva: Medecins Sans Frontières, 2025.

Peteet, Julie. Space and Mobility in Palestine. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017.

Sousa, Cindy, and Amy Hagopian. "Conflict, Health Care and Professional Perseverance: A Qualitative Study in the West Bank." Global Public Health 6, no. 5 (2011): 520–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2011.574146.

United Nations Population Fund. "Checkpoints Compound the Risks of Childbirth for Palestinian Women." United Nations Population Fund, May 15, 2007. https://www.unfpa.org/news/checkpoints-compound-risks-childbirth-palestinian-women.

Formal Rights, Limited Power
Women's Participation in Saudi Municipal Politics

Adelaide Telzrow

Edited by Amir Sallachi

Abstract

The 2015 municipal elections in Saudi Arabia granted women the right to vote and run for office, widely seen as a landmark for gender equality. This essay reviews existing literature with primary data from 2011 up to 2017 to synthesize public reactions to the reform, identifying four main sentiment groups: traditionalism, optimism, detachment, and indignance. This essay's original contribution lies in compiling and interpreting these aggregate reaction groups to evaluate the reform's legitimacy.

Using Pitkin's concept of representation, the analysis distinguishes symbolic from substantive representation. Structural constraints including centralized governance, limited municipal authority, social norms, and media censorship prevent women from translating participatory rights into influence. The findings show that while the reform expanded legal access, it largely functions as symbolic representation, offering visibility without substantive power.

Introduction

Until 2015, women in Saudi Arabia were fully disenfranchised, barred from both voting and candidacy in municipal elections. The extension of these rights to women ahead of the 2015 elections marked a historic shift, yet ambiguity remains over whether this reform advanced women's political power or merely served as symbolic positioning on the international stage.

Existing scholarship underscores the limits of representation in Saudi Arabia due to intensely centralized governance. Research has also examined public reactions to the reform, though few studies synthesize responses across demographics and regions. This essay addresses that gap by consolidating existing primary interview data to construct a more cohesive framework of public sentiments toward the reform.

This study asks two questions: How did the Saudi public receive the 2015 extension of voting and candidacy rights to women? And what does this reception reveal about the depth and legitimacy of the reform? Answering the first question clarifies the contours of public discourse, while the second situates these reactions within Pitkin's theory of representation, namely the distinction between symbolic and substantive representation. The analysis also offers Western readers a more grounded understanding of Saudi political realities, independent of media simplifications.

Method

To determine the public reaction to the electoral reform, this research performed a qualitative sentiment analysis on existing academic sources, supported by news articles covering relevant social media campaigns. The academic sources used were as close to primary data as possible, achieved using articles with interview data collected in the time period of the reform, from its announcement in 2011 up to 2017, just over one year after the election itself. The perspectives documented in existing academic research were then triangulated against each other, and distinct segments within these perspectives identified to form a four-part framework of sentiments within Saudi public opinion.

To answer the second part of the research question, this research worked within Pitkin's concept of representation to determine the degree of symbolic versus substantive representation in the 2015 electoral reform. Pitkin divides representation into a few camps, two of which are most relevant here: symbolic and substantive representation. She describes symbolic representation as representation for the sake of appearance, a gesture more than a delivery of outcomes for the group of interest. Substantive representation, on the other hand, is active; it focuses on actual policy actions and outcomes, advancing the interests and needs of the group represented.

Public Reception of the 2015 Electoral Reform

Saudi public reactions to women's enfranchisement cluster into four broad sentiments: traditionalism, optimism, detachment, and indignance.

Traditionalism

Traditionalist respondents opposed the reform on the basis of entrenched gender norms. Male interviewees often questioned women's political competence or insisted that women's roles should remain within familiar religious and domestic boundaries. Female advocates of traditional gender roles more frequently expressed fear rather than ideological opposition.

Thompson identifies "opposition from hardline religious conservatives" grounded in traditional gender roles. These norms also shape expectations among potential candidates: Pilotti et al. note that male candidates anticipated family support, while female candidates expected scepticism and pressure to prove their competence. Legal inclusion therefore does not override the social costs of participation.

One woman interviewed feared that women in leadership roles might become scapegoats for governmental shortcomings, warning that online campaigns could "reinforce negative images of women leaders through a process of deliberate marginalization." She worried less about women holding office than about the collective consequences for women if female politicians fell under public scrutiny.

Her concern anticipated the backlash that followed. In mid-2015, the hashtag #the_danger_of_electing_a_woman_in_municipal_elections circulated widely on Twitter/X, with over seven thousand posts in August alone. Users described the reform as "dangerous and unacceptable," warned that empowering women would "destroy the family," and accused reformists of attempting to "corrupt" women by "throwing [them] among men." These reactions reveal that the threat perceived is not female mismanagement of government, but the fear that political participation itself will corrupt or endanger women's moral position. Contrary to appearance, these respondents do not believe the reform holds much real significance for governance.

Optimism

Optimistic respondents saw the reform as a positive, even historic step toward gender equality and broader political participation. Some believed that the reform signalled gradual liberalization and the potential for future progress.

Saudi female leaders in industry and government expressed appreciation for King Abdullah's support of women's issues, often highlighting his recognition of women's contributions. Their optimism reflects confidence in existing national leadership, lacking any scepticism about why such rights were previously withheld.

Other interviewees viewed the reform as empowering, enabling Saudi women to have their voices directly represented rather than filtered through male intermediaries. Still others hoped the presence of female councillors would prompt discussion of more divisive issues, specifically equity and opportunity. Some male respondents echoed this optimism, suggesting that councils inclusive of women might possess greater legitimacy and exert more influence with the national government. For these participants, women's inclusion was not only a gendered milestone but a potential catalyst for broader democratization.

Detachment

Detached respondents supported the reform in principle but doubted its relevance or impact. This group spans ages and genders but is especially prominent among older women.

Interviewees above age twenty-five frequently interpreted the reform as a public relations gesture aimed at appeasing Western countries. One woman noted, "If Saudi Arabia is accused of backwardness, they can always point to women's participation… the image we broadcast to the West is more important than the people themselves."

Additionally, many older women interviewed did not vote and had no interest in running for office. Their community engagement was already fulfilled through traditional and religious institutions, which they viewed as more effective and meaningful.

Thompson also describes a sub-group of self-described conservatives who were not opposed to women's participation but saw it as merely "decorative"—a trend requiring acknowledgment only until it fades in importance. Their response conveys indifference rather than resistance, suggesting that the reform lacked sufficient political weight to trigger ideological pushback. If the reform truly threatened conservative values, stronger opposition might be expected; that it did not underscores perceptions of its irrelevance.

Detachment also reflects widespread disenchantment with Saudi elections overall. Voter turnout in 2015 was low across genders, largely because citizens felt that municipal elections were "irrelevant." This perception stems from the limited power vested in municipal councils, which cannot legislate independently or challenge national policy.

Indignance

Indignant respondents opposed the reform not because women should not participate, but because the reform was perceived as hollow, insincere, or even offensive. Unlike the detached group, this group articulated explicit criticism.

Some saw the reform as "purely symbolic" and designed to appease Western critics. Others argued that women were being used as tokens to strengthen Saudi Arabia's international image. These perspectives reject the notion that the election marked meaningful democratization, instead framing it as

strategic image management.

Other interviewees went further, arguing that the reform was anti-feminist. One woman criticized the move as a concession offered in place of "true and meaningful involvement in politics." By granting visibility without corresponding power, the reform risked entrenching inequality by presenting this superficial progress as a sufficient step.

> "Symbolic representation captures the gestures and appearances of inclusion; substantive representation requires real policymaking power, material outcomes, and the ability to further the interests of the represented group."

This cynicism is reinforced by state media narratives. Karolak and Guta mention that Saudi media focused heavily on international praise for the reform and very little on the activism required to reach such a point of inclusion, portraying women's representation as a resolved issue. Such messaging discourages demands for further change and signals that women's political participation is complete, even though little substantive power has been redistributed.

Limitations of Opinion Analysis

Researching public opinion in Saudi Arabia requires recognition of the country's authoritarian environment. Severe censorship laws restrict open political expression, and citizens risk harsh penalties for criticism of leaders and social norms. News media is state-controlled, and social media is not a safe outlet for dissent, limiting researchers' access to genuine perspectives.

Karolak and Guta note that social media content was used sparingly in their own investigation as platforms are unsafe for critical expression, citing the case of a man imprisoned and flogged for calling for the abolition of women's guardianship laws. Given such risks, interviewees in the studies cited in this paper may self-censor. Thus, even primary data likely underrepresents the extent of opposition toward the state's narrative.

Qualifying Representation Through Pitkin

Using the categorical framework for public reaction developed earlier, Pitkin's theory of representation, distinguishing symbolic from substantive, is now more practically deployed to answer the question of representational legitimacy.

Symbolic representation captures the gestures and appearances of inclusion; substantive representation requires real policymaking power, material outcomes, and the ability to further the interests of the represented group. Three major factors constrain substantive representation for Saudi women in the 2015 elections: centralized governance, censorship and limited political rights, and public perceptions of the reform.

Despite municipal elections, Saudi local governance does not hold any meaningful autonomy. Alkadry notes an explicit lack of "effective decentralization of power to the local level," with municipal councils depending entirely on the national government for resources. Moreover, councillors in these local bodies, regardless of gender, cannot enact legislation. The reform therefore granted women eligibility for positions that possess minimal authority.

Public reactions reinforce this structural limitation. Many women voiced frustration that the reform distracts from demands for genuine empowerment. Since no council member can significantly advance policy, women's participation in these councils cannot meaningfully advance their own interests. By Pitkin's standard, such representation is not substantive.

State-controlled media further entrenches symbolic interpretation by emphasizing international acclaim for Saudi women's participation. The reform was framed as evidence of modernization rather than as the beginning of sustained political development. Public sentiment reflects scepticism toward these narratives, with many viewing the reform as staged for external consumption.

Finally, the absence of subsequent elections strengthens the interpretation of this representation as symbolic. Saudi Arabia has not held another municipal election since 2015. A one-time event with no institutional follow-through cannot support long-term substantive representation.

Conclusion

While the 2015 municipal elections marked the formal extension of voting and candidacy rights to Saudi women, the reform's impact remains sharply limited by structural, social, and political constraints. Public sentiment—categorized here as traditionalism, optimism, detachment, and indignance—reveals broad scepticism about the reform's significance, with only a minority expressing confident optimism.

Traditionalists highlight persistent social barriers; optimists hope for gradual change; detached respondents view the reform as irrelevant; and indignant voices see it as strategically symbolic or even anti-feminist. Coupled with centralized governance, heavy censorship, and state-driven international image management, these sentiments point toward a reform that is primarily symbolic.

Ultimately, the 2015 reform is both a milestone and a mirage. While it grants women formal rights, these rights are overshadowed by structural and cultural limitations. Public reactions illustrate awareness of this dissonance. While optimism should not be dismissed, the prevailing picture is one where women's political inclusion is framed and received as largely symbolic, leaving the deeper promise of substantive representation unfulfilled. As it stands, the reform's legacy is not that women gained power, but that all Saudi citizens remain equally disenfranchised.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adel, Deena. "Twitter Campaign to Stop First Saudi Women's Vote." BBC News, September 16, 2015. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34090700.

AlAshry, Miral Sabry. "Arab Authorities Use Digital Surveillance to Control Press Freedom: Journalists' Perceptions." Digital Policy, Regulation and Governance 25, no. 3 (2023): 250–66.

Alkadry, Mohamad G. "Saudi Arabia and the Mirage of Decentralization." In Public Administration and Policy in the Middle East, 173–88. 2014.

Alsuraihi, Hanan M. The Impact of Social Media on Women's Civic Engagement in Saudi Arabia: An Empirical and Critical Study of Saudi Women Councillors. PhD diss., University of York, 2019.

Okruhlik, Gwenn. "Authoritarianism, Gender, and Sociopolitics in Saudi Arabia", in Janine A. Clark, and Francesco Cavatorta (eds), Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa: Methodological and Ethical Challenges (New York, 2018; online edn, Oxford Academic, 19 July 2018).

Karolak, Magdalena, and Hala Guta. "Saudi Women as Decision Makers: Analyzing the Media Portrayal of Female Political Participation in Saudi Arabia." Hawwa 18, no. 1 (2020): 75–95.

Pilotti, Maura A. E., Eman J. Y. Abdulhadi, Tahani A. Algouhi, and Muamar H. Salameh. "The New and the Old: Responses to Change in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Journal of International Women's Studies 22, no. 1 (2021): 341–58.

Pitkin, Hanna F. The Concept of Representation. 1st ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967. https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.2711645.

Thompson, Mark C. "Saudi Women Leaders: Challenges and Opportunities." Journal of Arabian Studies 5, no. 1 (2015): 15–36.

POETRY

ماذا لو ؟   What if?

Nooran Al-Rubaiee

Translation by Nooran Al-Rubaiee

ماذا لو ؟
ماذا لو لم تحتل أرض الدجلة والفرات
ماذا لو لم تقتل الأرواح واألحالم
ماذا لو استيقظت كل صباح على صوت موسيقى غاز العمو
هل كان سيكون اشتياقي لهذا الحد؟
أم تكون حالة واقعية ... فانا ال اعرف

ماذا لو أمي لم ترى مشاهد الظلم واألذى
ماذا لو عمي لم يستشهد
ماذا لو األم حضنت ابنها من شدة الفرحة وليش الخوف
ماذا لو الطفل لم يعرف معنى رعب النظر الى السماء
ماذا لو األخت لم تدفن أخيها

ماذا لو لم تمت البهجة
ماذا لو كنت اعرف شعور المطر في ارضي وألم واعرف ريحة هواها
فا ماذا لو كنت اعرف معنى الحياة هناك؟

فهل هكذا كان سيكون اشتياقي وحنيني؟

What if?

What if the land of the Tigris and Euphrates hadn't been occupied? What if lives and dreams hadn't been killed?

What if I'd woken up every morning to the music of Amo's gas ? Would my longing have been this intense?

Or would it be a mundane day… I don't know.

What if my mother hadn't witnessed the scenes of injustice and harm? What if my uncle hadn't been martyred?

What if a mother could embrace her son with pure joy, not fear? What if a child hadn't known the terror of looking up at the sky? What if a sister hadn't buried her brother?

What if joy hadn't died?

What if I knew the feeling of rain in my homeland and the scent of its air? What if I knew the meaning of life there?

Would my longing and yearning have been like this?

An Alternative Struggle: Palestinian Resistance

Jamie Weeks

Edited by Grace Philips

The Nakba of 1948 (the catastrophe) marked a transformation in Palestinian poetry and literature. The Palestine promised in the "White Papers" became a sudden memory for Palestinian writers. Its place was taken by the literature and poetry of occupation and exile. Then, the Naska of 1967 (the setback), furthered the semantic distance between Palestinian works of the present and those of the pre-Nakba. Palestinian literature and poetry thus adapted to symbolize, aid, and inspire the Palestinian identity, cause, and struggle. Ghassan Kanafani, a Palestinian author and activist, defined this Palestinian literature and poetry as a cultural "resistance."

Kanafani was a part of a large group of authors that included Muhammad Darwish, who created resistance works, a tradition that continues to this day. Some would even argue that these works substitute the arms, protests, and activism of the political struggle. Ultimately, the elements of nostalgia, exile, and anger in Palestinian resistance poetry and literature and the subsequent reaction to this genre provides an alternative, yet equally effective supplement to the traditional political struggle.

The Components of Resistance Works

Nostalgia became a key element of literary and poetic resistance which cemented the memory, desire, and immortality of Palestine in the collective cultural mind. The initial reaction of Palestinian writers to the Nakba was to create intensely romanticized nostalgia for home and for the before. Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's "Desert of Exile" encapsulates the shift to intense nostalgia with colour-ridden romantic imagery. In the poem, he paints a picture of "the jewel-like peony and narcissus" and "the joyous dance amidst the harvest." This idealized landscape that he associates with his childhood home contains dream-like qualities. It invites the reader to assume that pre-Nakba Palestine was dreamy and utopian-like, thus concealing the actual harsher realities of the Mandate.

Quickly, these "visions of the past [became] no longer tenable," as they were blind to the reality of the Palestinians under occupation and in exile. Muhammad Darwish criticizes the nature of such nostalgic poems in an unnamed composition expressing a desire for the poems to be "a chisel in the grip of a worker". Nostalgia can hurt the political struggle, as it promotes idealism instead of realism, yet simultaneously nostalgia can be one of the most important political tools. Poems such as Jabra's help immortalize a picture of Palestine, even if it is an idealistic one.

They serve as representatives of a symbol that is worth fighting and rallying for. Even Zionism itself is a movement partly based around nostalgia, granted for a time over a thousand years ago. This alludes to the obvious dangers of nostalgia as a detractor of reality, which is why it is a more effective poetic tool when it is placed in context with the realities of the present. Even with its criticism, nostalgia remains a constant element in works of resistance, serving as a device that immortalizes the possibility of a free Palestine.

> " Creators of resistance works often pair exile with nostalgia, contrasting the Zionist political narratives and justifying acts of general resistance. "

Creators of resistance works often pair exile with nostalgia, contrasting the Zionist political narratives and justifying acts of general resistance. Exile is an essential device in resistance, becoming a key theme in Palestinian works. The desert, the city, and occupied Palestine all function as places of exile. Kanafani's "Men in the Sun" encapsulates the environment and endlessness of exile, as "the miles of road speeding through a void, like black eternity." This exile is not unique to one singular setting. It is a feeling, a symbol, a state of being that is universal to the al-ghurbah.

It can be any place Palestinians live, such as in refugee camps or in cities like Beirut or Amman. Darwish illustrates in "A Letter from Exile," that a person may be settled with necessities like "a loaf of wheat bread and a small basket of veggies," yet exile still "haunts" them. He suggests that there is no real comfort or environment that replaces that of Palestine.

Even though exile is the result of the Nakba and Naska, it also symbolizes the eternity of a Palestinian state, as Palestinians will not fully accept their fate as refugees or citizens of other countries. As Barbara Parmenter explains, "exile is the antithesis of Palestine" and representations of exile deconstruct the Zionist narrative that Palestinians can settle elsewhere. In recent times, exile has become even more essential to the political struggle with the expansion of West Bank settlements and Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump's calls to ethnically cleanse and permanently displace the Palestinians of Gaza from.

In the current political landscape, it is evident that the sentiments of exile in past resistance works continue to find vitality in the present, by depicting not only exile's effectiveness, but also the lack of change from Kanafani's time to the present. The one-day exile ceases to be an element of resistance that encapsulates and aids the political struggle, marks immense progress and change in the Palestinian cause.

What commonly follows after nostalgia and exile in resistance works are genuine undisguised emotions like anger. In particular, anger unabashedly symbolizes the emotions that the mainstream media rejects, destroying the narratives of acceptance and compliance. "Identity Card" by Darwish captures an aspect of the anger, warning Israeli officers in the final line to "be aware of [the speaker's] rage." The poem suggests that anger is a part of the Palestinian identity and that this anger is caused by Israel. He rightly calls out the Israeli hypocrisy of directing anger at Palestinians and then getting upset that the sentiment is reciprocated. Even though the works of resistance are inherently peaceful, the emotions and actions depicted within are not.

Additionally, anger in resistance works, justifies and aids in other physical aspects of the political struggle, which can be seen in Kanafani's "The Child Borrows His Uncle's Gun." In the poem, anger is reflected in the speaker's actions, in his reaction to his uncle's mockery, and in his disappointment for what Galilee could be "if every man… took twenty cartridges." Though, this anger is never pure anger. Nuance and other emotions often accompany it.

Kanafani highlights that the al-ghurbah direct anger at themselves, their situation, and their family and friends. Anger is universal in resistance works being either in the work itself or a reason behind the work. If absent in either case, anger is present in the political struggle that accompanies resistance works. Israeli narratives shame Palestinian anger and use it for justifications of their own, but the resistance works overturn the Israeli narrative depicting the nuance of the anger in the political struggle.

The Reaction to Resistance Works

The international audiences' reactions and Israeli's subsequent suppression cement resistance works' effectiveness as an alternative to the political struggle. Mahmoud Darwish as seen above was a prominent figure, "seen as the national poet of Palestine." His works such as "Identity Card" and "Fleeting Words" championed the Palestinian cause, receiving critical acclaim and spreading international awareness of the Palestinian cause.

Yet, Israel suppressed or sanctioned his works, with "Fleeting Words" seen as "a stone thrown at Israeli soldiers." Darwish explained the general reaction to the poem in an interview after Yossi Sarid's unsuccessful attempt to include his poem in the Israeli curriculum: "The Israelis don't want to teach students that there is a love story between an Arab poet and his land." The power of his work was substantial enough to generate change and dismantle the image Israel tried to paint of Palestine.

Ghassan Kanafani, another prominent figure in Palestinian literary resistance, experienced an even more extreme deadly reaction from Israel. His aforementioned works depicted key elements of resistance that had substantial literary impact. The Israeli solution to stop his work was for the Mossad to assassinate him and his niece in 1972.

As said in his obituary in the Daily Star, he did not need to take up arms like Israel, as "his weapon was a ballpoint pen… And he hurt the enemy more than a column of commandos." The reaction of Israel and the world to both of these authors highlights the extent of their power. Moreover, it depicts the censurious hypocrisy of the Israeli government.

In the present, the reaction to works of resistance continues to be a valuable measure of their effectiveness. "No Other Land," a documentary by directors, Basel Adra, Hamdan Ballal, Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor, depicts the friendship between a Palestinian activist and an Israeli journalist in the Westbank. It received international acclaim and accolades, even winning an Oscar. Yet, Hamdan Ballal, one of the Palestinian directors, was beaten up and then detained by Israeli forces after the release of the film.

Even though it is not poetry or literature, it is still a resistance work. It promoted peace and justice, and yet the reaction it generated was anything but. This suggests that resistance works are, in a sense, more powerful than political struggle, as the emotional struggle that they depict cannot be justifiably met with violence or death in any situation.

Elements of nostalgia, exile, and anger in resistance works and the reaction to resistance works allows Palestinian resistance literature and poetry to provide a substitute to the traditional political struggle. Resistance works are equal to the political struggle and sometimes are even more effective in their inherently peaceful nature. They immortalize the Palestinian struggle through nostalgia, while deconstructing and highlighting the hypocrisy of Israel through anger and exile.

It is vital to highlight that Palestinian resistance works are just one category of resistance works, being a part of a much larger international genre. Yet, they share the same elements and themes of other resistance works, demonstrating that there are universal elements in the relationship of oppressed and oppressor.

Additionally, oppressors like Israel often suppress and remove works from context to depoliticize them, so as much as these Palestinian resistance works represent the Palestinian struggle, they also partly represent the millions if not billions of people in the world whose story of resistance is untold. Ultimately, resistance works will always have a place either complementing, aiding, and/or substituting the political struggle.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"'No Other Land' Co-Director Attacked by Israeli Settlers and Arrested." Al Jazeera,

March 24, 2025. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/24/no-other-land-co-director-attacked-by-israeli-settlers-and-arrested.

"What's behind Trump's Call to Take over Gaza?" Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera, 5

Feb. 2025. www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/5/whats-behind-trumps-call-to-take-over-gaza.

Darwish, Mahmud, and Ben Bennani. "A Letter from Exile." Boundary 2 8, no. 3 (1980): 203–6.

https://doi.org/10.2307/302984.

Darwish, Mahmud. "A Love Story Between an Arab Poet and His Land. An Interview With

Mahmud Darwish." By Adam Shatz. Journal of Palestine Studies, vol. 31, no. 3, 2002, pp. 67–78. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2002.31.3.67. Accessed 20 Apr. 2025.

Darwish, Mahmud. "ID Card." Translated by Marilyn Hacker. 1964.

Darwish Mahmud. "Unnamed." Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian

Literature. Edited by Barbara Parmenter. University of Texas Press, 1994. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.7560/727519. Accessed 20 Apr. 2025.

Harlow, Barbara. "Resistance Literature" in Resistance Literature, 1987, pp. 2-12.

Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim. "In the deserts of exile." The Palestinian Wedding: A Bilingual Anthology

of Contemporary Palestinian Resistance Poetry, edited by A.M. Elmessiri, Boulder, USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1982, pp. 69-72. https://doi.org/10.1515/9798896160106-015

Kanafānī, Ghassān. Palestine's children: Returning to haifa and other stories. Translated by

Barbara Harlow Karen E. Riley. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000.

Kanafānī, Ǵhassān. Men in the sun: And other Palestinians stories. Transalated by Hilary

Kilpatrick. London, WA: Heinemann ; Three continents Press, 1978.

Parmenter, Barbara McKeen. Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian

Literature. University of Texas Press, 1994. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.7560/727519. Accessed 20 Apr. 2025.

Reason in the House of Revelation
The earliest Islamic encounters with Greek thought

Catarina Lufinha

Edited by Isabelle Slentz

Before the emergence of Islam, the Arabian Peninsula was in a state of Jahiliyyah, a period defined by disunity and conflict where the pursuit of philosophy was largely absent. The Prophet Mohammed and his introduction of Islam fostered a new sense of unity and purpose which fundamentally transformed the Arab world. Through its subsequent conquest of the Sasanian and Byzantine civilisations, Islam encountered Greek philosophy.

This essay firstly contextualises these initial interactions by examining the historical emergence of Islam. Secondly, it explores these epistemic encounters, as Islam emphasised the primacy of revelation, while the Greeks affirmed the primacy of reason. The essay concludes with a discussion of why Islam did not outright reject Greek thought, but was able to reconcile faith and reason, which allowed the Arab world to instead engage with and be influenced by philosophical inquiry.

The period before the introduction and emergence of Islam is referred to as Jahiliyyah, or the Age of Ignorance. During this time, the Arabian Peninsula was fundamentally defined by disunity and conflict. The various tribes which inhabited the region were internally organised through familial relations, which reinforced a profound sense of loyalty to one's own tribe.

This internal loyalty was compounded with a sense of separation from other tribes, which was reinforced by the constant raids, plundering, and extraction of the khuwwa tax for military protection, from which tribes derived a significant portion of their wealth. Furthermore, the pre-Islamic Arabian tribes practiced distinct polytheistic religions, which created a constant cycle of shifting religiopolitical frameworks as tribes were able to consolidate power only temporarily and over a limited territory.

Within this context of irremediable differences and constant conflict, the lack of evidence of a preoccupation with Greek thought is unsurprising. Indeed, philosophy in Ancient Greece was fundamentally concerned with the study of moral phenomena, namely the definition and application of concepts such as arete – excellence. In fact, the idea at the centre of Aristotelian morality is eudaimonia – a state of human flourishing achieved through a life of arete.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, the profound sense of strife and division prevented the collective acceptance, or even consideration, of a higher good or of any broader philosophical ideal. It is within this broader sociopolitical context that we can understand the transformative force of Islam and how it led to encounters with Greek philosophy.

The Prophet Mohammed was born in Mecca in 570 A. D., during the period known as Jahiliyyah. By teaching the messages revealed to him by God, he criticised the foundations of this period, namely its profound sense of tribalism. Central to his teachings was the doctrine of tawhid – the absolute oneness of God. The core belief in the unicity of God was the foundation for his call for the unicity of all those – Muslims, Jews, Christians, and pagan monotheists – who abandoned idolatry and recognised the singular divine authority of God. Mohammed's teachings thus placed shared religious belief above tribal or specific denominational divisions, turning fragmented tribal societies into a unified and cohesive religious and political unit where faith was embraced without compulsion.

At the same time, Mohammed sanctioned a raiding of the non-Muslim world as mandated by God – within two centuries, Islam extended from the Iberian Peninsula to the periphery of India. Its rapid and successful expansion cannot be solely attributed to military strength, but also to its ability to address the needs of its historical context. Indeed, Islam was inherently accessible, as it significantly simplified religious practices by retaining what was common to both Judaism and Christianity – namely the oneness of God – while rejecting uniquely Christian doctrines, namely the sacramental structure. Furthermore, it offered an opportunity for freedom to those who had been exploited under Jahiliyyah, particularly slaves and debtors, who would be equals upon embracing Islam.

As previously discussed, Islam emerged from the Abrahamic religions prevalent in the Middle East during the time of the Prophet Mohammed. It was not a rejection of doctrine, but a deviation from it – indeed, Islam did not initially seek to become a separate religion. However, as it expanded under the Rashidun and Umayyad Caliphates, there arose a necessity for the legitimisation of its military victories. This necessity prompted a greater focus on defining the Islamic creed, which ultimately led to its establishment as an independent religion. Early Islam was therefore fundamentally doctrinal and jurisprudential, perceiving the non-Muslim world not as a potential source of knowledge, but as something to be subjugated.

Indeed, Caliph Omar invariably ordered the discard of captured books and scientific papers, since he believed that if they contained true guidance, then God had already provided better guidance, and if they were erroneous, then God had protected them from such errors. Furthermore, although the Caliphate was tolerant of religious difference, non-Muslims were required to pay a tax – the jizya – as material proof of their allegiance to the state and its laws.

However, as Islam was confronted with epistemologies far more advanced than itself, intellectual isolation proved unsustainable. Indeed, the 7th century Arab conquest of the Sasanian and of significant parts of the Byzantine Empires inevitably expanded the intellectual frontier of the Islamic world. In these territories, a significant body of Greek philosophical and scientific works had been translated into Syriac, which allowed for the first interaction between Islam and Greek thought.

Indeed, Greek philosophy was central to both the Sasanian Empire, where Syriac Christians maintained centres of Hellenistic learning particularly in Alexandria and Gondeshakpur, as well as to the Byzantine Empire, where Syriac Christians had long applied Greek philosophical ideas and logic in their apologetics.

However, as Islam began to interact with Syriac translations of Greek works, a fundamental clash between the two epistemologies became apparent, which threatened further Islamic exploration of Greek philosophy. Indeed, whereas the ancient Greeks emphasised the primacy of reason, the expanding Muslim world emphasised the primacy of revelation. The two epistemologies' differing conceptualisations of truth can serve as a lens through which to understand this clash. On one hand, Muslims held that the highest truth was the text of the Qur'an.

> " *Indeed, whereas the ancient Greeks emphasised the primacy of reason, the expanding Muslim world emphasised the primacy of revelation.* "

While human reason was fallible, divine revelation was infallible – as such, to follow the word of God was to be righteous. In stark contrast, the ancient Greeks conceptualised truth in terms of apodicticity – being necessarily or demonstrably true. A fundamental principle of Greek thought was thus the idea that the words of a god were no truer than what logical reasoning and empirical evidence established as true. For Islam to continue interacting with Greek philosophy, it could not continue to inherently reject this principle.

Islam thus needed rational theologians who would challenge the idea of Bila Kayfa – the unquestioning acceptance of the divine – and instead present a rational foundation for dawa – the call to embrace the Islamic faith. Thus emerged the Mu'tazilites, who sought to reconcile revelation with reason. Central to their philosophy was the belief that God is inherently reasonable and just. Consequently, they held that reality is structured by these principles, and could therefore be understood through the use of reason.

Furthermore, the Mu'tazilites held that God's inherent reason and justice necessarily imply that moral values are embedded in the nature of things, and are thus objectively knowable through human reason. As such, God's commands as expressed in the sharia do not simply indicate, but constitute moral truths. Therefore, the Mu'tazilites challenged the literal interpretations namely of the hadiths – the sayings and actions of the Prophet Mohammed, – arguing that their content should be questioned and reinterpreted in light of both the Qur'an and reason.

This emerging way of thinking fundamentally contradicted traditional Islamic thought, which held that attributing qualities to God would limit divine omnipotence, and so regarded philosophical inquiry as blasphemous. Amidst resistance to this emerging way of thinking, the philosopher Ya'qub al-Kindī wrote On First Philosophy, in which he reconciled the Greek and the Islamic concepts of truth.

Al-Kindī believed that reason and revelation are two paths to the same truth – while philosophers arrive at it through their own efforts, prophets receive it directly from God. As the perception of reason and revelation as inherently contradictory diminished, Islam furthered its interaction not only with the philosophy of the Greeks, but also of other epistemologies, leading to the flourishing of scholarship in the Arab world.

Over time, the Mu'tazilite perspective was marginalised, and the perception of reason and revelation as inherently contradictory resurfaced in the Islamic world. This perspective holds that, since God is pure will, creation exists beyond the bounds of reason and purpose, rendering it fundamentally unknowable. Therefore, existence can only be guided by revelation. Reason thus came to be regarded as unnecessary and even blasphemous.

In conclusion, the impact of the Prophet Mohammed and the subsequent expansion of Islam cannot be solely understood as a religious movement, but as a profound political, economic, and social transformation which unified different peoples into a cohesive unit. This unit was defined by a fundamental duality – while it was tolerant of religious difference, it upheld a doctrinal understanding of the Islamic faith that emphasised the primacy of Qur'anic revelation, thereby rejecting any influence from the outside world.

It was within this context that Islam first encountered Greek thought. The essay explored and analysed the epistemological encounter, tying it to the fundamental conflict between Islam's emphasis on revelation and the Greek affirmation of the primacy of reason. Lastly, it discussed how Islam was capable of reconciling faith and reason, which enabled the Arab world to engage with and be influenced by philosophical inquiry.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akyol, Mustafa. "An Early Islamic Debate on Faith and Reason Is Worth Examining." New Lines Magazine, October 2022. https://newlinesmag.com/essays/an-early-islamic-debate-on-faith-and-reason-is-worth-examining/

Belloc, Hilaire. The Great Heresies. TAN Books, 1938.

Donner, Fred M. The Early Islamic Conquests. Princeton University Press, 1981.

Hourani, George F. "Islamic and Non-Islamic Origins of Mu'tazilite Ethical Rationalism." International Journal of Middle East Studies 7, no. 1 (1976): 59–87. http://www.jstor.org/stable/162550.

Janssens, Jules□. "Al-Kindī: The Founder of Philosophical Exegesis of the Qur'an / الكندي مؤسس التفسير الفلسفي للقرآن□." Journal of Qur'anic Studies 9, no. 2 (2007): 1–21. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25728251.

Reilly, Robert R. The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist Crisis. ISI Books, 2010.

Schall, James V. "Belloc on the "Apparently Unconvertible" Religion." Catholic Culture, April 2003. https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=3437

Figured Ostraca of the New Kingdom
An insight into modes of expression in Ancient Egypt.

Ciara Gallagher

Edited by Francesca Cronin

The study of Ancient Egypt and its various forms of expression places great emphasis on formal tomb painting executed by highly skilled artists under strict adherence to traditional representation. Often, these works have very little of the maker's personality left and instead indicate a serious workforce. However, through the study of figured ostraca, these anonymous artisans can reassume their individuality and claim responsibility for some of the most astounding work in history.

To analyse these objects, this essay asks: How do the figured ostraca of ancient Egypt provide insights into the culture and society of the New Kingdom (1570-1069BCE)? Firstly, the definition of figured ostraca will be discussed. After exploring the materiality of these objects, their uses and functions will be analysed. Finally, what can be learned from figured ostraca about society and culture in the New Kingdom will be explored.

What are figured ostraca?

The literal translation of the term ostraca in Greek is "fragment". However, figured ostraca are more than just fragments; they are complete works of art. It is crucial to distinguish between ostraca and figured ostraca. Ostraca were a form of written document consisting of short texts inscribed on shards of pottery. Ostraca tended to be administrative and included no drawings or images. These texts were in hieratic script, a form of cursive writing.

Figured ostraca are a type of ostraca, as they were also shards of pottery. However, they contained images that are sometimes accompanied by text. In figured ostraca, the text is not independent from the image. Figured ostraca are fragments of limestone that served as supports for sketches.The majority are palm-sized and made from readily available limestone, whereas papyrus was precious and used only occasionally.

Additionally, limestone had a smooth surface and was familiar to the artisans, as it was used throughout the tombs of the necropolis. Figured ostraca were, for the most part, discovered to the west of Thebes, in Deir el-Medina. The prevalence of ostraca in Deir el-Medina was due to the village's role in accommodating artisans commissioned by New Kingdom pharaohs to design and decorate the tombs of the royal and noble families in Thebes.

These artisans of Deir el-Medina often used these shards of pottery to practise the drawings and sketches of the tombs they were working on. These drawings on figured ostraca served as models and starting points in the decoration of the tomb walls. The images on figured ostraca often followed the curve of the pottery shard and were generally done in black or red ink, the colours of the scribe's palette. In some cases, the colour range was extended to emphasize details, depending on the purpose of the drawing.

In some rare examples, figured ostraca contained relief work, but the majority were painted. The themes represented on figured ostraca vary greatly, but the most common drawings include animals, flora, portraits of divine and human figures, and scenes from the tombs.However, we also see satirical compositions and sketches made just for the pleasure of drawing.

The French Egyptologist, Guillemette Andreu, stated that figured ostraca are by definition "the expression of an ephemeral art." (Andrea 2002, 168) Due to the ephemeral nature of figured ostraca, themes that were not seen in official art are prevalent. The durability of limestone has allowed these objects to survive, despite not being intended to last.

Why were figured ostraca created?

Artists from Deir el-Medina used these limestone shards to practice their drawing before executing the art on the walls of the tombs. Additionally, artists used ostraca for drafts in the planning of large murals. Figured ostraca also served a pedagogical function, as students used them to practise drawing from models by their masters and professional artists. This practice can be seen on figured ostraca with many lines that students have retraced. One such example of this is a figured ostraca now in the Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, which depicts the head of a prince (fig 1).

His wig and the outline of his nose have been corrected many times, suggesting a student did this work. As discussed, the ephemeral nature of figured ostraca led them to contain themes not seen in official art. As a result, figured ostraca have a level of artistic freedom not seen in other forms of Egyptian art, which were typically very constrained by tradition. In contrast, figured ostraca were not intended to last and thus reveal a different side of the artisans of ancient Egypt. Some drawings show aspects of day-to-day life during the period, such as a checkerboard on a limestone flake from Abydos, "probably sketched out by labourers, wanting a game during a rest period".

Furthermore, erotic scenes and unusual iconography are depicted on figured ostraca. In fact, it is only on figured ostraca that we see kings with stubbly chins, signifying that they were in mourning. A figured ostracon found in western Thebes shows this motif, which was not seen in official art (fig. 2). The head is undoubtedly drawn by a master; however, the hands provide yet another example of a student practising their drawings. This is indicative of the practice of reusing ostraca, which is known as palimpsest. Figured ostraca were not always produced for practical means but were also created for the pleasure of drawing.

A hunting scene of an unidentified pharaoh was discovered in the Valley of the Kings, along with many other figured ostraca used in the practice of drawing. However, the scene depicted on this figured ostracon has not been found in royal tombs, and the proportions of the drawing do not follow tradition. As a result, it has been suggested that this figured ostracon was simply made for the amusement of the maker, who wished the Pharaoh success in his reign. Some of the most apparent examples of figured ostraca made for the amusement of the artists are the satirical compositions found on many of them.

Figure 1 Ostraca, Rammeside Period, Limestone with black ink drawing, 10 x 12cm, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

The majority of satirical ostraca placed animals in human roles, parodying the scenes of the walls of tombs. These ostraca may have been expressions of social criticism from lower ranks in society. A common motif seen in satirical ostraca is cats serving mice. These representations were a satire of the power dynamics of the New Kingdom and parodies of the offering scenes decorating the walls of the tombs that the same designers from the Valley of the Kings had created. Although the majority of figured ostraca were intended for short-term use, some rare forms of ostraca were made to last.

These were figured ostraca made for religious purposes and often deposited in front of tombs and left at shrines as ex-voto objects. Figured ostraca were a modest substitute for stelae dedicated to the gods and set up in workmen's chapels. Ostraca of the goddess Méretseger, the patron of the artisans who lived in Deir el-Medina, are particularly numerous on figured ostraca and are thought to be deposited as ex-voto objects.

In this way, figured ostraca are the traces of personal piety and independently valued objects. Figured ostraca were used as devotional instruments. Interestingly, several ex-voto figured ostraca were signed by the maker, with one reading, "Made by the scribe of the contours in the Square, Amenhotep".

What can we learn about Egyptian culture and society from figured ostraca?

The term "scribe des contours" was used by Egyptians to describe the designer, or draughtsman. In this way, the artist was considered a type of scribe. The role of designers is represented in the words of Egyptologist Luc Delvaux, who said, "le scribe dessine l'écrit et le dessinateur écrit l'image." This translates to "the scribe draws the written word, and the draughtsman writes the image." In pharaonic civilisation, there was an intrinsic link between writing and image.

It can be argued that the Egyptians saw no demarcation between the two forms of visual representation. Figured ostraca were by no means the only examples of writing and image used together. However, they are valuable in exemplifying this attitude and providing insight into the place of writing in the New Kingdom. On figured ostraca, image and writing are used in tandem, with the writing being used figuratively.

Figure 2 Ostracon with a royal head c. 1280 bc. New Kingdom, Dynasty 19. Western Thebes, Egypt. Painted limestone; 18.5 x 14.6 x 2.9 cm. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 32.1

> " Figured ostraca can give us insight into what folk stories were in circulation during the New Kingdom, which would otherwise have been lost entirely if not for the durability of these fragments of limestone. "

As a result, the text constantly echoes the image. Figured ostraca provide a fascinating look into Egyptian culture through the stories they contain. As discussed, many satirical figured ostraca were produced by artists.

However, recurring themes and characters appeared, leading Egyptologists to argue that these ostraca represented long-lost folk stories from the oral tradition. The figure of the cat and mouse was a recurring motif on ostraca, and Egyptologists have suggested that these images were drawn during the recital of the folk story. In this way, the animal tales of ancient Egypt were handed down as pictures on these shards of limestone.

Figured ostraca can give us insight into what folk stories were in circulation during the New Kingdom, which would otherwise have been lost entirely if not for the durability of these fragments of limestone. Ostraca survived over other forms of art, such as mural painting, which would have depicted the themes depicted on ostraca, and this is why these small fragments are so important.

To conclude, figured ostraca have been an invaluable resource for Egyptologists because of their durability compared to other forms of art that did not survive. They were accidentally preserved and therefore provide insight into aspects of Egyptian culture that would otherwise have been lost to time, such as the folk stories that were circulating.

They had many functions, such as artistic and pedagogical, that show how artisans, mainly from Deir el-Medina in Thebes, worked and also give us glimpses of the personalities of these workers, who are otherwise represented only through their traditional, commissioned art in the tombs of the Valley of the Kings. Today, some of the largest collections of figured ostraca can be found in Paris, Berlin, Cambridge, and New York, just to name a few, where they continue to inform historians of culture and society in the New Kingdom.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Accetta, Kelly. On the Threshold of the House of Eternity: Door Leaves and Tomb Doors. The Theban Project . n.d. https://thebanproject.com/en/on-the-threshold-of-the-house-of-eternity-door-leaves-and-tomb-doors/ (accessed February 25, 2024).

Andreu, Guillemette. «Les ostraca figurés.» in Les artistes de Pharaon, Deir el-Médineh et la vallée des Rois, de Guillemette Andreu, 168-193. Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2002.

Babcock, Jennifer. Ancient Egyptian Ostraca: A Reevaluation. 2012 October 2012. https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/features/2012/ancient-egyptian-ostraca (accessed February 25, 2024).

Brunner-Traut, E. Egyptian artists' sketches. Figured ostraka from the Gayer-Anderson collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum. Leiden: NEDERLANDS HISTORISCH-ARCHAEOLOGISCH INSTITUUT , 1979.

Delvaux, Luc. « écriture et dessin.» Dans L'art du contour: Le dessin dans l'Égypte ancienne, de G. ANDREU-LANOË, 68-73. Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2013.

Menéndez, Gemma. «Figured Ostraca from Dra Abu El-Naga (TT 11 - 12).» Studien Zur Altägyptischen Kultur 37 , 2008: 259–75.

Museum, The MET. Ostracon with Pharaoh Spearing a Lion and a Royal Hymn on its Back. n.d. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544076 (accessed February 25, 2024).

Sectarianism, Repression, and the Syrian State
Hafez al-Assad's Authoritarian Consolidation

Priya Caswell

Edited by Isabelle Slentz

Sectarianism has long shaped the social and political fabric of Syria, but it was under the Alawite-led regimes of Hafez and Bashar al-Assad that it became an entrenched and divisive force. While Syria has historically encompassed diverse religious and ethnic groups, including the Sunni Muslim majority and minorities such as the Alawites, Druze, and Kurds, the Assad regimes transformed these identities into politicised sects through systemic favouritism and repression.

This essay examines how sectarianism developed under Hafez al-Assad, analysing the mechanisms through which his regime consolidated Alawite dominance and repressed Sunni opposition. By focusing on the Islamist uprising of the late 1970s and the 1982 Hama massacre as case studies, it will be made apparent that Hafez al-Assad's approach to sectarian divisions was characterised not by reconciliation or inclusion, but by coercion, violence, and an entrenched system of sectarian patronage that laid the foundations for Syria's later civil conflict.

In February 1971, Hafez al-Assad, after initiating a successful coup, took the Syrian presidency, becoming the first Alawite president of the country and breaking from the precedent of Sunni succession. This was the culmination of the Alawite rise to power, from a previously marginalised and economically weak religious minority, to the ruling dynasty of the Syrian state.

A key reason Alawites have been traditionally alienated from Sunni rulers and other denominations of Islam lies in their theology, which centres around a divine triad and the centrality of Ali, as well as borrowed Christian practices—this is deemed heretical by the rest of Islam. Furthermore, the secrecy surrounding their religion has encouraged fears that they pose a threat to society, fostering a sense of alienation.

Under colonial rule, the French elevated religious minorities such as the Druze and Alawites in order to counter the powerful Sunni notables, which encouraged the Alawites to break free from their marginalised position. As such, the army and the Ba'ath party were disproportionately Alawite. Through these two institutions, Alawites were able to gain power and influence, particularly in the Baath party, whose secular ideology viewed the Alawites as Syrian nationals despite their unique religious affiliations.

The unstable political landscape following independence, with a multitude of coups between 1946-1963, eliminated key Sunni politicians. When the Baa'th took power in 1963, the Alawites overpowered the other religious minorities and initiated their own coup in 1970. This signaled a radical departure from Sunni majority rulers, who had characterised Syrian politics since its independence in 1946.

In order to cement his legitimacy as the ruling power, Hafez al-Assad placed allies in favourable positions. For instance, the majority of the cabinet, security forces and officer corps were Alawite. Although the Alawis only constituted 11% of the Syrian population, they continued to maintain disproportionate influence in the state's institutions, which worried the Sunni majority. This worry was compounded by increasing discrimination against the Sunnis, from the regime's control of imam selection, to a restriction of Sunni participation in government, and the prohibition of other political parties.

Additionally, cities in Northern Syria were particularly affected by the land reforms and nationalisation programmes of the regime, which produced wealth for the Alawite peasants at the expense of the Sunni Middle Class; this perceived favouritism towards the Alawites created a rise in anti-regime rhetoric which began to sharpen sectarian lines.

Consequently, the Muslim Brotherhood, who constituted much of the Sunni political elite ousted from their position by the Alawites, began to spearhead the opposition movement against the Assad Regime. Although the Brotherhood had been part of Syria's socio-political fabric since the 1940s, following Hafez's assumption of the presidency, they became increasingly opposed to Alawite control.

Not only did they regard the Alawite religion as heretical, the Muslim Brothers also wanted to address the perceived 'absurdity' of an Alawite minority ruling over a Sunni majority. From 1976, there was a wave of violence against the regime's institutions, and increased targeting of politicians and army officers across the country—although the Brotherhood did not assume responsibility until the end of the decade. The turning point was the June 1979 massacre of eighty Alawite Cadets at the Military Artillery school in Aleppo; this triggered governmental retaliation and reprisals, which took on a very sectarian character, and utilised questionable strategies of suppression.

In cities where the Islamist uprising was apparent, the Assad regime sent special forces units to suppress the unrest, conducting meticulous searches of those suspected of hiding insurgents. Often, these searches would target those with Sunni Arab names—and in certain cases, the more scrupulous searches were abandoned in favour of simply destroying villages populated by Sunni Arabs. The regime also targeted Islamic insurgents with heavy weaponry, artillery, tanks and combat aircraft, and utilised a tactic of collective punishment to dissuade more uprisings.

For example, after a failed assassination attempt on Hafez on the 26th of July, the regime massacred prisoners in Palmyra Prison in retaliation. Furthermore, the regime utilised paramilitaries to carry out extrajudicial crimes, and aided the distribution of weapons and the training of civilians. These operations, which paired loyal military units with pro-regime militias, using warfare tactics and weaponry, were effective yet brutal in suppressing revolts.

A key example of the regime's cruelty, which has retained importance in the collective Syrian memory, is the 1982 Hama massacre. Cities like Hama, Damascus and Aleppo often rose up against the regime as they were key Sunni strongholds, and the city of Hama was believed to harbour Brotherhood cells. The Hama massacre constituted a government response to the revolts in the city, which was subsequently besieged for a month.

After air bombardment and killings carried out by both military and paramilitary forces, the estimated death toll reached 200-500 civilians, many of whom belonged to the military wing of the Muslim Brotherhood. This event recorded an unprecedented level of violence which had occurred in contemporary Syria and constituted a horrifying massacre that the Assad Regime under Hafez committed against its own people.

To conclude, the emergence and consolidation of sectarianism under Hafez al-Assad was not the result of Syria's social diversity, but rather the deliberate outcome of political strategy. By privileging the Alawite minority within the army, government, and security apparatus, Hafez institutionalised sectarian hierarchy. His regime's discriminatory policies, particularly against the Sunni majority, intensified division, and consequently provoked organised opposition from groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

When this opposition materialised into violent uprising, the state responded with overwhelming brutality, epitomised in the Hama massacre of 1982, which revealed the lengths the regime would go to preserve power. Ultimately, Hafez al-Assad's manipulation of sectarian identities cemented patterns of repression, and division, which have shaped the trajectory of Syrian politics and sowed seeds of discord which would erupt under his successor, Bashar al-Assad.

Reflections Beyond Borders
Semanur Kavak

This poem reflects my exploration of freedom, identity, and cultural influence. Writing allows me to express complex emotions and ideas, offering a space to challenge assumptions and provoke thought. I'm drawn to themes of mental colonization and the invisible chains imposed by societal and cultural norms.

I write poetry because it combines emotion with intellect, providing a way to communicate beyond simple language. Writing sharpens my thinking and expands my perspective. Freedom is a central theme for me, as it mirrors my own journey of breaking free from societal and cultural limitations.

In this poem, I aim to explore the barriers that hold us back and the hope for freedom—both personally and globally.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atassi, Basma. "Breaking the silence over Hama atrocities" Aljazeera, February 2012. https://web.archive.org/web/20201103100553/https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2012/2/2/b rea king-the-silence-over-hama-atrocities. Accessed 20 Oct. 2024.

Conduit, Dara. "The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and the Spectacle of Hama." Middle East Journal, vol. 70, no. 2, 2016, pp. 211–26. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26427399. Accessed 19 Oct. 2024.

Faksh, Mahmud A. "The Alawi Community of Syria: A New Dominant Political Force." Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 20, no. 2, 1984, pp. 133–53. JSTOR,

http://www.jstor.org/stable/4282993. Accessed 19 Oct. 2024.

Holliday, Joseph. "The Assad Regime: From counterinsurgency to Civil War" The Assad Regime: From counterinsurgency to Civil War, Institute for the Study of War, 2013, pp. 1–69. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07937.1. Accessed 19 Oct. 2024.

Jasser, M. Zuhdi. "Sectarian Conflict in Syria." PRISM, vol. 4, 2014, pp. 58–67. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26469777. Accessed 17 Oct. 2024.

Lakitsch, Maximilian. "The Sectarian Dimension of Political Legitimacy in Syria: The National Roots of Sectarian Violence in the Syrian War." Sicherheit Und Frieden (S+F) / Security and Peace, vol. 35, no. 2, 2017, pp. 91–96. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26428672. Accessed 17 Oct. 2024.

Leenders, Reinoud. "How the Syrian Regime Outsmarted Its Enemies." Current History, vol. 112, no. 758, 2013, pp. 331–37. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/45319256. Accessed 19 Oct. 2024.

Lia, Brynjar. "The Islamist Uprising in Syria, 1976–82: The History and Legacy of a Failed Revolt." British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 43, no. 4, 2016, pp. 541–59. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26155517. Accessed 20 Oct. 2024.

In some places, time flows slowly.

While you live in 2024, others remain in 2004, under the shadow of mental colonization.

History is written with powerful pens.

Life is seen through a filter called culture.

But this filter is created in the West.

It is projected onto the East through a mystical mirror.

In this mirror, no one can see themselves.

After all, there is no such thing as Essence.

What you create for yourself, you call essence—neither confined to the East nor the West.

It fits only within yourself, not within mirrors.

Each person, while creating their own reality,

Resists cultural hegemony;

Not imprisoned by Western or Eastern views,

But finding themselves beyond borders.

The binoculars looking from East to West

Turns realities into compasses.

In both the East and the West, everyone searches for their own sky, their own truth.

In misty places, people carry the weight of injustice

On their backs, in invisible sacks.

Sometimes, voices echo in the sky, those of faith.

These voices, like remnants of mental colonization,

Bring freedom to some, captivity to others.

Religions merge or divide beyond borders.

…

Everyone lives in their own sky.

But this sky reflects the boundaries of global injustice;

Some in palace-like glass cages,

Others in invisible cages woven with chains.

In hope of freedom…

Semanur Kavak

Empire on Display
The Politics of the Ottoman Imperial Museum in the Late Nineteenth Century

Eve Townsley

Edited by Grace Phillips

The Ottoman Imperial Museum in Istanbul was founded in its final form with the appointment of Osman Hamdi Bey, an administrator, artist and archaeologist, as curator in 1881. Its creation not only represents a decisive step in the scientific development of Ottoman archaeology, but also holds great symbolic importance in relation to contemporary themes within the Empire and its relationship with Europe. In fact, Ottoman archaeology and museum curation functioned as a microcosm of broader debates, most notably regarding westernisation, self-determination and modernisation.

This essay will therefore examine how internal and external dynamics influenced the curation of the Imperial Museum – and vice versa. It will take two particularly significant artifacts as examples: the Alexander Sarcophagus, so named for its depictions of Alexander the Great giving battle; and the Sarcophagus of the Mourning Women, which is adorned with lamenting female statuettes and a funeral procession. Both were excavated from the Royal Necropolis of Sidon by Hamdi himself, transported to Istanbul and given pride-of-place in a specially designed new museum building in 1887.

On an international level, the sarcophagi's exhibition in the Ottoman Imperial Museum represents the Ottoman Empire's bid for integration into contemporary Europe via European classical history. This is evident in the decisive highlighting of the artifacts' Greco-Roman roots. From the 19th-century European viewpoint, the Alexander Sarcophagus possessed great cultural prestige: it depicts the exploits of a foundational figure of the Greco-Roman civilisation that European nationalist thinkers and philosophers celebrated as their cultural ancestor.

Therefore, the discovery of such an artifact in Ottoman territory enabled the Empire to claim their own part in this narrative. Hamdi well understood this phenomenon: his urgency in claiming the object, his concerted programme of further excavations to furnish an imperial museum capable of rivalling France, Britain and Germany and his elaborate displays of the artifacts demonstrate his desire to broadcast the high civilisation existent across Ottoman territories to European and local visitors. Clearly, Hamdi understood that the Empire's perceived level of belonging to European historical tradition would impact its favourability in modern Europe.

The Sarcophagus of the Mourning Women provides a further example of this trend: not only was it proudly displayed as an 'exemplar of Hellenic culture and western civilisation', but its Ionic design also provided a model for the construction of a new museum building to house the artifacts. This enabled the museum curator to showcase a typical western museum building style, while simultaneously laying claim to it as their own.

In this way, one understands the public display of the sarcophagi (and other classical artifacts found in Ottoman territories) as a means for the Ottoman Empire to carve out their equal place within European claims of cultural descent and continued greatness from the 'acme of civilisation'. The contemporary western world well understood this purpose: according to Ünlüönen, European nations considered the Museum 'a strategic tool' of 'an illegitimate attempt to appropriate Western culture' and identity. Clearly, the true purpose of the Imperial Museum as a means for acceptance in and integration with Europe appeared as obvious then as it does now.

On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire also utilised the Imperial Museum to maintain independence from increasing European intervention in archaeological and other affairs, as well as to reassert territorial integrity. At the time of the museum's foundation, European teams were carrying out excavations across the Empire, most of which stripped sites of artifacts and sent them to be displayed in various continental museums. Therefore, the discovery and public exhibition, in Ottoman territories, of such beautiful examples of classical civilisation as the sarcophagi designated the Empire as Europe's equal, not a subordinate.

This idea applies not only to the artifacts themselves, but also to their curation. First, the creation of a legitimate space for safekeeping aimed to prevent antiquities from leaving the Empire for Europe. Similarly, curation along geographical – rather than the customary positivist thematic – lines clearly situated the artifacts in their modern context and designated them definitively as Ottoman, while the naming of the administrator who had sent them to the museum (often having confiscated them from Europeans) showcased the triumph of the Ottoman system against Europeans who intended to subvert it.

Ünlüönen sees these decisions as a clear assertion of sovereignty against Western powers, while Shaw reinforces this idea through her description of the Imperial Museum as a resistor of the 'territorial imperialism implicit in European archaeological collection in the Ottoman territories'.

The idea of asserting independence from Europe appears particularly important given the contemporary political context. While earlier attempts had been made in this direction – notably, a byelaw from 1869 regulated the excavation and expropriation of historical sites , while the governor of Aydın had proposed governmental monitoring of archaeological digs following John Turtle Wood's exploitative excavations of Ephesus – they were overshadowed by the humiliation of extensive European involvement in the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (OPDA) of 1881.

> " **The discovery and public exhibition, in Ottoman territories, of such beautiful examples of classical civilisation as the sarcophagi designated the Empire as Europe's equal, not a subordinate.** "

Clearly, the sarcophagi and the buildings that housed them constituted an attempt to level the playing field and submit no longer to the superior attitudes of Europeans, which aligns with a general attitude of reclaiming independence from interfering European powers.

In terms of internal Ottoman trends, the late nineteenth century was increasingly marked by the battle between the modernising bureaucracy and the reactionary Sultan. This conflict is clearly reflected within the Imperial Museum. In this context, Osman Hamdi epitomises the figure of the 'Western scholar' striving to create a modern museum aligned with ideas of scientific progress. Other reformers – for example Hamdi's father Edhem Pasha, who proposed 'far more drastic' legislation to protect the Empire's archaeological artifacts – shared this desire.

Overall, the modernising camp appreciated the importance of the preservation and display of indigenous antiquities in their Empire of origin. On the other hand, the Sultan and other reactionaries perceived archaeological artifacts in a markedly different manner. Several incidents attest to this. For example, Sultan Abdülhamid circumvented laws against smuggling to gift artifacts to European sovereigns, causing a quarrel with the Ministry of Education, and issued an imperial Firman to allow British Lord Elgin 'the most extensive permission' for excavation and exportation of the Parthenon.

Similarly, he requested that his collection of avian taxidermy be exhibited in the new Museum, which Hamdi cleverly avoided. In this way, one understands not only the fundamental discrepancy between the two camps – while one favoured reform and increasing self-determination, the other clung to old-fashioned ways of being and doing – but also the interaction between them as each tried to assert their will.

One may argue that the pride of place granted to both the Alexander Sarcophagus and the Sarcophagus of the Mourning Women epitomises the victory of the bureaucrats: it broadcasts the success of the modern and reform-minded process that had allowed the acquisition of these objects to local and foreign visitors alike.

One therefore understands that modernisers and royal reactionaries were waging a battle within the walls of the Imperial Museum, from which the reformists ultimately emerged as victorious.

In conclusion, the function of the Imperial Museum expanded far beyond the purely archaeological realm to encompass a wide variety of contemporary themes in the Ottoman Empire. Notable among these are the dichotomous ideas of Ottoman affinity to, and self-assertion against, Europe, which created polarising discourses around modernisation, westernisation and reform among the Empire's governmental elites.

The Alexander Sarcophagus and the Sarcophagus of the Mourning Women embody these ideas due to their foundational role in the new Imperial Museum, starting from the very architecture of the building and reaching into its processes of acquisition and display as a prime example of Ottoman cultural richness. In this way, one understands not only the great significance of the Imperial Museum in the cultural realm, but also as the starting point of related political, economic and social discussions.

These themes permeated the development of archaeology in the Empire and perhaps even into the Turkish Republic, as evidenced by the continued celebration of Osman Hamdi's legacy in the modern Istanbul Archaeological Museum.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Eldem, Edhem. "From Blissful Indifference to Anguished Concern: Ottoman Perceptions of Antiquities, 1799-1869." In Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753-1914, edited by Z. Bahrani, Z. Çelik, and E. Eldem. SALT, 2011.

Shaw, Wendy. "From Mausoleum to Museum: Resurrecting Antiquity for Ottoman Modernity." In Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753-1914, edited by Z. Bahrani, Z. Çelik and E. Eldem. SALT, 2011.

Ünlüönen S. "Rethinking the Nineteenth-Century Museum via the Ottoman Imperial Museum." Literature Compass 21, no.1-3 (2023): 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12710.

Top left: Fez, Robin Andrés. Top right: Istanbul, Martina Braghin. Bottom: Fez, Robin Andrés

Top: Captain Hamdi, Luxor, Priya Caswell. Bottom left: Istanbul, Martina Braghin. Bottom right: Istanbul, Martina Braghin.

Top: Siwa Desert, Priya Caswell. Bottom left: Istanbul, Martina Braghin. Bottom right: Siwa Oasis, Ancient town of Shali Ghadi, Egypt, Priya Caswell.

Top: Fez, Robin Andrès. Middle: Fez, Robin Andrès. Bottom: Fez, Robin Andrès.

Thank you for reading, and special thanks to Aoife Hick who worked hard to design this issue. The work featured in this volume will be appearing in a printed issue in the Hilary Term - stay tuned!