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Abstract

This thesis challenges the assumption that recent political action in Arab societies is evidence of a 'Habermasian' public sphere. It argues instead that the specific historical trajectory of the public sphere associated with Jürgen Habermas' *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, renders it an unsuitable operational conceptual framework in which to ground recent debates on the question of emancipatory political action in the various states and societies of the Middle East and North Africa. In order to demonstrate the extent of dissonance between the Habermasian designation and the empirical evidence, the thesis constructs a conceptual framework based on the public sphere's developmental trajectory articulated by Habermas in *Structural Transformation*. The evidence when cast in the Habermasian light foresees a pessimistic outcome for this activity. It depicts instead a stylised identity community built around commercialism and advertising enabled by commercialisation processes and the expansion of communicative technologies.

It concludes, through a discussion of recent empirical evidence, that a Habermasian approach to this material may not in fact be the most useful option. Instead, it draws on the work of Hannah Arendt, specifically sections from *The Human Condition* and *On Revolution*, which also considers the public realm. Arendt downplays the economic foundations of the public realm to a greater extent than Habermas, uncoupling political consequences from economic production. The emergent public realm of political significance in the MENA might then be better understood as an Arendtian space of appearance which envisages a possible rebuilding of a political community after the tearing down of consensus. In doing so, the thesis provides a preliminary and partial assessment of the justificatory basis for using an expressly Habermasian characterisation of the public sphere to analyse these events.

The Concept of the Public Sphere and the Middle East and North Africa: An Examination of the Habermasian Approach to Political Action

By

Lucy Mary Abbott

St. Chad's College

Thesis for partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Philosophy

Submitted to the School of Government and International Affairs

Durham University

2014

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Signed: Lucy M. Abbott

Date: 14th May 2014

Acknowledgements

There are many people to thank for their contributions to the realisation of this thesis. Firstly, I would like to express heartfelt gratitude for the unfailing guidance and expertise of my supervisors Peter M. R. Stirk, James Piscatori and Emma C. Murphy.

Funding from UK Economic and Social Research Council has kindly supported both my pre-research language training period at the University of Edinburgh and the subsequent research period at the University of Durham. Special thanks go to Lorraine Holmes, Andrew Newman, Jonathan Featherstone, Mourad Diouri, Lis Kendall, Anoush Ehteshami, Carole and Robert Hillenbrand, and Yasir Suleiman whose support and guidance have proved invaluable. I would also like to thank Marwan Kraidy and Monroe E.Price at the Centre for Global Communication Studies at the University of Pennsylvania who kindly hosted me as a visiting scholar in 2010.

The final thesis has benefitted greatly from comments and questions I have received at conferences and presentations over the last four years. I am grateful to, amongst others, Adel Iskandar, Jeroen Gunning, Elihu Katz, Marc Lynch, Christopher M. Davidson, Kristian Ulrichsen, Steve Welch, Maria Dimova-Cookson and Mehmet Asutay.

My students on Democracy and Democratic Theory and Middle East in the International System also deserve a mention. Marking their essay assignments has taught me the importance of clarity, relevance and style in my own writing.

My Durham friends Luca Trenta, Caelum Moffat, Tahani Al Terkait, Vincent Keating, Mark Shaw, Mehmet Asutay, Cristian Cercel have all been constant sources of inspiration during the writing up stages.

Finally, I would like to thank Andy and my family for all the encouragement and support they have given me during my studies.

Lucy M. Abbott

St. Chad's College, Durham University 2014

Note on Translation and Transliteration

This thesis draws on quotations from primary and secondary sources in English, Arabic, French, German and Italian. Where appropriate, transliterations of Arabic, Ottoman Turkish and Persian terms conform to international conventions. All translations and transliterations have been undertaken by the author.

> '*Conflict and consensus (like domination itself and like the coercive power whose degree of stability they indicate analytically) are not categories that remain untouched by the historical development of society. In the case of the structural transformation of the bourgeois public sphere, we can study the extent to which, and manner in which, the latters' ability to assume its proper function determines whether the exercise of domination and power persists as a negative constant, as it were, of history or whether as a historical category itself, it is open to substantive change.*'[1]

Introduction

This thesis sets out a novel theoretically-led critique of the Habermasian public sphere approach currently used to explain political action oriented towards authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In doing so, it makes four key arguments. Firstly, the treatment of Habermas by commentators has been selective and subsequently misrepresentative of his views on the public sphere. Secondly, this selective usage downplays the public sphere's key assumptions. These are a European historical experience of capitalism and a tradition of rational law. Thirdly, as a consequence, colonialism, nationalism, divergent conceptions of authority and the authoritarian character of the Arab state are also downplayed. Finally, Habermas is not the only theoretical approach. Alternative theoretical lenses exist which permit the challenges faced by revolutionary action in these states to be seen more clearly. The political thought of Hannah Arendt is one such alternative.

The term 'public sphere' is an English approximation of the German word '*Öffentlichkeit*'. It refers to a conceptual motif expounded by second-generation Frankfurt School theorist and German public intellectual Jürgen Habermas, in his 1962 *Habilitationsschrift* thesis *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (*Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*).[2] *Structural Transformation* was Habermas' earliest and most radical contribution to a neo-Marxist social theory. It was thus acutely aware of the economic foundations of social phenomena. It traced the emergence of the European bourgeoisie as a 'new' social class founded on private commodity

[1] Jürgen Habermas (1989) [1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* tr. Thomas Burger with Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity Press), p.250.

[2] Other prominent members of the Frankfurt School have included Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Axel Honneth, Claus Offe and Oskar Negt.

ownership. As such, the emergence of the bourgeoisie was, for Habermas, intertwined with the historical development of capitalism in Europe. The economic foundations which gave it life, also played a role in its decline. The 'public sphere' motif denoted an abstract status-free social space where members of the bourgeoisie encountered each other, to avail themselves of and discuss issues of common concern. His later work on the public sphere, however, took care to dilute some of its more idealistic foundations.

In the preface to the 1989 English language edition of *Structural Transformation*, Habermas immediately outlined the problematic nature of the public sphere for the discipline of politics, in whose light it 'disintegrates' as an object of analysis and theoretical organisation. The 'bourgeois public sphere' is, as Habermas noted, 'a category that is typical of an epoch' and as such requires both a sociological and historical approach.[3] *Structural Transformation* boasted both historical and normative readings and the public sphere motif has demonstrated applied resonance across a range of disciplines. For deliberative democratic theorists, the public sphere motif portrays deliberation and debate as cornerstones of a functioning democracy, processes which nurture the formation of public opinion, the ultimate check on power.[4] For political scientists, these normative democratic processes can be measured through the parameters of operational concepts. Insights arising from this empirical theory of democracy can be used to generate predictions regarding *future* political behaviour in a given context.

Before proceeding with the main tasks of this conceptual analysis, it is important to be specific about the use of common terms and phrases throughout. This will help to avoid decontextualised misinterpretations and ensure maximum theoretical clarity. Care has been taken to avoid liberal usage of the phrase 'public sphere'. The thesis takes the view that the phrase 'public sphere' *should* connote some specific Habermasian insights. Defining the Habermasian public sphere itself is challenging because it resides within a wider philosophical framework of action. The action famework incorporates assumptions about human reason, morality and ethics. It should therefore be considered a particular product of Habermasian thought. It further acknowledges that Habermas has updated his 'public sphere' views on several occasions since the publication of *Structural Transformation* and therefore a single motif cannot be easily uncoupled from his larger body of work.

The thesis uses the phrase, 'public realm of political significance' to identify a distinction between approaches to political action in the MENA. It forms a category of

[3] Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p.xvii.
[4] Nancy Fraser (1990) 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to Actually Existing Democracy' *Social Text* Nos.25/26, p.57; Craig Calhoun (1992) (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press); Walter Lippman (1969) [1922] *Public Opinion* (London: George Allen & Unwin).

analysis - the public realm - within which the motifs of Jürgen Habermas' 'public sphere' and Hannah Arendt's 'space of appearance' appear as differing types of political action. The second half of the phrase - political significance - denotes the extent to which the public realm is acknowledged or recognised by the governance system within which it operates. It is not supposed to constitute a comment on its tenor or dynamics whether institutional, dominant or passive. It simply and solely indicates *the existence of a capacity for action* with consequences for politics, a capacity which both Habermas and Arendt have commented upon at length in their respective specialised theoretical languages.

Throughout the 2000s, media-politics scholarship of the MENA pointed towards an eagerly anticipated political emancipation for the Arab polities. This was through the expansion of information communication technologies, transnational satellite television, in particular.[5] It was eagerly awaited because of the chronically authoritarian character of the Arab state since independence. Although it has taken the structures and language of the Western state conception, the Arab state uses these elements to disguise 'indigenous systems of power and authority'. The Arab state has promoted a 'populist', 'clannish' power, expressed in the 'idioms of religion' as a means to ensure its own survival. This has come at the expense of the public realm, the political significance of which has been systematically eroded by the authoritarian state. The structures of the Arab state ensure that public criticism which 'might become the basis of an effective opposition' is neutralised at an early stage of its development.[6] As the greatest evidence yet that a public realm of political significance may be in emergence then, the Arab Uprisings are deeply significant for citizens of the differentiated societies of the MENA region, as they can be seen to suggest an end to one prevailing order and the beginning of another, still unknown and unspecific, order.

Taking its cue from the specific characteristics and behaviours of Qatari-owned Arabic-language transnational news station, al-Jazeera, the literature connected the informational role and psychological effects of satellite television with the generation of political action. The first and most successful of its kind in the region, al-Jazeera's *newness* reoriented the terms of the prevailing scholarly debate from an absence of democracy to

[5] Jon B. Alterman (2002) 'The Effects of Arab Satellite Television on Arab Domestic Politics' *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* No. 9, Fall/Winter; Emma C. Murphy (2006) 'Agency and Space: The Political Impact of Information Technologies in the Gulf Arab States' *Third World Quarterly* Vol.27, No.6, pp.1059-1083; Anissa Daoudi & Emma C. Murphy (2011) 'Framing New Communicative Technologies in the Arab World' *Journal of Arab and Muslim Media Research* Vol.4, No.1, pp.3-22.

[6] Charles Tripp (1996) 'Islam and the Secular Logic of the State in the Middle East' in Abdel Salam Sidahmed & Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.) *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), p.54, 56.

the *presence* of political action. Its candid and often provocative news and current affairs programming constituted for some a new rhetorical style which could be attributed to founding the beginnings of a new 'public sphere' and the widening of public space to include this new type of argumentation. It would be reasonable to assert then that the Arab Uprisings constitute in some part, the long-awaited empirical substantiation of the 'new Arab public sphere', nascent since the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Underpinned by an empirically-led literature, the articulation of a political action characterised by presence, as opposed to absence, has so far displayed at least two problematic tendencies. The first is a lack of theoretical detail regarding the precise processes by which the 'new' type of public argumentation empowered Arab audiences to become engaged in a 'public sphere' through the reproduction of these onscreen critical debating styles in the public realm. The second is an optimistic though determinist and myopic consensus on the political significance of the new technologies (as they are often described) which has proved to distract analysts from the diverse socio-economic realities which have come to be included within the 'Arab public sphere'.[7] The casting of the debate in terms of 'potential' rather than 'actual' exhibits a tendency to issue time-sensitive forecasts for political action. An example of this was the strength of commentators' conviction as to the relevance and direct impact of information and communication technologies on political structures such that the journal *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* was relaunched as *Arab Media and Society* in 2007 with the proclaimed goal of 'reporting a revolution.[8] The issuing of the Arab League Satellite Broadcasting Charter just a year later, demonstrated regimes' continued control over their respective informational spaces and public domains, the contravention of which would result in the confiscation of equipment and the withdrawal of licences.[9] Mindful of the failure of scholarship on Arab media to identify any real changes to the political landscape since the arrival of private transnational satellite television, commentators suggested that media power had been wrongly attributed to elements of assured success and the high hopes pinned on the effects of satellite television were unwisely optimistic. [10] Rather than reconsidering the original assumptions regarding the connection between technology and political action, satellite television was supplanted in the role of catalyst by mobile communication and the

[7] This perhaps contributed in part to the suprise expressed by many towards the actual outbreak of the Arab Uprisings.

[8] Lawrence Pintak (2007) 'Reporting A Revolution: The Changing Arab Media Landscape' *Arab Media & Society* (February), p.2. [http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=23].

[9] Daoud Kuttab (2008) 'Satellite Censorship Arab League Style' *Arab Media and Society* (March) [http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=651].

[10] Kai Hafez (2008) (ed.) *Arab Media: Power and Weakness* (London: Continuum), pp.4-5.

internet.[11] A second example of this is the short-sighted positive reception of events of the Arab Uprisings as demonstrating the type of political significance capable of effecting regime change. As the case of Egypt attests, attempts to dismantle the Mubarak regime have not proved to be as politically significant as they first appeared. While the symbols of the regime may have been removed from public view, the structures upon which the regime rested however have not changed much since the establishment of the republic in 1952. Political action therefore can only be as significant as its institutions allow and beyond the hype, the Egyptian citizen's political status has not changed all that much.

Although its conceptualisation has been described by some as parodical of the real political phenomenon of pan-Arab nationalism in the twentieth century,[12] the theoretical possibility of an 'Arab public sphere' thus signals a renaissance for the wider concept of the public sphere and public sphere theory, significant given their declining popularity in most other fields.[13] Usages of the public sphere motif (or 'concept' in some cases) in this specific context acknowledge *Structural Transformation*.[14] It has been summoned for a

[11] Bruce Etling, John Kelly, Rob Faris & John Palfrey (2010) 'Mapping the Arabic Blogosphere: Politics and Dissent Online' *New Media & Society* Vol. 12, No.8 (December), pp.1225-1243; Marc Lynch (2007) 'Blogging the New Arab Public' *Arab Media & Society*, Issue 1 (Spring) [http://www.arabmediasociety.com/articles/downloads/20070312155027_AMS1_Marc_Lynch.pdf]; For further historical background see Albrecht Hofheinz (2011) 'Nextopia: Beyond Revolution 2.0' *International Journal of Communication Special Feature: The Role of ICTs in the Arab Spring* Vol.5, pp. 1417-1434.

[12] See Khalil Rinnawi's (2006) *Instant Nationalism: McArabism, Al Jazeera and Transnational Media in the Arab World* (Lanham: University of America).

[13] In political philosophy and theory, Habermas does not have the same primacy in conceptualisations of power (and by extension the public sphere) as might appear to be the case in the literature on 'Arab', 'Muslim and 'Islamic' public spheres. Samantha Ashenden & David Owen's (1999) *Foucault Contra Habermas : Recasting the Dialogue Between Genealogy and Critical Theory* (London: Sage) and Michael Kelly's (1994) (ed.) *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press) describe Foucaults' attempt to 'unmask' Critical Theory methods of the social sciences, and compare Habermas concept's of 'communicative rationality' and 'discourse ethics' with Foucault's 'power analytics' and 'genealogy'. Foucault's critique of Habermas provided the context for poststructural 'critical' approaches to the nature of power within society, one such example is Dana R. Villa (1992) 'Postmodernism and the Public Sphere' *American Political Science Review* Vol.86, No.3, (September), p.712. Foucault's concept of 'governmentality' in particular has gained considerable visibility in the debate over technology and politics outside of the MENA-specific literature. See 'The Postdemocratic Governmentality of Networked Societies' in Jodi Dean, Jon W. Anderson & Geert Lovinck (2006*) Reformatting Politics: Information Technology and Global Civil Society* (London: Routledge), pp. xv- xxviii. On the left, Jodi Dean has written extensively on the limits of Habermas and public sphere theory when considering information technology alongside the capacity for political action. See (2003) 'Why the Net is not a Public Sphere' *Constellations*, Vol.10, No.2 pp. 95-112 and for an alternative approach; (2002) *Publicity's Secret: How Technoculture Capitalises on Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press) and (2010) *Blog Theory: Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive* (Cambridge, MA: Polity).

[14] Kai Hafez (2008) (ed.) *Arab Media: Power and Weakness* (London: Continuum); Seteney Shami (2009) (ed.) *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Social Science Research Council); Basyouni I. Hamada (2008) 'Satellite Television and Public Sphere in Egypt: Is there a link?' *Global Media Journal* Vol.7, Issue 12 (Spring); Lisa Wedeen (2008) *Peripheral Visions: Politics, Power and Performance in Yemen* (Chicago: Chicago University Press); Jon W. Anderson & Dale F. Eickelman (2003) (eds.) *New Media and the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press); Noha Mellor (2007) *Modern Arab Journalism: Problems and Prospects* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press); Marc Lynch (2003) 'Beyond the Arab Street: Iraq and the Arab Public Sphere' *Politics & Society* Vol.31, No.1, pp.55-91; Marc Lynch (2006) *Voices of the*

particular use, that is, to analyse ongoing Arab state-society relations under the conditions of persistent political authoritarianism.[15] These relations too are expressed in a specific fashion; they are *political* relations, ultimately ones that can be considered evidence of *future* political revolution. At the heart of this brand of 'public sphere theory' lies the 'public sphere', a type of natural bounded 'space' between state and society within which something approaching a democratic public opinion can be formed and broadcast. The function of this 'public opinion' is to hold government to account, a process which crystallises 'public opinion' as the basis of legitimation for the liberal democratic system of governance. Without the presence of 'public opinion', this space can be occupied and subsequently dominated by non-democratic interests and ceases to be a 'public sphere'. The bounded nature of the 'public sphere' suggests it is populated by 'citizen' members who meet the requisite entry criteria and exercise the political duties or opportunities afforded to them by the 'liberal representative democratic state'. The articulation of this space as seemingly 'natural' reveals public sphere theory's normative standpoint: a public sphere *should* exist because it too is a characteristic institution of liberal representative democracy, in a global political context where liberal representative democracy is the rule rather than the exception.

The new Arab public sphere presents itself as a pragmatic methodological and theoretical reformulation of political action in the MENA region. In light of the Orientalist critique of knowledge production on the Middle East, the explanatory mechanisms of the prevailing political culture approach to politics and by extension political action, displayed a tendency towards culture-based explanations and the reproduction of stereotypes of Arab and Islamic social norms.[16] The public sphere framework as deployed in the MENA empirical context implicitly claims to overcome these deficiencies by accommodating theoretical rigour alongside detailed cultural substantiation through empirical means in equal measure:

> 'public spheres as an analytical framework helps distinguish and explore three aspects of societal forms and practice [...] (1) the spatial formations of the public, or space of publicity; (2) the formation of publics as process and emergent

New Arab Public: Iraq, Al Jazeera and Middle East Politics Today (New York: Columbia University Press); Amal Jamal (2008) *The New Arab Public Sphere in Israel: Media Space and Cultural Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press); Muhammad I. Ayish (2008) *The New Arab Public Sphere* (Berlin: Franke & Timme).

[15] Jill Crystal (1995) 'Authoritarianism and its Adversaries in the Arab World' *World Politics* Vol.46, No.2 (January), pp.262-289; Karl Wittfogel (1957) *Oriental Despotism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press) identified the absence of a civil society to counteract despotic power to be characteristic of what was then described as 'Oriental' society.

[16] Armando Salvatore (2011) 'New Media and Collective Action in the Middle East: Can Sociological Research Help Avoiding Orientalist Traps? *Sociologica* Vol.3, pp.1-17.

> forms of publicity; and (3) the multiple institutionalisations of political participation'[17]

This general 'Habermasian' concept of the public sphere serves as a pragmatic disciplinary epistemological compromise between the positivistic orientation of political science and the interpretivist stance of area studies of the Middle East. As such any findings it provides are of relevance for both social scientists and area specialists. However, this public sphere analytical framework, broadly defined, has also exhibited at least three interconnected problematic dimensions:

1. ***Multiple Meanings connoted by the phrase 'public sphere' and its constituent components*** - The public sphere as a conceptual framework displays several usages and is deployed in a variety of contexts. It appears to be best described as an approach to evaluating political action that is empirically-led.[18] Yet, it simultaneously draws on wider terminology associated with Habermas' work.[19] There are both normative and empirical usages of the public sphere framework which result in many varying perspectives on what the phrase 'public sphere' means.[20] 'Public sphere' can mean a site where individuals act in front of others, a space that is controlled by authority in the interests of the public, a normative concept of the public sphere with structural preconditions and components

[17] Seteney Shami (2009) 'Introduction' in (ed.) *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Social Science Research Council), p.30.

[18] The height of the public sphere's popularity for MENA commentators was marked by the publication of Seteney Shami (ed.) (2009) *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Social Science Research Council) 'Reconceptualising Public Spheres in the Middle East and North Africa'. It was the culmination of an SSRC Project (2000-2005) designed to to bring conceptual and theoretical order: 'the impetus behind deploying the public sphere as a conceptual framework for the SSRC project and this volume was not so much to carve out a delimited space of social science inquiry that emphasies specific and distinct social and political processes, as much as to integrate, within a new analytical field, research endeavours that are currently fragmented and variously labelled as civil society, private/public domains, urban social movements, gender identities, youth culture, the welfare state, new media and cultural production. It is the integrative promise in the notion of public spheres that enables new perspectives of the region, its societies and politics', p.15. An online respository named 'Transformations of the Public Sphere' is available on the SSRC website [http://publicsphere.ssrc.org/]. The New Islamic Public Sphere Programme at the University of Copenhagen was launched in 2008. It 'maps and analyses how new media such as satellite TV and the Internet are changing Islamic norms, politics and identity in the contemporary Middle East.' [http://islamicpublicsphere.hum.ku.dk/].

[19] An example of this is the term 'communicative action' which is often interpreted as the deployment of action through the use of communications technologies or the deployment of action by individuals speaking to each other in public. Neither intepretations acknowledge the specific context in which Habermas presents communicative action as a democratic dam between individual autonomy and the influences of money and power.

[20] Examples of differing interpretations and approaches include Mehdi Abedi & Michael Fischer (1993) 'Etymologies: Thinking a Public Sphere in Arabic and Persian' *Public Culture* Vol.6, No.1, pp.222-224; Lisa Wedeen (2007) 'The Politics of Deliberation: Qat Chews as Public Spheres in Yemen' *Public Culture* Vol.9, No.1 (Winter) pp.59-84; Muhammad I. Ayish (2008) *The New Arab Public Sphere* (Berlin: Franke & Timme) & Amal Jamal (2001) 'State Building and Media Regime: Censoring the Emerging Public Sphere in Palestine' *International Communication Gazette* Vol.63, Nos.2-3, pp.263-82.

oriented towards liberal political democracy. It can even be a synonym for public opinion.[21]

At the methodological level, for the political scientists, 'public sphere' provides an explanatory framework for human action (in this specific case political action under autocratic or authoritarian conditions), usually articulated in operational models and concepts. Where a public sphere can be observed, therein resides the potential for future political transition. In contrast, area specialists view the public sphere as a social site or space, the dynamics of which can be substantiated through detailed historical description. This difference is perhaps best exemplified by the divergent answers to the questions 'is there a public sphere' and 'what is the public sphere?' The first, normative, question seeks to establish the existence of a public sphere in relation to its political significance within a larger normative framework. The second, empirical, question assumes the public sphere's existence and seeks to substantiate its contents. This theoretical formulation overlooks the fact that the term 'public sphere' is not a synonym for the 'public realm', but it is rather a theoretical peculiarity which emanates from a specific geneology. It appears initially in the work of Habermas and is subsequently modified by other normative theorists of deliberative democracy.

These varying usages of public sphere language deployed in the MENA context all reflect in some way on the political significance of *action undertaken in front of others*. As each study departs from a specific theoretical definition of what the public sphere is (as opposed to the public realm), it then generates a conclusion which implicitly supports the claim to its existence. The breadth of usages suggests then that a lack of consensus prevails over what 'a public sphere' actually is. The task of definition is then left to a single, albeit selective, Habermasian assessment of the public realm's political significance. An example of this would be:

> 'The importance of spaces that bring together strangers in discussion, opinion exchange and consensus building is at the heart of the Habermasian notion of public sphere, the sites of the coffee shop or *salons* providing the prime example of physical spaces, and journals providing the example of mediated spaces.'[22]

[21] See Miriam Hansen's 'Foreword' to Oskar Negt & Alexander Kluge (1972) [1993] *Public Sphere and Experience: Towards An Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press): She renders the term *öffentlichkeit* in at least three senses (1) as a spatial concept denoting the social sites or levels where meanings and manufactured, distributed and exchange; (2) as the ideational substance that is processed and produced within these sites; and (3) as 'a general horizon of social experience', p.9.

[22] Shami, 'Introduction', p.31.

2. ***Suspect ideological intentions*** - The public sphere framework, as a specific product of Anglo-American political thought, has its own political and in some cases ideological significance. Its use in relation to the MENA region peaked in the years immediately following 9/11 and the War on Terror. Its usage has drawn strong objections in two areas. The first is the tendency of specialists to approach political relations in terms of accounting for the 'absence' of liberal democracy rather than the presence of other forms of politics.[23] A'democratisation paradigm' has 'preoccupied' analytical accounts of political activity in the Arab states, evaluating the empirical reality in terms of 'potential' and 'prospects' for 'democracy'.[24] It documents prevailing political conditions and identifies a 'democratic deficit' to account for the missing 'outcome' of political democracy. The democratisation paradigm is considered controversial by many commentators on account of its implicit and explicit attempts to 'explain' this 'deficit'. For explanations, it relies on the identification of socio-economic factors. Its speculative tendency often leads it to make implicit predictions based on insights from comparable, successful transitions from political totalitarianism to political democracy. In these circumstances, the public sphere is the most recent analytical concept (its predecessor being 'political culture') to be used to document activity in the Arab states deemed relevant as evidence of 'political participation.' As a whole, this activity construed as a 'public sphere' constitutes observable evidence of the presence of the process of democratisation and ultimately liberal democracy. Thus from this perspective, the answer provided to the question 'is there a public sphere', is an assessment of 'democraticness' and constitutes part of an ideological discourse which places Western liberal democracy above other forms of governance. Use of the public sphere framework is, thus, the continued use of a hegemonic discourse which supports

[23] See 'Contesting Democracy: Discourses and Counter-discourses' in Larbi Sadiki (2004) *The Search For Arab Democracy: Discourses and Counter-discourses* (London: Hurst & Co.), pp.1-35. Examples of work conducted within this paradigm include Ghassan Salamé (1991) 'Sur la causalité d'un manque: Pourquoi le monde arabe n'est-il donc pas démocratique?' *Review Française de Science Politique* Vol.41, pp.307-340; Oliver Schlumberger (ed.) (2007) *Debating Arab Authoritarianism: Dynamics and Durability of Nondemocratic Regimes* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press); Oliver Schlumberger (2000) 'The Arab Middle East and the Question of Democratisation: Some Critical Remarks' *Democratisation* Vol.7, No.4, pp.104-132.

[24] See Lisa Anderson (1992) 'Remaking the Middle East: The Prospects for Democracy and Stability' *Ethics and International Affairs* Vol. 6, Issue 1, pp.163-178; (2001) 'Arab Democracy: Dismal Prospects' *World Policy Journal* Vol.18, No.3 (Fall), pp.53-60; Michael C. Hudson (1991) 'After The Gulf War: Prospects For Democratisation in the Arab World' *Middle East Journal* Vol.45, No.3 (Summer), pp.407-426; Gudrun Krämer (1992) 'Liberalisation and Democracy in the Arab World' *Middle East Report*, pp.22-25, 35; Oliver Schlumberger (ed.) (2007) *Debating Arab Authoritarianism: Dynamics and Durability of Nondemocratic Regimes* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press); Ibrahim Elbadawi & Samir Makdisi (2011) (eds.) *Democracy in the Arab World: Explaining the Deficit* (Abingdon: Routledge); Adeed Dawisha (2005) 'The Prospects for Democracy in Iraq: Challenges and Opportunities' *Third World Quarterly* Vol.26, Issue 4-5 pp.723-737; Volker Perthes (1994) The Private Sector, Economic Liberalisation and Democratisation: the Case of Syria and Some Other Arab Countries in Ghassan Salamé (ed.) (1994) *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp.243-269.

reproduction of the cultures associated with 'Western' modernisation and capitalism. The media, particularly, are strongly associated with the reproduction of these cultures (conceived of as resulting from media globalisation), on account of the perceived psychological effects brought about by the diffusion of information.[25]

Of particular relevance to this tendency is the construction of a public policy discourse which depicts the MENA as in need of transformation in order to overcome its suffering from a series of political, social and economic maladies.[26] This position is not a new phenomenon but something which emerges from a similar political rhetorical stance taken by the United States and European governments towards the USSR during the Cold War, which sought to bring about the conditions necessary to sustain democracy (a vibrant civil society and a pluralist economy) in order to delegitimise political communism as a form of governance. Media once again were noted as the key catalysts of transformation, as the capacity for private ownership provided the market pluralism needed to sustain a capitalist economy, having removed them from state ownership.[27] It was also public diplomacy media initiatives such as US-based Radio Free Europe which contributed to the eventual demise of ideological Communism. Political communism has since been replaced by authoritarianism as the target of these media initiatives which take the view that authoritarianism appears to be permanent, the institutional structures by which Arab authoritarian governments ensure their own political and institutional survival need to be dismantled and can be dismantled on a systematic basis.[28] As the last global region 'resistant' to democratisation, the explanation for the 'democratic deficit' are cultural formations deemed to be specific to the region (such as Islam and social organisation based on tribal lineages) which constitute obstacles to democratic 'progress.' This cultural essentialism depicts the region as resistant to democratisation on account of a perceived cultural backwardness, an ideological impulse identified by Edward Said in his critique of knowledge and power in *Orientalism*.[29]

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[25] Helga Tawil-Souri (2008) 'Arab Television in Academic Scholarship' *Sociology Compass* Vol.2, No.5, pp.1407-1410

[26] Karin Gwinn Wilkins (2004) 'Communication and Transition in the Middle East: A Critical Analysis of US Intervention and Academic Literature' *International Communication Gazette* Vol.66, No.6, pp.483-496.

[27] For a succinct account of the transitologist perspective on democracy see Colin Sparks (2008) 'Media Systems in Transition: Poland, Russia, China' *Chinese Journal of Communication* Vol.1, No. 1, p.11.

[28] Marc Lynch (2008) 'Political Opportunity Structures: Effects of Arab Media' in Hafez, *Arab Media*, pp.17-32. For a detailed historical overview and explanation of this view see Lisa Anderson (2006) 'Searching Where the Light Shines: Studying Democratisation in the Middle East' *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol.9 (June), pp.189-214.

[29] For more detail see Lila Abu Lughod's 'Anthropology's Orient: The Boundaries of Theory on the Arab World' and Lisa Anderson's 'Policy-Making and Theory Building: American Political Science and the Islamic Middle East' both in Hisham Shirabi (1990) (ed.) *Theory, Politics and the Arab World*: Critical Responses (New York: Routledge), p.81-131 and pp.52-80, respectively.

A second area in which the public sphere framework's ideological intentions have been questioned is in its relationship to a neoconservative and neoliberal political agenda. This was associated with the Bush administration during the War on Terror in the 2000s. The literature on the public sphere in the MENA region published since 2003 consulted for this thesis displays a marked concern for Arabs' perceptions of the United States following the invasion of Iraq in March of that year. Much of the debate is conducted in terms of a single Arab transnational political community in which 'Arab public opinion' is sought on 'Arab political issues'. These tend rather to be political issues of interest to foreign policymakers and politicians rather than citizens of Arab states.[30] An example of this would be the intense scholarly focus on al-Jazeera's political motives, having broadcast the Bin Laden tapes after 9/11.[31] The Arab public then is construed as a target audience for public diplomacy initiatives using international media such as al-Hurra TV.[32] This objection has been further advanced by the identification of apparent similarities between Habermas' normative cosmopolitan project and neoconservative and neoliberal commitments.[33]

3. ***Absence of justification for drawing on Habermasian thought for substantiating the 'Arab public sphere', 'Arab public spheres' and 'Islamic public spheres'*** - Despite the first two problematic dimensions, Jürgen Habermas' public sphere motif remains the dominant theoretical approach for commentators on political action in the diverse societies of the MENA region. Two aspects have taken the greatest prominence: the first is the description of rational-critical debate and media development as outlined in *Structural Transformation* and, the second, is the concept of communicative action as described in

[30] See Philip Seib (2005) 'Hegemonic No More: Western Media, the Rise of Al Jazeera and the Influence of Diverse Voices' *Review of International Studies* Vol. 7, No.4 (December), pp.601-615. Saima Saeed (2011) 'News Media, Public Diplomacy and the 'War on Terror' in Mahjoob Zweiri & Emma C. Murphy (eds.) T*he New Arab Media, Technology, Image and Perception* (Reading: Ithaca Press), pp.47-68; Peter A. Furia & Russell E. Lucas (2006) 'Determinants of Arab Public Opinion on Foreign Relations' *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 50, pp.585-605; Shibley Telhami (2003) *Arab Public Opinion on the United States and Iraq: Postwar Prospects for Changing Prewar Views* Brookings Review 21, pp.24-27; James Zogby (2002) *What Arabs Think: Values, Beliefs and Concerns* (Utica, New York: Zogby International); Marc Lynch (2003) 'Beyond the Arab Street: Iraq and the Arab Public Sphere' *Politics and Society* Vol.31 pp.55-91; Mohamed Zayani (2008) 'Courting and Containing the Arab Street: Arab Public Opinion, the Middle East and U.S. Public Diplomacy' *Arab Studies Quarterly* Vol.30, No.2, pp.45-64.

[31] Thomas L. Johnson & Shahira Fahmy (2008) 'The CNN of the Arab World or a Shill For Terrorists? How Support for Press Freedom and Political Ideology Predict Credibility of Al Jazeera Among its Audience' *International Communication Gazette* Vol. 70, No.5, pp.338-360.

[32] For further details of the legal and financial arrangements regarding US Public Diplomacy in the Middle East see Mamoun Fandy (2007) *(Un)Civil War of Words* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International) pp.103-119; see also El Mustapha Lahlali (2011) *Contemporary Arab Broadcast Media* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) pp.79-117.

[33] Vivienne Matthies-Boon (2011) 'Jürgen Habermas and Bush's Neoconservatives: Too Close For Comfort?' *Issues in Social Justice* Vol.5, Issue 2, pp.167-182.

Theory of Communicative Action Vol.1. However, there appears to be scant justification as to precisely why the Habermasian reading of the public sphere is the most suitable approach. In most cases, a short selective 'Habermasian public sphere' definition is provided as a backdrop through which to interpret empirical evidence. This is important because Habermas is not the only theorist to have conceived of a public realm of significance to a prevailing political order; others include Hannah Arendt and Carl Schmitt.[34]

There are several possible though speculative explanations for the non-problematisation of the Habermasian approach. The first of these is the resource constraints of academic research. Habermasian thought is renowned for its breadth, depth and trademark grammatical complexity which often confuses more than it elucidates. To read all of Habermas' work and fully appreciate its context and implications would take several years. Or perhaps it is a methodological phenomenon which deploys Habermasian terminology in a metaphorical sense to describe rather than theorise existing political dynamics. This imputes a teleological dimension to this analysis. Research questions often deploy the term 'public sphere' as a synonym for the public realm, despite its larger theoretical and philosophical assumptions. In attempting to locate a 'public' then, the target public realm of civil society is imbued with political significance from the outset when this may not be the case. Beyond this point of departure then, the 'public sphere' becomes an arbitrary standard against which all available empirical material can be made to conform.

This final problematic dimension then constitutes the point of departure for this thesis which seeks to ascertain with greater precision, the utility of the Habermasian public sphere framework in the recent debates over political action in the MENA region. Specifically, it questions the suitability of the Habermasian approach to a public realm of political significance for the empirical evidence collected and documented by the literature. It takes the view that 'public sphere' connotes a particular manner of organising relations of political significance in the public realm which serves to obscure the existing social, economic and political differentiation observable across the region. Through a strategy of sustained, systematic critique, this problematisation of the Habermasian approach does not dispute the existence of new forms of political action nor does it deny or downgrade the significance of the Arab Uprisings for the citizens of Arab states. Rather it takes the view that a re-examination of this theoretical approach will instead increase the significance of

[34] Hannah Arendt (1998) [1958] *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press), Carl Schmitt (2008) [1928] *Constitutional Theory* trans. Jeffrey Seitzer (Durham: Duke University Press).

those events which take place outside of and in opposition to elite political structures, thereby increasing their emancipatory scope.

In order to operationalise this strategy, the thesis examines the concept of the public sphere in order to highlight the areas in which current theoretical formulations of an Arab public sphere differ from the Habermasian trajectory of events described in *Structural Transformation*. To that end, it is concerned with identifying historical empirical evidence analogous to that which Habermas draws upon to substantiate the historical trajectory of his own 'bourgeois' public sphere. The reasoning behind this is firstly to demonstrate the extent of empirical evidence available and secondly to draw attention to the tendency towards stylisation and essentialisation required to draw up a comparative analytical frame in this way. Chapter One specifies the context and nature of the debate over the political action in the Arab Middle East as primarily approached in terms of the presence of 'public spheres'. It specifies the intellectual genealogy of the reading of public spheres as developing from Jürgen Habermas' views on the development of a public realm of political significance in Europe as expounded in *Structural Transformation*. Habermas' reading of the public realm has been subjected to a series of modifications by theorists of democracy operationalising its characteristics in order to reflect the empirical realities of will formation in late industrialised societies. Several operational definitions exist which have been drawn upon by the two dominant approaches to conceptualising the public realm in Arab states: that of political science of the Middle East and Islamic Studies. Both connect themselves to Habermas and *Structural Transformation* to support empirical descriptions of the public realm. However, they differ in their degree of commitment to generating normative theory. Most importantly, the respective conceptualisations of Arab and Islamic 'public spheres' exhibit several characteristics which appear to be inconsistent with their original theoretical framework which associates itself with Habermasian public sphere language.

Chapter Two further interrogates the Habermasian characteristics identified in Chapter One, to discern the extent to which they correlate with Habermas' actual views on his notion of the public sphere. *Structural Transformation* is considered first, but the discussion also includes insights from *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action, Theory of Communicative Action* Vol. 1 and *Between Facts and Norms*. It is important at this stage to strive to be as clear as possible when discussing the language of the Habermasian public sphere. This establishes 'Habermasian' definitions of the 'bourgeois public sphere', the 'public' and 'private' domains and further increases the level of specificity of the meaning of 'public sphere' for Habermas.

Having established the nature of debate in a 'Habermasian public sphere', Chapter Three raises these Habermasian characteristics in relation to the MENA context to ascertain whether or not this type of debate can be identified. The objective of this chapter is to evaluate the spread and amount of data to ascertain its resonance and thus plausibility of an emergent proto-public sphere consistent with the trajectory of development of a public realm of political significance. It assesses the empirical dimensions of debate in this context by providing evidence from the scholarly literature analogous to that identified by Habermas in *Structural Transformation* in the following areas: change in the mode of production, the emergence of a privatised status, existence of reading societies and salons, and a distinction between moral and ethical questions. The majority of evidence in this section is drawn from the later stages of the Ottoman Empire (a trans-national system of governance) and the years leading up to independence for the Arab states from the Ottoman Empire.

Subsequently, Chapter Four addresses the claim made by the scholarly literature in Chapter One that the 'Arab public sphere' is enabled by and thus contingent on the private ownership of information and communication technologies, specifically transnational-satellite television.[35] The mass media also feature in Habermas' account of the bourgeois public sphere and are considered to have moved the public sphere into a second stage of transformation (in *Structural Transformation*, a stage of decline) It considers the institutions of the Arab regional media system in detail, in both national and transnational contexts, firstly to identify the economic foundations of the newly-emerged 'Arab public sphere' and secondly to discover the extent to which economic interests influence the so-called 'Arab public sphere' in order to assess the extent of its similarity to the foundation of the European bourgeois private sphere. It pays special attention to the larger commercialisation of the media system. Through systematic measurement of the empirical evidence against Habermas' insights on the mass media, it concludes that this is not a public sphere in Habermas' sense. It ultimately suggests that a Habermasian designation to these activities may not be the most helpful lens through which to consider the specific characteristics of the public realm of political significance in the MENA region. In light of

[35] Followers of this debate will have noticed that the thesis does not deal with social media technology, which has proved to have developed its own political significance in relation to the Arab Uprisings. It does not address the usage of the public sphere concept in relation to social media. The reason for this is that the claims of MENA-specific public sphere approaches were solely related to advancing claims about the emancipatory capacity of satellite television for most of the 2000s. This is because of the significance of private satellite television ownership in the MENA as an instance of the private commodity ownership identified by Habermas as the key reason for the emergence of the European bourgeoisie.

this, Chapter Five suggests a preliminary alternative conceptualisation of a public realm of political significance, found in the work of Hannah Arendt who has written on the issue of political revolution specifically in sections from *On Revolution*, *The Human Condition* and *Origins of Totalitarianism*. Her views address how action in the 'space of appearance' can lead to the dismantling of an old order and the creation of a new one. In contrast to the Habermasian approach, the Arendtian approach does not downplay the significance of the impact of colonialism on the MENA. It also does not emphasise the transnational media market. Nor does it de-emphasise the diversity of the region by considering a single category. Rather it is an approach which considers the creation of power in the public realm to allow for the enshrinement of authority in institutions.

Chapter One

Usages of the Public Sphere Concept in Political Theory, Political Science of the Middle East and Islamic Studies

Only when the exercise of political control is effectively subordinated to the democratic demand that information be accessible to the public, does the political public sphere win an institutionalised influence over the government through the instrument of law-making bodies.'[1]

Introduction

The central contention of this chapter is that the complexity of Habermas' views on the public sphere is not reflected in the 'Habermasian' approach to political action in the MENA. It presents an approach replete with 'slippages, conflations and analytical fuzziness'.[2] The majority of studies which invoke a public sphere theoretical framework have associated themselves with Jürgen Habermas' public sphere motif (most cite *Structural Transformation*; the remainder cites *The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article*). They draw upon it in various, innovative ways. Almost all public sphere analyses depart from the same point in the political theory literature, specifically, a connection between Habermas and the public sphere. Beyond this however, they differ in their interpretation of the phrase 'public sphere'. Interpretations range from an extraction of an operational blueprint (a conceptual framework against which an empirical context is measured) to an application of public sphere language to describe the context's discursive characteristics.

This conceptual analysis begins then with an examination of the usages of the public sphere concept as they relate to political action in the MENA. This will help assess whether the Habermasian approach is as 'Habermasian' as it claims to be. The concept has appeared most visibly in political science of the Middle East, Islamic studies and democratic theory. All three literatures are linked by their common interest in the behavioural evidence of political participation. This chapter highlights the 'Habermasian' characteristics from political science of the MENA and Islamic Studies' comments on the public sphere and political action. It draws attention to the specific salience of media

[1]Jürgen Habermas, Sara Lennox & Frank Lennox (1974) [1964] 'The Public Sphere' *New German Critique* Vol.3, pp.49-55. This definition also appears in Jürgen Habermas (2001) [1989] *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp.102-3.

[2] Seteney Shami (ed.) (2009) *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Social Science Research Council), p.129.

technology in both ‘Arab’, ‘Muslim’ and ‘Islamic’ conceptualisations of the public sphere. The media, thus, allows a confrontation with the authoritarian state and its structures.

The operational concept of the public sphere emerged as a methodological upgrade to the inadequacies of the concept of political culture. For MENA commentators, political culture incorporated a tendency towards a deeply-held, or even inherent cultural superiority on the part of political science. From the 1950s until the 1990s, the burden of proof for the concept of political culture was the presence of political institutions. The public sphere framework however, circumvented institutions to cast *debate in front of others* as the evidence of participation. Islamic Studies draws on the public sphere concept to present accounts of public debate over religious authority. In doing so it attempts to reconfigure the normative intent of the public sphere framework away from its Anglo-American underpinnings towards an expressly Islamic normativity. In democratic theory, the public sphere concept has undergone several modifications since its first outing in *Structural Transformation*. These changes came as a result of pragmatic interventions by Habermas himself but more importantly by Nancy Fraser, who is acknowledged to a lesser extent by the literature. The concept has evolved primarily in response to questions posed by the reality of democratic governance and citizenship in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. These concerns reveal the public sphere concept to have a cosmopolitan orientation.

This backdrop of evolving definitions then places usages of the public sphere concept into a meaningful theoretical context. Together, the literatures present several common empirical claims about public spheres and the MENA. Specifically these are that ‘Arab’ and ‘Islamic’ public spheres appear to be characterised by several common elements. The presence of these empirical claims also reveals a further theoretical claim regarding the significance of the public realm to the prevailing political order in the MENA. It assumes that *the public realm is of such significance to the prevailing authoritarian order that it can drive political change autonomously*.

1.1 The Public Sphere and the Study of Political Action in the MENA

The ‘Arab public sphere’ is a concept used to document and describe the political impact of media expansion in the MENA region since the 1990s. It reached the height of its popularity during the early 2000s. While in recent years it has been applied to internet technologies, its most widely documented association is with the expansion of the satellite

television market.[3] Three inter-connected properties infuse it with the significance to modify the prevailing authoritarian order. These are: the capacity to self-emancipate its members from an authoritarian predicament, the capacity to create political agency, the capacity to confront, and subsequently, transform the authoritarian state and its infrastructures.

As a 'transformative' entity, the 'Arab public sphere' emerged against a backdrop of chronic authoritarianism which had seen the possibility of autonomous political action all but extinguished. Despite some economic liberalisation reforms in the 1980s, regimes remained oriented towards their own survival rather than the political autonomy of their citizens.[4] Where some political reforms could be observed they were superficial, establishing institutional actors (elections and political parties) which could be easily co-opted into the state bureaucracy.

The Arab public sphere therefore is considered to be a completely new political phenomenon. Its emergence coincided with the rapid expansion of the regional media market in the 1990s. This period saw the introduction of private ownership of satellite television channels.[5] Where the only choice had been state media channels, consumers could now choose to catch non-state channels from across the Middle East.[6] In addition to private individuals, political and religious organisation too saw the opportunity to spread their message beyond their immediate membership.[7] Despite the non-state criteria for the political impact of these channels, commentators have predominantly focused on Qatari-funded al-Jazeera when formulating claims. Al-Jazeera seemingly revolutionised the Arab mediascape.[8] Its programming in particular was 'uncensored political coverage quite

[3] Of a population base of 77.1 million TV households, satellite reception increased from 61% in 2008 to 92% in 2013 according to EUTELSAT TV Observatory MENA 2014. Available at [http://www.eutelsat.com/home/services/broadcast--media/our-audience/tv-observatory-mena-2014.html]

[4] Specifically, these were those Arab state leaders whose ruling powers during the 1980s and 1990s were in practice, unlimited. The evidence of this can be seen by the length of terms in office. Examples include: Husni Mubarak, President of Egypt between 1981 and 2011, Muammar Gaddafi leader of Libya between 1969 and 2011, Saddam Hussein was President of Iraq between 1979 and 2003. Bashar al-Assad has been President of Syria since 2000 and was preceded in the post by his father, Hafez, who presided over Syria for 29 years.

[5] In reality, private ownership was restricted to Lebanon which allowed it in 1994. Morrocco and Jordan allowed it in 2002; Kuwait licensed three channels in 2003, as Oman in 2004 followed by Tunisia, Saudi and Libya. Syria followed in 2005. Naomi Sakr (2007) *Arab Television Today* (London: IB Tauris), p.15.

[6] Satellite television also had high numbers of viewers as often several households would share one satellite dish, cutting the cost. State channels had characteristically devoted the majority of their attention to the social and diplomatic diaries of Arab leaders rather than the activities of representative assemblies. See Faisal Al-Kasim (1999) 'Crossfire: The Arab Version' *Harvard International Journal of Press Politics* Vol.4, No.3, p. 94

[7] Examples include Hezbollah's al-Manar and Hamas' al-Aqsa TV. Philip Seib (2005) 'Hegemonic No More: Western Media, the Rise of al-Jazeera and the Influence of Diverse Voices' *Review of International Studies* Vol. 7, No. 4, (December), pp.601-615.

[8] Ahmet Uysal (2011) 'The New Frontier in International Politics: The Nature of Al Jazeera's Prime-time Broadcasting in Arabic and English' in Emma Murphy & Mahjoob Zweiri (eds.) *The New Arab Media:*

different from any Arabic-language television programming previously seen.'[9] As such it filled a'political void' where pluralism and 'political will' had been missing. The visibility given to political dissidents from across the Arab states on al-Jazeera's talk shows was for some, an indicator of a wider revolutionary aim.[10]

The transnational media market has enabled the presentation of a challenge to the authoritarian state and the political status quo in the MENA. The transnational dimension specifically has allowed for the development of a supranational 'constituted community' capable of circumventing national prohibitions on public expression[11] This identity community bears resemblance to the terms of Benedict Anderson's encapsulation of imagined communities of nationalism, as its members are aware of each other's existence despite never meeting. It is further imagined to be politically significant and both 'inherently limited and sovereign' as it includes those diaspora networks which reside outside the MENA region which communicate in Arabic.[12] It is an imagined community particularly in the sense that it also overlooks the actual inconsistencies, divisions, irregularities and exploitations which exist within a given society on a day-to-day basis by conceiving of the community in terms of a 'deep, horizontal comradeship'.[13] The shared heritage gives rise to topics of discussion in the Arab public sphere which are focused on current everyday political issues which emphasises anti-American sentiments or secular nationalism alongside 'Islamic democracy'.[14] These topics emphasise a self-conception characterised by subordination to and domination by Western hegemony.[15] The imagined

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Technology, Image and Perception (Ithaca Press: Reading), p.4. The entry of al-Jazeera into scholarship was marked by Faisal al-Kasim's article 'Crossfire: The Arab Version'. Crossfire refers to a current events debate show airing between 1982 and 2001 on CNN, The format pitted two opposing political opinions (loosely conforming to 'liberal' and 'conservative' against each other and would often culminate in a candid and fiery exchange of views. Al-Kasim was presenter of al-Jazeera's flagship political affairs programme *al-Ittijah al-Muakis* (The Opposite Direction) from 1996 until April 2011. *Al-Ittijah al-Muakis* showcased the same fiery argumentative style as Crossfire. Beyond al-Jazeera, wider regional examples include al-Arabiyya's *Sena'at al-Mawt* (Death Industries), Qatar TV's *Lakom Al-Karrar* (The Decision is Yours), Dream TV's *10 PM* and LBC's *Kalam Enaas* (Talk of the People).

[9] Naomi Sakr (2001) *Satellite Realms: Transnational Television, Globalisation and the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris), p.13.

[10] Mohammed Zayani (2005) *The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media* (New York: Pluto Press), p.2. Of less importance to the proponents of the Arab public sphere was the 'colonising' aspect of the state interaction with the transnational media. The aftermath of 9/11, for example, saw the Arab states deploy a series of counterterror measures aimed specifically at the ICT sector. The Arab League issued a region-wide satellite Charter in 2008 which many saw as a gag order against the criticism aired by *Al Jazeera*.

[11] Muhammad I. Ayish (2008) *The New Arab Public Sphere* (Berlin: Franke & Timme), p.171.

[12] Marc Lynch (2006) *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al Jazeera and Middle East Politics Today* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp.248-9.

[13] Benedict Anderson (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books), p.6-7; It also bears resemblance to the 'structure of feeling' notion in Raymond Williams (1961) *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus).

[14] Ayish, *New Arab Public Sphere*, p.171.

[15] Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public*, p.56.

community emphasised issues of 'shared rather than local concern', asserts 'the existence of an Arab people having a common story and common identity' and exhibited 'high levels of political interaction.' It created a new Arab political subject, who, having been 'dormant' previously had been awakened by the new media to have a 'critical perspective oriented towards the questioning of political legitimacy:

> 'Where the Arab public sphere has for decades been dominated by the voice of the state, al-Jazeera ushered in a new kind of open, contentious politics in which a plethora of competing voices clamored for attention. Rather than imposing a single, overwhelming consensus, the new satellite television stations, along with newspapers, internet sites and many other sites if public communication, challenged Arabs to argue, to disagree, and to question the status quo. These public arguments, passionate in their invocation of an aggrieved Arab identity, sometimes oppressively conformist and sometimes bitterly divisive, sensationalist but liberating, define a new kind of Arab public and new kind of Arab politics.'[16]

The transnational media provided a political opportunity and enabled activities which the prevailing authoritarian conditions had made impossible. The documentation of the 'communications revolution' has relied on the strategic use of 'Habermasian language' to endow its findings with political significance. The widespread use of the 'normatised Habermasian principles' of 'rational debate', 'assembled publics', 'emancipatory potential', 'discussion of issues of common concern in front of others' and 'autonomy from the state' has produced an operational analytical framework which selects empirical evidence on the basis of pragmatically selected motifs of 'Habermasian' thought.[17] Usages of the public sphere motif (or 'concept' in some cases) in this specific context

[16] Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public* p.2; See also Jon. W. Anderson & Dale F. Eickelman (2003) *New Media and the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press); Emma Murphy (2006) 'Agency and Space: The Political Impact of Information Technologies in the Gulf Arab States' *Third World Quarterly* Vol.27, No.6, pp.1059-1083; Mohammed El Oifi (2005) 'Influence Without Power: Al Jazeera and the Arab Public Sphere' in Mohamed Zayani (ed.) *The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media* (London: Pluto Press), pp.66-79; Kai Hafez (2008) *Arab Media: Power and Weakness* (London: Continuum); Philip Seib (2008) *The Al Jazeera Effect: How the New Global Media is Reshaping World Politics* (Washington: Potomac Books); Terry Regier & Muhammad Ali Khalidi (2009) 'The Arab Street: Tracking A Political Metaphor' *Middle East Journal* Vol.63, No.1 (Winter).

[17] On 'development of a political press from newspapers and journalism' see Noha Mellor (2007) *Modern Arab Journalism: Problems and Prospects* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), on 'culture consumption enabled by media' see Amal Jamal (2009) *The New Arab Public Sphere in Israel: Media Space and Cultural Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press); On 'emancipatory potential' see Anissa Daoudi & Emma Murphy (2011) 'Framing New Communicative Technologies in the Arab World' *Journal of Arab and Muslim Media Research* Vol.4 No.1 pp.3-22; On 'public deliberation' see Lisa Wedeen (2007) 'The Politics of Deliberation: Qāt Chews as Public Spheres in Yemen' *Public Culture* Vol.9, No.1 (Winter), pp.59-84.

acknowledge *Structural Transformation.*[18] Several descriptive elements of *Structural Transformation* have gained particular prominence in the conceptualisation of the Arab public sphere: (these elements have themselves been idealised in order to fit the empirical context and are indicated in brackets): the trajectory of the development of the bourgeois public sphere (i.e. the empirical specificities of a structural socio-political transformation), the perceived overcoming of absolute divine authority by the bourgeoisie (the overcoming of arbitrary political authority), the description of coffeehouses and *salons* as places where culture could be accessed and debated (debate in front of others with political significance), the development of the political press from these locations (technology allows for mass scale participation), description of public opinion (as a fact of political democracy) towards the end of the book. They can also be observed in attempts to provide a definition of the phrase 'Arab public sphere'. It incorporates 'the exchanges of arguments oriented toward producing consensus', 'social, cultural and political negotiations and deliberations', 'active arguments before an audience about issues of shared concern, 'a space for exchanging information on common topics, which in turn form public opinion', 'pan-Arab news media constitute a public sphere for rational debates among concerned citizens'.[19] To acknowledge the provenance of these abstractions (presented as 'Habermas' public sphere' or 'Habermasian public sphere') *Structural Transformation* is often cited in its entirety without identifying specific pages. Those who attempt to provide a definition of 'public sphere' from *Structural Transformation,* itself an English approximation of the German term 'Öffentlichkeit', are usually left unsatisfied and have turned to this 1993 definition from *The Postnational Constellation*:

> 'a contested participatory site in which actors with overlapping identities, engage in negotiations and contestations over political and social life' the public sphere is that site of interaction in which actors routinely reach

[18] See Hafez (2008) (ed.) *Arab Media: Power and Weakness* (London: Continuum); Seteney Shami (2009) (ed.) *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Social Science Research Council); Basyouni I. Hamada (2008) 'Satellite Television and Public Sphere in Egypt: Is there a link?' *Global Media Journa*l Vol.7, Issue 12 (Spring); Lisa Wedeen (2008) *Peripheral Visions: Politics, Power and Performance in Yemen* (Chicago: Chicago University Press); Jon W. Anderson & Dale F. Eickelman (2003) (eds.) *New Media and the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press); Mellor, *Modern Arab Journalism;* Marc Lynch (2003) 'Beyond the Arab Street: Iraq and the Arab Public Sphere' *Politics & Society* Vol.31, No.1, pp.55-91; Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public*); Amal Jamal (2008) *The New Arab Public Sphere in Israel: Media Space and Cultural Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press); Muhammad I. Ayish (2008) *The New Arab Public Sphere* (Berlin: Franke & Timme).

[19] Marc Lynch (1999) *State Interests and Public Spheres,* p.21; Jamal , *The New Arab Public Sphere in Israel,* p. 3; Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public,* p.92; Mellor, *Modern Arab Journalism,* pp.75, 96.

> understandings about norms, identities, and interests through the public exchange of discourse.[20]

The preference for this definition has precipitated an emphasis on identity politics (not a concern for Habermas in *Structural Transformation*) in the 'Arab public sphere' conceptualisation. As this definition encapsulates the public sphere concept in light of *all* of Habermas' writings until 1992 (including *Theory of Communicative Action*), it incorporates a procedural dimension in which Habermas' 'communicative action' can be deployed for the purposes of human emancipation often discussed in terms of the existence of a public sphere. This explains the existence of identity concerns in the conceptualisation of the Arab public sphere which privileges just one type built upon a 'shared Arab-Islamic heritage'.

At the theoretical level, the Arab public sphere concept brings with it specific explanatory mechanisms for political action. It shares these mechanisms with its predecessor political culture.[21] It is a conception of socio-political change predicated on the *psychological effects of media technologies on the individual.*[22] The concept of political culture proved to be a distinct reorientation of political science away from an emphasis on the formal institutions of democratic politics towards voting behaviour and political attitudes, more specifically democracy's *social* conditions. Amid a growing interest in 'replicating the conditions of Western democratisation', the concept of political culture in the MENA context is most widely associated with modernisation theory, for which it

[20] Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public,* p.11. This book incorporates a chapter titled 'The Structural Transformation of the Arab Public Sphere' (pp.29-88) and then draws on a public sphere definition cited from Craig Calhoun (1993) 'Civil Society and the Public Sphere' *Public Culture* Vol.5, No.2, pp.267-280.

[21] Classical texts in political culture research include Lucien Pye & Sidney Verba (1965) *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Gabriel Almond & Sidney Verba (1963) *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press). For a conceptual analysis of the body of work incorporated by political culture see Stephen Welch (1993) *The Concept of Political Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan) Harry Eckstein (1988) 'A Cultural Theory of Political Change' *American Political Science Review* Vol.82, pp. 789-804; David Laitin (1988) 'Political Culture and Political Preference' *American Political Science Review* Vol.82, pp. 589-93; Seymour Martin Lipset (1990) 'The Centrality of Political Culture' *Journal of Democracy* Vol.1, pp.80-83; Robert Putnam (1993) *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Sid Tarrow (1992) 'Mentalities, Political Cultures and Collection Action Frames: Constructing Meanings Through Action' in Aldon D. Morris & Carol McClurg Mueller (eds.) *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press). MENA-specific engagement with the concept of political culture include Gabriel Ben-Dor (1977) 'Political Culture Approach to Middle East Politics' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.8, No.1 (January), pp.43-6; Michael C. Hudson (1967) 'A Case of Political Underdevelopment' *The Journal of Politics* Vol.29, Issue 4 (November), pp.821-837; Michael C. Hudson (1991) 'After The Gulf War: Prospects For Democratisation in the Arab World' *Middle East Journal* Vol.45, No.3 (Summer) pp.407-426; James A. Bill & Carl Leiden (1984) 'The Politics of Patrimonial Leadership' in *Politics in the Middle East* 5th Edition (Boston: Little Brown), James A. Bill (1994) 'Comparative Middle East Politics: Still in Search of Theory' *Political Science and Politics* Vol.27 (September), pp.518-9; Larry Diamond (1993) (ed.) *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner), p.171.

[22] See also David J. Elkins & Richard Simeon (1979) 'A Cause in Search of its Effect, or, What Does Political Culture Explain?' *Comparative Politics* Vol.11, No.2 (January), pp.127-145.

documented the participative outcomes of socio-economic modernisation.[23] Daniel Lerner's seminal book *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernising the Middle East* which charted the development of what he described as the 'participant style of life' encapsulated the replicatory spirit of the modernisation discourse:

> 'Modernisation then, is the unifying principle in this study of the varied Middle East. The term is imposed by recent history. Earlier one spoke of Europeanisation, to denote the common elements underlying French influence in Syria-Lebanon and British influence in Egypt and Jordan. More recently, following a century of educational and missionary activity, Americanisation became a specific force and the common stimuli of the Atlantic civilisation came to be called Westernisation. Since World War II, the continuing search for new ways has been coupled with repudiation of the Western aegis. Soviet and other modernising models, as illustrated by India and Turkey have become visible in the area. Any label that localises the process is bound to be parochial. For Middle Easterners more than ever want the modern package, but reject the label 'made in USA' or for that matter 'made in USSR'. We speak nowadays of modernisation.'[24]

Participation was a desirable consequence of the larger process of socio-economic modernisation. It was considered by some to be one of the *ideal operational conditions for stable democratic states.*

Political culture, as an analytical category borne of modernisation theory, proved problematic when raised in non-western empirical contexts.[25] As an approach predicated on an elite empirical definition of democracy (as the presence of institutions at the expense of internal political dynamics), the concept of political culture tended towards the documentation of institutions. It saw political change brought about by a combination of social reorganisation and psychological reorientation, rather than any raw economic forces.

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[23] Daniel Lerner (1958) *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernising the Middle East* (New York: Glencoe Free Press); Samuel Beer (1962) *Patterns of Government: The Major Political Systems of Europe* 2nd Ed. (New York: Random House); Philip E. Converse (1964) 'The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics' in David E. Apter (ed.) *Ideology and Discontent* (New York: Free Press), pp.206-261; Robert Dahl (1966) *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies* (New Haven: Yale University Press); Seymour Martin Lipset (1981) [1960] *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (New York: Anchor); Lucien Pye & Sidney Verba (1965) *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

[24] Daniel Lerner (1958) *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernising the Middle East* (New York: Glencoe Free Press), p.45. At this time it was assumed that communications technologies were ahistorical, acultural and thus apolitical, assumptions which have received extensive attention by scholars of international communication concerned with cultural imperialism. For further detail see Herbert I. Schiller (1969) *Mass Communications and American Empire* (New York: A.M. Kelley) & (1976) *Communications and Cultural Domination* (White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press) & Marwan M. Kraidy (2013) 'The Production of Modernisation: Daniel Lerner, Mass Media and the Passing of Traditional Society' *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews* Vol.42, pp.106-108.

[25] For a comprehensive summary of the main critiques of modernisation theory; see Irene L. Gendzier (1985) *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press).

The societies of the MENA region were conceived as 'traditional' and not yet constituted by 'moderns'.[26] Lerner and other modernisation theorists believed political change to be a uni-directional and constant process, bound for a liberal pluralist politics. Local political institutions were expected to decline in the face of industrialisation, urbanisation, extension of literacy education and the media, 'modernity's' 'syndrome' of changes.[27] The various ways in which one could participate were by attending school, reading newspapers, taking up paid employment, buying goods for cash on an open market and electoral participation through voting. Citizens were also expected to have opinions on public matters. The corollary expectation of these individuals is that their opinions will matter *i.e.* are of significance to the prevailing political order.[28]

This 'modernity' was not, however, one characterised by self-superiority or ideological hegemony, it was simply for Lerner a type of social behaviour conducive to 'participation'. Media was significant because it represented the conduit by which social behaviour compatible with 'modernity' was made known to would-be participants. The modernisation process required the development of a 'mobile personality' oriented towards a type of 'empathy' that allowed individuals to firstly 'operate efficiently in a changing world' and to secondly 'see oneself in the other fellow's situation.' [29] 'Empathy' incorporated two mechanisms which allowed the individual to extend their conception of their own identity in response to new developments in their habitual environment i.e. that they are not used to. The first is 'projection' which 'facilitates identification by assigning to the object certain preferred attributes of the self; others are 'incorporated because they are like me'. The second 'introjection' builds on projection and 'enlarges identity by attributing to the self-certain desirable attributes of the object; others are incorporated because I am like them or want to be like them'. The technologies of mass communication (radio, television and film at the time of Lerner's writings) enabled individuals to access the 'infinite vicarious universe' made up of the various experiences of other people. Investment in mass communications technology in particular benefitted the socio-economic modernisation efforts of new and emerging countries, as Wilbur Schramm noted 'with adequate and effective communication, the pathways to change can be made easier

[26] Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, p.78. Peter Gran notes the salience of 'the 'normal' social-psychological chracteristics of the Muslim' in orientalist approaches to theorising political relations in Islamic societies; 'What a Middle Easterner lacks in the larger sense of village identity or national identity, he/she makes up for in an intensely strong family solidarity and religio-ethnic solidarity.' Peter Gran (1980) 'Political Economy as a Paradigm for the Study of Islamic History' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.10, p.515.
[27] Gendzier, *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World*, p.5.
[28] Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, p.51.
[29] *Ibid*., pp.47-50.

and shorter'.[30] By accessing the universe, receivers can live vicariously the experience of new people they encounter, thus changing their perceptions of their own original environment of experience. [31] The hypothesis generated from this line of thought is: high empathic capacity is the predominant personal style only in modern society which is distinctively industrial, urban, literate, and *participant*. The change in lifestyle was supposed to mean that regional socio-cultural specificities would be disregarded.

Since Lerner, the psychological aspect of this approach has remained the key basis of explanation for action in political science of the Middle East. It underpinned the political culture approach to studies of political change in the 1960s and 1990s.[32] The operational definition of political culture circulating during this period was 'the particular distribution of patterns or political orientations - attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system'.[33] The empirical experiences of other global regions (such as Latin America and later the USSR) supported modernisation theory's theoretical claims (socio-economic modernisation increased political participation). These experiences provided substantive empirical evidence of the 'two-step effect' of media privatisation in order to upset totalitarian political orders. The first step was the introduction of market dynamics to upset regime elites and the second, was the introduction of competition into public opinion by showcasing competing perspectives on media channels.[34] The introduction of legislative provisions supportive of private ownership effectively upset the prevailing monopolistic order.

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[30] Wilber Schramm (1964) *Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in the Developing Countries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), p.ix. For a wider critique of modernisation theory and approaches see Irene L. Gendzier (1985) *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), p.5.

[31] Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society,* p.52-53.

[32] Examples include Michael C. Hudson (1967) 'A Case of Political Underdevelopment' *The Journal of Politics* Vol.29, Issue 4 (November), pp.821-837; Michael C. Hudson (1991) 'After The Gulf War: Prospects For Democratisation in the Arab World' *Middle East Journal* Vol.45, No.3 (Summer) pp.407-426; James A. Bill & Carl Leiden (1984) 'The Politics of Patrimonial Leadership' in *Politics in the Middle East* 5th Edition (Boston: Little Brown), James A. Bill (1994) 'Comparative Middle East Politics: Still in Search of Theory' *Political Science and Politics* Vol.27 (September), pp.518-9; Larry Diamond (1993) (ed.) *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner), p.171.

[33] Lisa Anderson (1995) 'Democracy in the Arab World: A Critique of the Political Culture Approach' in Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany & Paul Noble (eds.) *Political Liberalisation and Democratisation in the Arab World Vol.1 Theoretical Perspectives* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner), pp.78-79; Michael C. Hudson (1995) 'The Political Culture Approach to Arab Democratisation: The Case For Bringing it Back In, Carefully' in Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany & Paul Noble (eds.) *Political Liberalisation and Democratisation in the Arab World Vol.1 Theoretical Perspectives* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner), pp.68-71.

[34] For further detail see Samuel Popkin (2006) 'Changing Media, Changing Politics' *Perspectives on Politics* Issue 2, pp.327-341; Marc Lynch (2008) 'Political Opportunity Structures: Effects of Arab Media' in Kai Hafez (ed.) *Arab Media: Power and Weakness* (London: Continuum), pp.17-32; Adam Przeworski (1991) *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press); Robert D. Putnam (1988) 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games' *International Organisation* Vol. 42, No.3, pp.427-460; Thomas Risse-Kappen (1991) 'Public Opinion, Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies' *World Politics* Vol.43, No.4, pp.479-512.

Commentators attributed the structural changes of the post-Soviet states to a burgeoning 'civil society' fanned by the media. Of Hegelian derivation, the concept of civil society was 'a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication.'[35] In the MENA region, national development since the 1950s did not result in the expected level of participation on the timescale envisaged by its theorists. Rather, its own metric demonstrated a developing totalitarian tendency. Media had not performed its role as a 'harbinger of modernity' in the MENA as effectively as it had in the USSR. The central control of mass media technologies resulted in the restriction of information to political elites, rather than society at large. As such the evidence of 'civil society' which had brought down communism in Latin American and the USSR was not observable in the MENA's case. The resilience of authoritarianism in the MENA confounded the predictions made by the modernisation theorists. MENA analysts did not have a large scale of available data on the attitudes of citizens of MENA countries. [36] They had to rely on the provision of 'self-fulfilling prophecies' drawn from cultural observations and thus lacked any reasonable consideration of causal connections between the correlated phenomena of socio-economic modernisation and political participation.[37]

The public sphere analytical framework emerged as something of a conceptual antidote for the supposed failings of political culture. In response to the charges of essentialism and particularism levelled by the Orientalism critique, a conscious attempt was made by area-specialists to overcome the methodological shortcomings of political culture and the articulation of political action relative to the 'Orient's special place in European Western experience.'[38] Marxian political economy was invoked instead as a

[35] Jean L. Cohen & Andrew Arato (1992) *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), p.ix

[36] Exceptions to this include Mark A. Tessler et al. (1987) *The Evaluation and Application of Survey Research in the Arab World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press); Tawfic Farah & Yasumasa Kuroda (1987) *Political Socialisation in the Arab States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers).

[37] Gabriel Ben-Dor (1977) 'Political Culture Approach to Middle East Politics' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.8, No.1 (January), pp.43-63.

[38] Edward W. Said (1978) *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), p.1; In addition to Anderson 'Democracy in the Arab World', pp.77-92, see Michael C. Hudson (1995) 'The Political Culture Approach to Democratisation: The Case for Bringing It Back In Carefully' in Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany & Paul Noble (eds.) *Political Liberalisation and Democratisation in the Arab World Vol.1 Theoretical Perspectives* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner), pp.61-76; Mark A. Tessler (1999) (ed.) *Area Studies and Social Science: Strategies For Understanding Middle East Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press); Lisa Anderson (1990) 'Policy-making and Theory Building: American Political Science and the Islamic Middle East' in Hashem Shirabi (ed.) *Theory, Politics and the Arab World: Critical Responses* (New York: Routledge), p.54-55. For more detail on the Orientalism critique see Zachary Lockman (2004) *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.182-214;

theoretical framework that constrained the explanatory basis of MENA socio-political phenomena to expressly economic dynamics.[39] As a materialistic 'theory of reality', it centred on the dynamics of resource distribution in a global 'world-systems' context.[40] Although this reflected the empirical reality of economic development and growth in the Arab states during the 1970s and 1980s, it was not completely free from the orientalising tendencies of its predecessors, modernisation theory and political culture. The inclusion of the 'asiatic mode of production' within the political economy analytical framework replicated orientalist attitudes as a result of its contingency on an 'oriental despotism'.[41] Furthermore, as Alan Richards and John Waterbury noted, the Marxian frame incorporated a tendency towards a deterministic class-based analysis (ruling class vs. non-ruling class) which 'conformed to social formation' already in existence.[42] Political economy, therefore, seemed less useful for the emerging reality of chronic authoritarianism as its ruling class orientation could not account for nor identify non-elite forms of political action.

In contrast to political culture, the usage of the public sphere concept in the empirical context of the MENA region is distinctive. As a conceptual component of a diluted form of neomarxist political economy, the concept of the public sphere attempts to overcome the charges of essentialism and determinism. An association with Habermas' Critical Theory method is central to this project; it overcomes determinism by emphasising the specific social context of material political formations. This liberates non-elite forms of political action from the predetermination of the class analytic approach. The public sphere concept developed from the *empirical specifics of political action in the region* rather than as a general operational model around which the empirical specifics are then made to fit.[43] The privatisation of nationalised and monopolistic economies provided the institutional

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Larbi Sadiki (2004) *The Search For Arab Democracy: Discourses and Counter-discourses* (London: Hurst & Co,), pp.3-6, 140-176.

[39] Examples of this type of work include John Waterbury (1983) *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press). The first generation of post-Orientalism critique promoted by area-studies specialists had to stress the common integration of the Middle East into the world economy e.g. Helen Lackner (1978) *A House Built on Sand: A Political Economy of Saudi Arabia* (London: Ithaca Press) Further examples include Alan Richards & John Waterbury (1998) *A Political Economy of the Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press) p.6: 'In general we view political-culture analysis as a potentially a more powerful tool than the psychological analysis of leaders, we shall refer to political-cultural variables with some frequency'

[40] Peter Gran (1980) 'Political Economy as a Paradigm For the Study of Islamic History' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.11, p. 518.

[41] Nazih N. Ayubi's (1995) *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris) employs a Marxist 'modes of production' analytical framework which includes the asiatic mode of production as a category.

[42] Alan Richards & John Waterbury (1998) *A Political Economy of the Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press) 2nd ed., p.3. The first section of chapter two is titled 'Economic Growth and Structural Transformation'.

[43] Ruth Lane identified the same 'procrustean' tendency within the concept of political culture (1992) 'Political Culture: Residual Category or General Theory?' *Comparative Political Studies* Vol.25, No.3, pp.362-387.

basis for political opportunity structures which would have otherwise not existed, allowing for private commodity ownership which then entitled the owner to a public say. The salience of media technology to the Arab public sphere is also reflected in the literature on 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' public spheres. This chapter now turns to consider these conceptualisations which also share a state confrontation dimension.

1.2 The Concept of the Public Sphere and Islamic Studies

'Muslim' and 'Islamic' public spheres are built on more complex conceptual foundations than the 'Arab public sphere'. Islamic Studies' encounter with the concept of the public sphere has been overtly concerned with its association with Habermas. As a consequence, greater care has been taken when conceptualising 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' public spheres to set aside the 'Habermasian' overtones of the public sphere concept. The main issue here is of course, the visible lack of treatment given to religion in *Structural Transformation.* Many have interpreted this as a deliberate oversight on Habermas' part which has resulted in religion taking on a marginal role in the public sphere motif. This poses some difficulties then for applying the public sphere concept to those societies where religion has not retreated from the public domain as it has in Europe.

'Muslim' public spheres are, in the first instance, empirical concepts because they document and describe the Muslim-majority social dimension of the Arab states. They are thus assumed to be present in all Muslim-majority states. The 'Islamic' public sphere by contrast refers to a normative concept of a single transnational society of Muslims. It counts the *Umma* (community of the faith) as its public and is governed by Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and its interpretations of the *maslaha* (common good). The attempt to conceptualise public spheres 'beyond Habermas' has however only been partially successful. In order to give prominence to the political effects of 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' public spheres, commentators have prioritised documenting processes of deliberation and deliberative politics. As a predominantly sociological approach, it is important to acknowledge that its concern is not with political power per se (unlike the political scientists). This approach holds that the power and authority are determined by divine law which includes provisions on political governance and management. Political power therefore cannot be easily abstracted from religious law. The Islamic studies literature shows 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' public spheres to be characterised by deliberation, group identity, the pursuit of the common good and 'connectedness'. Despite liberating the public realm from its Habermasian roots, commentators continue to refer to it as a 'public sphere'

rather than the public realm. The rationale for this is the implicit value of the Habermasian public sphere principles which, as this section will demonstrate, are still deployed when commentators imbue these emergent senses of public with the political significance to confront the authoritarian state.

Structural Transformation does not consider the role of religion and the bourgeois public sphere to any great extent.[44] Comparative historical sociologists documenting religious social formations have tried to look beyond Habermas for a theoretical framework of the public realm.[45] Dale F. Eickelman and Armando Salvatore claim that religious movements such as pietism and revivalism did 'institute a sense of legitimacy through congregational forms of deliberation' and should not be discounted from the conception of the public sphere.[46] This was not straightforward for a comparative method which, by definition, looks for similarities with preexisting formations in order to ascertain differences. The separation of cases into 'European' and 'non-European' depicted those non-European cases in a light which highlighted the extent of their deviation from modernity. At the core of modernity's cultural programme was 'the crystallisation and development of a mode of interpretation of the world […] of a distinct social *imaginaire*, indeed of the ontological vision […], combined with the development of a set of new institutional formations.'[47] Ascendency to modernity was marked by a decline in the legitimacy of the 'divinely preordained and fated cosmos.' The cultural programme of Western modernity invoked distinct changes to an individual's behaviour in the social and political domains.[48]

[44] This does not however mean that Habermas has overlooked religion in other writings; see Jürgen Habermas (2002) *Religion and Rationality: Essays on Reason, God and Modernity* (ed.) Eduardo Mendieta (Cambridge: Polity Press) and (2001) [1997] *The Liberating Power of Symbols: Philosophical Essays* tr. Peter Dews (Cambridge: Polity Press)

[45] This view incorporates an assertion that it is possible to observe distinct public spheres in pre-modern Muslim majority societies if one draws a distinction between the public sphere enabled by 'multiple modernities' and a Habermasian public sphere of 'rational-critical' discourse. Dale F. Eickelman (2002) 'Foreword' in Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt & Nehemiah Levtzion (eds.) *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies* (Albany: State University of New York Press) p.2; Dale F. Eickelman & Armando Salvatore (2002) 'The Public Sphere and Muslim Identities' *European Journal Of Sociology* Vol.43, Issue 1 (April), pp.92-115; Armando Salvatore (2008*) The Public Sphere: Liberal Modernity, Catholicism, Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), p.259-260.

[46] Dale F. Eickelman & Armando Salvatore (2004)'Muslim Publics' in (eds.) *Public Islam and the Common Good* (Leiden: Brill), p.6.

[47] Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (2001) 'The Civilisational Dimension of Modernity: Modernity as a Distinct Civilisation' *International Sociology* Vol.16, No.3 (September), p.321; For a critical perspective on modernity see Talal Asad (1993) *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).

[48] Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (2000) 'Multiple Modernities' p.2-3.

This method presented those non-European cases alongside a problematic yardstick; in terms of failure to reach 'Western modernity'.[49] Max Weber's sociology of religion exemplifies this essentialising tendency in scholarship. Weber contrasted 'Islam', a conception drawn from the Islamic social regulations for life on earth, with his more positive conception of Calvinist Christianity. This was a selective characterisation, Islam was depicted in terms of its 'alleged historical failure to develop rational capitalism, 'over-directness in the definition of the God-man relationship', 'innerworldly asceticism' and an essentially 'political character'.[50] In addition to the ideological criticisms, this approach, in conceiving of Islam in an essentialising monolithic manner, was therefore unable to account for changing social and political dynamics in religious-majority states:

> 'The belief that Islamic traditions excluded any differentiation of religion and politics has not quite disappeared from public discourse but scholarly debates have effectively demolished it. It is now widely accepted that Islamic history is characterised by specific forms and trajectories of differentiation, neither identical with those of other civilisations, nor reducible to a lower degree of the same dynamic. In the course of the first Islamic conquests, much older traditions and mechanisms or imperial rule were integrated into the new order, and the political sphere thus acquired forms and meanings foreign to the original religious vision of the conquerors. At the same time, the religious framework itself developed in ways conducive to a certain autonomy of social life and restraints on political control over it.'[51]

The multiple modernities thesis set aside the concern for a single modernity and reoriented the Orientalist perspective on Islam. It conceived of Islamic societies as operating within a trajectory of modernity shaped by their historical and cultural dynamics. Despite the advantages of this new perspective for macro sociological analysis, it could not link the analysis of long-term trends and transformations to that of 'enduring and immutable cultural patterns.'[52] The conceptual public sphere, however, allowed for the study of transformations on a micro-scale including social formations such as nations, diaspora and religious groupings such as the Islamic world. This method could ultimately conceptualise a wholly Islamic 'perspective on modernity'.[53] From this perspective the

[49] The charge of 'failure to reach Western modernity' is not the view of the author, it is merely drawing attention to the problematic yardstick by which the comparative method had previously accounted for social and political change.

[50] Armando Salvatore (1996) 'Beyond Orientalism? Max Weber and The Displacements of 'Essentialism' in the Study of Islam' *Arabica* Tome 43, Fasc.3 (September), pp.464-466.

[51] Johann P. Arnason (2001) 'Civilisational Patterns and Civilising Processes' *International Sociology* Vol.16, No.3 (September), p. 399.

[52] Arnason,'Civilisational Patterns and Civilizing Processes', p. 390.

[53] Armando Salvatore (2011) 'Eccentric Modernity? As Islamic Perspective on the Civilizing Process and the Public Sphere' *European Journal of Social Theory* Vol.14, No.1, pp.55-69; Armando Salvatore (2010)

public sphere can accommodate these divergent trajectories of development because it implies a larger set of differentiated spaces within state and society:

> 'The concept of the public sphere implies that there are at least two other spheres from which the public sphere is more or less institutionally and culturally differentiated: the official sphere and the private sphere. The public sphere is therefore a sphere located between these two. It is a sphere where collective improvements (the common good) are at stake. While this also holds for the official sphere, in the public sphere, this business is also carried out by groups that do not belong to the ruler's domain. Rather, the public sphere draws its personnel from the private sphere: it expands and shrinks according to shifting involvement of such personnel […].'[54]

This shows the public sphere to be a location (between the official and private spheres), to have infrastructure (personnel) and capacities (collective improvements). The public can be constituted by anyone present in the public sphere that does not have a role in the official sphere. The public sphere itself does have a specific function, which is the same function as the official sphere: harnessing the common good. It is not a space of contestation, the extent of its influence is contingent on interpreting the common good from the examples of the official sphere and the private sphere. It is institutionalised but yet autonomous from the political order:

> 'Such public spheres are constructed through several basic processes. The first is one of categorisation, which defines and frames a discourse beyond face-to-face interaction. The second process is one of reflexivity, which invites a debate on the problems of the common good, on criteria of inclusion and exclusion, on the permeability of boundaries, and on the recognition of the 'other'. The third process stabilises and institutionalises this sphere. Public spheres tend to develop dynamics of their own, which, while closely related to that of the apolitical arena, are not coterminous with it and are not governed by the dynamic of the latter.'[55]

'Repositioning 'Islamdom': the Culture-Power Syndrome Within a Transcivilisational Ecumene' *European Journal of Social Theory Vol.*12, No.2, pp. 99-115.

[54] Shmuel N. Eisenstadt & Wolfgang S. Schluchter (1998) 'Introduction: Paths to Early Modernities: A Comparative View' *Daedalus* Vol.127, No.3 (Summer), p.10. In this article, the authors do not provide a citation for their definition of the public sphere, citing instead economist Albert O. Hirchsmann's book (1982) *Shifting Involvement: Private Interest and Public Action* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), p.63. Hirschman does not provide a definition of the public sphere either, but comments on the relationship between 'public' and 'private' in the following terms; '*public* action, action in the public interest, striving for the public happiness – these all refer to action in the political realm, to the involvement of the citizen in civic or community affairs' (p.6). Later in the article the authors mention Habermas' *Structural Transformation* gaining 'wide recognition of after the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the inauguration of the concept of civil society as a norm for Middle and East European societal reconstruction.' Since its publication, 'the concepts of public sphere and civil society have been combined.' They cite the book in its entirety without specifying specific pages.

[55] Eisenstadt & Schluchter, 'Introduction', p.10.

It sets the public sphere aside as an entity autonomous from the political order; its influence rests 'on interpretations of the common good vis-à-vis the ruler, on the one hand, and the private sphere, on the other.'[56] In contrast to the Habermasian (Kantian) emphasis on the autonomy of the public sphere from institutions and representatives of authority, Dewey's public instead emphasises their necessity in forging a consensus on the 'common good' :

> 'Those indirectly and seriously affected for good or for evil form a group distinctive enough to require recognition and a name. The name selected is the Public. This public is organised and made effective by means of representatives who as guardians of custom, as legislators, as executors, judges etc. care for its especial interests by methods intended to regulate the conjoint actions of individuals and groups. Then, and in so far association adds to itself political organisation, and something which may be government comes into being.'[57]

The tenor of the Muslim public sphere is one of 'shared anticipation'; a sense of expectations regarding others is developed through the public authoritative mediation of 'shared habits and practice'. The necessity for 'guardians of custom' suggests that the reproduction and sustenance of tradition is a key function of this public sphere. If this is the case then, it is not an autonomous realm of contestation, but rather an 'orchestrated realm of the permissable.'[58] Its substance (i.e. what goes on inside it), is the sharing of ideas of community, identity and authority.' It operates with reference to a type of communication hierarchy; priority is given to those who can 'authoritatively assert this alternative sense of identity.'[59]

The choice of the public sphere concept was therefore a deliberate one. The alternative option, the Hegelian concept of civil society, had gained prominence for scholars alongside the demise of the Soviet Union in the 1980s and 1990s. This conception was historically rooted in German society of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It highlighted a concern for 'the creation of a sphere of autonomy relative to a traditionally interventionist, regulating princely and absolutist 'polizeystaat', a state governed by princely ordinances or policies that could in principle apply to any domain of societal activity.'[60] This conception of civil society was not considered suitable for those societies whose developmental trajectories differed from this one.

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[56] Miriam Hoexter & Nehemiah Levtzion (2002) 'Introduction', p.9.
[57] John Dewey (1927) *The Public and its Problems* (New York: Henry Holt), p.35.
[58] Eickelman & Salvatore 'The Public Sphere and Muslim Identities', p.105.
[59] Anderson & Eickelman, *New Media and the Muslim World*, p.6.
[60] Eisenstadt, 'Multiple Modernities' p.10.

The 'Islamic' public sphere differs from the Muslim public sphere because it has a normative basis. As a transnational, diasporic community of public virtue, it seeks to replicate and reproduce Islamic values and norms. As demonstrated throughout this section, it describes a public space in both abstract and concrete terms through its conceptual contingency on transnational senses of belonging and Islamic social institutions.[61] If a transnational Islamic public sphere can be conceptualised, then the concept of the public sphere no longer needs to be framed in terms of the nation state.[62]

The normative basis for the 'Islamic public sphere' is derived through its 'function' which is the active public discussion of the primary sources of Islamic legal authority (the *Qu'ran* and the *shariʿa* [moral code of conduct]) through the practice of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) by the *ʿulamaʾ* (Muslim legal scholars). The issuance of *fatawas* (legal rulings) therefore constitutes the active contestation and constant redefinition of Islamic tradition in front of the *umma* (community of believers), i.e. in public in Muslim societies:

> 'Yet at stake is the redefinition of Islamic normativity or shariʿa, the understanding of which has become more contested than ever. Some parts of the transnational Islamic public, such as that existing among European Muslims, are in the vanguard of this contestation and redefinition. This process remains focused on the what, while it avoids an open determination of the who, i.e. how membership is defined, how membership rights are accessed and how authority over members is determined. It is a transnational public that exalts the movement dimension to the detriment of institutional crystallisation.'[63]

This is supported by the advent of the internet which has increased public accessibility to *fuqaha* (jurists) to gain rulings on questions of *shariʿa* compliance in daily life. At the core of institutional arrangements within the Islamic public sphere is the concept of *maslaha* (of the common good or public interest). This normative concern therefore modifies the descriptive usage of the language of the public sphere found in previous conceptual commentary. The Islamic public sphere can be said to have both a function and a set of discursive institutions that enable and sustain its existence.

An 'Islamic public sphere' draws on an historical backdrop of those historical moments that were not affected by non-Muslim influences such as the periods preceding colonialism and the global endorsement of the nation state as the only institutional

[61] Nancy Fraser (2007) 'Transnationalising the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World' *Theory, Culture & Society* Vol.24, No.4, p.7.
[62] Armando Salvatore (2007) 'The Exit from a Westphalian Framing of Political Space and the Emergence of a Transnational Islamic Public' *Theory, Culture & Society* Vol.24, No.4, p.51.
[63] Salvatore, 'The Exit from a Westphalian Framing of Political Space', p.50.

framework for modern governance. It is also supported by the transnational grouping of its members, the *Umma*, given their dispersal across many states and thus severs the conceptual link between the notion of the public sphere and the modern nation state. It demonstrates a political capacity in response to single issues but cannot be said to be politically efficient as a whole on account of the numerous legal, financial and political networks that govern its members.[64]

The 'Islamic public sphere' is also considerably more associated with Habermasian insights regarding the theory of communicative action and discourse ethics. It incorporates an orientation towards the development of a discursive consensus of the common good through rational argument and Islamic forms of reasoning (through the practice of *fiqh*). Commentators have also considered its economic foundations:

> 'There is no fiscal basis to this discourse of *maslaha* outside of the national framework of taxation and redistribution, but one should not underestimate the efficacy of networks of solidarity and mutual financial help on specific issues, ranging from catastrophe relief through education to support of national liberation movements or of boycotted governments committed to those Islamic tenets.'[65]

The expansion of the regional media market is also said to have had two related consequences for the conceptualisation of 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' public spheres. The first is satellite television's (and more recently the internet's) contribution to an emergent sense of 'public' in Muslim-majority Arab states.[66] These Muslim public spheres provide a space which increases the awareness of ways in which 'Islam and Islamic values can be created.' This public space is 'discursive, performative and participative'. Contributors to the discussion present themselves from a wide range of diverse locations: 'trusted partners, channels, media, topics, genres, and other communicative conventions set within different social realities'.[67] Media give additional circulation to those public exchanges made in secluded circumstances such as 'face-to-face personal settings such as coffeehouses, dowrehs, the majlis, and informal discussion circles form university dormitories to parlours, to dissident cells and other places where familiars meet.'[68] Diversified forms of communication obliged 'even the most authoritarian regime to justify its actions' by

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[64] Salvatore, 'The Exit from a Westphalian Framing of Political Space', p.51.
[65] Armando Salvatore & Mark LeVine (2005) (eds.) *Religion, Social Practice and Contested Hegemonies: Reconstructing the Public Sphere in Muslim Majority Societies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
[66] For a detailed historical overview see 'Transnational Public Spheres: Information and Communication Technologies in the Muslim World' in Peter G. Mandaville (2001) *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Ummah* (London: Routledge), pp.152-177. See also Dale F. Eickelman & James Piscatori (1996) *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press)
[67] Anderson & Eickelman, *New Media and the Muslim World,* p.6.
[68] *Ibid*., p.46.

rapidly increasing the intensity of discussions both within and beyond national boundaries.[69]

The second consequence media expansion has had for the 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' public sphere conceptualisations lies in its presentation of a challenge to the political status quo. The significance of this new space was that it was located beyond state control at the 'intersection of religious, political and social life'.[70] Expanding forms of media have allowed the number of these types of public challenges to increase exponentially, while at the same rate diluting the strength of their respective claims to authority of interpretation. The significance of the technologies was not that they called the public sphere 'into being'. It was rather that they allowed for increased transparency as the diversified forms of communication 'obliges even the most authoritarian regimes to justify its actions' by rapidly increasing the intensity of discussions both within and beyond national boundaries.[71]

The challenge takes place on two fronts. This first concerns the nature of authority in the presence of differing interpretations of Islam and its practice. Although this can be seen at the domestic level, it has also had consequences at the regional level. This can be seen in the attempts by Saudi Arabia to prevent non-Wahhabi Islamic discourses from gaining further ground in the region. Qatar has become a particular target in recent months. The second concerns political legitimacy on a domestic level. The self-consciously Islamic dimension of the varying strains of political Islam, for example, is a direct consequence of religion's encounter with the authoritarian state.[72] In Egypt, for example, Nasir's revolutionary republic took great care to neutralise the potential conflict from religious quarters. The nationalisation of Al-Azhar University in 1961 led to the emergence of a new type of political behavior oriented to creating new spaces for religious intervention.[73]

It is in presenting this political challenge that a 'Muslim' public sphere conceptualisation takes on Habermasian characteristics. While the topic of debate for this 'public' is Islam broadly conceived, it also incorporates an interest in 'politics'. This type of politics is one that is micro-level and acted out in associational life, the existence of which the authors believe to be paramount to the development of a type of associational

[69] Eickelman & Salvatore, 'Muslim Publics', p.9.
[70] Jon W. Anderson & Dale F. Eickelman (2003) (eds.) *New Media and the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), p.2.
[71] Eickelman & Salvatore, 'Muslim Publics', p.9.
[72] Charles Tripp (1996) 'Islam and the Secular Logic of the State in the Middle East' in Abdel Salam Sidahmed & Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.) *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), p.54.
[73] Malika Zeghal 'Religion and Politics in Egypt: the Ulema of Al Azhar, Radical Islam and the State (1952-94)' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 31, No. 3, pp.373-75.

life oriented towards 'the creation of civil society'.[74] It demonstrated that the Habermasian public sphere language identified in the previous section arises and is used in a liberal fashion. The public realm is referred to as the public sphere despite the aforementioned connections to the specific theoretical developmental trajectory outlined in the first section of this chapter. Rather, there is more theoretical innovation which begins with tackling the question of the Habermasian public sphere's European philosophical underpinnings.

Commentators have also drawn on the work of John Dewey as a conceptual framework for the 'Muslim' public sphere, rather than employing the Habermasian action framework. The Habermasian version emphasises a Kantian notion of 'public', the appearance of discourse among individuals who are independent of the order of authority. Ideas presented in this way are judged on their own merits; and are located in a space that is 'separate from both the formal structures of religious and political authority and the space of household and kin.'[75] In contrast to commentators' interpretations of Habermas' view of the public sphere ('ideally an intermediate space in which ideas are presented on their own merits by self-reflective moral subjects rather than as emanating from authorities such as preachers, judges and rulers' and where 'authority is vested in the public sphere itself […] all participants have in principle an equal opportunity to persuade others') Dewey considers the 'pervasiveness of religious values' that introduce 'perspective into the piecemeal and shifting episodes of human existence' and sustain the 'implicit public interest'. This process has a practical outcome for society; it turns 'human impulses' towards 'affection, compassion and justice, equality and freedom.'[76]

At the same time, however, it relies on some familiar Habermasian themes to endow these observations with political significance. In the public sphere all participants have 'in principle, an equal opportunity to persuade others.'[77] The advantage of the public sphere concept was that it shifted the emphasis 'from the political authorities to society and stresses the close connection between the autonomy of this sphere and the idea of the social order as promulgated in a specific society or culture without necessarily developing in the direction of Western political institutions.'[78] At the same time it also incorporated a concern for the political order. Salvatore notes 'in its kernel the notion of the public sphere rests on the idea of acting, arguing, and deliberating in common ways that are legitimated through a rational pursuit of collective interest, which also implies a fair degree of

[74] Eickelman & Salvatore, 'Muslim Publics', p.1.
[75] Eickelman, 'Foreword', p.2.
[76] Eickelman & Salvatore 'Muslim Publics', p.6, 8 cite John Dewey (1934) *A Common Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp.24, 28, 80-82.
[77] Eickelman & Salvatore 'The Public Sphere and Muslim Identities', p.95-6. See also pp. 94-98.
[78] Miriam Hoexter & Nehemiah Levtzion (2002) 'Introduction', p.9.

transparence of communication among the actors involved in the process.'[79] 'Muslim' public spheres can also contribute to 'civic pluralism' and thus further democratisation.[80] Referring to Habermas, Hefner says that Habermas has accepted the 'premises of the pluralist model' and also emphasised that, 'in addition to structural countervalences and great political compromises, democratisation needs something more specifically cultural. In particular it requires a public sphere and a participatory culture that encourages citizen participation in discussions of matters of shared interest'.[81] This increased level of 'publicness' in the MENA (which means 'visibility' rather than a Habermasian 'representative publicness') did not guarantee an increase in 'participation in associational life'. Its mere presence, however, did constitute a positive event, as it formed 'a foundation from which associations can begin to emerge'.

As this discussion has established many different interpretations of the public sphere concept are in use within Islamic studies. Describing this social phenomenon a public sphere has created some specific methodological problems. As a conceptual framework, it provides order for the categorisation of the emergent 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' senses of public. At the same time, however, the importance of deliberation to both Muslim and Islamic public sphere conceptualisations has shown the Habermasian legacy to be almost impossible to set aside. For many, the Habermasian definition of the public sphere failed to address the role of religion in the development and expansion of the bourgeois public sphere.[82] More significant here is the extent to which these 'Habermasian characteristics' differ from Habermas' actual views on the public sphere. This chapter now turns to consider the public sphere concept generally in democratic theory to establish whether or not a single Habermasian definition of the public sphere can be extracted.

[79] Armando Salvatore (2007) *The Public Sphere: Liberal Modernity, Catholicism, Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), p.7.
[80] Robert Hefner (2003) 'Civic Pluralism Denied: The New Media and Jihadi Violence in Indonesia' in Jon W. Anderson & Dale F. Eickelman (eds.) *New Media and the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p.158-159.
[81] Hefner, 'Civic Pluralism Denied', p.159.
[82] The definition of the public sphere cited here is from Jürgen Habermas (2001) [1989] *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), p.102-103: 'A realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private citizens assemble to form a public body.'

1.3 From the Bourgeois Public Sphere of *Structural Transformation* to the Public Sphere of Democratic Will Formation

In order to demonstrate the extent of the Habermasian public sphere's decontexualisation in the empirical context of the MENA region, it is necessary to be specific about the developmental context of the general public sphere motif. This involves considering Habermas' *Structural Transformation* alongside recent operational applications as an analytical tool in the normative political theory of democracy. This section takes a chronological approach and itemises the major steps in the body of work often described as 'public sphere theory'. The Habermasian public sphere is not a static concept but one which has evolved alongside Habermas' changing views since 1962. It would therefore be misleading to suggest that a single definition of the public sphere exists.

The first outing of the public sphere motif occurs in Habermas' *Structural Transformation.* Habermas' method has proved to be the ultimate source of the scholarly attention it has garnered. Its historical account of the European bourgeoisie's development has received the most attention; it begins with reflections on socio-political phenomena from a much earlier era. It discusses the development of a private realm from the times of the Greek city state, which gives life to a public realm during the time of the bourgeoisie. It then discusses how the bourgeoisie takes charge of the public realm. This leads to its degeneration at the hands of the mass media in the 1960s.

The 'structural transformation' aspect of the book then can refer to *several* historical events which occur during this time period. The first is the 'structural transformation' from feudalism to capitalism. A second 'structural transformation' is the overcoming of domination (firstly evidenced by the decline of Church institutions, the decline of absolutism, the realisation of liberal rights). A third 'structural transformation' is where the bourgeoisie introduces legal provisions to protect its interests (the conditions of the market conducive to their lifestyle, the consolidation of the bourgeois constitutional state). A fourth structural transformation is the killing off of the public sphere's autonomy by the mass media (evidenced by the refeudalisation of the public sphere around economic interests, the rise in public relations, advertising etc.) Together these moments of *Structural Transformation* show that although the book tells a historical story, this story is punctuated by normative developments: individual autonomy emerges amid the decline of absolute authority, the emergence of a public sphere allows for the realisation of universal rights.

Structural Transformation is however, a neo-Marxist approach to this 'positive' story of the bourgeoisie realising its own political autonomy. Habermas' Frankfurt-School inspired approach combined the methodological techniques of both sociology and politics. He infused flat social identity categories with economic foundations to infuse social actors with political significance. This demonstrated more effectively the complex link between higher social status and increased capacity for domination. As a consequence, he could successfully expose the duplicitous, non-discriminatory nature of capitalism. Although it permitted the emergence of the bourgeoisie as a new social class, (which in turn successfully realised some political autonomy), capitalism was not oriented towards the realisation of rights, it was just the means by which the bourgeoisie made itself known. Capitalism, is rather oriented towards profit maximisation, which it pursues to the detriment of all else. Victims include the public sphere, social advances made by the bourgeoisie, political autonomy. In short, capitalism replaces feudal absolutism as the new form of domination.

Exposing capitalism in this normative-historical manner required a deliberately selective and stylised treatment of the historical evidence. This gave 'prominence to its peculiar characteristics'.[83] The selection of the bourgeoisie is therefore on the basis of its direct descent from the economic conditions of capitalism. As a consequence, terms such as 'public' or 'private' cannot be explained away in a simple one-line definition. They are rather the sociological sum of everything that has preceded them. Answering the question 'what is Habermas' public sphere?' therefore requires detailed knowledge of the chronology of social development in Europe, over a period of around nine hundred years.

The complexity at work in Habermas public sphere motif is reflected in his several attempts to provide a definition. A loose definition of the 'public sphere' appears in the second chapter of *Structural Transformation:*

> 'The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatised but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labour. The

[83] Jürgen Habermas (1992) 'Further Reflections on the Public Sphere' in Craig Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), p.422. The particular method of investigation has meant that *Structural Transformation* has been interpreted in several ways, taking on a different significance for different disciplines. These have included an historical account of the emergence of the European bourgeoisie as a new socio-economic category amid the decline of feudal patterns of landownership and the absolute status of the monarch. Simultaneously, this history can be read as a normative account of how to mobilise and counteract domination (the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy), and establish a mass welfare state upon a market economy and perhaps more pragmatically how to establish public opinion through media with relevance for everyday democratic politics.

> medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason (öffentliches Räsonnement).[84]

This definition presents the public sphere as a non-concrete phenomenon which is neither a social nor a political institution. It is populated by members who are commodity-owners assembled together in order to use their reason in concert. It does not yet specify the public sphere's characteristics or constituent components. What this definition does establish however is the uniqueness of this type of political phenomenon. It was an occurrence that was truly new and this is the basis upon which it is infused with 'emancipative' potential. This was a concept which could not be easily extricated from the prevailing social and political conditions because it relied on them to provide an accurate depiction of 'social reality.' Habermas also provided a sketch of where the public sphere may reside relative to other spheres of life:

Private Realm		**Sphere of Public Authority**
Civil Society (realm of commodity exchange and social labour	Public sphere in the political realm	State (realm of the 'police')
	Public sphere in the world of letters (clubs, press)	
Conjugal family's internal space (bourgeois intellectuals)	(market of culture products) 'Town'	Court (courtly-noble society)

Habermas' Diagram of the Bourgeois Public Sphere in the Eighteenth Century, *Structural Transformation* p.30

An encyclopaedia article in 1964 fleshed out a more theoretical view of the public sphere motif which was more oriented towards the empirical conditions of democracy. Specifically, he was interested in how to theorise the formation of public opinion in light of his neo-Marxist roots. 'Citizens' have now taken the role of the bourgeoisie of *Structural Transformation*:

[84]Jürgen Habermas (1989) [1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society* tr. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), p.27.

> ‘By ‘the public sphere’ we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. They then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy. Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion - that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions - about matter of general interest. In a large public body, this kind of communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it. Today, newspapers and magazines, radio and TV are the media of the public sphere. We speak of the political public sphere in contrast, for instance, to the literary one, when public discussion deals with objects connected to the activity of the state. Although state activity is so to speak, the executor, it is not a part of it…Only when the exercise of political control is effectively subordinated to the democratic demand that information be accessible to the public, does the political public sphere win an institutionalised influence over the government through the instrument of law-making bodies.’[85]

This definition sets up the mass media as the conduits by which the discussion in a conceptual public sphere would become known more widely. Most importantly it sets up the public sphere as an *institutional influence over the government*. This is significant because, it points out the Habermas did not see the public sphere as a political institution in its own right. This influence is expressed through the courts and not through the mass media.

Upon the decline of state socialism, Habermas paid greater attention to the general capacity of political action (derived from deliberation). He reflected particularly on what he considered to be the now-systemic nature of capitalism and state bureaucracy. Attempting to transform these fields from within was no longer possible without bringing entire political systems to their knees. This signalled Habermas’ move towards a more serious normative concern. As he had been unable to protect the public sphere from the forces of private economic interest in *Structural Transformation*, his subsequent writing

[85] Jürgen Habermas, Sara Lennox & Frank Lennox (1974) [1964] ‘The Public Sphere’ *New German Critique* Vol.3, pp.49-55. This definition also appears in Jürgen Habermas (2001) [1989] *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp.102-3. For Habermas's later use of the category of the public sphere, see Jürgen Habermas (1987) [1981] *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol.2, Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, tr. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press). For a critical secondary discussion of Habermas's later use of the concept, see Nancy Fraser (1985) ‘What's Critical about Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender’ *New German Critique* No.35, (Spring-Summer), pp. 97-131.

took an active role in the protection of individual autonomy. Rather than preferring one societal resource (freedom from domination) at the expense of another (freedom from private economic interests) as was the case in *Structural Transformation*, Habermas created a new form of legitimation process. This was one which could balance all societal resources alongside each other. This could be achieved by allowing the communicative force of production to prevail over 'money and administrative power'.[86] *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981) advocated the protection of the *lebenswelt* (lifeworld) from the control resources of 'money and power' through the construction of a 'democratic dam'. The *lebenswelt* is important for the public sphere concept because it is the repository from which individuals draw their material for public discussion. In doing so, he set aside the Marxist Frankfurt School notions of 'alienation' and 'objectified essentialist powers' and invested his new 'radical democratic' method with pragmatic applications.

The first criticisms of Habermas' public sphere project were brought to bear in German in 1973. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge observed the lack of specificity created by Habermas' breadth of scope in *Structural Transformation*. It was labelled 'an historical concept of extraordinary fluidity':

> 'The public sphere denotes specific institutions, agencies, practices (e.g. those connected with law enforcement, the press, public opinion, the public, public sphere work, streets, and public squares); however, it is also general horizon of experience in which everything that is actually or ostensibly relevant for all members of society is integrated.'[87]

Habermas specified the bourgeois social class as the central focus of *Structural Transformation*. Negt and Kluge pointed out that the bourgeois public sphere existed alongside a proletariat public sphere. The status of the proletariat public sphere was subject to the same economic conditions which allowed for the emergence of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois public sphere then did not rely solely on itself as a reference point for specifying the views of the humanity it claimed to represent, but was influenced by non-bourgeois groups. The public sphere then represented a horizon of experience, made possible by the production of a proletariat class.[88]

Criticisms from the Anglophone academic community did not emerge until much later. The translation of *Structural Transformation* into English came some twenty-five years after its original publication in German. Habermas wrote several more pieces related

[86] Habermas (1992) 'Further Reflections', p. 444.
[87] Oskar Negt & Alexander Kluge (1993) [1973] *Public Sphere and Experience: Towards An Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), pp.1-2.
[88] Negt & Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, pp.3-54.

to the public sphere motif in this period.[89] Since this point, the public sphere has become viewed *in light of all Habermas' other work*. The public sphere concept then became an established part of an empirical theory of democracy and ushered into a post-Habermasian phase. Nancy Fraser in particular expounded the post-Habermasian public sphere. She criticised Habermas' presentation of a specific, limited 'liberal model of the bourgeois public sphere'. It left a motif which was not particularly useful for the diagnosis of democracy under conditions of 'welfare state mass bureaucracy'. It was however 'indispensable' for theorising the 'limits of late capitalist societies.'[90]

Furthermore, Habermas did not envisage what a 'post-bourgeois model' of the public sphere might look like.[91] In her oft-cited 1990 essay *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Critique of Actually Existing Democracy*, Fraser asserts that what feminists meant in their usages of the phrase 'the public sphere' was unclear. It usually conflated 'the state, the official economy of paid employment, and arenas of public discourse'. As such it could be considered to connote many different things including, most importantly for the feminists, a 'masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule.' In order to overcome the resulting conceptual confusion, Fraser derived an operational framework of the public sphere. It was based on a pragmatic reading of *Structural Transformation* and ultimately modified the public sphere motif's hitherto spontaneous character:

> 'It is the space in which citizens deliberate about common affairs, hence an institutionalised arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. The public sphere in Habermas' sense is also conceptually distinct from the official-economy; it is not an arena of market relations but rather one of discursive relations, a theatre for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling.'[92]

Mindful of the exclusionary tendency of a normative reading of *Structural Transformation*, she considered the alternate histories of those groups who would have been excluded

[89] Habermas' publications after *Structural Transformation* (1962) include: *Theory and Practice* (1963); *On the Logic of the Social Sciences* (1967); *Toward a Rational Society* (1967); *Technology and Science As Ideology* (1968); *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968); *Legitimation Crisis* (1975); *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1976); *On the Pragmatics of Social Interaction* (1976); *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981); *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (1983); *Philosophical-Political Profiles* (1983); *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985); *The New Conservatism* (1985*); Postmetaphysical Thinking* (1988); *Justification and Application* (1991).

[90] Nancy Fraser (1990) 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to Actually Existing Democracy' *Social Text* Nos. 25/26, p.56.

[91] Fraser's own interest in the public sphere was in order to address the 'occlusion' of the question of whether or not the liberation of women should be promoted by 'subjecting' gender issues to the 'logic of the market' and the 'administrative state'.

[92] Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere', pp.57, 62.

historically from participating in the bourgeois public sphere (i.e. women, children, non-bourgeois social classes). She then presented the theoretical possibility of multiple 'subaltern counterpublics' - minority group discourses which run counter to the dominant socio-political discourses.[93]

Craig Calhoun's introduction interpreted *Structural Transformation* as an answer to the question of identifying the social conditions requisite to a 'rational critical debate about public issues conducted by private persons willing to let arguments and not statuses determine decisions. *Structural Transformation* finds something of enduring normative importance: an institutional location for practical reason in public affairs and for the accompanying valid, if often deceptive, claims of 'formal democracy.'[94] Calhoun's criticism is that the existence of identity politics means that current economic conditions do not influence identity formation in a completely private realm. Craig Calhoun questions the negative characterisation of 'growing democratic inclusiveness' and 'public relations manipulation' as they downplay the political significance of identity politics. Calhoun disagreed that material under discussion in the public sphere (opinions) could have come solely from a single social identity.[95]

Seyla Benhabib, by contrast, considered the public sphere framework alongside other models of public space, specifically the agonistic model and the liberal model. She points to the practical nature of legitimation in the Habermasian public sphere highlighting matters under discussion as pertaining to the validity of general norms. She also says that the public sphere comes into existence whenever the practical mode of discourse is engaged.[96] Nicholas Garnham says this model of public discourse cannot conclude in a pluralist politics because it leaves out a role for political parties, the nature of which is to represent specific poles of opinion. This allows for a compromise of views rather than a total overcoming of extreme or divisive views.[97]

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[93] On gender see Mary Ryan (1992) 'Gender and Public Access: Women's Politics in Nineteenth Century America' and Geoff Eley 'Nations, Publics and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century' in Craig Calhoun (ed.) (1992) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press) pp.259-288 & pp.289-339 respectively. This subaltern counterpublic analytical innovation has proved to be particularly fruitful when reviewing the political dynamics of postcolonial states. An example of this is Dina Matar (2007) 'Heya TV: A Feminist Counterpublic for Arab Women?' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* Vol. 24, No.3, pp.513-524.

[94] Craig Calhoun (1992) 'Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere' in (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), p.1.

[95] Craig Calhoun (1993) 'Civil Society and the Public Sphere' *Public Culture* Vol.5, No.2, pp.276, 274-5, 280.

[96] Seyla Benhabib (1992) 'Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition and Jürgen Habermas' in Craig Calhoun (ed) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), p.87.

[97] Nicholas Garnham (1992) 'The Media and the Public Sphere' in Craig Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), p.360.

Presented with a reception of his work that seemed to disagree radically with its basic assumptions, Habermas reconsidered his views in light of the new emergent political theory of democracy and the modifications made by commercialisation to the nature of legitimation processes in democratic will-formation.[98] Habermas admitted the contribution of *Structural Transformation* to a contemporary theory of democracy had to come under a cloud: 'the unresolved plurality of competing interests...makes it doubtful whether there can ever emerge a general interest of the kind to which a public opinion could refer as a criterion.'[99] His original viewpoint in *Structural Transformation* was based on a theoretical framework with a specific developmental trajectory that included Hegel's philosophy of right, developed by Marx, 'shaped' by the German tradition of constitutional law. This meant that the theoretical framework was influenced by 'constitutional construction of the relationship between a public authority that guarantees liberties and a socioeconomic realm organised on the basis of private law.' His interest in political action therefore had emanated from the historical context of developments in Germany which saw the emergence of a liberal theory of constitutional rights demanding a strict separation of public and private law and the 'development of a state based on the rule of law but without democracy'.[100] In light of this weakness, Habermas said the public sphere motif of *Structural Transformation* required revisions in three areas: the private sphere and the 'social bases of private autonomy', the 'structure of the public sphere as well as the composition and behaviour of the public' and the 'legitimation process of mass democracy itself.'[101]

From this point on, Habermas became more interested in technical questions of democracy. This was on account of the changing political conditions of democracy in late industrialised societies which incorporate conceptions of universal rights on account of feminism and the civil rights movement. As universal rights were now part of the constitutional state framework, private property could no longer be the sole means by which individuals have access. Habermas' approach to the contemporary political public sphere motif is in terms of how it can best be managed, rather than whether or not it can exist. Public opinion is now a category of technical interest and the law should allow the political public sphere an *institutional influence* over the government. This suggests that the public sphere can have normative significance as an empirical indicator of the health of a democracy:

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[98] Habermas, 'Further Reflections', pp.439-440, 456-457.
[99] *Ibid.*, p.441.
[100] *Ibid*., pp.430-431.
[101] *Ibid.*, pp.432-433.

> 'In modern societies, one particular social space, namely the political public sphere of a democratic community, plays an especially important role in the integration of citizens. For complex societies can be normatively held together by civic solidarity among citizens. And among citizens who can no longer know one another face to face only the process of public reason and will formation can function to reproduce a brittle form of collective identity. For this reason, the critical state of a democracy can be measured by taking the pulse of the life of its public sphere.'[102]

This cements the public sphere, now referred to as 'political public sphere', as the location where democratic will formation takes place and the medium through which it is formed is public opinion. This then allows the public sphere to become a practical operational concept which can be deployed in order to measure the health of a democracy. This is about the formation of constructed public opinions, and builds a bridge between normative and political reality. Nancy Fraser takes it further to say that this is a political *force*, rather than an influence:

> 'The concept of the public sphere was developed not simply to understand empirical communication flows but to contribute a normative political theory of democracy. In that theory, a public sphere is conceived as a space for the generation of public opinion to assure a minimum level of political validity. Thus, it matters who participates and on what terms. In addition, a public sphere is supposed to be a vehicle for mobilising public opinion as a political force. Thus, a public-sphere is supposed to correlate with a sovereign power, to which its communications are ultimately addressed. Together these two ideas - the validity of public opinion and citizen empowerment vis-à-vis the state - are essential to the concept of the public sphere in democratic theory. Without them, the concept loses its critical force and its political point.'[103]

Having set aside the historical specificity then of the public sphere of *Structural Transformation*, the concept of the new political public sphere of democratic will formation is not as limited in its potential operational applications. As Fraser, Calhoun and

[102] Jürgen Habermas (2004) 'Public Space and Political Public Sphere – The Biographical Roots of Two Motifs Of My Thought', commemorative lecture given at Kyoto University and published in (2008) [2005] *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Polity Press), pp.11-23.

[103] Nancy Fraser (2007) 'Transnationalising the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World' *Theory, Culture & Society* Vol.24, No. 4, pp.7-8. Others on Transnationalisation: Slavko Splichal (2006) 'In Search of a Strong European Public Sphere: Some Critical Observation on Conceptualisations of Publicness and the (European) Public Sphere' *Media, Culture & Society* Vol.28, No.5, pp.695-714; James Bohman (1998) 'The Globalisation of the Public Sphere: Cosmopolitan Publicity and the Problem of Cultural Pluralism' *Philosophy and Social Criticism* Vol.24, Nos. 2-3, pp.199-216; Myra Marx Feree et al. (2002) 'Four Models of the Public Sphere in Modern Democracies' *Theory & Society* Vol.31, No.3 (June), pp.289-324; Jens Steffek (2010) 'Public Accountability and the Public Sphere of International Governance' *Ethics and International Affairs* Vol. 24, Issue 1, (Spring), pp.45-68.

others have shown, it is now possible to apply the public sphere concept to any context which claims to include public opinion as an influence on governance, regardless of whether the sovereign power is the state or another transnational governance institution such as the European Union, or more importantly for this thesis, a transnational political collectivity supported by media technologies.[104] The operationalisation of the public sphere framework had significant methodological implications for political action. Rather than discussing democratic values in terms of their normative desirability, the public sphere framework itself *became* a normative institution of this new normative political theory of democracy. In addition to its normative dimension, the new operational concept of the public sphere permitted empirical applications, i.e. depiction and description of the *current* states of democracy. As such it did not identify opportunities for political action in the traditional emancipative potential sense of Critical Theory, but rather sought to anchor the concept of the public sphere in the blueprint of late industrial societies. As part of an empirical theory of democracy with a normative concern, *the public sphere itself became an institution of liberal democracy* on account of its function. That is, as an 'institutionalised arena of discursive action'.[105]

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown the public sphere concept to demonstrate significant theoretical baggage and complexity. Its popularity since the 1990s has resulted in a framework strongly correlated with the realities of late industrial capitalist democracies. Consequently, it has demonstrated an increasing concern for identity politics. The concern for identity politics has thus found its way into MENA-specific applications of the public sphere concept. The debate has been overshadowed by the democratisation paradigm, which connects modernisation processes with media and technological advance. Mass media has thus emerged as a key actor in the conceptualisation of 'Arab' and 'Islamic' public spheres.

This discussion has revealed four empirical claims at work in the literature on 'Arab' and 'Islamic' public spheres: (1) the emergence of multiple public spheres in the MENA, (2) their emergence coincides with the introduction of private satellite television

[104] Craig Calhoun (2004) 'Information Technology and the International Public Sphere' in Douglas Shuler & Peter Day (eds.) *Shaping the Network Society: The New Role of Civil Society in Cyber Space* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp.229-251; Manuel Castells (2008) 'The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks and Global Governance' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol.616, No.1 (March), pp.78-93.
[105] Dana R. Villa (1992) 'Postmodernism and the Public Sphere' *American Political Science Review* Vol.86, No.3, (September), p.712.

ownership, (3), the issues under scrutiny in these public spheres are solely political, (4) these public spheres are engaged in a debate over the identity of their members. Taken together, these claims also present an implicit theoretical claim. It assumes that the public realm is firstly, of significance to the prevailing authoritarian order. Secondly, it assumes that this public realm is thus capable of driving political change autonomously.

Although these claims correlate with empirical reality (Arab Uprisings) they are not, however, consistent with Habermas' views on the public sphere in *Structural Transformation*. Furthermore, the empirical realities of the MENA however do not reflect the same specific economic, social and political conditions. Religion, in particular, although neglected in the Habermasian account of the bourgeois public sphere has a significant role in the structures of Arab states. In addition to its historical properties, it also incorporates a specific set of ontological and epistemological positions. These positions specify the conditions necessary for the realisation of political action by the public realm.

In light of the objections raised here, it is necessary to determine the precise extent to which the 'Habermasian' characteristics of this debate correlate with Habermas' actual views on the public sphere. The following chapter considers *Structural Transformation* first and foremost, but also considers some of Habermas' later work on the themes of consensus, public opinion, morality and mutual understanding. It is therefore appropriate to include *Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 1* and *Between Facts and Norms*. It develops a two-step 'Habermasian' theoretical framework to be brought to bear on historical evidence from the MENA in Chapters Three and Four. Chapter Two now presents a detailed account of Habermas' view on the public sphere, primarily from *Structural Transformation* but also from *The Theory of Communicative Action* and *Between Facts and Norms,* as substantiation of a 'Habermasian' analytical framework to be deployed in empirical Chapters Three and Four.

Chapter Two

Jürgen Habermas' Concept of the Public Sphere

'*Moral issues are never raised for their own sake; people raise them for seeking a guide for action.*'[1]

Introduction

As highlighted in the previous chapter, several analyses expanding upon or associated with Habermasian public sphere theory have been developed to address what appears to be an emergent public realm of political significance within Arab, Muslim and Islamic 'contexts'. These analyses have resulted in a conceptual fusion of the presence of a public sphere and structural political change and it draws on language of public sphere theory. As most commentators have associated the public sphere with Jürgen Habermas' *Structural Transformation*, it seems reasonable to speak of 'Habermasian' public spheres in normative terms, even to the extent of an entirely normative theory of a public sphere oriented towards liberal democracy. However, a closer reading of the conceptual insights contained within *Structural Transformation* reveals several issues. These issues become problematic when grounding 'Arab', 'Muslim' or 'Islamic' public spheres because they include normative presuppositions regarding the *nature* of debate in the public sphere which are supported substantively by Habermasian insights. Hence, this chapter critically examines the extent to which the scholarly debate over how to conceptualise a public realm of political significance in the MENA region demonstrates 'Habermasian' characteristics *i.e.* whether or not it resembles Habermas' own evolving views on the public sphere.[2]

If it is possible to conceive of 'Arab', 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' public spheres, it stands to reason that their adherence to a Habermasian notion requires evaluation. Given the breadth of information contained within *Between Facts and Norms* and *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* relevant to this thesis, the question of a Habermasian 'Arab', 'Muslim' or 'Islamic' public sphere is discussed with reference to key issues arising from their conceptual implications. The debate over the possibility of these types of public sphere makes the following key assertions: a single transnational

[1] Jürgen Habermas, (1990) [1983] *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press,) p.179.
[2] For an authoritative account of Habermas' extensive body of work and larger philosophy see Thomas McCarthy (1978) *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).

public sphere or multiple counter-public spheres have emerged in Arab societies through the development of public opinion through the practice of public debate. Public spheres in this context are catalysed and sustained by media and communications infrastructure in the Arab states and supported by infrastructure in terms of active provision of access to information. It is appropriate to postulate a public sphere with a single will of its own, capable of political revolution and the overthrowing of governments.

Arab, Muslim and Islamic public spheres link a single identity to a conception of the common good. The normative case for Islamic public spheres incorporates a further dimension concerning the implications of a divinely revealed religious law for politics. Islamic law does not make a distinction between the religious and secular realms in the same way that Habermas does in *Between Facts and Norms*. Islamic law (in addition to other types of religious law in operation in the MENA) also has jurisdiction over matters which would be considered 'private' in Habermas' categorisation of the realms of life. Furthermore, the Muslim-majority social context presupposes a fixed group ethical identity which incorporates Islamic positions on moral issues. These are adjudicated by Islamic jurisprudence in terms of whether they are '*halal*' (lawful) or '*haram*' (unlawful). These dynamics mean that the Muslim-majority social context upon which the conceptualisation of Islamic public spheres is based does not map easily onto the Habermasian 'public'/ 'private distinction'. As a whole, these assertions, which will be addressed in turn, are linked by their relevance to the nature of debate in the conceptual public sphere.

As public debate or opinion takes a privileged role for conceptual approaches examined in the previous chapter, it is appropriate to read beyond *Structural Transformation* to formulate a detailed idea of Habermas' notion of the public sphere. *Between Facts and Norms* and *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* include further clarifications of the themes of consensus, public opinion, morality and mutual understanding first broached in *Structural Transformation.* These texts, in addition to *The Theory of Communicative Action,* provided the basis for the first normative critique of the notion of the public sphere by democratic theorists. They evaluated its explanatory power for democratic politics through a retroactive application of concepts found in Habermas' later work. The culmination of a conference in September 1989 marking publication of the first English translation of *Structural Transformation*, *Habermas and the Public Sphere* laid out a series of sophisticated criticisms compelling Habermas to further clarify his thoughts on the public sphere, some thirty years after his first engagement with it. The principal criticisms which remain valid are that the now normativised public sphere is

stylised beyond the point of plausibility (Geoff Eley), exclusive and blind to other public spheres (Mary P. Ryan) and finally patriarchal and thus blind to gender (Nancy Fraser).[3]

This event, (combined with Habermas' response incorporated as the concluding chapter of the book) implies that Habermas condoned the normativisation of *Structural Transformation* and 'political' characterisation of the public sphere to some degree. Normative approaches highlighted in the previous chapter depart from this juncture. However Habermas points out that the 'political public sphere' is a 'fundamental concept of a theory of democracy whose intent is normative.' [4] This concept of the public sphere is thus limited in its scope and does not say much about normative usages of the public sphere outside the realm of deliberative democratic theory. As the previous chapter highlights, it has since become difficult to draw definitive lines between differing approaches to the conceptualisation of public spheres, as they appear to combine both normative and empirical concerns. Scholars addressing the 'Arab' and 'Islamic' contexts are left with a normative model of a public sphere oriented towards liberal deliberative democracy underpinned by Enlightenment philosophical traditions. To avoid further confusion, this thesis looks at the aforementioned texts in chronological order to highlight the *changing* nature of Habermas' views on the public sphere in light of mass media and globalising capitalist economic structures.

As a second-generation member of the Frankfurt School, Habermas' earlier work, including *Structural Transformation*, was influenced in part by Marxist concerns similar to first generation theorists, who in coming to terms with the conditions that had permitted the rise of Nazi ideology, issued a particularly pessimistic forecast for human emancipation in the fetishised and commercialised cultures of Western civilisation.[5] This is reflected in the pessimistic tone of the book's second half and the assignation of blame for the public sphere's degeneration at the hands of economic interests made political by the mass media. Although *Structural Transformation* depicts an inevitable degeneration of the public sphere on account of mass culture consumption, proceeding in this way highlights the bourgeois public sphere's real frailty and susceptibility to domination by other interests.

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[3] See Geoff Eley's 'Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century', Nancy Fraser's 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy' and Mary P. Ryan's 'Gender and Public Access: Women's Politics in Nineteenth Century America' in Craig Calhoun (ed.) (1992) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp. 289-339, 109-142 & 259-288 respectively.

[4] Jürgen Habermas (1992) 'Further Reflections on the Public Sphere' in in Craig Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press) p.446.

[5] Douglas Kellner (2000) 'Habermas, the Public Sphere and Democracy: A Critical Intervention' in Lewis Hahn (ed.) *Perspectives on Habermas* (Chicago, IL: Open Court), pp.259-287. See also Max Horkheimer (1947) *Eclipse of Reason*; Theodor W. Adorno (1966) *Negative Dialectics*; Herbert Marcuse (1964) *One Dimensional Man*; Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno (1947) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*; Herbert Marcuse (1941) *Reason and Revolution.*

Despite its quasi-Marxist origins, Habermas' project appears concerned with the protection of a threatened public sphere whose very existence is permanently under threat.[6] It is threatened by two things: the mass culture industry and the tendency towards its institutionalisation as public opinion in late industrialised societies. Habermas' protective tendency towards the public sphere is affected in some part by the larger historical context in which he was writing at the time.[7] He was involved, albeit on the margins, in the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) (as their intellectual voice[8]) whose interests also intersected with those of the German student movements of the 1960s and 1970s.[9] During this time, Habermas witnessed first-hand the cumulative political relevance which could be gained by fragmented instances of non-institutionalised debate (in the forms of public intellectualism and cultural production) for the incubation process of political discontent.[10] After he moved away from more pronounced Marxism of his earlier years, his models of modernisation and the juridification of the lifeworld also posed threats to the continuing viability of a public sphere. Drawing on this sketch in *Structural Transformation*, a two-level model of democratic deliberation can be observed in his later work, specifically *Between Facts and Norms*.[11]

This chapter is organised in the chronological order of Habermas' work to better demonstrate how and why he decided to clarify his understanding of the public sphere over time. What we now conceive of as processes in the public sphere were added at a later stage of the debate (Calhoun et al.) and are not incorporated in *Structural Transformation* as was the general definition of the public sphere used to justify its normative usage. This chapter clarifies the extent of the connection of the presence of a public sphere to structural

[6] *Structural Transformation* (1962), *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968), *Legitimation Crisis* (1975), *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1976), *On the Pragmatics of Social Interaction* (1976), *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (1983), *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985), *Justification and Application* (1991), *Between Facts and Norms* (1992), *On the Pragmatics of Communication* (1992) *The Inclusion of the Other* (1996), *A Berlin Republic* (1997), *Rationality and Religion* (1998), *Truth and Justification* (1998), (1985) *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalisation of Society* (1985); *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (1985); *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (1996).

[7] Jürgen Habermas (1992) 'The Role of the Student Movements in Germany' in Peter Dews (ed.) *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas* (London: Verso Books) pp.229-236.

[8] Darrow Schecter (1999) 'The Functional Transformation of the Political World: Reflections on Habermas' in *Studies in Sociological and Political Thought* Issue 1, June, pp.33-49 Peter M. R. Stirk (2000) *Critical Theory, Politics and Society: An Introduction* (London: Pinter) & (2006) *Twentieth Century German Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

[9] Some have said that his work constitutes an intellectual defence of a section of German Social Democracy 'an attempt to stake out a critical, independent position'.

[10] Jürgen Habermas (1992) 'The Role of the Student Movements in Germany' in Peter Dews (ed.) *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas* (London: Verso Books) pp.229-236 p. 230 It is in his comments as a public intellectual that he reveals the fragility and potential of the public sphere.

[11] Jürgen Habermas (1996) [1992] *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to A Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* tr. William Rehg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp.360-366.

political change asserted both implicitly and explicitly in the first half of Chapter One. As both approaches to conceptualising the public realm of political significance, outlined in the previous chapter, privilege the role of debate or contestion in front of others, it is prudent therefore to establish precisely the nature of debate in a Habermasian public sphere. It identifies a theoretical framework to be deployed later in this conceptual analysis.

2.1 *Structural Transformation* is Concerned with *both* the Emergence *and* Decline of the Public Sphere of the European Bourgeoisie

It is important here to be precise about the nature and purpose of Habermas' text and the explicit limits of his ambition. In the preface, Habermas specified that *Structural Transformation* was an investigation of the 'bourgeois public sphere' and that the account he proposed to give was a 'stylised picture'. He explicitly acknowledged the existence of 'plebian' forms of the public sphere. He also referred to the 'plebiscitary-acclamatory' form later on in the text which will be further addressed below. For the moment however, it suffices to emphasise that Habermas was fully aware that the idea of the public sphere had potential wider implications and application than was covered by *Structural Transformation*.

While Habermas seemed to have been concerned to specify the limits of his interest in the preface, he did not indicate there the structure of his text. This is perhaps unfortunate because neglect of the overall purpose and structure of the text has been one of the main causes of an oversimplistic reading of Habermas. Simple consideration of the titles provides some illumination. The first three chapters defined and set out the nature of the bourgeoisie public sphere much as one would expect from his comments in the preface. Hence there is Chapter One, *Introduction: Preliminary Demarcation of a Type of Bourgeois Public Sphere*, Chapter Two, *Social Structure of the Public Sphere* and Chapter Three, *Political Functions of the Public Sphere*. This was approximately half way through the text. Chapter Four, *The Bourgeois Public Sphere: Idea and Ideology*, formed a bridge between the first three chapters and the remainder of the text. As the title indicated Habermas was increasingly focusing on the fragility of the public sphere. The titles of the next two chapters were, respectively, *The Social-Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and the *Transformation of the Public Sphere's Political Function*. It is surely striking that here we encounter the terminology of the title as a whole. It is here that Habermas referred to the 'structural transformation' of the public sphere. In fact by this he means the decline of the public sphere. *Yet it is precisely this element which is neglected*.

In order to indicate more precisely Habermas' purpose and claims, this section will consider his distinction between the private and public sphere. This is a distinction which is central to his notion of the public sphere, insofar as *the two spheres are mutually constitutive*. Moreover, neither refers to ahistorical analytical concepts. Both the private and the public spheres are, in his account, the product of a specific and historically recent socio-economic constellation.

It is important to specify what Habermas intended to connote in his references to both 'public' and 'private' spheres throughout *Structural Transformation*. There are multiple meanings to both terms which inform his later arguments regarding the conceptualisation of the bourgeois public sphere. Despite these potential overlaps, it is possible to discern a distinction between 'public' and 'private' as 'notions' and as 'realms'. 'Notions' revolve around the meaning of 'public' or 'private' whereas realms refer to locations in society in which the aforementioned notions can be said to have associative jurisdiction or purview. The tendency towards the dichotomous categorisation of forms of social life into either 'public' or 'private' in sociological investigation was a key obstacle that Habermas believed should be challenged. As such his account of the emergence and decline of the bourgeois public sphere *does not present a clear picture of two discernible realms of 'public' and 'private'*. Instead, Habermas discusses these realms in terms of their mutually constitutive properties to lend weight to an underlying observation about the central role played by economic production in their constitution and sustenance.

As mutually constitutive spaces, the 'public' and 'private' realms each permit and sustain the existence of the other. While it is reasonable to surmise that the bourgeois public emerges from developments in the private sphere later on in *Structural Transformation*, at the beginning of the text, it is not clear which of 'public' and 'private' is considered to have emerged first, if that could be said of either. Nor it is possible to assert with confidence that the two developed simultaneously. Despite the focus of *Structural Transformation* on accounting for and narrating the 'public sphere' the private sphere is of considerable interest for Habermas as this is the domain in which the effects of early capitalism could be felt most strongly, These changes put in motion a series of events that then culminated in the emergence of the bourgeois 'public'. The issue of defining or at least discerning the 'public' and the 'private' was approached cautiously from the outset and frequently included a simultaneous contrastive reference to the other. The notion of 'public' and the historical development of a 'public realm' receive considerably more treatment than their 'private' corollaries. This is perhaps unsurprising as all six chapter titles include the word public at some point and but there are no such references to

'private'.[12] Reflecting Habermas' order of treatment in Chapter One, this section opts to consider the notion of 'public' and the 'public sphere' ahead of 'private' and the 'private sphere'

Habermas' concept of *Öffentlichkeit* has several possible meanings which came to be loosely rendered as 'public'. *Öffentlichkeit*, which appeared in the original German title of the book, *Strukturwandel der 'Öffentlichkeit* can be variously rendered as '(the) public', 'public sphere' or 'publicity'. To avoid long complex phrasing in English reflective of the German syntax in the original, a strategic decision was made to render *Öffentlichkeit* as 'public sphere' whenever the usage context had more than one possible and plausible meaning. Therefore it is more difficult to appreciate nuance in the technical language employed by Habermas when articulating his arguments in *Structural Transformation*. According to the translators several types of *Öffentlichkeit* can be identified:

> '*politische Öffentlichkeit'*= 'political public sphere'/'public sphere in the political realm'
>
> '*literarische Öffentlichkeit'* = 'literary public sphere' /'public sphere in the world of letters'
>
> '*repräsentative Öffentlichkeit'* = 'representative publicness'/ 'the display of inherent spiritual power or dignity before an audience'[13]

These multiple types of 'public spheres' in the original Habermasian language are again problematic for the English translation. Therefore it cannot be said with absolute certainty which additional meanings were inferred by each reference to 'public' in *Structural Transformation* in the absence of further clarification.

Habermas himself commented further on the challenges of rendering the notion of 'public' in his work. He acknowledged his attempt to apply historical notions of 'public' to 'the conditions of a bourgeois society that is industrially advanced and constituted as a social-welfare state' may have served to further complicate matters. It resulted in an association between 'public' and 'private' and specific historical conditions at the expense of other possibilities. The word 'public' has not been immune to influences from outside academic scholarship; in fact it is more widely used in 'bureaucratic and mass media

[12] Charles Turner (2009) 'Habermas' "*Öffentlichkeit*": A Reception History' *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* Vol. 12, Issue 2 , pp.225-241 Before commenting on the historical genesis of the notion of 'public', Habermas goes to considerable lengths to highlight the multiple meanings of the word 'public.' It is important here to recall that *Structural Transformation* was originally written in German in 1963 and not translated into English until 1989. Whether or not the text conveys the true meanings intended by Habermas and ultimately whether the English text is therefore an authentic representation of the German original is an issue for translators Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence. They saw fit to provide further clarification regarding the rationale underpinning translation in the English version in the Translator's Note.

[13] Jürgen Habermas (1989) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press), p.xv.

jargon.' The notions of 'public' are varied: it can mean open to all (in reference to public houses or other 'public places') or owned by the state (in the case of 'public buildings'). However, the way in which the notion of 'public' is incorporated within sociological categories such as 'public opinion' or to 'publish' or 'publicise' can fundamentally alter its meaning.[14]

To demonstrate the contested nature of the usages of 'public', Habermas moved to consider 'public' in terms of both location and extent of its purview as a social 'realm'. As empirical substantiation, a stylised example of the Greek city-state of antiquity is employed. The sphere of the *polis* is considered to house that which can be considered 'public'. Habermas asserted that it contrasted with the sphere of the *oikos* within which all individuals act in their own autonomous realms (*idia*). The realm of the *polis* was populated solely by citizens (as the dominant social group, the only other group would be non-citizens, thus slaves, or women or children) and in its self-interpretation was considered common (*koine*) to all. This political arrangement was made possible by the sustenance of economic production through slavery. Citizens taking part in public life (*bios politicos*) would do so in the marketplace (*agora*). Something relating to 'public sphere' (read: *Öffentlichkeit*) could be found in discussion (lexis) which could take place in several modes including 'consultation', 'sitting in the law courts' or in a collective form (praxis) such as the 'waging of war or competition in athletic games.'[15] This public sphere conceived as it was as a realm of equals *(homoioi*) (all who were not bound to slavery and who were liberated from economic labour) was also meritocratic *in its own estimation*. Those skilled at discussion in public life could excel (*aristoien*) in front of others who in turn bestowed their esteem and distinction upon the best amongst them. 'Freedom', 'revelation' and 'permanence' characterised this stylised public sphere. The act of discussing issues in front of others acknowledged them as 'revealed' and thus 'in existence'.[16]

Before moving to consider subsequent historical appearances of the notion of 'publicity' Habermas pointed out that this stylised notion provided a pervasive and longstanding 'ideological template' in intellectual history which few are willing to relinquish. Despite ever-increasing evidence that the public realm is in a state of prolonged collapse, its conceptual usage and consequently its scope continues to expand. This is perhaps because the notion of 'publicity' is an inherent organisational principle of the liberal political order. In order to liberate 'public sphere' from its own liberal ideological

[14] Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p.2.
[15] *Ibid.,* p.3.
[16] *Ibid.,* p.4.

tendencies, a sociological clarification of 'public sphere' is required. This can only be successful if carried out from its own perspective.[17]

Notions of 'public' and 'private' arose in Roman law to distinguish between *imperium* and *dominium*. Roman legal distinctions between '*publicus*' and '*privatus*' were not used substantively in the Middle Ages but the contrast between them was familiar.[18] This did not however mean that it was accurate to suggest that the definitive realms of the Greek city state could be mapped onto feudal society. Habermas located unsuccessful legal attempts to distinguish between 'public' and 'private' which prove that it was not possible to draw such a distinction at this historical juncture. Although the dominant nature of feudal systems of manorial authority necessitated an organisation of economic production similar to that of the Greek city state, they differed in terms of the location of their domination (household) and their relationships to the positions in the 'process of production'.[19]

Habermas noted the categories of '*gemeinlich*' and '*sunderlich*' that mean 'common' and 'particular' respectively in old German legal tradition. The contrast between these categories did correspond closely to the Roman legal term '*publicus*' and '*privatus*'. 'Common' goods could be accessed by all (including public access to a public fountain) (*loci communes, loci publici).* 'Particular' referred to whatever else stood against that which was considered to be 'common' but in this basic context included to some extent, those with 'special' characteristics or privileges. The understanding of these categories was modified under feudalism. Reversing the previous logic of associating 'common' with 'public', the realm of the particular was instead 'at the core of the feudal regime' and hence of the realm that was 'public'. 'Common' comes to connote 'private'.[20]

Prior to the emergence of trade capitalism, the beginnings of what could be conceived of as a public realm under feudalism were oriented towards the representation of the monarch and the display of his authority in front of the masses:

> 'This *publicness* (or *publicity*) of *representation* was not constituted as a social realm, that is, as a public sphere; rather it was something like a status attribute, if this term may be permitted. In itself the status of the manorial lord, on whatever level, was neutral in relation to the criteria of 'public' and 'private'; but its incumbent represented it publically. He

[17] Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p.4.
[18] *Ibid.,* p.5.
[19] *Ibid.,* p.5.
[20] *Ibid.,* p.6.

> displayed himself, presented himself as an embodiment of some sort of 'higher' power.'[21]

This was not an interactive event in which the rest of society could respond but, rather, it enabled solely the 'representative publicness' of the monarch and other institutions of power including the Church and nobility.[22] The meaning of 'public' then developed to include the attribution of being public or 'publicness' which Habermas attributed to a trend towards the use of 'lordly' and 'publicus' at the end of medieval documents, *publicare* meaning 'to claim for the lord'. In practice this led to the monarch being attributed with 'publicness' or as having the status as being publically representable and therefore becoming the public face of what was formerly a private estate. [23]

The decline of Church institutions brought with it a decline in this 'representative publicness.'[24] In the growing power gap that it left behind, a sphere of public authority (separated from the private sphere) emerged enabled by the existence of a 'permanent administration' (the nascent state) and a 'standing army' that maintained continuous oversight over those engaged in 'commodities and news'.[25] The meaning of 'public' now connoted 'state-related':

> 'the attribute no longer referred to the representative court of a person endowed with authority but instead to the functioning of an apparatus with regulated spheres of jurisdiction and endowed with a monopoly over the legitimate use of coercion.'[26]

However, this was not yet the public realm that became the focus of Habermas' arguments. Indeed the bourgeois public sphere would be formed in part in opposition to this public authority embodied in the state. Furthermore, in order for this bourgeois public sphere to emerge, it was necessary, according to Habermas, that a specific private sphere should also take shape.

Habermas was rather insistent that the form of the private sphere required for the formation of the new form of public sphere was the familial form of the bourgeoisie. It was 'the sphere of the patriarchal conjugal family.' Neither the family life of the old urban nobility nor that of the extended family typical of the people could fulfil the same function. They could not do so because neither of them provided the basis for a radical separation of a distinctive private realm. This is evident in the fact that the family life of the urban

[21] Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p.7.
[22] *Ibid.,* p.11.
[23] *Ibid.,* p.7.
[24] *Ibid.,* p.19.
[25] *Ibid.,* p.18.
[26] *Ibid.,* p.18.

nobility historically operated an 'open house'. In practice this could mean that the spouses held separate accommodations (*hôtel*) at considerable distances from each other and were more likely to meet outside in the street or at a *salon* than in their own household. This was a tolerable and indeed desirable arrangement for all concerned as the family name was enough to guarantee the continuation of the familial bloodline and thus its claim to property and estate. This is further exemplified by the existence of salon hostess (*la maîtresse du salon*), usually an older woman judged on her ability to provide an environment of high distinction for the guests assembled in the *salon*. This role shows that a clear private/public distinction in the pre-bourgeois periods was not familiar. Social hierarchies were such that a bourgeois private sphere could not exist institutionally and permanently but were just episodic instances of bourgeois-style privacy.

Habermas elaborated on the 'privatisation of life' with reference to changing architectural styles. The family parlour was historically considered a public space because it housed a representative function for the master of the household and his spouse in front of domestic staff.[27] It became a 'living room' in which the master and lady of the house would retire with the children away from domestic staff. This became the intimate sphere of the conjugal family, insulated from the 'public' character of the *salon*. Habermas pointed out that the line between 'public' and 'private' therefore extended throughout their living quarters. Going to the *salon* meant leaving the protected privacy of the intimate sphere, to enter into a semi-public sphere of the *salon* to socialise.[28] The fact that this domain served 'society' rather than the 'household' meant that its potential guests could be drawn from groups wider than that of immediate personal acquaintances of the family.[29]

According to Habermas, the new private sphere of the bourgeoisie also had its own distinctive architectural features. It is only at this point that we see the displacement of the halls and courtyards familiar from antiquity in favour of the new more private spaces of the dining and the drawing room with which we are familiar today. Public spaces within the household such as lofty halls and courtyards began to fall out of fashion.[30] The large public space around which the house was built became subdivided into smaller rooms, its use restricted to the conjugal family. The most imposing room in the house became the sole public space in which members of the conjugal family would encounter other relatives and serving staff. As such it was considered 'public'. This became the semi-public *salon*.[31] The

[27] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.45.
[28] *Ibid.,* p.45.
[29] *Ibid.,* p.45.
[30] *Ibid.*, p.44.
[31] *Ibid.,* p.45.

conjugal family as a unit retired to rooms specifically reserved for them, furnished and appointed accordingly.

Habermas was careful to point out however, that those people who stepped into the *salon* to socialise could not be simply described as constituting 'society'. They had merely stepped into it from the specific formations of a 'private life that had assumed institutionalised form in the enclosed space of the patriarchal conjugal family'.[32]

This new familial form was, of course, not merely a matter of architecture. This architecture was the residence of the bourgeois patriarchal conjugal family. It is worth emphasising three aspects of Habermas' account of this new familial form. Firstly, it allowed the expression and cultivation of new forms of sensibility within the intimate sphere protected from the public gaze. As Habermas later pointed out, the cultivation of sentiment and the celebration of the intimacy of the private sphere would become central themes of the new literary form of the novel. These forms of sensibility, oriented towards the development of a 'cultivated' personality, comprised three basic facets: The first was voluntary entrance into conjugal life through marriage (differing from earlier material ties based on blood-line continuation and material interests only). This voluntary aspect created a familial structure that was in principle built around a 'community of love' enshrined in the love between two spouses. Together these form a type of 'humanism' that all human kind could adopt as their ideal, the purpose of which was to 'emancipate' the inner realm from any specific material purpose. The reality of these illusory 'humane' commitments was of course vastly divergent.[33]

Secondly, the basis of this intimate private sphere was, in its stylised form at least, a marriage entered into voluntarily: 'It seemed to be established voluntarily and by free individuals and to be maintained without coercion; it seemed to rest on the lasting community of love on the part of the two spouses; it seemed to permit that non-instrumental development of all faculties that marks the cultivated personality.[34] Marriage until this point had been a distinctly instrumental arrangement, in which a match was solely for material benefit and social propriety. It was, of course, though Habermas does not stress the point, this idealised form of marriage that also formed the recurrent topic of the literary form of the novel.[35]

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[32] Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p.46.
[33] *Ibid.,* p.47.
[34] *Ibid*., p.46.
[35] Elizabeth Bennett, the heroine of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, was faced with an impending financial crisis. One of five sisters, her father's estate was to pass to her nearest male relative in the event of his death, leaving the sisters and their mother reliant on charity from family members. Her father's estate was destined for her first cousin, Mr Collins, but Elizabeth did not look on him favourably as a life partner despite the seriousness of her financial situation. Despite her belief in romantic love, the only way to secure her

Habermas also took great pain to emphasise that the bourgeois patriarchal family rested upon specific material foundations. Yet, despite the contingency of bourgeois status on specific material foundations, members of the bourgeoisie did consider themselves to be autonomous. 'Autonomy' in this context refers to a type of commercial emancipation. Instead of making decisions with reference to the will of public authority, commodity owners would take decisions based on profitability. They were influenced solely by the laws of the market, which Habermas described as an 'immanent economic rationality'.[36] At this historical juncture, Habermas recalled that engaging in commercial activities incorporated a claim to moral authority. Market exchange was therefore a 'just' notion, a type of justice that could overcome force. [37] It was only the economic activity of the commodity owning patriarch that permitted the isolation of the intimate sphere from both the public gaze and the harsh economic needs from which the majority of the population could not escape. In this sense, the separation of the private and public in the era of the bourgeoisie could be said to be more radical than that known to the ancient Greeks. It is so in the sense that the household of the Greeks, although radically separate from the public life of the citizens, was not separate from the economic realm of necessity to which all are subject. The bourgeois intimate sphere was.

Of course in another respect and this is equally important, the distinction was less radical than that known to the ancient Greeks. For what in the world of the ancient Greeks was private would remain forever excluded from the public sphere. By contrast, and this was the crucial point for Habermas, the sentiments, forms of personality, and opinions formed within the private sphere would become acceptable and indeed desirable topics of public discourse.

2.2 The Bourgeois Public Sphere in *Structural Transformation*

The private realm, protected as it was from public gaze, allowed for the development of a notion of sensibility. This was made possible because the bourgeois conjugal family believed that it was possible to enter into 'purely human' relationships with each other that were free from external coercion or influence. While Habermas pointed out that this autonomy was illusory, the belief in its existence catalysed greater

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future was to 'marry well'. The attractiveness of a gentleman with property is confirmed when her best friend Charlotte Lucas, marries Mr Collins instead considering him a good match despite their friendship. The situation does end well for Elizabeth Bennett, who eventually marries the both handsome and wealthy Fitzwilliam Darcy in the style characteristic of Jane Austen, reconciling the idealised form of marriage with the dictates of economic necessity, despite the fact that Austen has clearly exposed the economic constraints.

[36] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.46.

[37] *Ibid.,* p.46.

communication about feelings and sentimentality between members of the conjugal family. Letters between families started out in the seventeenth century as simple reports stating the unquestioned 'married love and faithfulness' of the senders.[38] The reporting style gave way to sentimentality as letters became stylised by emotion and considerations of individual subjectivity. Habermas affirmed Gellert's description of letters at the time as 'an imprint of the soul', a 'visit of the soul', stating that these demonstrate the developing interest in psychology.[39]

The subject material took on a different element when faced with publication. In order to provide the 'prettiest' letters, strangers would stylise their depictions of human relations to guarantee publication. This development had a major implication for the future development of the literary public sphere: the models of such letters generated the literary framework for the novel, their content and the genre of 'fiction'.[40] Whereas a strict separation between author and letter was observable in the diaristic letters of the seventeenth century, authors of the novel were psychologically invested in their writings because the subject matter arose from their own life experiences. It was from these literary forms that the future public sphere of letters would take its inspiration, as people began to discuss their readings in public with the subsequent opening of libraries and coffee houses. Topics of public discourse regarding the political realm at this time also had a characteristic theme. The development of ideas related to sensibility of the conjugal family played out in the form of the psychological novel could also assist the bourgeois family's interpretation and articulation of its own political interests. Given the fundamental role of the market for the emergence of the bourgeois family, the theme of the modern public sphere, unsurprisingly, was concerned with the protection of the market economy and its conditions.[41] For Habermas this 'public sphere' was 'modern' because it was concerned with the civic tasks of a society 'engaged in critical public debate' over the protection of the market economy. This was thus distinct from the 'ancient' 'public sphere' of Greek antiquity which was characterised by the 'citizenry acting in common' over expressly political concerns such as survival through military defence and the administration of law.[42] Contingent on a privatised family sphere and conceiving of itself as oppositional to public authority, the bourgeois public sphere was both private and polemical simultaneously.

[38] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.48.
[39] *Ibid.,* p.49.
[40] *Ibid .,*p.50.
[41] *Ibid*., p.52.
[42] *Ibid.,* p.52.

To summarise, the Habermasian distinction between private and public was less of a stark distinction than a set of notions of 'private' and 'public' that changed over time. It appeared first as a stylised social distinction, then as a legal distinction and is thus dependent on historical dynamics. These notions are also mutually constitutive: developments in one have implications for the internal dynamics of the other. As such it is not quite possible to set out a definition or account of either the private or public realm without incorporating a comparable comment on the nature of the other. To neglect this would lead to a misleading stark dichotomisation of two distinct realms of society when Habermas' description does not address them in these terms. Habermas' most revealing comment on the subject occurs on page three of *Structural Transformation*: 'notions concerning what is "public" and what is not – that is, what is "private" – can be traced further back into the past'. The most that can be said is that they are mutually constitutive. The emergence of the bourgeois public from the private sphere suggests that the private sphere in some way gave birth to part of the public realm. However, the bourgeois public sphere managed to colonise a space in the sphere of public authority that also straddled the private realm. From this position, it addresses the sphere of public authority as its 'public'. At its simplest it appears to occupy a location between state and society but this discussion demonstrates that it in fact occupies a part of both domains (public authority and private realm)

It is also clear that economic arrangements determine where the boundaries between what can be considered 'private' and 'public' lie. As discussed, the designation of 'public' or 'private' is made possible by specific conditions for economic production. It is precisely this that Habermas chose to emphasise where he wrote:

> 'The fully developed bourgeois public sphere was based on the fictitious identity of the two roles assumed by the privatised individuals who came together to form a public: the role of property owners and the role of human beings pure and simple.'[43]

It is important to note that Habermas' perception of the bourgeois public sphere's internal dynamics, incorporated some underlying philosophical assumptions about the nature of debate and the possibility for communicative action. References to these are left implicit and sketchy by Habermas in *Structural Transformation,* only to be picked up as dominant themes in later work. Acknowledging this reality is central to understanding the limits of what Habermas attempted to articulate about the internal dynamics of the bourgeois public sphere specifically in *Structural Transformation*. This is because *the*

[43] Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p.56.

communicative assumptions influenced the overall conception of how the topics of debate in the public sphere were approached by those who could gain access to it.

Before discussing the larger communicative assumptions, the depiction of debate in the bourgeois public sphere in *Structural Transformation* requires further clarification. Critical debate, the presence of which was what made this social grouping a 'public' rather than an 'audience' or an 'addressee', could only be achieved under certain conditions. Habermas noted a set of 'institutional criteria' which governed both the dynamics of debate and the boundaries of the public sphere itself. The first of these is the bracketing of social status.

Habermas used the experience of the *Deutsche Gesellschaften* ('German Societies'), founded in Leipzig in 1727, to highlight attempts made to overcome the historical association of literary societies with exclusivity. This was because it was usually the aristocracy who convened such meetings and societies in the pursuit of good taste and entertainment of distinction, all part of the process of becoming a prince. The intentions of the *Deutsche Gesellschaften* were outlined in constitutional documents: 'that in such manner an equality and association among persons of unequal social status might be brought about.'[44]

This foundational principle accorded a new way of understanding the interaction between persons. It was a fundamental change in the understanding of communication that was key, which was now conceived of as a capacity that all 'humans' had in common and thus shared. What had formerly been the interaction between aristocrats was now considered to be communicative interaction between humans, overcoming the traditional social barriers which would have previously excluded all those outside of aristocratic circles. This articulation was of course idealised, as in practice the 'humans' which the bourgeoisie could encounter at the *Deutsche Gesellschaften* were often individuals of significant social status and not from all walks of life. That these individuals were in a position to enter these realms of society on account of their lack of political influence demonstrated the insulation of this social space from the political realm. As such, they were allowed access but the barrier itself was not removed. Habermas makes the point that social equality was only possible outside of realms which were governed by the state.[45]

Tischgesellschaften, salons and coffeehouses, later manifestations of the function served by the *Deutsche Gesellschaften,* also organised debate among 'private' people on the basis of specific criteria. The first of these was that the celebration of rank amongst

[44] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 34.
[45] *Ibid.*, p.35.

equals characteristic of the earlier forms of organised, ongoing debate was recalibrated into a disregard of status altogether. Instead, 'authority' in this communicative context was judged as to the extent of its persuasiveness which could be demonstrated in terms of both content and delivery. Although wholly unrealisable in the prevailing social conditions, the bourgeoisie actively asserted this communicative context as liberated from the influence of market exchange and the domination of the state by placing 'authority' in the hands of those who were skilled at argumentation.

Despite its foundational commitment to the exclusion of social status, the actual historical experience tells us that entry to this space was solely class-based. Only those of bourgeois social status were in a position to access these discussions. Although Habermas does not go so far as to comment on the non-bourgeois perspectives on the bourgeois public sphere, it can be said that the exclusion went further than on the basis of social class. Gender would remain an exclusionary factor for bourgeois women as it would not have been socially acceptable at this moment for bourgeois women to attend such meetings.

In addition to the bracketing of status, debate was also supposed to be in principle unconstrained. Although this could mean that all topics could be open for discussion, in the historical context of the bourgeois public sphere, authentic discussion necessitated 'the problematisation of areas that until then had not been questioned'.[46] The topics which could be objectively stated as of relevance to the bourgeois public and therefore of common concern were subject to prior interpretation by a previous dominant order. The subject matter itself, cultural production, whether in art, literature, philosophy or science, was subject to interpretation by the Church before it arrived in the public domain of 'common concern'. Anything in this domain owed its presence to a successful demonstration of adherence to the particulars of the Church's own interpretation of 'desirable' or 'moralistic' cultural production. Its sacramental character became profaned through the act of private people interpreting its *raison d'être* with a critical eye, verbalizing their thoughts and saying out loud why it had managed to exert authority for so long.[47]

Furthermore, the 'public' of the bourgeois public sphere also considered itself to be, in principle, inclusive. This was made possible by the same process that allowed culture to be turned into a commodity around which discussion could take place. Talking of the 'public' as a 'public' allowed for the principle of inclusivity to be established as a

[46] Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p.36.
[47] *Ibid.,* p.37.

criterion of operation. This principle of inclusivity was necessary to avoid the public developing into a selective clique which would hamper the quality and tone of the discussions. Instead membership of the 'public' was open to all private people (which in reality meant those of property and thus education). This was of significant benefit to the members as it would allow them to engage in self-amelioration and enlightenment by listening, reading and watching other members of the public. Of course, this was contingent on the topics themselves being of a quality suitable for engagement or discussion by everyone. These issues were by definition 'general' enough to be understood and received, but also 'generalised' over time. It should be noted that, at this point, this grouping did not conceive of itself as the 'public', i.e. the addressee of public authority's publicity. It did however, consider itself instead to be the 'public's mouthpiece on the issues at hand, in essence a 'new form of bourgeois representation.'[48]

These three institutional criteria, that status can be disregarded, that debate is unconstrained, and membership is all open to all, reveal two communicative assumptions. It is important to note the existence of these assumptions for two main reasons. The first is that they influence the way in which the debate took place inside the public sphere (critical-rational communication, a concept most explicitly commonly associated with the Habermasian notion of the public sphere). The second is that identifying these assumptions in *Structural Transformation* demonstrates Habermas' interest in these themes at a much earlier stage in his research career than is perhaps obvious from his later work explicitly focused on discourse ethics and communicative action.

The first communicative assumption upon which the bourgeois public's institutional criteria are constructed is the exclusion of status. The idealised depiction of the bourgeois public's commitment to inclusivity suggests that participation in discussions was open to all. However, the historical reality of social organisation at the time, paints a conflicting picture. 'Status' is defined with reference to dominant articulations of authority in eighteenth century Europe. It is not surprising therefore that those who commanded the highest social status were men of wealth and education. Despite the focus on the emergence of the 'bourgeoisie' as a new social grouping or class, 'status' in this context incorporates a dimension of gender as well as socio-economic class.

The exclusion of status from proceedings could only be made possible by a reorientation of the source of legitimate authority which had until this point been held in status in the form of social rankings. The act of criticising culture forced a recalibration of the source of legitimate authority, as the capacity to criticise emanated from a consensus

[48] Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p. 37.

on what was 'good'. This could only be arrived at by a commitment to the authority of the better argument. To support this assertion Habermas recalled the moment when the commitment to the authority of the better argument become a normative concern for the bourgeoisie during a debate over the legitimate source of legal authority. The making of laws was essentially the rationalisation of social, political and moral norms. Opponents attacked the arbitrariness of the political will of the prince as the embodiment of sovereignty and as an acceptable basis for the law, arguing that commands could only be considered legitimate if they emanated from the law itself. The adjudicators of the law at this historical moment were those in positions of authority, i.e. land or estate based authority assembled together. Law became rational rules that were universal results in a recalibration of authority's role from articulating the law to one of *veritas non auctoritas facit legem* (truth, not authority, makes law).[49]

The second assumption revealed in Habermas' discussion of institutional criteria is that communication can be rationalised in order to achieve specific outcomes: 'Discussion within such a public presupposed the problematisation of areas that until then had not been questioned.'[50] What Habermas essentially meant here is that areas or topics that had been regarded as wholly taboo, under the strict control of the institutions of absolute power such as the Church, were now regarded as legitimate areas of debate. Participants could put anything on the agenda, nothing was beyond the purview of this critical debate. How far we can actually meet this ideal is doubtful. History tells of many occasions when people could still die for what they discussed publically, despite freedom of expression in principle.

In this particular case, it is about the outcome of discussions between members of the public. In order for this group to successfully come to a view on an issue, there would have to be a set of rules governing how they would communicate with each other in order that they reach a type of consensus suitable to inform the process of the 'bourgeois representation'. This commitment would be to the 'authority of the better argument'. This is another example of how far in principle the remit of the public sphere extends. This notion of the public sphere challenges established social distinctions in the name of rationality which is supposedly accessible to all.

Of course, Habermas would later develop these ideas about rational debate at great length. The task at hand however does not permit us to follow through Habermas' elaboration of these issues. It is nonetheless useful to recall some of the main features of

[49] Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p.53.
[50] *Ibid.*, p.36.

rational debate which clearly reflect his earlier thoughts for *Structural Transformation*. In *Theory of Communicative Action*, he raises the possibility of four validity claims which are raised in communication that is oriented towards co-ordinated action.

The communicative assumption of the authority of the better argument implies, for Habermas, at least an adherence to rational rules or norms of communication. For the authority of the better argument to mean something, however, rational justification of arguments must go beyond the actual content of discussions. The communicative conditions in which these discussions take place and the justification for these conditions also need to be taken into consideration. Habermas draws on the philosophy of language to establish four claims to validity that a speaker makes when articulating their views. His intention in doing this is to establish some normative conditions under which humans can agree to act in common. In *Theory of Communicative Action* Vol. 1 he connects the realisation of co-ordinated action to four validity claims which a speaker raises in the act of articulating their views. The first of these, a claim to intelligibility, does not receive the same degree as emphasis as the final three. This is perhaps because in order for a statement to be considered rational, it must in the first place be expressed intelligibly, so that others may understand the content of what is being said. If it is not intelligible then it serves no purpose for a normative framework of communicative action built on rational communication. The second condition is that the statement must be 'true'. 'Truthfulness' in this particular context does not incorporate a claim to sincerity on the part of the speaker. Rather it implies their accurate assessment of factual material. This meaning is better expressed by the phrase, is this in fact the case? As such it establishes facticity of statements. The third condition concerns the 'normative context' within which the statement is made. For Habermas, a normative context, in this particular case would refer to the views of a given society on a question. As such a normative context derives its validity as a moral framework from the society within which it developed. This means that a statement that adheres to the moral consensus of one normative context (i.e. it claims to be 'true') may not command the same degree of 'truthfulness' in another. To make a statement outside of the normative context would be to contradict the expectations of a society on a given matter, as such, the statement is morally inappropriate. The final condition is that the speaker must be genuine in what they express and are not misrepresenting their own intentions. Misrepresentation of the statement would include

fabrication. All of these claims operate within a context that presupposes recognition of the speaker by those to whom they are speaking.[51]

The significance of these claims to validity which, for Habermas, support co-ordinated human action is that they are open to question when raised in the public sphere. To question a statement as simple as 'it is raining' is straightforward; the response to it would be that it is raining, not raining or something in between. The final consensus on the state of the weather in this particular example would not have any great consequences for the social world. But what of statements that are complex and require a complex answer? Reflecting on where the world came from or the purpose of humanity is potentially problematic for society. If everything is open to question in the public sphere, then even the foundations of our societies and the normative frameworks they come to generate are also open to question. Habermas was acutely aware that calling the basic consensus upon which society rests is a risky endeavour. There is no guarantee that once this normative context has been questioned that it would be possible to forge a new consensus in the future. Thus, the consequences of this are serious for society.

Finally, although Habermas construed the force of the better argument in positive terms for the public sphere, it does not mean to say that it is a motivationally strong force. He did not believe that the motivation necessary to act could be generated solely by the force of the better argument. The capacity that includes the motivation to act instead requires a certain type of socialisation. Individuals take on this socialisation prior to their exposure to the critical public sphere. The process of feeling bad about doing the wrong thing is not a product of moral argument but is a product of socialisation.

2.3 Habermas on Identity

It may appear that *Structural Transformation* is replete with considerations regarding the 'bourgeois' identity of its protagonists. However, Habermas' actual insights on identity are not presented as clearly as his comments on the role of economic forces providing the substantive foundation of the bourgeois private sphere. True to his membership of the Frankfurt School, Habermas concerns himself with sociological categories. This does not mean that he was lacking in sensitivity to national trajectories. Indeed he made frequent reference to them. National identity however, was not a specific theme of *Structural Transformation*, It would however, be surprising if Habermas, a leading public intellectual of the FRG in the wake of the Nazi era, had been unmoved by

[51] Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action Vol.1: Reason and the Rationalisation of Society*, p.99.

considerations of national identity. It is therefore not surprising that we find him referring to matters of identity in commentary on specific issues and trends in the FRG but also in wider terms, informed by his underlying philosophy.[52] Thus, in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* Habermas approaches the issue of identity from a philosophical standpoint that seeks to evaluate the possibility of revealing a type of universal morality. The nature of this morality is such that it transcends ostensible cultural signifiers such as names or nationalities.

It is important to note the existence of two sets of distinctions operating in Habermas' philosophical comments as they influence the presentation of the same themes in later work. The first distinction is between moral questions or standpoints and identity questions and standpoints. Moral questions, about the 'correct' course of action to take, typically evoke 'yes' or 'no' responses. The answers to these questions are valid for everyone because they are based on a consensus regarding the issue under discussion that is universal in its purview. As such they are questions of justice, often formulated as 'is this course of action just?' It assumes, for example, that all humans would consider the act of killing to be wrong in principle.

Neither of these characteristics can be said to be true of questions of identity. Answering the question 'who am I?' requires a distinctly qualitative response. The substance of identity questions also cannot be sufficiently addressed by a binary answer. Additionally, the answer to such a question cannot be binding on all humans in the same manner as a moral question. The answer to the question 'how should we behave?' will be different for different groups of people across different cultures and times. 'Yes' or 'no' answers to identity questions are not necessary.

As this point, it is useful to briefly make a reference to a second peculiarity about Habermas comments on identity. In the discussion of moral and identity questions, it is possible to interchange questions of identity with questions of ethics. The rationale for this is because Habermas takes the view that identities are formed with reference to what other groups in society consider to be the 'good life', i.e. the ethical life. These groups set the conditions within which a person can form and then articulate their identity. These conditions define the ethical parameters set by a given culture or group at a given historical period, often referred to as 'normative frameworks'. A person, when forming and expressing their identity, does so with specific reference to these normative frameworks within which social consensus on moral issues reside. As such, their identity is formed by

[52] Peter M. R. Stirk (2000) *Critical Theory, Politics and Society: An Introduction* (London: Pinter) & (2006) *Twentieth Century German Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

inscribing themselves within the context of what is right and what is good according to 'society'. The capacity for an individual to articulate identity autonomously is rather limited.

The overall goal of revealing a universal morality leads Habermas to make a distinction between questions of morality and questions of ethics. Identity and its connection to types of morality appear to be of long-term interest as the theme is revisited several times in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action, Theory of Communicative Action: Life World and System* and *Between Facts and Norms*. There is a specific reason why morality is explored in this way. Subdividing 'morality' into smaller areas attributes to it a degree of rationality. By rationalising morality it is then possible to explore 'motivation', a key factor of rational communication oriented towards a specific outcome (in this case, mutual understanding).

Habermas' stance on morality is complex. This is because in addition to his goal of establishing a normative basis for a universal morality, he is also attempting to move forward a larger philosophical debate over the connection between morality and autonomous action. Put most simply, Habermas' definition of morality is based on his own contrast between Kant's notion of morality and Hegel's 'ethical life'. Kant asks a traditional question, 'how do we know what we ought to do?' It is possible, according to Kant, to answer this question sufficiently in a non-relativistic way. Practically speaking this means that it is possible, in principle, to formulate moral laws which are valid for 'everybody'.

As such, Kant does not put forward a moral code, but rather a procedure or a formula for *determining* what is morally appropriate. He further holds that it is in principle possible for each rational being to ask him or herself this moral question (how do we know what we ought to do?) and to arrive at the same answer. Hegel's response to this is that this process puts a considerable burden on individuals. They must first be in a position to ask themselves the question as rational beings, and secondly to arrive at a conclusion legitimate within the normative context of the question. He pointed out that Kant's procedure ignored the fact an individual's moral expectations are formulated within the context of a particular community, usually one they are an ostensible member of. Hegel describes these contexts as the 'ethical life' (*sittlichkeit*).

Habermas takes up this contrast and reasons that Kantian and Hegelian strategies do not necessarily need to be seen as alternatives to each other. Instead, they are related but distinctive strategies for dealing with distinctive types of questions. Although he retained the Kantian belief that it is possible for humans to *arrive* at moral judgements valid for all,

Habermas did not believe that humans can determine moral judgements on their own. So in place of Kant's isolated reflection, Habermas invoked a process of rational deliberation *between* individuals. Simultaneously, however, he believed that Hegel's formulation of 'ethical life' is necessary to supplement his reformulated Kantian morality. This refocuses the terminology of the 'ethical life' not onto questions of what we ought to *do* (where 'we' stands for all humans) but of what we want to *be* (where 'we' stands for the members of a specific ethical community.

In both cases, Habermas believed that part of the process of modernisation involves the emergence of the capacity of individuals to question the assumptions of their own society. To that extent, both moral and ethical assumptions can be called into question in processes of rational communication. The ability to do this assumes the emergence of a certain level of individual autonomy. Although these two types of questions or processes are clearly reflected, Habermas insists on the importance of their distinctive features, namely that the moral claim is a claim to validity for *all humans*; the ethical claim is a claim to validity for *all members of a particular ethical community*.

With the distinction between moral and ethical questions established, Habermas asserted that the law (by this he meant the rational adjudication in the courts) is an appropriate, if not vital, means for resolving moral questions. He maintains reservations however about the extent to which the law can comment on the 'good life' and 'what we want to be'. Once again there is a specifically German context from which Habermas' interests in this area emanate. The Federal Constitutional Court, in reaction to the supine positivistic mentality of judges before 1945 takes on an activist role and formulates judgements in terms of what it takes to be values central to a democratic and socialist states. Habermas and many other theorists were concerned to the extent to which the court and law have become substitutes from the democratic deliberation about what sort of people the Germans want to be. The Federal Constitutional Court developed its own 'doctrine of values' (*Wertordnungslehre*) which influenced the manner in which judges saw themselves in the judicial process directed towards important cases of precedent. In this specific context, the norms or principle underpinning the judicial process were transformed by certain thinkers into 'values' through a process of balancing between lawyers. The outcome of this process affected the validity basis of what could be considered an 'objective fundamental norm' as these could only be arrived at by assessing the relative 'value' of each position. Habermas asserted that it was not possible for values to contain any type of inherent priority over another which hinders the process of judicial deliberation. In practice, if in order to reason a judgement, a judge must consider the values

alongside each other, these values become positively or negatively weighted depending on the case at hand. This particular example also asserts that the case itself, which necessitates a reasoning of values specific to the case, has a disproportionate influence on the articulation of values. Established law becomes reinterpreted as the realisation of precedent-setting values in legislative frameworks, rather than the realisation of principles or fundamental norms. [53]

Habermas deployed this example to distinguish between 'what we ought to do' and 'what is good for us' in collective decision making. The question 'what we ought to do' necessitates either a binary response ('yes' or 'no') or a withholding of judgement. These responses are either 'valid' or 'invalid'. Underpinning this are principles or higher level norms which have a deontological character: 'The 'oughtness of binding norms has the absolute sense of an unconditioned and universal obligation; 'what one ought to do' claims to be equally good for all.'[54] By contrast, the question 'what is good for us' concerns 'values' that can be attained and are thus goal-oriented. This question requires an evaluative answer that determines which goods are better than others for the group and creates a series of long-term value preferences. 'Values' are teleological and intersubjectively shared, the collective evaluative answer establishes a benchmark of desirable values across cultures and forms of life.[55] Norms pertaining to different issues supplement each other to the extent that together they form a system. Different values must compete for recognition by different groups on a case by case basis.

This distinction is omitted in 'legal values' or legally protected interests (*Rechstgütern*) because positive law is subject to the specific constraints of territory and the community of individuals addressed by it. In the case of basic rights as norms, the law must aggregate a matter in terms of equal interest to all members of the community. Its articulation must also be presented in a manner that meets the symbolic expectations of the particular community. This process 'domesticates' the prioritisation of specific normative viewpoints over others thus specifying the addressee community.

Habermas' discussion of the role of the courts demonstrates that a distinction between moral and ethical standpoints can be observed in the process of collective identity clarification. The collective identity 'human' is bound by a set of universal deontological principles that include human dignity, solidarity, self-realisation and autonomy. Other identities, such as those formed in communities, cultures and forms of life are subject to specific configurations of value preferences that ultimately tell us 'who we want to be'. It

[53] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms,* p.254.
[54] *Ibid.,* p.255.
[55] *Ibid.,* p.255.

is up the individual to reflect upon what they identify with and what type of person they want to be in modernised societies. Collective groups are bound by specific discourses of law and politics that ensure the ethical validity of their decisions. An attempt to transfer these ethically constricted discourses outside of their territorial or addressee context results in an uncoupling of action from the ethical context in which it was developed. Deliberative politics by contrast points out that several forms of argument, communicative forms and institutional legal procedures exist, the *variety* of which should be considered in a theory of communicative action.[56]

Habermas' work also displays an aversion to the idea that the public sphere could be construed as a version of the macro-subject or an embodiment of the general will of which he is deeply suspicious.[57] Habermas' conception of the general will is that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's political theory, that is *le peuple*, a unified body of people which can be called upon at any moment to endorse the general view on a given topic or issue. Rousseau's reflections place this revolutionary body in the seat of the formerly absolute monarch. As the monarch embodied the very source of legitimacy and by extension, legitimacy, Rousseau's vision of the general will invests *le peuple* with the same characteristics. As such it continues the role of an absolute unquestioned authority into the French Revolution, this time as constituted by the people rather than the king.[58] In *Structural Transformation* Habermas examines Rousseau's connection of the general will (*volonté générale*) to public opinion (*opinion publique*) and its incorporation of a legislative function in *Contract Social*. Although this sovereign opinion is depicted as emerging organically from the people, as they constitute the basis of authority, it was still required to make reasonable or good judgements and thus requires some 'indirect influence' to guide it, 'it was therefore necessary to present matters as they were, sometimes as they were to appear.'[59] Thus for Habermas, Rousseau's notion of the general will represents an arbitrary attempt to dominate society through the manipulation of public opinion by an absolute authority. Under such conditions, therefore, it was not possible to engage in any sort of 'critical discussion in the public sphere' in the manner Habermas envisaged.[60] Thus, his painstaking setting out of the marginalised public sphere and the lifeworld attempts to overcome any notion of the general will as deception by emphasizing human

[56] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms,* p.283.
[57] Patchen Markell (1997) 'Contesting Consensus: Rereading Habermas on the Public Sphere' *Constellations*, Vol.3 Issue 3, pp.377-400.
[58] Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1972) [1762] *Du Contrat Social* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), Book 2, Chapter 7, p.40.
[59] Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, Book 3, Chapter 20, p.74.
[60] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 98 see also pp.89-99; See also Markell, 'Contesting Consensus', pp.385-386.

intersubjectivity and a decentered society.[61] His intersubjectivist depiction of the individual transcends the idea of a group wholeness or unity. Intersubjective reason requires that a notion of solidarity is reached by 'individuated subjects', free to make up their own minds and also to express disagreement. Upon this foundation then, Habermas takes great pains to distance the marginalised public sphere form any notion of the general will: 'Rousseau's model of will formation was intended to establish the conditions under which the empirical wills of separate burgers could be transformed, without any intermediary, into the wills, open to reason and oriented towards the common good of moral citizens of a state.'[62] He fears any suggestion that a particular group or class can believe that it embodies the general will and seeks to speak on behalf of society.[63]

2.4 Conceptual Implications of Habermas' Public Sphere Motif

The Habermasian positions exposed in these discussions have consequences for how the 'Habermasian approach' can be translated into a theoretical framework to be applied to political action in the MENA. It is important to bear in mind that Habermas saw a specific type of life as a precondition for the emergence of the public sphere. It was essentially a *bourgeois* public sphere, which cultivated a specific type of privacy and sentiment. This type of privacy allowed for the discussion of topics outside of the bourgeois familial domain amongst other members of the bourgeoisie. It also permitted the development of alternative interpretations of morality and the public good or the 'good life'.

This was a style of life built upon specific material foundations. The emergence of this bourgeois identity was only made possible by a transformation in the prevailing mode of economic production. These new economic conditions allowed for the emergence of a 'new' social grouping. A bourgeois identity was developed through self-realisation (as private individuals) and reflection (their experiences expressed in literature). This process allowed them to express 'who they are' i.e. bourgeois private individuals, but also to fuse

[61] Habermas [1981] *Theory of Communicative Action*; Patchen Markell (1997) 'Contesting Consensus: Rereading Habermas on the Public Sphere' *Constellations*, Vol.3 Issue 3, pp.385-386.

[62] Habermas's reticence towards the idea of the subject writ-large can be seen in 'Further Reflection on the Public Sphere' in Craig Calhoun (1992) (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), p.445; Jürgen Habermas (1994) 'Three Normative Models of Democracy' *Constellations* Vol.1, No.1 (April), p.9; Markell, 'Contesting Consensus', p.385; 'The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article' in Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas Kellner (1989) *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader* (New York: Routledge), pp.136-42.

[63] He is fearful of any group or class which can believe that it embodies the general will and seeks to speak on behalf of society. This fear emerges from his disagreements in the 1960s with the hardline Marxists who believed in the Leninist model of the party as an avant-garde and hostile model of leftwing politics Habermas characterised these activities as 'leftwing fascism' Jürgen Habermas (1992) 'The Role of the Student Movements in Germany' in Peter Dews (ed.) *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas* (London: Verso Books), p.233.

this economic signifier with an ethical position ('who they want to be'). This created a social identity that was specifically bourgeois.

Furthermore the change in economic structures necessary for the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere simultaneously became the catalyst, over a long period of time of course, for its eventual decline on account of the mass media. This has implications for the association made in Chapter One between the diverse media markets which support a public sphere. For Habermas, the media exploited the fragile authentic lived experience of the bourgeoisie's public private sphere through replication and stylisation for commercial gain. When content became prearranged by mass media, *the emancipatory character of the public sphere became distorted*. Once debate in the public sphere had lost its vibrancy, the public's critical capacity also degenerated further. *The emergence of the public sphere is therefore followed by an inevitable decline and degradation.*

Habermas also saw a specific type of interaction taking place within the public sphere according to his later work. Debate within it is subject to several communicative assumptions oriented to the realisation of communicative action, i.e. the act of overcoming domination. From a philosophical standpoint, debate in the public sphere should be open to all regardless of status. More importantly for this thesis, is the assumption that all topics are up for discussion including those that were previously forbidden. Habermas depicted the public sphere as engaged int a reorientation of the authority of religious institutions as the primary interpreters of morality and cultural production. In the public sphere, it is possible, therefore, to question publicly the very philosophical and moral foundations upon which societies and cultures have been built.

Finally, describing incidences of political action in the MENA such as the Arab Uprisings, is further restricted by Habermas' anxiety towards tearing down of an established consensus as part of the process of debating legitimacy principles in the public sphere. His views on the risks of political action and the dismantling social consensus can be observed in his response to those who would challenge his claim that universal moral intuitions are by definition unchanging. They can however by 'clarified' through an interrogation of their meanings by a community of communication. Challenging the existing consensus is a risky business and as an empirical possibility of this concern, Habermas discussed the social and political tensions surrounding slavery which culminated in the American Civil War of 1861. He isolated the 'political and implicitly moral question of whether the institutions of slavery could be justified within the framework of a set of

constitutional laws'.[64] In order to make this point, Habermas contrasted the 'moral' case against the abolition of slavery in the United States during the 1850s with that of *sati* (Hindu ritual burning of widows) outlawed by the British colonial administration in India. Both cases involved an interrogation of the extent to which they can be considered constituent parts of a 'form of life' which is self-sustaining by an unforced social consensus. Southern society was not a 'self-reproducing indigenous for of life' but was, along with the North to equal measure, ' artificially produced' as part of the larger 'agrarian zone' of capitalistic production.[65] As such it did not have a moral claim to maintaining the practice of slavery. *Sati* on the other hand, was a component institution of Hindu society, a 'freely chosen' form of life that was self-sustaining and not faced with 'inevitable dissolution and assimilation.' As such, Habermas argued that the British should have abstained from banning it, for their interference upset a prevailing social consensus.

Political action therefore is a risky strategy, as it does not provide any guarantee that a new social consensus, by which everyone can live, can be forged in its place. The consensus to which Habermas is referring is not limited to the business of democratic politics but rather emanates from the processes of socialisation which inform individuals' interpretations of the world around them. Individuals derive unproblematic, deeply-held social and cultural linguistic meanings ('background meanings') for the *Lebenswelt* ('lifeworld'), a background repository of convictions which provides the cognitive horizon or worldview for individuals.[66] These meanings and convictions of the *Lebenswelt* are unproblematic (i.e. 'unquestioned') and as a whole constitute the worldview with which an individual encounters others. Individuals make sense of their lifeworlds throughs intersubjectivity, i.e. shared experience. Habermas' philosophical conception of the world also impacted upon how he depicted 'meaning' and 'validity' in *Theory of Communicative Action*. In a reorientation of Kant's critique of reason, the concept of the world is no longer projected by a single monological consciousness but by an intersubjective experience. Subjects now come together and raise claims to validity through communication.

Habermas argued that the *Lebenswelt* became rationalised by modernisation and subsequently colonised by the instrumental rationality of bureaucracy and market forces. This lead to a questioning of the convictions and positions held within it. According to the

[64] Peter Dews (ed.) *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas* (London: Verso Books), p.203.
[65] Dews, *Autonomy and Solidarity*, p.204.
[66] Jürgen Habermas [1984] (1985) *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol.1: Reason and the Rationalisation of Society* trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, MA: Beacon Press), p.70; 'An Alternative Way Out of the Philosophy of the Subject: Communicative Versus Subject-centred Reason' in the *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* tr. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp.294-327.

theory of communicative action, the only legitimate principles are those which can withstand examination in the public sphere. The process of consensus formation (rational communication) in communicative action reorients legitimacy to be held within these principles.

It is the procedure of rational communication which incorporates the greatest risk. It involves an examination of the dominant, prevailing positions of legitimation. After this, there is a possibility that disagreement may occur over how to proceed. Disagreement increases the range of possible positions to be considered in consensus formation. The larger the number of positions, the less likely it is that those positions can be satisfied and a new consensus formed on the the original issue of legitimation. In challenging the prevailing consensus then, there is no guarantee that a new one can be formed in its place. This has a negative consequence for society as it unleashes social institutions from the obligations placed on them previously by the now-dissolved consensus, thus overloading society with multiple, conflicting answers to the original question. This is a serious, intolerable burden for the individual and society who must live in the knowledge of these possibilities but without the consensus with which to co-ordinate their future actions. Thus, *not all things can be questioned all of the time*. The co-ordination of action is then provided by 'steering media' which co-ordinate action around instrumental values such as money and power. This thus severs the link of action to processes of reaching understanding, replacing it with purposive-rationality.[67]

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Habermas' views on the public sphere have changed over time since the publication of *Structural Transformation*. Where his earlier work emphasised an emancipative, offensive public sphere, his more recent writing portrays a vulnerable, defensive motif. Habermas also emphasises a specifically European trajectory of political and social development. This trajectory is based on a specific understanding of law, authority and legitimacy. This should be taken into account when developing a theoretical framework from the Habermasian approach. Four 'Habermasian' positions have been identified. These are (1) the singular public sphere declines as well as emerges, (2) the public sphere emerges from the private sphere, (3) all subjects, including

[67] Jürgen Habermas [1984] (1985) *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol.1: Reason and the Rationalisation of Society* trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, MA: Beacon Press), p.342.

authority, are up for debate in the public sphere, (4) identity (status and privilege) is disregarded in the public sphere. These findings contrast with the Habermasian characteristics claimed by 'Arab', 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' public spheres in Chapter One. Briefly these were (1) the emergence of multiple public spheres in the MENA, (2) these public spheres have come into being with the introduction of private commodity ownership, (3), the issues under scrutiny in these public spheres are solely political, (4) these public spheres are engaged in a debate over the identity of their members.

The extent of the contrast between 'Habermasian' characteristics revealed in chapter one and the 'Habermasian' positions identified in Chapter Two, necessitates a re-examination of the Habermasian approach to political action in the MENA. These Habermasian positions are likely to prove problematic when realised in contexts which differ from the historical, legal and philosophical aspects of the cultural context in which Habermas made his arguments. The above findings inform the next part of this thesis, which deploys its revised 'Habermasian' framework to the MENA context in two stages. The first stage will apply the emergence portion of the Habermasian trajectory of public sphere development in the MENA. This will address the empirical claim made by the literature in Chapter One that 'Arab' and 'Islamic' public spheres have emerged. The second stage will then apply the decline portion of the Habermasian trajectory in the context of the MENA. It will consider the empirical claim made by the literature in Chapter One that the emergence of public spheres in the MENA was made possible by media technologies.

The following chapter thus deploys the first step of the theoretical framework. It uses the first step of the Habermasian historical trajectory (emergence) to identify evidence in the Arab states that is analogous to the example Habermas puts forward in *Structural Transformation*. Specifically, it will consider analogous evidence of a public realm, analogous evidence of a private realm and analogous group conceptions of identity. It is hoped that this strategy will demonstrate rigorously the extent of the utility of the Habermasian approach to political action in the MENA.

Chapter Three

Communication and the Arabic-Speaking Middle East and North Africa

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined a series of claims about the possible characteristics of a 'Habermasian' designation to the public realm of political significance, often economically described as the 'Habermasian public sphere.' Briefly, these included the existence of a private realm and its corollary institutions, the emergence of a public sphere from within the private realm, the existence of a set of communicative assumptions under which activities in the public sphere are undertaken and the demonstration of a specific type of ethical identity. Claims of similarities between these dimensions and those characteristics of 'public spheres' in the Arabic-speaking MENA states have been raised in the literature reviewed in Chapter One. This complementarity alone, however, is not sufficient to assert that it is plausible or even possible to observe 'Habermasian' public spheres in this empirical context with confidence. Rather, further investigation of empirical evidence reveals several fundamental divergences contained within the assumptions underpinning these positions. In order to expose these distinctions, it is therefore necessary to measure the claims made by the literature in the above four areas against 'empirical realities' described in the wider scholarship.

Therefore, this chapter raises the 'Habermasian' distinctions and their foundational assumptions (as identified in Chapter Two) in the context of Arabic-speaking MENA states. Specifically it considers historical examples of phenomena associated with the emergence of a public realm of political significance from Arab and Islamic history. Although the literature does suggest it is possible to speak of 'Islamic' and 'Arab' public spheres in a transnational or even supranational sense on the basis of shared cultural and historical heritages, it does not provide information on their institutional criteria. Without this information, these notions of the public sphere become limited to a particular identity community at the expense of the recognition of other groups.[1] Aside from isolated examples from the Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic periods, the majority of relevant

[1] This is inconsistent with the cosmopolitan democratic undertone of Habermasian thought, which has been reframed by Nancy Fraser around the recognition of all groups in the public sphere. See Nancy Fraser (1995) 'Recognition or Redistribution? A Critical Reading of Iris Young's Justice and The Politics of Difference' *Journal of Political Philosophy* Vol.3, No.2 (June), pp.166-180; (2000) 'Rethinking Recognition' *New Left Review* Vol.3, (May-June), pp.107-120; (2005) 'Reframing Justice in a Globalizing World' *New Left Review* Vol.36, (November-December), pp. 69-88; (2007) 'Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World' *Theory, Culture & Society* Vol.24, No. 4, pp.7-30.

examples provided by the scholarly literature occur from the Ottoman period until the mid-twentieth century. A broader and more discriminating view of the 'public sphere' literature helps re-establish some of the explanatory power of Habermas' insights that are often obscured by superficial and thus obfuscatory use of the language of the public sphere.

In pursuit of this goal then, this chapter seeks to measure the plausible extent of a 'Habermasian' designation to the public realm of political significance in the MENA states. To maintain conceptual clarity and relevance, it proceeds by using three of the 'Habermasian assumptions' identified in the previous chapter (emergence of a private realm, emergence of a public realm, conceptions of morality with implications for conceptions of identity) as an analytical framework. This chapter deploys the first stage of a revised 'Habermasian' framework to the MENA context. The theoretical framework is drawn from Habermas' own comments on the public sphere identified in Chapter Two. This first stage uses the first portion of the trajectory of public sphere development (that of emergence) to identify empirical evidence analogous to those examples provided by Habermas in *Structural Transformation*. It is therefore tasked with identifying material which can be considered evidence of an emerging private sphere, emerging public sphere and analogous conceptions of identity. Where Habermas chose to emphasise some general similarities between Germany, France and Great Britain, the following discussion of empirical evidence emphasises instead *divergence and differentiation* in the MENA.

3.1 Emergence of A Private Sphere

In *Structural Transformation*, the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere was made possible by a set of new economic conditions which generated a private realm. Within it, a privatised life was lived in the unit of the bourgeois family, which provided shelter for its members beyond the influence of the market. Within its boundaries, members began to view themselves as individuals as they share their human experiences with others in literary forms. The shift in family life was marked by a change in architectural preferences and marriage arrangements. The observable presence of the bourgeois family unit is the evidence that a 'privatised' realm exists.

Habermas identified a change in the ownership of the mode and means of production as a precursor to the development of the new private sphere. In Europe, feudal power structures relinquished absolute power over the mode and means of production to private individual commodity owners. Individuals then had an economic stake in the development of society as they were able to control how their labour was used. This

change in the economic foundations was also observed in other developments: the cultivation of a type of sensibility in a newly emergent privatised realm of the family and the emergence of the novel as a new literary form. Similar changes to the mode of production can also be observed in Arab societies. However, the significance of these conditions as evidence of the type of private sphere Habermas describes has not yet been fully interrogated. Habermas identified four indicators: a change in the ownership of the mode and means of production, emergence of a bourgeoisie, the architecture of family life and literary reflections on lived experience. While evidence of these four indicators can be observed, they are, however, of a different type and different geographical distribution to the 'Habermasian trajectory'. They are consequently of differing, though not diminished, significance to the public realm of political significance.

Discerning empirical evidence of a change in ownership of the mode and means of production in the MENA presents a restricted picture. The historical economic relations at work in the MENA region do not display the same linear and uni-directional historical properties often associated with Marx's categories of production.[2] The modern Arab states are built on specific historical economic relations that explicitly incorporate 'traditional' forms of socialisation which generate multiple 'modes of production' ('lineage' and 'bureaucratic') that can be observed at several historical junctures. Most importantly perhaps, the privileged status of custom and tradition created distinctive formative dynamics in the private sphere and, by extension, the public realm. The first of these formative dynamics is the simultaneous practice of state-ordered economic relations alongside nomadic pastoralism. The significance of this for the developing public realm can be understood through a detailed discussion of two examples: the Ottoman land regime and bedouin subsistence practices.

The importance of the Ottoman land regime for this chapter lies in its historical attempt to create an economic distinction between 'public' and 'private.' A state power-ordered set of economic relations can be observed in the creation of formal land ownership for 'private' individuals by the Ottoman state bureaucracy during the nineteenth century. This state power-centred economic framework bears some of the characteristics of Ayubi's 'bureaucratic' mode of production: 'a powerful centralised state, frequently dealing in hydraulic agriculture and public works, and involved in 'generalised slavery'. The bureaucratic structure of the Ottoman State drew on rural populations for a peasant labour

[2] Nazih N. Ayubi (1995) *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: IB Tauris), p.4

force to maximise the exploitation of land resources.[3] Ottoman historical agrarian practices were similar to those experienced by Europe i.e. the maximisation of revenue through resource exploitation.[4] From the seventeenth century, the Ottoman state maximised its revenue from the land through *iltizam* (tax farming), a system which required a large bureaucratic network of *kuls* (management agents) acting as personal representatives of the Empire in general and the sultan in particular. Land within the territories of the Ottoman Empire was considered property of the sultan who had the right to hold all sources of wealth in the empire as Imperial goods.[5] The sultan had the right to maximise revenue from Imperial goods securing his position as the only individual capable of 'private' commodity ownership. This remained the case until the *Arazi Kanunnamesi* (Ottoman Land Code) of 1858 enacted by Muhammad Ali Pasha, nineteen years after the start of the tanzimat reforms period of 1839-1876. Divergent scholarly accounts of the precise purpose of the Land Code exist. It remains to be seen whether the purpose of the Code was to establish a system of land registration designed to provide a 'defensive modernisation' obstacle to colonial encroachment, or was simply a confirmation of existing jurisdictional land laws. Although some disagree that it was the first instance of private land ownership, the issuance of title deeds did mark the first time that land could be *owned on paper*.[6]

Scholars have shown more agreement over the emergence of a formally landed class composed of bureaucratic officials and tribal leaders.[7] The relationships of this class

[3] Perry Anderson (1979) *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso Editions), pp.485-6 as cited in Ayubi, *Overstating the Arab State,* p.44. See also Linda T. Darling (1996) *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire 1560- 1660* (Leiden: Brill). For futher details on land patterns in the earlier periods see Frede Lokkegaard (1950) *Islamic Taxation in the Classical Period* (Copenhagen: Branner & Korch).

[4] Karen Barkey & Ronan Van Rossem (1997) 'Networks of Contention: Villages and Regional Structure in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire' *American Journal of Sociology* Vol.102, No. 5 (March), p.1362.

[5] Stanford J. Shaw (1968) *The Budget of Ottoman Egypt 1005-1006/1596-1597* (The Hague: Mouton), p.1.

[6] Haim Gerber (1987) *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers), p.72 pp.67-90: 'The land law divided the state's lands into five distinct legal categories: *mulk*, land held in absolute freehold; *miri*, state land held on lease; *waqf*, land that belonged to pious foundations; *metruka*, land earmarked for public purposes; and *mevat*, waste and unused land' (p.67) In practice this did not change land ownership much which had been subject to informal types of 'ownership' in the form of perpetuity by groups. It brought pre-1858 rights to arable land bestowed through the working of the land to an end. Gerber points out that relations between landlords/tenants were in fact rare throughout the Ottoman administration period, as such they did not figure significantly in the 1858 Code (p.71). It was rather a renewal of Ottoman *kanuns* on agrarian matters dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Karen Barkey & Ronan Van Rossum (1997) 'Networks of Contention: Villages and Regional Structure in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire *American Journal of Sociology* Vol.102, No. 5 (March), p.1360.

[7] Haim Gerber (1987) The *Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers), p.72 Many *kuls* took the opportunity to register land in their own names rather than in those of local peasants, bedouin shaykhs did it in their names instead of tribesmen. See Nazih N. Ayubi (1995) *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: IB Tauris), pp.87-91; Keith David Watenpaugh (2006) *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp.24-5, Kemal Karpat (2001) *The Politicisation of Islam, Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith and Community in the Late-Ottoman State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp.93-98 and Peter Sluglett & Marion Farouk-Sluglett (1984) 'The Application of the

to the land and its workers cannot, according to Albert Hourani, conform to the theoretical ownership as described by both *sharia'* and modern statute law. Similarly, this group of 'landowners' might be better understood as 'urban notables', participating in a type of 'patrician' politics.[8] In the context of Muslim Ottoman provinces, these urban notables were members of 'great families' resident and prosperous in the urban areas. This position allowed these families to preside over a 'rural hinterland'. Divergent from a structure in which notables ruled the urban zone as an independent city-republic (*e.g.* De Medici Florence), the Ottoman provinces were instead subject to a monarchical power, supported by urban elites who were, in turn, able to 'impose limits or exercise influence'.[9] This constellation of governance incorporated specific forms of political action which rested on the capacity of notables to possess 'access' to agents of authority or to already hold sufficient social power, independent of the ruler, giving them 'a position of accepted and 'natural' leadership.' Such persons were able to extend influence over both rural and urban groups simultaneously and ultimately form a series of coalition groups.[10] Hourani argued that in the Arab provinces, three different groups of *iktai'yin* ('notables') who derived their authority from different social positions could be identified: *ulama* (religious authority), *ashraf* (military authority) and the *aghawat* (whose authority was not rooted in either of the other two types).[11] As such, the term notable denotes a distinctly *political* identity.

1858 Land Code in Greater Syria: Some Preliminary Observations' in Tarif Khalidi (ed.) *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East* (Beirut: American University of Beirut), pp.409-424.

[8] Patriciate system where large families provided social patronage whose members were able to participate or take on political functions.

[9] Albert Hourani (1968) 'Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables' in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (London: Macmillan Press), pp.36-66. The 'urban notables' paradigm has been influential among historians of the Middle East; Ira Lapidus (1967) *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), Ernest C. Dawn (1962) 'The Rise of Arabism in Syria' *Middle East Journal* Vol.16,145-168 & (1973) *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), Peter M. Holt (1968) (ed.) *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt: Historical Studies from the Ottoman Conquest to the United Arab Republic* (London: Oxford University Press), Gabriel Piterberg (1990) 'The Formation of an Ottoman Egyptian Elite in the Eighteenth Century' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.22, No.3 (August), pp.275-89; (1979/80) 'The Ottoman Conquest and the Development of the Great Arab Towns' *International Journal of Turkish Studies* No.1, pp.84-101.

[10] For example, the Qazdağli and Jalfi households in Ottoman Egypt; see Jane Hathaway (1997) *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.52-87; André Raymond (1991) 'Soldiers in Trade: The Case of Ottoman Cairo' *British Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.18, No.1, pp.16-37; Jane Hathaway (1995) 'The Household of Hasan Ağa Bilifya: An Assessment of Elite Politics in Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Egypt' *Turcica* Vol.27, pp.135-51; Ehud Toledano (1990) *State and Society in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

[11] For an overview of the confessional composition of the Lebanese notable families at the end of the eighteenth century see Boutros Labaki (1988) 'Confessional Communities, Social Stratification, and Wars in Lebanon' *Social Compass* Vol.35, No.4, pp.536-537; Ruth Roded (1984) 'Tradition and Change in Syria during the Last Decades of Ottoman Rule: The Urban Elite of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Hama, 1876-1918' (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International) and (1986) 'Social Patterns Among the Urban Elite in Syria During the Late Ottoman Period 1876-1918' in David Kushner (ed.) *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Politics, Social and Economic Transformation* (Leiden: Brill), pp.146-171.

Such organisational structures of authority were common across the Muslim provinces of the Ottoman Empire, though the actual strength of notables' political influence depended on the location. It is unclear, however, to what extent it can be claimed that certain socio-economic transformations can be causally associated with specific religious groups and locations. Philip Khoury, once a supporter of Hourani's urban notables 'paradigm', acknowledged the possibility that other groups who lived alongside the predominantly Sunni Muslim urban notables have not been given adequate attention by historians of the region. Appraising his own work in *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism*, Khoury suggested the ascendancy of the landowning bureaucratic class after 1860 perhaps involved the erosion of other classes. He noted that he was unable to demonstrate empirically why 'private property rights became widespread and any such claim that this constituted a class, in the Marxian sense, cannot be as sharply defined as it was […].' [12] The existence of Shi'i communities and by extension their own structures of authority, particularly those in Jabal Amil in modern-day South Lebanon, are often considered to be unacknowledged by the urban notables thesis.[13]

These 'new' owners of the land could perhaps be considered 'privatised' in a Habermasian sense through their formal ownership of a commodity. However the extent to which this could be considered as contributing to a change in the mode of production is limited. Most of the land went to individuals who were already of significant social status, thus protecting the social hierarchy already in operation. Commodity ownership in this context therefore means the continuation of the established system of authority as it froze out any new social class that could be considered analogous to the European bourgeoisie. If the majority of the land went to persons of status, those of lower social provenance were unable to ascend the social hierarchy. This was therefore the emergence of a landed class that was to fall into insignificance by the end of World War II, as a result of the formation of separate Arab states.[14]

Despite the difference of this group from the Habermasian privatised commodity owner, some of their elements have been documented in terms of their 'newness' and 'self-

[12] Philip Khoury (1990) 'The Urban Notables Paradigm Revisited' *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée* Vol. 55, No. 55-56, p.221 and (2003) *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) Khoury stated that Arab nationalism evolved in this particular social and political environment, though he is careful to avoid suggesting a causal relationship.

[13] Rula Abisaab (1999) 'Shi'ite Beginnings and Scholastic Tradition in Jabal Amil in Lebanon' *The Muslim World* Vol. 89, No.1 (January), p.1-4.

[14] Haim Gerber (2010) *State and Society of the Ottoman Empire* (Farnham: Ashgate), p.1.

made' tendencies and characteristics between 1908 and 1919.[15] Leila Fawwaz noted the *'embourgeoisement'* of the Christian entrepreneurs in Beirut, as a result of international maritime trade and expanding missionary activities: 'The new clothes and houses were accompanied by a new European cultural orientation, and a passion for all things European developed among the city's Christians. Western ways were emulated and Eastern ways were looked down upon.'[16] Concurrently with the expansion of the landowning magnate class and the Christian bourgeoisie of Beirut, emerged a 'middle strata' composed of state-related professionals (civil servants and military officers) whose very skills were 'made possible by and were necessary for the continued expansion of market relations and the administrative apparatus' of the state.[17] Similar groups were emerging in Cairo where significant numbers of Levantine traders and intellectuals had emigrated.[18] Joel Benin and Zachary Lockman noted that both elites and functionaries were now considered *effendiyya*.

Between 1909 and 1911 a smaller self-conscious grouping of *mutanawwirun* ('men of culture' or the 'enlightened') emerged as the heirs to authority in Syria. According to Gelvin, the nascent ideology of these *'isamiyyun* ('self-made men') came to be expressed later in Arab nationalism.[19] Much like the bourgeoisie claimed political influence in their own right and came to dominate the public discourses of nationalism by associating nationalism with human progress.[20] Further divisions of the class appear in the self-appointment of the *mutanawwirun* and the subsequent divisions made about their manifesto and the people on behalf of whom the group spoke. They did however eventually become a self-conscious middle class aware of a role for itself in public life and the pursuit of a manifesto of its commitment to Arab nationalism.

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[15] Keith David Watenpaugh (2006) *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p.19.

[16] Leila Tarazi Fawaz (1983) *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth Century Beirut* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p.102.

[17] James L. Gelvin (1998) *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria At the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p.16. See also Leila Tarazi Fawaz (1983) *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth Century Beirut* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press); Philip Khoury (1983) *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Rashid Khalidi (1992) 'Society and Ideology in Late Ottoman Syria' in John P. Spagnolo (ed.) *Problems of the Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani* (Reading: Ithaca Press), pp.119-131; Ruth Roded (1983) 'Ottoman Service as a Vehicle For the Rise of New Upstarts among the Urban Elite Families of Syria in the Last Decades of Ottoman Rule' *Asian and and African Studies* Vol.17, pp.63-94.

[18] Juan R. Cole (1981) Feminism, Class and Islam in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.13, No.4, p.388-389 speaks of 'comprador capitalists' who were not liked by the local Cairene elites.

[19] James L. Gelvin (1998) *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria At the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: California University Press), p.17.

[20] James L. Gelvin (1998) *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria At the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: California University Press), p.57.

Keith Watenpaugh speaks of these groups as constituting an entire middle class whose identity incorporated more than simply economic status but rather 'an intellectual, social and cultural construct linked to a set of historical material circumstances; class is more than just one's relationship to the means of production or the accumulation of wealth'.[21] As such, it is not prudent to refer to these groups as constituting a 'petit bourgeoisie' or to ascribe to them the same characteristics as the Habermas bourgeois commodity-owner. The emergence of this middle class (collectively made up of smaller emergent phenomena) displays characteristics of social transformation (particularly if it can be tied to the development of Arab nationalism). However, these events are not tied to the same specific economic foundation Habermas constructs for the emergence of the European bourgeoisie. Their rise was not a result of commodity ownership in a Habermasian ideal-type sense but a result of proximity to power structures already in place underpinned by a specific social order. This was an expressly political relationship to power structures, which in fact *reinforced* old structures of traditional forms of authority.

A second example of the variation of economic relations at work in the MENA is the practice of bedouin pastoralism, exemplifying a type of non-state ordered economic production. The patriarchal, patrilinear and endogamous dimensions of the bedouin system of social organisation necessitates a specific division of labour. This in turn has consequences for the subsequent arrangement and political significance of the private realm. In early Islamic Arabia, nomadic tribalism was supported economically through conquest of other tribes, although some instances of sharecropping in the first century have been documented.[22] The decline of pastoral nomadism, quickened by economic changes brought about by the exploitation of hydrocarbon resources in the Gulf states, has forced bedouin tribes to look to other forms of production.[23]

Today, this subsistence-oriented production is achieved through independent pastoralism or *tarrash* (independent pastoralism or shepherding), *shirak* (sharecropping), and *fa'il* (agricultural manufacturing wage labour). The limited scale of these operations, as a form of subsistence farming, mean that they are better considered 'forms' of production rather than 'modes'. As a 'form' of production then, independent pastoralism involves the grazing of animals on land provided by contract from peasant landowners or

[21] Keith David Watenpaugh (2006) *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p.19.
[22] Saleh El-Ali (1959) 'Muslim Estates in Hidjaz in the First Century A.H.' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* Vol.2, No.3 (December), pp.247-261; Mohammed A. Bamyeh (2006) 'The Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia' in Dawn Chatty (ed.) *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa: Entering the 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill), pp.33-48.
[23] Dale F. Eickelman (2002) *The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach* 4th Edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall), p.76.

free of charge in the case of government land. The animals then produce meat and other products to be sold at market. As the owner of the livestock, the bedouin producer owns and thus controls part of the means of production. The landowner determines where the animals can graze and thus owns the rest of the means of production. The bedouin must pay to graze the animals unless the land is government owned.[24] Pastoral nomadism is oriented towards a market economy. Surplus animals are exchanged for food stuffs or clothing. The bedouin seeks to increase the numbers: the more animals (camels and sheep) he sells the better off he is.[25] Sharecropping by contrast, the dominant form of production among bedouin tribes, involves a contract with the landowner to produce crops and generate a profit split evenly between both parties. The bedouin provides all the labour required to produce a harvest (planting, weeding, harvesting). The means of production, however, is owned by the landowner, who is supported by an Islamic legal provision for *al-muzara'a* (sharecropping). [26]

Lineage or kin-ordered economic relations can be observed in the production activities of nomadic bedouin tribes. Their capacity to subsist informs attitudes towards marriage and domestic arrangements.[27] The tribe is considered to be the fundamental unit that must 'secure and hold the territory necessary for livelihood.' [28] Marriage practices therefore have a specific supportive function for the subsistence lifestyle. Genealogical ties allow access to land the tribe does not control; marriage to a woman from another land-controlling tribe allows the extension of influence and control over new areas of land.[29] Women take care of all tasks considered to fall within the *dar* (the space occupied by the family). With the maintenance of the *dar* taken care of by females, men can then go out

[24] Suzanne E. Joseph (2002) 'Forms of Production and Demographic Regimes: An Anthropological Demographic Study of Bedouin Agro-Pastoral Tribes in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon' PhD Thesis submitted to the University of Georgia, pp.59, 63-4.

[25] Emmanuel Marx (1977) 'The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence: Nomadic Pastoralism in the Middle East' *American Anthropologist* Vol. 79, No.2 (June), p.347.

[26] *al-Muzara'a* and *al-Musaqat* are elements of the system of sharecropping governance for agricultural products. For further detail see Mohammed H. Bin Mohd Shafini (2011) 'Theory of Sharecropping from an Islamic Economic Perspective: A Study of *al-Muzara'a* & *al-Musaqat' Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies* Vol.4, Nos.1&2 (March), pp.190-209.

[27] For further information on the economic relations of bedouin society see Emmanuel Marx (1967) *Bedouin of the Negev* (Manchester: Manchester University Press); Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) *Veiled Sentiments: Honour and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press); Dawn Chatty (1996) *Mobile Pastoralists: Development Planning and Social Change in Oman* (New York: Columbia University Press); Joseph Ginat & Anatoly M. Khazanov (1998) (eds.) *Changing Nomads in a Changing World* (Britain: Sussex Academic Press); Dawn Chatty (2006) *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa: Entering the 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill).

[28] Emmanuel Marx (1977) 'The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence: Nomadic Pastoralism in the Middle East' *American Anthropologist* Vol. 79, No.2 (June), p.355.

[29] Landowning bedouin command a higher social status that non-landowners, the Nomadic population of Cyrenaica is also divided into aristocratic landowning bedouin see Marx, 'The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence', p.355 For example bedouin of Cyrenaica marry groups with more diverse resources (ecologically differentiated areas) according to Emmanuel Marx (1977) 'The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence: Nomadic Pastoralism in the Middle East' *American Anthropologist* Vol. 79, No.2 (June), pp.347, 353, 357.

and tend to the animals and generate economic revenue.[30] While this evidence can be construed as instances of 'private' commodity ownership in these kin-ordered economic relations, the arrangement of labour and resources around a collective subsistence precludes the type of autonomy Habermas describes as characteristic of the bourgeois commodity owner in *Structural Transformation*.

When attempting to identify analogous empirical evidence from the MENA, once more some divergent formative dynamics present themselves. Despite the existence of both lineage and state bureaucracy ordered economic relations, family organisation in the MENA region remains deeply influenced by tribalism. As such, family life tends to be organised along the contours of social custom rather than the explicit economic influences Habermas highlights. The organisation of Arab families is structured by the specific kinship norms of 'classic patriarchy'.[31] Familial solidarity is ascribed to bonds between male family members of the same paternal lineage. Patrilinearity also incorporates religious codes of inheritance that advocate the interests of male relations over females and male kin over daughters and wives.[32] The patrilinear family takes ownership of the labour of women and children. Marriage is endogamous along kin lines but their sons and daughters follow different procedures when leaving the paternal residence. Patrolocality in Arab societies requires that when a son marries, his wife joins him in his father's home where the children will also be raised. Daughters move to the house of their husband's families. Families living together tend to assume joint ownership of the domestic sources.[33]

Social custom maintains its relevance in the organisation and reproduction of family life. Dynamics within the domestic sphere differ depending on the religious community but women are on the whole responsible for the domestic management of the household. For Muslim women living in urban settings, living arrangements require

[30] Talal Asad (1970) *The Kababish Arabs: Power, Authority and Consent in a Nomadic Tribe* (London: Hurst Publishers).
[31] Hisham Shirabi (1985) 'The Dialectics of Patriarchy in Arab Society' in Samih K. Farsoun (ed.) *Arab Society: Continuity and Change* (Beckenham: Croom Helm), pp.83-104.
[32] Kathryn M. Yount (2005) 'The Patriarchal Bargain and Intergenerational Coresidence in Egypt' *The Sociological Quarterly* Vol.46 No.1 (February), p.140; Mounira M. Charrad (2001) *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California Press); Andrea B. Rugh (1984) *Family in Contemporary Egypt* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press); Thomas B. Stevenson (1997) 'Migration, Family, and Household in Highland Yemen: The Impact of Socio-Economic and Political Change and Cultural Ideals on Domestic Organisation' *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* Vol.28, No.2, pp.4-53; Diane Singerman & Barbara Ibrahim (2001) 'The Cost of Marriage in Egypt: A Hidden Dimension in the New Arab Family' *Cairo Papers in Social Science* 24: 80-116; Barbara Ibrahim, Layla Nawar & Cynthia B. Lloyd (1995) 'Women's Autonomy and Gender Roles in Egyptian Families' in Carla Makhlouf Obermeyer (ed.) *Family, Gender and Population in the Middle East: Policies in Context* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press), pp.147-178.
[33] M.Kamal Nahas (1954) 'The Family in the Arab World' *Marriage and Family Living* Vol.16, No.4 (November), pp.293-300; Ilse Lichtenstadter (1952) 'An Arab-Egyptian Family' *Middle East Journal* Vol.6, No.4 (Autumn), pp.379-399.

additional considerations for demonstrating socially- appropriate behaviour. Often the family home includes a reception area at the front of the house, adjacent to the front door where guests are welcomed and offered refreshments. This space is in addition to and is separated from the main living area of the house. Despite its location inside the family's 'private' residence (i.e. their private property), female Muslims will keep their hair covered in this reception area because they may be in the presence of non-kin males. The reception of guests in this specific area rather than in the family's living quarters suggests that this space has public properties even though it is still part of the family's private home. In this patriarchal framework then, the rationale for marriage is the provision of progeny and the transference of property in line with socio-religious commitments. Upon marriage, a wife joins her husband's kingroup (patrilocal kinship) and the children take his surname (patrilineal descent).[34] The signing of the *katib al-kitab* (marriage contract) can only be granted by religious institutions and the marriage is registered by the state *after* satisfying religious requirements.[35]

For Habermas, the family unit provided an intimate sphere in which human experiences could be shared between members. As these experiences became shared outside of the family with other families in the form of sentimental letters, the fictional novel emerged as a new literary genre. Its subject matter was drawn from real experiences, though presented in an idealised form and the economic foundations of marriage were of particular interest. This develops a specific type of reflective sensibility. Empirical evidence of what Habermas refers to as 'literary reflections on lived experience' can be found in the MENA region, though it is not of the same specific type. For example, the Arabic novel as a literary form emerged from differing historical circumstances. The modern Arabic *riwaya* (novel) in the early twentieth century is associated with the Arabic *nahdah* (cultural awakening or renaissance), the first traces of which appeared in Maronite and Orthodox urban communities of modern-day Lebanon. A literary innovation rather than a revival of old literary forms, the Arabic novel combined the form of the European

[34] In the event of the bedouin husband's death, the widow is then married to one of his cousins or brothers. This is because upon marriage women become part of their husband's kingroup and the larger family. In the event of divorce, any children would remain with the father's kingroup.

[35] Some couples resort to marrying in a civil ceremony abroad and then return to their home country which recognises foreign civil marriages. The absence of civil marriage can create a number of obstacles to a partner seeking divorce as they would have to approach their religious leaders to obtain a dissolution. Lebanese Maronite Catholics, for example, would have to approach the Catholic Holy See in Rome in order to secure a marital dissolution as the Lebanese state does not provide a mechanism for divorce. These examples demonstrate that the types and organisation of social relations which influence the formation of the public realm are of religious, social and cultural derivation simultaneously.

novel with the particular rhetorical styles of formal Arabic language.[36] Its earliest manifestations were chiefly concerned with negotiations of the self between 'traditional' and 'modern' forms of life, conflict and confrontation, changing relationships between the Middle East and the West and social transformation after independence from the Ottoman Empire. This can be observed in the autobiographical accounts of émigrés to the West (America and France) such as *Zaynab* by Mohammed Husayn Haykal (1917), Taha Hussein's *Adib* (The Intellectual) (1935) and Tawfiq al-Hakim's *Usfur min al-Sharq* (A Bird from the East).[37] After Naguib Mahfouz's detailed descriptions of the city in the Cairo Trilogy, later novels came to focus more strongly on political themes of political revolution such as Abd al-Rahman al-Sharqawi's *al-Ard* (The Earth) and Yusuf al Sibai's *Rudda Qalbi* (Return My Heart).[38]

As such, the subject matter at the time of their emergence is significantly divergent from that which Habermas describes. This is not to say however that this type of reflection cannot be observed in Arabic literature in more recent history. There are examples of Arabic fiction composed by female writers that pick up themes of lived experience and the cultivation of sensibility in more recent history. For example, Saudi authoress Raja al-Sanea's *Banat al-Riyadh* (Girls of Riyadh) broached the topics of forbidden love and resignation to one's fate similar to those of Jane Austen.[39] The longevity of the theme of female stoic acceptance of the status quo suggests that economic necessity remains a motivation for marriage. There is further evidence of a type of sensibility that Habermas describes in bedouin society. Reflections on the self, and on domestic life more broadly, are expressed through *ghinnawa* (little songs), lyric poems sung by women in the company of other women. They most often address interpersonal relationships particularly the subjects of thwarted love, stoic acceptance of one's fate and the undesirability of polygyny. They take on a specific form, similar to Japanese haiku, and hold high artistic value for bedouin tribespeople. An oral tradition, these small poems are often used when faced with personal difficulties or obstacles and are usually melancholic in tone. They are a ritualised form of 'personal expression' and 'confidential communication'. Although they are not written down, *ghinnawa* conform to a specific form and express stylised forms of sentiment rather than raw emotion. Thus they have a tendency to be doleful, resigned and

[36] See Roger Allen (1995) *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction* Second Edition (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press) pp.68-11.
[37] George Sfeir (1966) 'The Contemporary Arabic Novel' *Daedalus*, Vol.95, No.4, p.941-2.
[38] Other examples include: Taha Hussein's *al-Ayyam* (The Stream of Days), Yahya Haqqi's *Qindil Umm Hashim* (Umm Hashim's Lantern), Gibran Khalil Gibran's *al-Ajnihah al-Mutakassirah* (The Broken Wings).
[39] Marilyn Booth (2008) 'Translator v. Author: Girls of Riyadh Go to New York' *Translation Studies* Vol. 1 Issue 2, pp. 197-211. Booth points out that the English translation of Raja al-Sanea's *Girls of Riyadh* removes some of the emphasis on gender politics apparent in the Arabic version.

reflective. The subject matter (the link between the self (*'aql*) and sentiment) sets *ghinnawa* apart from other types of bedouin songs and poems.[40] The content, context and performance of these songs resonate with the reflections of lived experience described by Habermas, but as isolated examples they do not constitute sufficient evidence to satisfy the Habermasian trajectory. Furthermore in light of the multiple modes of production in operation in this empirical context, these songs also emerge from differing economic conditions, re-orienting their overall political significance. This chapter turns now to consider evidence of a public sphere in the MENA.

The preceding discussion demonstrates that it is possible to identify MENA specific evidence of an emergent private sphere analogous to that described by Habermas in *Structural Transformation*. This evidence includes the existence of 'new' sets of economic conditions, the emergence of 'new' middle social groups and reflections on lived experience. The following section repeats this method to identify evidence of a public sphere analogous to that described by Habermas.

3.2 Emergence of A Public Sphere

For Habermas, the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere was enabled by the development of a private intimate sphere in which a specific form of family life resided. The emergence of the public sphere is evidenced by the manifestation of *gesellschaften* (reading societies and public reading groups). These were historically preceded by aristocratic *salons* characterised by exclusivity and light entertainment. In contrast, reading societies privileged the amassing of knowledge and self-improvement and demonstrated a broader interest in the legitimacy of moral questions. Habermas' account describes the new commodity-owner gaining access to aristocratic *salons* through their newly-elevated social status. As the bourgeoisie expanded as a group, they began to identify common issues of concern arising from their lived experience in the new private realm of the bourgeois family. Reading societies brought individual commodity owners together to discuss these issues, transcending the barrier to knowledge and self-improvement formerly supported by status. This was the abstract location of a developing bourgeois ideology that sought to combine the pursuit of commodities with a distinct ethical outlook. The supporters of the Protestant ethic therefore were concerned with the protection of the free market exchange system and the limitation of interference by agents of authority.

[40] Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) *Veiled Sentiments: Honour and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

Phenomena analogous to that of the reading societies have been documented in the MENA region, though there is a relative paucity of examples of the type that Habermas described. Their significance as signs indicative of an emergent Habermasian public sphere therefore must be considered carefully. Furthermore, although Habermas draws a clear descriptive distinction between the *salons* and reading societies in terms of their form and function, the scholarly articulation of similar manifestations in the MENA region tend to incorporate aspects of both types of phenomena. This section thus draws a general distinction between what it considers to be '*salons*' and 'literary-scientific societies'. This distinction is necessary because the specific operations of the *salons* and literary societies differ from Habermas' reading societies. All examples available in the literature exhibit aspects of 'public' assembly, discussion of 'pertinent' issues between individuals of similar social status. A contrast can be drawn between the culture consuming *salons* (which tended towards artistic and literary consumption in a European style) and the culture producing literary-scientific societies (which tended to be self-consciously intellectual and concerned with both literary innovation and political reform often expressed through the society journal or periodical). This overlap is further reinforced by a conflation of both phenomena as imbuing a 'literary' character. The 'literary' characterisation has two dimensions: the first is the presence of 'notable' persons of status, i.e. intellectuals, politicians and local leaders. The second is the pursuit or maintenance of status through the consumption of the type of entertainment associated with refinement and respectable behaviour in society.

Habermas' account also presents both types of phenomena in a specific chronological order. Briefly, *salon* culture precedes reading societies which in turn focus on the issues relating to the new lived experience emergent from the new economic circumstance of the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois members encounter each other for the first time in the *salon* and then in reading societies to discuss group notions of lived experience. The majority of Arabic salons appeared in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Marrāsh salon in Aleppo, for example) and the first half of the twentieth century (the Antonius Salon in 1940s Mandate Jerusalem).[41] They were for most part held in the houses of wealthy women who acted as *salonnières* providing guests with hospitality and light entertainment similar to the style of the classic French example of the seventeenth-century *Hôtel de Rambouillet* highlighted by Habermas in *Structural Transformation*. Documented examples include the salons of Maryan Fath Allah Marrash (1848-1919) (Ottoman

[41] Norman Rose (2010) *A Senseless, Squalid War: Voices from Palestine 1890-1948* (London: Pimlico), pp.31-2.

Aleppo)[42], French-born Eugénie Le Brun (Cairo), Lebanese-born Alexandra Avierinoh (Alexandria)[43], Labibah Hashim (Cairo), Mary Ajami (Damascus: 1922-25), Habbubah Haddad (Beirut:1920-1930), Haja Fatima al-Rifa'i (Lebanon) (founded 1927), Huda Sharawi (b. 1879-1947) and Palestine-born Mayy Ziyada.[44] It is unclear in the majority of cases however whether these *salons* operated as autonomously as they have been portrayed by those documenting their existence. Usually secluded from public life under patriarchal domestic control, the *salons* provided educated, married women an opportunity to escape from the confinement of the *harem* and socialise with intellectual and literary figures (all male) in a respectable manner. Egyptian feminist Huda Sharawi, who eventually ran her own salons in Cairo and Beirut in the first half of the twentieth century, first encountered Arab salon culture as a companion of Husain Rushdi Pasha's wife, Eugénie Le Brun, a famous Cairene *salonnière.* Le Brun guided Saturday discussions on social practices such as veiling, immorality, and offspring, taught her French, but also looked out for Sharawi's reputation.[45] Guests were usually acquaintances of the *salonnières* male relatives, the *salons* themselves were perhaps more of a bi-product of meetings already taking place in the house.[46] The very existence of the *salons* was therefore dependent on status and propriety which was acquired by relations to distinguished men.[47] For *salonnière* Mayy Ziyada, the lack of family members when her mother died meant the immediate cessation of the *salon*.

Despite these social constraints, the *salonnières* believed themselves to be fostering serious discussions that would advance literature and knowledge for the betterment of society. The 'intellectual' or 'literary' status of their guests ensured that their discussions

[42] See Antun Sharawi (1995) The Al Marrash Family and the Literary Salons of Aleppo in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century ['*Al al-Marrash wa'l-salunat al-adabiyya fi Halab fi al-nisf al thani min al-qarn al-tasi' 'ashar'*], *Majallat al-Dad 9*, pp. 25-64.

[43] According to Joseph T. Zeidan (1995) *Arab Women Novelists: The Formative Years and Beyond* (Albany: State University of New York Press), Greek Orthodox Alexandra Avierinoh founded *Anis al-Jalis* in Alexandria, 1872-1926, pp. pp.50-53

[44] Guests included Qastaki al-Himsi (1858-1941), Gabriel al-Dallal (1836-1892), Kamil al-Ghazzi (1852-1933) and Rizqallah Hassun (1825-1880) in addition to politicians and diplomats. For futher explanation of Sha'rawi's role in moving forward the Egyptian women's cause see Rila B. Quawas (2006) 'A Sea-Captain in Her Own Right': Navigating the Feminist Thought of Huda Sharawi *Journal of International Womens Studies* Vol.8, No.1 (November) - evidence to support claims of Sharawi herself hosting *salons* is yet to be found.

[45] Huda Sharawi (1986) Harem Years: The Memoirs of An Egyptian Feminist (1879-1924) trans. and ed. Margot Badran (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York), pp.76-81. Soha Abdel Kader (1987) *Egyptian Women in a Changing Society*, 1899-1987 (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers). See also Juan R. Cole (1981) 'Feminism, Class and Islam in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.13, No.4, pp.387-407

[46] At the Maryana Marrash *salon*, most participants were regular visitors to her family's home where they used to meet her father and two brothers. Members of the salon were all men (politicians, members of the diplomatic corps and intellectuals). See Zeidan, *Arab Women Novelists,*p.284

[47] Mervat Hatem (1989) 'Through Each Other's Eyes: Egyptian, Levantine-Egyptian and European Women's Images of Themselves and Each Other (1862-1920)' *Women's Studies International Forum* Vol.12, No.2, p.197.

were filled with cutting-edge ideas and insights. Some *salonnières* were also literary scholars and intellectuals who made frequent contributions to the world of letters through publication. Beyond this the salons were also the purveyors of the hospitality and light entertainment associated with 'good society.' Many entertained their guests with singing, instrumental music and dancing.[48]

Perhaps the most famous *salon*, of Princess Nazli Fadil (cousin to Khedive Tawfiq and wife of Ottoman foreign minister, Khalil Sharif) came to be explicitly associated with influence in politics and religious reform. The lack of empirical evidence (records were not kept) on what was actually discussed in the salon means it is unclear whether it was considered political on account of the types of topics discussed (at this time reformist, modernist Islamic debates) or the types of guests who attended (diplomats and Arab intellectuals).[49] Anecdotal evidence claims the Fadil *salon* was frequented by colonial agents and thus is considered to have been one of the places where colonial officers encountered Arab elites with political ambitions. Sa'ad Zaghloul, a famous Egyptian judge, was given a first post in government at the suggestion of Cromer after meeting him in Nazli's *salon*. However, according to Lutfi Sayyed, Zaghloul's appointment was made on the basis of his connection to Mustafa Fahmy, a reformist.[50] Princess Nazli's salon included the most prominent religious literary and political figures in Egypt their main discussions were the political and social predicament of Egypt. They kept themselves abreast of Western intellectual trends by reading and discussing books in various European languages.[51] The example of Huda Sharawi at Eugénie LeBrun's salon demonstrates that women's *salons* could be places of learning and self-improvement particularly for women as they were exposed to the new styles, social customs and education in the literary arts.

The female *salonnières* themselves did enforce operational rules regarding the use of specific registers of language, the provision of light entertainment through singing and instrumental music, the types of topics up for discussion. The most productive *salon* (in operation for three decades, 1913-37), that of Lebanese-Palestinian literary figure Mayy Ziyada, was a strictly literary activity in which writers could avail themselves of new

[48] The Fadil s*alon* would employ the Tunisian maid to dance and sing for its elite guests. See Ronald Storrs (1937) *Orientations* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons), p.100.
[49] Roger Allen (1971) 'Writings of Members of the Nazli Circle' *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* Vol.8, pp.79-84; Ronald Storrs (1937) *Orientations* (London: Nicholson and Watson), pp. 102-107; According to Mansool Moaddel (2005) *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse* (Chicago: Chicago University Press), pp.132-133, Nazli apparently became pro-British after the fall of Urabi, Afaf-Lutfi Sayyid-Marsot (1968) *Egypt and Cromer: A Sudy in Anglo-Egyptian Relations* (London: Murray) pp.96-97; Robert Tignor (1966) *Modernisation and British Colonial Rule in Egypt 1882-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp.256-257.Tignor suggests that the *salons* provided a way for low key Urabi supporting fervour to maintain itself.
[50] John Marlowe (1971) *Cromer in Egypt* (New York: Praeger), p.235.
[51] Zeidan, *Arab Women Novelists,* p.27, 52.

trends through mingling with Arab elites and intellectuals present at the gatherings. Ziyada also mandated the use of Classical Arabic alongside French as she believed it to be an important aspect of the 'civilising mission' of the *salon*.[52]

Although these *salons* were run by women and inspired many female writers, the women themselves were subject to political, social and economic restrictions that restricted their capacity for literary production. It is not surprising then that a leading topic in the Cairo discussions was the position of women in Egyptian society. They did however manage to start a women's movement in Egypt early in the nineteenth century when increasing communication with the West 'led Arab intellectuals to question the position of Arab women'.[53] They also were the subject of discussion in certain *salons* on Egypt (the question of *al-mara* - women) leading to an awareness of a group notion of lived experience of women in their position. Zeidan suggests that women's *salons* were made possible by the extension of education to women fought for by Qasim Amin at the end of the nineteenth century.

Despite the predominance of female hosted *salons* concentrated in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus and Aleppo, there are reports of Cairene *salons* headed by males which were of more direct political significance. Circassian statesman Riyaz Basha operated a salon that was well known to be an anti-occupation and anti-religious hierarchy meeting place on account of its attendees: Ali Yusuf, the Azhari Shaykh founder of *al-Muayyad* in 1889, and Fu'ad Salim al-Hijazi (son of Latif Salim, head of the military college) and nationalist lawyer Mustafa Kamil Pasha.[54] At the outset, the Cairene *salons* only admitted 'traditionally trained members of the old ruling class' (Muhammad Sultan, Princess Nazli, Riyaz Basha) but gradually admitted graduates of government schools and other professionals (Mustafa Kamil). As such any political matters occurring during these meetings were insulated from the rest of Egyptian society.[55] The discussions themselves were not therefore also made accessible in a 'general' manner for the benefit of 'all'. This was so that, as the size of the bourgeoisie grew, so did the numbers of less educated

[52] Boutheina Khaldi (2010) 'Microcosming the Nahdah: Mayy Ziyadah's Salon as Hybrid Space' *Journal of Arabic Literature* Vol.41, No.3 (January), pp. 262-302. Ziyada's guests included Consul-General Cromer, Harry Boyle Ronald Storrs, Herbert Kitchener, Yacoub Sarrouf, Abbas al-Akkad, Antoun Gemayel, Khalil Moutrane & Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid.

[53] Zeidan, *Arab Women Novelists,* p.4

[54] Mansool Moaddel (2005) *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse* (Chicago: Chicago University Press), p.132; Arthur Goldschmidt (1968) 'The Egyptian Nationalist Party: 1892-1919' in Peter M. Holt (ed.) *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press), p.311; Afaf-Lutfi Sayyid-Marsot (1968) *Egypt and Cromer: A Sudy in Anglo-Egyptian Relations* (London: Murray), pp.95-96, 308-333. Mustafa Kamil also visited Egyptian educator Ali Mubarak Pasha's *salon*.

[55] Robert Tignor (1966) *Modernisation and British Colonial Rule in Egypt 1882-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp.256-257.

members. This rule enabled less-educated individuals to avail themselves of the issues in order to be able to participate in the discussion. As there are famously no records of the discussions at Mayy Ziyada's *salon*, it is not possible to know what was discussed beyond 'literature, music, political and social issues' and whether or not it was accessible to all in principle.

While the Arabic *salons* appear to present themselves as an emulation of similar meetings in Europe, they do not signify the first nor only time that matters of common concern were discussed in front of others in Arab and Islamic history. Arabic *salons* of the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries were predated by the majlis (pl. *majalis*), a gathering hosted by a figure of authority and the environs in which it takes place. Caliphal *majalis,* usually held in the royal palace, incorporated the physical separation of the Caliph from courtiers and entertainers by a curtain presided over by the *sahib al-sitr* (master of the audience hall) in the Umayyad and Abbasid periods.[56] Artistic performances and discussions took place in his presence as part of a system of patronage bestowed in the form of money or good favour. A display of authority through wealth and generosity, the Caliphal *majlis* displayed similar characteristics to the organisation and operation of courtly society in Europe. As an agent of divinely ordained authority, the Caliph presided over the official interpretations of tradition, religion, culture and social life. *Majalis* were not limited to Caliphs, however, as they could be hosted by kings, merchants, scholars and even poets. In addition to its conviviality, entertainment in these gatherings operated under the tenets of *adab* but with similarities to the courtly behaviour of Renaissance Italy. The tenor of these gatherings (*majlis al-uns, majlis al-sharab, majlis al-shurb*) was considered 'convivial' because guests met to drink wine and appreciate the artistic production of poets, singers and musicians. However these sessions were not strictly limited to enjoyment; serious questions of jurisprudence and doctrine could also be debated (*majlis al-munazara* or *mujadala*). An 'egalitarian' version of the royal majlis was documented in ninth-century Abbasid Baghdad. *Mujalasat*, similarly organised assemblies at the houses and gardens of members of the community, permitted appreciation of artistic and cultural talents in an 'intimate' setting. It was this lack of formal propriety that distinguished the *mujalasat* from the *majalis*, Muslims and non-Muslims could both attend socialise together and perhaps securing opportunities in marriage, income and job prospects.[57] The most famous *mujalasat* was run by Yuhanna b. Masawayh (d.857) and such gatherings were

[56] Dominic Brookshaw (2003) 'Palaces, Pavilions and Pleasure-gardens: The Context and Setting of the Medieval *Majlis*' *Middle Eastern Literatures: incorporating Edebiyat* Vol. 6, No.2, p.201.
[57] Samer M. Ali (2010) *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages: Poetry, Public Performance and the Presentation of the Past* (London: University of Notre Dame Press), p.15.

'one of many social institutions that promoted in varying degrees humanistic edification, which produced generations of professional and amateur humanists or *littérateurs*' (*adib*; pl. *udaba*). Such humanists practiced *adab*, a 'constellation of courtly manners and tastes to be conditioned and exhibited' which necessitated 'a corpus of varied literary knowledge'.[58]

Another example of this type of gathering and discussion is the contemporary Kuwaiti *diwaniyya*, a modified version of the old majlis. Only found in Kuwait, the *diwaniyya* is a reception space in which a man meets male guests and business colleagues to discuss the pertinent issues of the day over refreshments and tobacco smoking. It is separated from the main residence and has a separate entrance so that guests do not encounter women of the host's family. Inside there are couches around the edges of the room in a U-shape and guests are usually dressed in thobes, or traditional Kuwaiti dress. Socially significant *diwaniyya* are often named after prominent families. As an expression of hospitality and generosity, decisions of marriage, business and politics are made in *diwaniyya*. In less urban settings the *diwaniyya* would have been where tribal leaders met to discuss. The *diwaniyya* has taken on a political function in Kuwait; the National Democratic Alliance in Kuwait held its election campaign networking events as *diwaniyya*. Throughout the Gulf, a derivative of the *diwaniyya* form is used by tribal leaders for more formal gatherings.[59]

Further differentiation from the Habermasian framework can be found in the emergence of literary or 'scientific' societies which, as either 'literary circles' or official 'associations', were different from the reading societies described by Habermas. The first appeared in 1847 as the 'The Syrian Society' founded by American Protestant missionaries William Thomson, physician Cornelius Van Dyck and Eli Smith which was composed exclusively of Christian members (Greek Orthodox, Uniate, Catholic and Protestant). In 1852, the renamed 'Syrian Scientific Society' had no less than fifty Muslim members residing across Beirut, Damascus, Sidon, Palestine and Tripoli. [60] The cultural output of the society was convened by its secretary Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1893), one of the first promulgators of Syrian nationalism who was also editor of the society's journal. Bustani's

[58] Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*, p.19, 33. The notion of *adab* performs a function similar to the *sprezzatura* and *grazia* of Italian courtly sensibilities expressed in Renaissance literature. It is the performance of specific rhetorical styles in company, the mastery of which bestows the good favour of the crowd on the performer. See Baldassare Castiglione's account of Renaissance courtly life *Il libro del cortegiano* (published in English in 1561).

[59] Mary Tétreault (1993) 'Civil Society in Kuwait: Protected Spaces and Women's Rights' *Middle East Journal,* Vol.47, No.2 (Spring), p.279-280.

[60] For a list of members during the period 1868-69 see Yusuf Choueri's (1987) 'Two Histories of Syria and the Demise of Syrian Patriotism' *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 23, Issue 4, pp.496-511 footnote 4, p. 509.

activities have been well-documented by scholars because the dissemination of his secularist political views both in press and at lectures has resulted in a relatively large corpus of evidence.[61] The society's activities extended to but have perhaps been overshadowed by Bustani's political ambitions in historical accounts. The importance of these activities has been perhaps overstated, firstly because there is not very much empirical evidence to support this, other than material Bustani published himself through his own outlets.[62] Ayalon points out the reason for them taking such an interest was in part due to a need to 'improve their lot' in society as a minority group.[63] Tignor points out that many of Egypt's intellectuals at this point were Syrian Christian immigrants who came in the 1880s, including Rashid Rida.[64]

Between 1870 and 1871, there was a burgeoning periodicals market: *al-Jinan, al-Zahrah, al-Nahhlah, al-Bashir, al-Jannah, al-Najah, al-Nashrah al-Usbuʿiyyah* and *al-Junaynah* in Beirut. It was founded largely by wealthy Maronite Christian families with trade connections to Europe; this meant that the publications market predated the appearance of the famous Arabic *salons*. This has been described as a 'bourgeois reading public' who became conscious of a need to reproduce the habits, customs and literary material of the European bourgeoisie.[65] Examples of renowned literary-scientific Arabic journals include *al-Jinan* (Bustani's magazine) (The Heavens), *al-Muqtataf* (The Digest), *Misr* (Egypt), *al-Liwa'* (The Standard), *Misbah al-Sharq* (Lantern of the East), *al-Manar* (The Lighthouse), *al-Hilal* (The Crescent), and *al-Jami'yah* (The Federation).[66]

By 1880, Christian women had also begun to found their own such societies in Beirut each with its own particular self-conceived purpose: *Bakurat Suriyya* (The Dawn of Syria) discussed social and literary issues, *Jamʿiyyat Zahrat al-Ihsan* (The Flower of

[61] In Arabic Literature he is considered to have been a 'father of the *nahḍa*' because of his translation of Van Dyck's dictionary, and a father of Arab nationalism according to George Antonius. He also founded educational programmes in Beirut. Stephen Sheehi (2000) 'Inscribing the Arab Self: Buṭrus al-Bustāni and Paradigms of Subjective Reform' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.27, No.1 (May), pp.7-24.
[62] Nadia Farag (1972) 'The Lewis Affair and the Fortunes of al-Muqtataf' *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 8, No.1 (January), pp.73-83 shows the reason for the move was result of a social scandal at the Syrian Protestant College where they worked together.
[63] Ami Ayalon (1995) *The Press in the Arab Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Abdul Latif Tibawi (1963) *American Interests in Syria 1800-1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); 'The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus Al-Bustani' *St Anthony's Papers* No.16, pp.137-82; Philip C. Sadgrove (2004) (ed.) *History of Printing and Publishing in the Countries of the Middle East* Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 15 (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
[64] Robert Tignor (1966) *Modernisation and British Colonial Rule in Egypt 1882-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp.256-257.
[65] Peter M. Holt (2004) *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.38-45.
[66] Stephen Sheehi (2005) 'Arabic Literary-Scientific Journals: Precedence for Globalisation and the Creation of Modernity' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* Vol.25, No.2, p.440.

Charity Association) had a wider social mission oriented towards women's education.[67] *Nur al-Afaf* (The Light of Virtue) emerged in Ḥims in 1898 with a cultural and literary focus. The first Muslim group, *Jam'iyyat Yaqzat al-Fatat al-'Arabiyya* (The Association of the Arab Woman Awakening), was not founded in Beirut until 1914.[68] After a prolonged absence of around thirty years, the women's literary-scientific societies reappeared in 1920s Damascus in the form of *al-Nadi al-Adabi al-Nisa'i* (The Women's Literary Club). The club held public meetings and allowed its members the opportunity to give lectures.[69] The final example emerged in 1942 as *al-Nadwa al-Thaqafiyya* (The Cultural Club) whose explicit mission was to improve the position of women in society by increasing their participation in the Arts.[70]

Over in Cairo, similar societies were emerging having taken inspiration from *Bakurat* such as *Zahrat Misr* (The Flower of Egypt) at the American Girls' School in Cairo in 1889.[71] Having first been located in Beirut, the centre of Arab journalism shifted to British-occupied Cairo during the 1870s because freedom of expression was particularly vibrant under Lord Cromer and attracted many Arab intellectuals.[72] Egypt had also experienced significant levels of Lebanese Christian immigration on account of the Druze-Maronite war in the early 1860s.[73] By 1892, over forty-six periodicals were published in Egypt alone.

Having found some analogous evidence of a public sphere's emergence, the chapter now turns to consider the third of Habermas' distinctions, conceptions of identity.

3.3 A Conception of Morality with Implications for Conceptions of Identity

For Habermas, the bourgeois public sphere operated within a specific framework of dynamics that incorporated distinct perspectives on both moral and ethical questions. In *Structural Transformation* the specific interpretation of notions of right, wrong and

[67] Joseph T. Zeidan (1995) *Arab Women Novelists: The Formative Years and Beyond* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), p.45. *Bakurat Suriyya* was formed by Maryam Nimr Makariyus. See *Al Muqtataf* (Vol. 9, no.9, 1885) 265-271 for Maryam's lecture on al- Khansa (the name of a female poet from Najd).
[68] ʿUmar Rida Kahalah (1979) *Al Mar'a fi al-Qadim w-al-Hadith*, Vol.1 (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risala), p.116 as cited in Zeidan, *Arab Women Novelists*, p.45.
[69] Founded by Mary ʿAjami (b.1888-1965) and Nazik al-ʿAbid Bayhum (b.1887-1960)
[70] Zeidan, *Arab Women Novelists,* p.45, 118
[71] *Al-Muqtataf* (1889) Vol. 13 No.9, pp.616-17.
[72] Robert Tignor (1966) *Modernisation and British Colonial Rule in Egypt 1882-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp.256-257. Tignor suggests that the *salons* provided a way for low key Urabi supporting fervour to maintain itself. He cites Abd al-Latif Hamza's *Adab al-Maqalah* [Journalistic Articles] v. 68 as such nationalism was reserved to the upper class and bypassed the urban proletariat and peasantry pp.262-263
[73] Zeidan, *Arab Women Novelists,* p.47

identity are formulated with reference to a bourgeois ideology of humanism and universality that comes to be expressed through law. The expression of this ideology finds its mouthpiece in the operation of the courts whose rulings are, for Habermas, the ultimate expression of society's moral standpoints. Moral questions can only be adjudicated by the courts for Habermas. Ethical questions, including associated questions of identity should not be adjudicated by courts. The rationale for this is because Habermas takes the view that identities are formed with reference to what other groups in society considered to be the 'good life' i.e. the ethical life. These groups set the conditions within which a person can form and then articulate their identity.

Once more, the MENA context presents a differentiated empirical picture. Rather than a single rational public law context as observed in *Structural Transformation*, multiple divergent socio-legal contexts exist in the modern MENA states. Religious legal contexts also predate the independence period. As a consequence, it is not possible to observe the same separation of moral and ethical questions that Habermas described. The empirical evidence demonstrates instead that group conceptions of identity dominate in patriarchal, tribal Arab societies and the family, rather than the individual, is considered to constitute the basic unit of society. The moral positions revealed by court verdicts cannot be articulated in the simple distinction Habermas makes between moral and ethical questions. Rather, these moral positions incorporate group-specific ethical stances in both their formation and application in the courts.

If, as Sharabi asserts, an individual inherits their group identity (a religious identity) from their family, both moral and ethical viewpoints are inherited simultaneously.[74] This is in addition to community expectations of their status as a member of the identity group. The Ottoman heritage of the Arab states, particularly in Lebanon, Egypt and Syria, reinforced confessional conceptions of identity under the *millet* system.[75] Each *millet*, roughly corresponding to the total members of a confessional group, was assigned the autonomous authority to regulate its own community, the ultimate authority for which was invested in a religious leader i.e. a Patriarch, Mufti etc.[76] Religious or spiritual courts today maintain legal jurisdiction over issues of *al-ahwal al-shakhsiyya* ('personal status') in all Arab states where Islam is the constitutionally-mandated national religion.[77]

[74] Hisham Shirabi (1985) 'The Dialectics of Patriarchy in Arab Society' in Samih K. Farsoun (ed.) *Arab Society: Continuity and Change* (Beckenham: Croom Helm), pp.83-104.
[75] The Ottoman millet system was predated by the assignation of *dhimmi* status to non-Muslims by Islamic rulers organised around Caliphal legal provisions for the management of non-Islamic communities.
[76] Many non-Sunni Islamic sects became subsumed under the Islamic millet.
[77] [http://www.druzepersonalstatus.gov.lb/], [http://syrianorthodoxchurch.org/library/articles/the-concept-of-jurisdiction-and-authority-in-the-syrian-orthodox-church-on-antioch].

The actual *application* of Islamic legal provisions in matters of 'personal status' in the majority of cases is thus context-specific.[78] This is because of an operative distinction between matters of personal status and other matters that fall under national legislative purview. As a rule, matters of personal status are subject to provisions made by the individual's religious community (usually concerning marriage, inheritance, parentage, maintenance and matters of contract between two people of the same sect). However, this does firmly depend on the national context. Tunisia, for example, has had state legal provisions for personal status since 1956 which permitted civil divorce. Amendments to the original Code in July 1993 extended the rights of women to include the passing on of kin-status and nationality to progeny, opening of bank accounts separate to those of their spouse and a say in the marriage of minor children.[79] Article Two of the Tunisian Presidential Decree of 26th June 1957 outlined the matters deemed to fall under the purview of 'personal status';

> 'Personal Status shall include disputes over the status of persons and their legal capacity, marriage, property dispositions between spouses, mutual rights and duties of the spouses, divorce, repudiation and judicial separation, parentage, acknowledgement or disavowal of paternity, family and descendants' relationships, maintenance duties among relatives and others, rectification of parentage, adoption, tutelage, guardianship, interdiction, attainment of majority, gifts, inheritance, wills and other acts taking effect subsequent to death, the absent person and the declaration of a missing person to be dead'

There have been attempts to create a unified Personal Status law for members of the Arab League since 1977 based on Sunni Hanafi doctrine.[80]

The *'ilm al madhhab* ('substantive law') of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence makes an additional distinction between the delivery of *fatawa* ('legal responses') to an issue and *ahkam* ('judicial verdicts'). As such, the type of issue under dispute dictates the jurisdiction under which it falls, i.e. that of a *faqih* ('jurisconsult') or a *qadi* (judge). Both of these persons are considered to have the correct 'types of knowledge' for the juridical

[78] *Sharia'* legal provisions are applied without discussion in the Arab Gulf States (Qatar, UAE, Oman) Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya, and Sudan. These were to give stability to ethnic groups rather than to form nations. Jamal J. Nasir (2002) *The Islamic Law of Personal Status* (The Hague: Kluver Law International), pp.34-43. For a historical and jurisprudential background on Islamic legal theory and application see Haim Gerber (1999) *Islamic Law and Culture 1600-1840* (Leiden: Brill); Wael Hallaq (1997) *A History of Islamic Legal Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) & (2001) *Authority, Continuity and Change in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) & (2009) *Sharī'a: Theory, Practice, Transformations* (Cambridge: University Press); Ayman Shabana (2010) *Custom in Islamic Law and Legal Theory: The Development of the Concepts of 'Urf and 'Adah in the Islamic Legal Tradition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

[79] Tunisian Code of Personal Status Amendments 93-74 outlawed polygamy. The code exists alongside a qu'ranically derived inheritance law.

[80] Jamal J. Nasir (2002) *The Islamic Law of Personal Status* (The Hague: Kluver Law International), p.40.

role. The first is knowledge of *waqi* ('contextual reality') to enable them to understand real-life cases. The second is the *ma'rifat al-nas* ('knowledge of the textual sources') from which they may be able to derive God's ruling for the questions under consideration. The *Faqih* and *qadi* have differing powers of enforcement on account of the differing sources from which they derive their decisions. The *Faqih* derives a reasoned extraction of juridical opinion from textual sources (*Qu'ran and sunnah*) by adhering to *usul al-fiqh* ('principles of jurisprudence'). His rulings apply to every *mukallaf* ('legally capacitated individual)' and followers of that particular *madhhab*. The *faqih* can also consider customary practices in a given context and adjust rulings to suit a new or unusual context (*'urf al-Adah*). A *qadi'*s judgement, in contrast, is drawn from the consideration of a greater selection of sources. This can include *hijaj* ('evidence and arguments') on *hadithat juz'iyyah* ('the particular incident') and *qara'in* ('witness statements, oaths and circumstantial evidence'). As such, these judgements are binding solely on the parties involved in the original dispute.[81]

It should be noted however that although this does constitute the overall general approach to considering moral and ethical questions in Sunni jurisprudence, its jurisdiction is limited to Sunnites, with some variations depending on the predominant school of thought (Maliki, Hanbali, Shafiʿi or Hanafi). Ja'fari jurisprudence, the dominant *madhhab* for Shi'i Islamic groups, does not adhere to the same principles of *usul al-fiqh*. Clerics draw on *ijtihad* (legal decision made independently of a particular school of thought) alongside the application of *usul al-fiqh*. Ja'fari jurisprudence provides legal provisions for the personal status matters of Twelvers, Ismai'lis and Zahids. As Sunni jurisprudence predominates in the Arab states, both non-Sunni Islamic groups and non-Muslim communities are nominally subject to state laws which incorporate elements of Sunni *fiqh* introduced under the Ottoman caliphate.[82] However, in matters of personal status, a plurality of religio-legal doctrines prevail. For example, Lebanon is the only MENA state to have constitutional recognition of all the major religious doctrines (including their sub-denominations) and considers them to be 'autonomous juristic personalities'[83];

> 'The freedom of belief is absolute. The State, while paying homage to the Almighty God, shall respect all religions and doctrines, shall guarantee the freedom to conduct religious rites under the State's protection provided it shall not contravene the

[81] Ayman Shabana (2010) *Custom in Islamic Law and Legal Theory: The Development of the Concepts of Urf and 'Adah in the Islamic Legal Tradition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), p.150, 152,153.
[82] For an historical overview of the development of Sunni Jurisprudence under the Ottoman Empire see Wael Hallaq (2009) 'Hegemonic Modernity: The Middle East and North Africa' in *Shari'a: Theory, Practice, Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.396-443.
[83] Jamal J. Nasir (2002) *The Islamic Law of Personal Status* (The Hague: Kluver Law International), p.40.

> public order and shall also safeguard for the citizens of whatever religion or sect, due respect of their Personal Status Code and their spiritual interests'[84]

Only the Druze confession has a codifed Act addressing personal status in Lebanon (1948, amended 1959), leaving all other confessional communities to refer to their own religious legal provisions for matters of personal status. The constitutional decree No. 241 in Article 111 demarcated the jurisdictions of both Sunni and Shi'i judges:

> 'The Sunni judge shall give judgement according to the most authoritative opinion of the Hanafi doctrine except in those cases specified in the Family Rights Acts, promulgated on the 8th Muharram 1336AH, the 25th October 1917, in which case the rulings of the said Act shall be applied by the Sunni judge. The Jaafari judge shall give judgement in accordance with the Jaafari doctrine, and the relevant provisions thereto of the Family Rights Act'[85]

The legitimation bases for religious courts are largely textual sources, emanating from religious laws which themselves are derived from source texts of religious law (Islamic *Shari'a*, Christian Canon Law or Jewish *Halakhla*). Religious or spiritual courts are not subject to state oversight or legislation in practice and they are permitted to adjudicate over personal status issues (betrothal, marriage, divorce, guardianship, parentage, children, wills, inheritance). The binding of religious legal rulings is limited to members of the religious community and allows for the issuance of rulings from outside national territorial borders with binding potential in several other countries.[86]

The role of the courts then in the MENA region is not as easily specified in this context as they operate in two areas which often overlap, despite their demarcation in principle: civil or criminal laws on constitutionally enshrined issues (specifically the issuance of punishment by the state) and religious rulings (which can include provisions for heresy or apostasy, for example).[87]

The significance of these findings lies in their implications for identifying where the private realm ends and the public realm begins in the MENA states. If religious law has a role in the determining of civil or criminal matters, then this is a conception of morality which has implications for conceptions of identity. The state, therefore, does not

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[84] Jamal J. Nasir (2002) *The Islamic Law of Personal Status* (The Hague: Kluver Law International), p.36; Chibli Mallat (2007) '*Constitutional Law: The Specificity of Middle Eastern Constitutionalism*' in *Introduction to Middle Eastern Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.141.

[85] Nasir, *The Islamic Law of Personal Status*, p.36.

[86] The Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch has ultimate authority over the religio-legal rulings in his jurisdiction. His decisions cannot be appealed. [http://syrianorthodoxchurch.org/library/articles/the-concept-of-jurisdiction-and-authority-in-the-syrian-orthodox-church-on-antioch].

[87] Chibli Mallat (2007) *Introduction to Middle Eastern Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); On Egypt see Nathalie Bernard-Maugiron (2008) (ed.) *Judges and Political Reform in Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press)

have the monopoly on interpretation regarding the law, that the European rational legal tradition presupposes in its assessment of society's moral standpoints. In contrast to Habermas' belief that a society is engaged in a single debate over its own validity norms, the MENA context highlights the existence of multiple group-specific debates over divergent sets of validity norms. These norms also incorporate a divinely inspired dimesion which Habermas does not address in *Structural Transformation*.

3.4 Conceptual Implications of Empirical Evidence

The preceding discussions highlight a preliminary limitation of the Habermasian trajectory. Its Marxist foundations mean that the framework applied in this thesis has been chiefly concerned with the economic foundations of social life in the MENA. Only phenomena which displayed similar economic foundations to those described by Habermas, were included as evidence of the emergent public sphere. The content of the preceding discussions demonstrates, however, that events of political action which do not display similar economic foundations have been overlooked. A particular victim of this appears to be Arab nationalism, which only features in the discussion on account of its connection with the *salons* in Egypt, Beirut and Damascus. But, this is problematic because the absence of Arab nationalism from this discussion obscures the existence and political implications of colonial activity in the region. Consequently, Arab nationalism's significance to the prevailing political order is also undermined. This is despite the scholarly consensus having noted the unparalleled political significance of Arab nationalism to the formation of the modern Arab states.

This tendency to underemphasise previous instances of political action in the MENA can also be seen in the treatment of the Arabic novel. The Habermasian trajectory casts the Arabic novel as a literary form of political insignificance. This is because the novel form does not appear as an example of the type of reflections on lived experience required by Habermas. It appeared later in history as an imported European innovation and exhibited divergent content to Habermas' European examples.[88] The Arab form of the novel typically had a political significance. The specific role of the author is similar to that of a Prophet; they are attributed with the responsibility to document changing social and

[88] For Elias Khoury, the novel emerged with 'the modern state and new forms of communication especially the press and with the influence exercised by the European Cultural Model' see Elias Khoury (1990) 'The Unfolding of Modern Fiction and Arab Memory' *Journal of the MidWest Modern Language Association* Vol. 23, No. 1 (Spring), p.4.

political dynamics above other types of material. Fiction, for example, is revered for its role in the documentation of the Palestinian struggle for statehood and independence.[89]

Whereas these *salons* were politically significant, those studied by Habermas exhibited an ambiguous attitude towards politics. In Cairo, for example, the *salons* allowed for the political, social and intellectual elites to socialise and exchange information. Anti-colonial Egyptian elites were therefore able to avail themselves of the information necessary to mount campaigns for independence from the British. The ʿUrabi revolt, for example, has several connections to *salon* activity.

Literary-scientific societies too demonstrated political significance by virtue of their existence. They provided a space in which to discuss particular issues in public, in contrast to the seclusion of the *salons*.[90] They were often used as fronts for secretive political activism for both proponents of Arab nationalism and supporters of colonial powers in the region. Increasing factionalism in Istanbul between Ottoman administrative and military officers provided an opportunity to promote ethno-nationalisms. *Al-Muntada al-Adabi* (The Literary Society) of Istanbul (1909-1915) provided an organisational framework for the Arab Club of Damascus, formed in 1918 after the British occupation of Syria. It was an extra governmental association of Amir Faysal's 'Arab Government' installed after the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. Its distinctly political purpose was to engage the 'enlightened' elements of Damascene society (the self-styled *mutanawwirun*) in politics on the side of the Arab government. It therefore promoted a government-sanctioned nationalism, financed by the British.[91] As such it drew on the members of the middle strata and second tier of nobility. The club's leadership viewed politics as the instrument through which a small elite might impose its goals and values, along with their supporting institutions, on an otherwise passive population.

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[89] See 'The Necessity to Forget and Remember' interview with Elias Khoury by Sonja Mejcher available at [http://www.banipal.co.uk/selections/48/151/elias-khoury/]. See also Verena Klemm (2000) 'Different Notions of Commitment (Iltizam) and Committed Literature (al-Adab al-Multazim) in the Literary Circles of the Mashriq' *Arabic and Middle Eastern Literature* Vol. 3, No.1, pp.51-62.

[90] Egyptian proto-feminism of the twentieth century may never have emerged at all, had these types of organisations not made it possible.

[91] See Keith David Watenpaugh (2005) 'Cleansing the Cosmopolitan City: Historicism, Journalism, and the Arab Nation in the Post-Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean' *Social History* Vol. 30, No. 1, p.9, James L. Gelvin (1994) 'The Social Origins of Popular Nationalism in Syria: Evidence for a New Framework' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 26, p.64; [91] The beginnings of nationalist political action in Syria were in secret society *al-Fatat*, a group founded by Arab students studying in Paris. It was the first prewar Arabist organisation to call for the independence of the Arab provinces from the Ottoman Empire. See James L. Gelvin (1998) *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p.65. For wider commentary see also Ernest C. Dawn (1973) *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press); (1991) 'The Origins of Arab Nationalism' in Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih & Reeva S. Simon (eds.) *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press), p.56.

The final discussion of group conceptions of identity highlights an additional limitation of the Habermasian trajectory. This time, the objection relates to Habermas' association between the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere and the development of the particular type of rational law in Europe. The salience of public religious affiliations in the Arab states presents a differentiated set of operational legal contexts. This means that Habermas' distinction between moral and ethical questions cannot be easily observed. Religious courts, rather than civil courts, determine both moral and ethical positions for a given faith community in the areas of personal status. Thus civil law is not involved in the determination of group identities in the Arabs states as was the case for the European bourgeoisie. The arbitrary nature of state boundary drawing by the imperial powers resulted in many different ethnic, religious and cultural groups being subsumed into a single state. As such, they are not nation-states.

On the theoretical level, this has consequences for how political action will actually be realised in a society dominated by group positions on both moral and ethical questions. Habermas believed that a universal morality (oriented towards personal autonomy) could be uncovered by society, if society put aside its group-derived ethical positions. The empirical evidence identified by the Habermasian trajectory shows Arab states to be dominated by multiple identity groups which do not distinguish between questions of morals and questions of ethics. Because of this degree of legal and jurisdictional differentiation, it follows that the task Habermas sets the courts, the uncovering of universal morality oriented towards personal autonomy, cannot be realised. The consequence for political action is that it cannot be enacted. These separate groups have differing and competing conceptions of the good life. As such each group has a differing conception of group ethical identity and thus they cannot be fed homogeneously into a singular rational conception of the nation. Lebanon in particular suffers from this scenario.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter identified several points that become problematic when raised in contexts, which are different from the historical, legal and philosophical aspects of the cultural context within which Habermas makes his arguments regarding the dynamics of the public sphere. The common-placed assumption that the Habermasian concept of the public sphere is applicable to 'Arab', 'Muslim' or 'Islamic' contexts is based on a superficial understanding of Habermas' socio-political thought. This position also makes a similar assessment of the cultural dynamics (as incorporated within history, law and

philosophy) at work in 'Arab', 'Muslim' or 'Islamic' societies, subsumed as they are into European frameworks of reference. It appears, thus, that these conceptions of the public sphere are not as Habermasian as they claim to be. A given conceptualisation of the public sphere would have to satisfy the aforementioned structural preconditions in order to be considered 'Habermasian' as such.

This chapter deployed the first stage of the two-step Habermasian theoretical approach to political action in the MENA identified in the previous chapter. This first step in the framework correlated with Habermas' account of the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere. It identified phenomena analogous to but different from those examples provided by Habermas in *Structural Transformation*. This included private commodity ownership, a middle social strata, reflections on lived experience, the emergence of a public realm indicated by reading societies, and the adjudication of identity questions by courts of law.

Given that these analogous phenomena can be observed, it could be inferred that the criteria of this first half of the Habermasian trajectory, the emergence of a 'public sphere', have been met. However, beyond their analogous characteristics, the MENA-specific evidence as a whole does not appear to match the scale nor the specific historical chronology of Habermas' European examples. From a strictly Habermasian standpoint, the MENA-specific evidence was observed to a more conservative extent and was not as widespread. It was geographically restricted to the urban areas of Cairo, Damascus and Beirut. The chronology of the evidence was also non-linear; the emergence of the novel for example was considerably recent in the MENA when compared to its emergence in Europe in the 1800s.

If then this thesis is engaged in overcoming the Orientalist dimension of knowledge production in the MENA, a Habermasian approach is problematic because it appears unable to account for MENA-specific historical events which are known to have had considerable political significance. Specifically, the experience of colonialism which encouraged anti-colonial nationalism and eventually resulted in the emergence of independent Arab states. This is because the Habermasian trajectory has demonstrated a tendency to organise the empirical evidence solely in terms of its economic foundations. This means that it is organised *in terms of its similarities to the trajectory of European capitalism*. As such, by adhering to this Habermasian trajectory, several fundamentally important aspects of the historical experience of the MENA states have become obscured. Specifically, it downplays the existence of colonialism and, secondly, the implications of

the colonial legacy for Arab state formation and consolidation. This is the primary limitation of the Habermasian trajectory.

Although, it cannot yet be said that the Habermasian trajectory is unsuited categorically to the specific historical conditions of the MENA, it does not yet mean that it is impossible to observe a Habermasian public sphere. Yet the evidence does appear to be patchy and restricted. The empirical claim identified in the literature reviewed in Chapter One specified that the 'Arab public sphere' has been enabled by the 'private' ownership of transnational satellite television since the 1990s. Given this apparent contradiction, it is therefore necessary to consider this claim in greater detail. The significance of satellite television over earlier and existing forms of media technologies (press, radio and television) in the MENA has incorporated two dimensions. Firstly, it provided the technological capacity to broadcast content to numbers of people larger and more disparate than the historically and geographically restricted press readerships. International regulatory regimes for satellite broadcasting have also introduced new mechanisms for political interaction between the Arab states at the regional level around common defence and security concerns. This has had consequences for the socio-legal conditions in which subsequent political action can take place. Secondly, 'private' ownership permitted the possibility of a larger range of channels that then state monopoly on satellite ownership had been able to offer previously. This has allowed a 'new' diversity of voices to be heard. The following chapter invokes the method of investigation deployed in this chapter but focuses on the second step of the Habermasian trajectory, *the chronology of the public sphere's decline*.

Chapter Four

Economic Foundations of an Arab Public Sphere

'*The world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only*'[1]

'*The culture of harmony infused into the masses per se invites its public to an exchange of opinion about articles of consumption and subjects it to the soft compulsion of constant consumption training*'[2]

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with further advancing the argument that the Habermasian approach to political action may distort historical and social conditions in the MENA. As a consequence, the significance of these events as political action oriented towards the prevailing authoritarian political order becomes further obscured. The previous chapter presented MENA-specific empirical phenomena, analogous to but different from those indicative of the Habermasian public sphere framework criteria. Briefly, these were a change in the ownership of the mode of production leading to the emergence of a 'privatised' realm, the articulation of lived experience derived from the private sphere to cultivate a specific type of sensibility, the discussion of these issues in *salons* and reading societies and finally a specific distinction between moral and ethical questions observable in legal adjudication. Where it was possible to observe these phenomena, they appeared restricted geographically to specific cities (Cairo, Beirut and Damascus) and historically to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As such, they did not demonstrate the same widespread resonance as the examples Habermas provided as evidence of the bourgeois public sphere in *Structural Transformation*. It was not yet possible therefore to observe clearly the emergence of a new social group as a direct result of changing economic conditions in the same way Habermas described.

Recalling the literature reviewed in Chapter One, this chapter addresses the first empirical claim about Arab and Islamic public spheres. The authoritarian political context in which they operate means that their emergence and continued existence is contingent on transnational capabilities of mass media technology. The contribution of satellite television since the 1990s (and more recently social media technologies) to the realisation of political

[1] Jürgen Habermas (1989) [1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* tr. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), p.171.
[2] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.191-192.

action has been widely documented.[3] The 'Arab public sphere' has been enabled by the 'private' ownership of transnational satellite television since the 1990s.[4] At first glance, the socio-political conditions and dynamics of events surrounding the Arab Uprisings appear consistent with the claims to political emancipation made by proponents of the satellite television-supported 'Arab public sphere'. Specifically, these claims were, firstly, the determinist relationship identified between satellite television station talk shows or debate programmes (thus exposing their audiences to a new style of public argumentation) and, secondly, the shattering of taboos around discussing political issues publicly.[5] The outcome was that people would then congregate in groups in coffeehouses and other places discussing these political issues of mutual concern.[6] This empirical evidence is not, however, consistent with the Habermasian ideal-type account of the bourgeois public sphere. In contrast, it *links the mass media to the systematic decline and total degeneration* of the hitherto vibrant public sphere of the European bourgeoisie.[7] Habermas constructed a Marxist-driven trajectory which connected monopoly capitalism to mass media. Thus, to speak of any 'public sphere' positively affected by mass technology is a distortion of Habermas' views in *Structural Transformation.*

This inconsistency requires revisiting the empirical evidence in order to discern further the suitability of a Habermasian approach. It proceeds in a similar manner to the previous chapter, providing a summary of the relevant aspects of the Habermasian account of the public sphere's decline trajectory in *Structural Transformation.* It then presents the analogous empirical evidence of the formation of publicist institutions in the MENA, and

[3] On satellite television see Dina Matar (2007) 'Heya TV: A Feminist Counterpublic for Arab Women?' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* Vol.24, No.3, pp.513-524; On social media see Nahed Eltantawy & Julie B. Wiest (2011) 'The Arab Spring: Social Media in the Egyptian Revolution, Reconsidering Resource Mobilisation Theory' *International Journal of Communication* Vol. 5 pp.1207-1219; See Ilhem Allagui and Johanne Kuebler's editorial introduction to the special issue 'The Arab Spring: The Role of ICTS' *International Journal of Communication* Vol. 5 pp.1435-1442; Gilad Lotan, Erhardt Graeff, Mike Ananny, Devin Gaffney, Ian Pearce & Danah Boyd (2011) 'The Revolutions Were Tweeted: Information Flows During the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions' *IJC* Vol. 5, pp.1375-1405. On ICT impacts on political transformation from a regional perspective see Emma C. Murphy (2009) 'Theorizing ICTS in the Arab World: Informational Capitalism and the Public Sphere' *International Studies Quarterly* Vol.53, pp.1131-1153 & (2006) 'Agency and Space: The Political Impact of Information Technologies in the Gulf Arab States' *Third World Quarterly* Vol.27, No.6, pp.1059-1083.

[4] It is important to note that this claim does not accurately reflect the historical relationship between 'new' media formats or technologies in the region. As will be discussed, private ownership of newspapers, for example, has been possible since the later stages of the Ottoman Empire. Upon independence in the 1940s and 1950s, the new Arab states launched individuals press regimes (which might be more accurately referred to as publicity regimes - the technology or format type is irrelevant, it is what the system is trying to prevent, publication). Thus this original claim should refer to 'extent' of ownership, rather than just ownership.

[5] Dina Matar (2012) 'Contextualising the Media and the Uprisings: A Return to History' *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* Vol.5, pp.75-79.

[6] Merlyana Lim (2012) 'Clicks, Cabs and Coffee Houses: Social Media and Oppositional Movements in Egypt, 2004-2011' *Journal of Communication* Vol.62, No.2, pp.231-248.

[7] This pessimistic aspect of *Structural Transformation* is downplayed by the literature on the emergence of public spheres and receives limited attention when devising a definition of the Habermasian public sphere.

of the commercialisation processes of advertising and public relations. These discussions display a greater amount of consistency with the Habermasian account than in the previous chapter. This is because Habermas' account of the public sphere's decline emphasises economic institutions, rather than social formations. Despite these broad economic similarities, however, the empirical evidence emerged from differing historical conditions. These have proved to shape the socio-legal context in which the processes of commercialisation have taken place, presenting a more *differentiated picture of political implications* than Habermas described.[8] Discussions of selected empirical examples demonstrate the extent of differentiation at work.

Once more, the Habermasian approach pursued in this chapter emphasises an economically ordered social reality where analogous examples appear limited in number and regional spread. This serves to downplay other dimensions or examples which demonstrate the full extent of differentiation in operation in the MENA region. For example, the preceding discussion revealed these analogous phenomena to display characteristics inconsistent with a Habermasian concept of the public realm. In its place we find that a public realm shaped by state control under authoritarianism emerges. It is also subject to a specific type of capitalist development oriented towards regime survival. It appears characterised by authoritative instruction (popular religious television programming and state control of publicist institutions) and feudalisation (private interests made public).This reality thus locates private economic interests played out in public as a *foundational* component of this public sphere rather than *a result of* the convergence of market standardisation processes.

If, then, there is a greater amount of evidence to support the decline phase of the public sphere's developmental trajectory than the emergence phase, then it could be inferred that the empirical evidence constitutes a Habermasian public sphere in the very late stages of decline. This has consequences for how the overall significance of political action to the prevailing authoritarian order can be interpreted. It issues in a pessimistic forecast for political action because the prevalence of economic structures precludes the emancipatory action of the public sphere for Habermas. As such, this finding cannot account for the nature and scale of political action during the events of the Arab Uprisings. These events, rather, have demonstrated the public realm to have sufficient political significance to overthrow longstanding political regimes, despite these prevailing

[8] *Structural Transformation* was originally published in 1962 in German and the insights it contains on the mass media, reflect the historical context in which it was written. It therefore does consider the press, television and radio but stops short of subsequent technological developments. Thus, it does not contain references to satellite television, mobile technologies or the internet despite scholarly extrapolations of the public sphere motif in *Structural Transformation* to incorporate these phenomena.

economic conditions.[9] It appears then, in light of these findings and those of the previous chapter, that the Habermasian trajectory may not be particularly useful when considering political action in the MENA region. An alternative theoretical approach should therefore be considered.

4.1 Habermas' Account of the Decline of the Public Sphere on Account of Commercialisation

Having described the processes by which the public sphere of the bourgeoisie emerged in the first half of *Structural Transformation*, Habermas moved to consider the effects of monopoly capitalism on its institutional criteria. In nineteenth-century England, material drawn from the experiences of the new bourgeois family provided content for a developing press and publications sector. This material's connection to the intimate, 'privatised' sphere of family life was what gave the public sphere its autonomy. Ultimately (and this is where Habermas' Marxism reveals itself), monopoly capitalism snuffed out the vibrancy, diversity and originality associated with an autonomous public sphere. By the 1960s, this same material became copied, simplified and parodied in the pursuit of commercial gain. This destroyed the vibrancy and unscripted nature of the 'critical rational debate' which he associated with the realisation of the bourgeois public sphere's autonomy. For Habermas, the public sphere (emergent following the demise of the absolute monarch) became 'refeudalised' under the direction of economic interests.

The orientation of the press to a mass model was a pivotal moment for Habermas. The introduction of mass media signaled the total incorporation of private economic interests into the previously autonomous institutions of the public sphere. The dynamics of free market competition were to blame. This process was acutely observable in the experiences of Great Britain, France and the United States from the 1830s. Commercialisation, as he sees it, took the form of mass consumption and entertainment. In

[9] Hamad Dabashi (2012) *The End of Postcolonialism* (London: Zed Books); Mohammed Noureddine Affaya (2011) 'The 'Arab Spring': Breaking the Chains of Authoritarianism and Postponed Democracy' *Contemporary Arab Affairs* Vol.4, pp. 463-83; Hisham Abdelbaki (2013) 'The Arab Spring: Do We Need a New Theory?' *Modern Economy* Vol.4, pp. 187-196; Lisa Anderson (2011) 'Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya' *Foreign Affairs* Vol.90, No.3, pp. 2-7; Asef Bayat (2011) 'Arab Revolutions and the Study of Middle Eastern Societies' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.43, No.3, p. 386; Katerina Dalacoura (2012) 'The 2011 Uprisings in the Arab Middle East: Political Change and Geopolitical Implications' *International Affairs* Vol.88, pp.63-79; Khalid Mustafa Medani (2013) 'Teaching the 'New Middle East' Beyond Authoritarianism' *PS: Political Science and Politics* Vol. 46, No.2, pp.222-224; Nathan J. Brown & Emad El-Din Shahin (2010) *The Struggle Over Democracy in the Middle East: Regional Politics and External Policies* (Oxford: Routledge); Armando Salvatore (2013) 'New Media, the 'Arab Spring' and the Metamorphosis of the Public Sphere: Beyond Western Assumptions on Collective Agency and Democratic Politics' *Constellations* Vol.20, No.22, pp. 217-228.

contrast to the idea that 'the masses' referred to the working or proletariat classes, the earliest forms of mass consumption were in fact developed for the middle classes. Once publications did not have to be ideologically committed in order to operate, they could abandon their 'polemical stances' to focus on making commercial profit.[10] Habermas' suspicion of commercialisation emanates from its undermining of the 'critical-rationality capacity of the public'.[11] Debate between members of the public was degraded as the extent of antagonism between opinions decreased. The commercialisation process modified media content from ideology promotion to profit maximisation. At the outset, newspaper organisations were reorganised into stock companies that increasingly made use of advertising to maximise revenue. Commercialisation did not stop here, however. Twentieth century film, radio and television increased the scope, reach and efficiency of the new 'mass media' business model.[12]

Habermas' concerns about the scale of commercialisation focused on the political consequences for the public sphere. Specifically these were concerns for the genuine reflections on lived experience which had previously provided the basis of published content. Once publications operated as businesses, the relationship between publisher and editor underwent a fundamental change: they could no longer make decisions regarding supporting ideological content but had to select copy on the basis of the publisher's requirements. What had once been literary activity developed into 'journalism'.[13] The 'capital requirements' and 'publicist power' of such enterprises seemed so large that the establishment of the new media companies was done with government control.[14] This signified for Habermas a reversal in the original basis of the 'publicist institutions'.[15]

The process of commercialisation was signified empirically by the presence of two new phenomena. Business advertising brought *the business interests of private persons into the public sphere* and transformed it. This was as a result of the dual role of private persons *qua* property owners and *qua* the public. The public sphere became a 'medium of advertising' which had been 'met halfway by the commercialisation of the press'.[16] It was not however, in the short term, solely private interests that increased the intensity of advertising and the simple liberalisation of the market. Increasing 'oligopolistic restriction of the market' required greater strategisation in advertising and marketing to maintain

[10] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.184.
[11] *Ibid.*, p.159.
[12] *Ibid.*, p.185.
[13] *Ibid.*, p.185.
[14] Habermas provided examples of large media companies Reuters and Agence France Press whose Director-Generals were appointed by the government. See Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p.187.
[15] *Ibid.*, p.188.
[16] *Ibid.*, p.189.

competitive advantage. This was a distinct feature of late stage capitalism for Habermas: 'There is a transparent connection between the tendency toward capitalist big business and an oligopolistic restriction of the market, on the one hand; and, on the other, the proverbial soap operas, that is, a flood of advertisement which pervades the mass media's integration-oriented culture as a whole'.[17] This was not simply a result of the liberalisation of the market but the nature of financial and technological optimisation processes for big industrial businesses. Greater technological investment ensured mass production and increased efficiency but sacrificed elasticity and market responsiveness. In order to ensure the market remained stable long-term, companies engaged in indirect competitive strategies. These strategies served to blur the clarity of the market for consumers who would be swayed by brands rather than pricing. Competition via advertising, therefore, reduced the significance of economic rationality as a motivator for sales. The possibility that motivation could be manipulated psychologically had been introduced.

The new technologies did not change the activity of advertising greatly (despite the additional capacity to expand reach and scope). Advertising remained the 'design and placement of advertisements' in specific locations. Television, however, grew in importance as the dominant location where such adverts could be placed. It exceeded the significance of the earlier newspapers and other publications.[18] The target of mass 'scientifically-directed advertising' was somewhat ambiguous. Higher status groups were more likely to be able to afford or identify with the products on offer; they were also more likely to own a television. However, in practice, individuals from lower status groups were exposed to advertisements in greater numbers and frequencies: 'The trickling down of commodities formerly restricted to the higher strata attracted greater attention among those strata which, through their style of consumption, were trying to elevate themselves at least symbolically.'[19] This consumptive tendency was not restricted to a particular age group or historical period. Referring to David Riesman, Habermas pointed out that the 'mass' orientation of advertising was designed to socialise individuals into a culture and lifestyle of mass consumption: 'Today the future occupation of all moppets is to be skilled consumers'. Riesman described the targets of political marketing as the 'new indifferents' or, in other words, the political consumer.[20]

Habermas did not believe that the subsequent transformation in the public sphere was solely the result of advertising. It may not ever have happened had *economic interests*

[17] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.190.
[18] *Ibid.*, p.191.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*, p.191-2 cites David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd,* p.81.

not made it necessary.[21] Advertising had, after all, limited itself to the 'simple sales pitch'.[22] Private commercial interests entered into the public sphere via the dual-role of members of the 'public'. This had distinct political consequences. Simultaneously in the public sphere there existed a 'horizontal' competition amongst private persons about business dealings and the larger 'vertical' competition between the higher and lower social classes: 'the public presentation of private interest *eo ipso* took on a political significance.' Advertising within this large-scale context then was more than just business advertising, it incorporated political dimensions through its competitive strategies based on optimal financial calculations.[23] This had distinct political consequences.

The second phenomenon indicative of the press's commercialisation for Habermas is the practice of public relations. The central concern about the existence and practice of public relations for Habermas is its aim of the 'engineering of consent'. News creation convinced people of the value of what is promoted to them. As this involves the invocation of the public's identity as a critically reflecting body, the public fell under the illusion that its opinion formation in this context is free from private interest and influence. As the public of critically reflecting private persons, they believed themselves able to contribute responsibly to public opinion. In reality, however, they were an assembly of consumers primed to respond to advertising cloaked in created news of public relations.[24] Public relations make the previously simple sales pitch of economic advertising aware of its 'political character'. The 'opinion management' techniques of public relations allowed for the diagnosis of the public sphere's condition, tenor and dynamics through the examination of public opinion- much like the new media technologies, opinion management came to dominate the public spheres of Western countries during the twentieth century, after the end of World War II.[25]

Public relations considered the public sphere to play a political role. This is a step beyond the advertising perspective which solely addresses private persons as consumers. The addressees of public relations in contrast are the private persons as the public or 'public opinion' and not as consumers: 'The sender of the message hides his business intentions in the role of someone interested in the public welfare. The influencing of consumers borrows its connotations from the classic idea of a public of private people putting their reason to use and exploits its legitimations for its own ends.'[26] Competition

[21] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.192.
[22] *Ibid*., p.193.
[23] *Ibid*., p.192-3.
[24] *Ibid*., p.194.
[25] *Ibid.*, p.193.
[26] *Ibid*., p.193.

between private interests therefore became the context within with the accepted functions of the public sphere operated. 'Opinion management' further distinguished itself from economic business advertising by its tendencies towards 'promotion' and 'exploitation' during the process of public opinion formation. This involved an explicit attempt to influence the individual psychologically by attracting their attention to specific dramatically presented events, whether or not such events are even genuine. The 'making or creating of news' limited the events to ones that connect well with the 'pictorial publicity of the mass media' presented with reference to stereotypical topics of 'human interest': romance, religion, money, children, health and animals. Its overall objective was 'a reorientation of public opinion by the formation of new authorities or symbols which will have acceptance'.[27]

The effects of public relations went beyond the staging of public opinion in order to increase the sales of certain goods. It provided its brands with a specific set of consumers and a quasi-political status that provides a legitimate basis for political activities. Habermas likens this political credit to 'the respect of a kind one displays toward public authority.'[28] The consensus created by public relations managers was not of the same type as the unanimous consensus of the ideal-type bourgeois public sphere prior to the infiltration of the mass media. The argumentative basis upon which it was constructed (the freely-reached 'rational agreement between publicly competing opinions') was colonised by the 'publicist self-presentations of privileged private interests'. Despite the previous dual role of private persons *qua* property owners and *qua* the public, within the infiltrated public sphere, the role of private persons as the public became restricted. They were 'members of civil society'. Their rational-critical debate was restricted to the 'foundations of civil society as a sphere of control'. A new basis for the 'convergence of opinions' could not simply be enacted afresh because the private interests which colonised the public sphere maintained a hold on its 'faked version': 'For the criteria of rationality are completely lacking in a consensus created by sophisticated opinion molding services under the aegis of a sham public interest.'[29]

Habermas was very pessimistic about mass media which he considered to be the mechanism of a refeudalisation of the public sphere. This served to erode its autonomous capacity. The mass media were merely the tools by which attempts to inculcate an engineered consent of consumerism were unleashed. The decline of the public sphere occurred when it was separated from the private sphere, marking a change in its political

[27] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.193-4.
[28] *Ibid.*, p.194.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

function. Where the public sphere had been the location in which genuine issues of public interest (emergent from the private sphere) manifested themselves for settlement, it became hijacked by private commercial interests. Unlike political interests, commercial interests could not be adjudicated by political institutions.[30] The diversion of the public sphere away from Habermas' idealised values has consequences for the individual's capacity to effect politics. The public sphere then became burdened with the settling of private conflicts: a task for which it was unsuited. The origins of these commercial interests can be found in the settlement reached.

Following the hijacking of genuine public interest, the public sphere became a location in which private commercial interests were brought out into the open, because they could be adjudicated by political institutions.[31] It was thus 'burdened' with sorting out conflicts which 'cannot be accommodated with the classical forms of parliamentary consensus and agreement'. Instead critical debate gave way to staged display: 'Publicity loses its critical function in favour of a staged display; even arguments are transmuted into symbols to which again one cannot respond by arguing but only by identifying with them.'[32] Participation was through the *consumption* of prefigured culture. Manufactured publicity and nonpublic opinion masquerade as consensus. For Habermas, the sign that the decline of the public sphere reached its endgame was its refeudalisation. By this point, private interests have gained control of the new political functions of the public sphere and modified the function of publicity.[33] The function of publicity previously had a distinctly political character, to expose domination in front of the public which made use of its reason. The invasion of private economic interests reshaped publicity into a passive 'friendly' acclamation for the events and products presented. The public sphere of civil society was thus reorganised and restructured into a feudal arrangement by public relations: 'The suppliers display a showy pomp before customers ready to follow. Publicity imitated the kind of aura proper to the personal prestige and supernatural authority once bestowed by the kind of publicity involved in representation'.[34] These modifications were not limited to just the public sphere and members of the 'public'; the state too became subject to refeudalisation. Influenced by private economic interests in the public sphere, members of the formerly critical public were duped into thinking that their acts of mass culture consumption were also acts of citizen participation. The state was forced to approach its

[30] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.181, 198.
[31] *Ibid.*, p.198.
[32] *Ibid*., p.206-7.
[33] *Ibid.*, p.195.
[34] *Ibid.*, p.195.

citzenry as consumers and compete for publicity against the private interests in the public sphere.[35]

Ultimately, for Habermas, political democracy as a normative ideal was undermined by the processes of monopoly capitalism. The 'public sphere' was infiltrated by economic interests, providing a climate of opinion rather than the formation of a genuine public opinion. It became 'prone' to acclamation by the political community *qua* 'political consumers' rather than the public's use of its reason. With its interests presented to it by advertising and public relations and drawing predictable reactions through social and psychological manipulation, there was no longer any need for the public to think for itself. In the place of the public's once organic critical input, a 'plebsicitary agreement' resided. This created a passive relationship between politics and the individual because any connection to political issues and related arguments was eroded. The issues themselves became symbols of identification rather than participation.[36]

Parliamentary elections also required the 'liberal frictions' of a public sphere in civil society in order to carry out its democratic function. Democratic consensus was formed between 'citizens' as voters, assembled as a public (of private persons) which assumed critical and legislative functions.[37] The political framework remained the same, but the type of issues brought to bear upon political institutions changed to reflect commercial motives. Over time, the public sphere became increasingly uncoupled from the formation of consensus. The issues it put forward were bent out of any recognisable shape for the liberal parliamentary framework. Political democracy too was affected by the presentation of private interests in the public sphere. Political parties and actors too were forced to compete for publicity alongside the private economic interests. The same coercive mechanism of advertising that influenced buying decisions also afforded political parties a context within which to influence voting decisions. Habermas saw this in the use of 'political marketing' provided by advertising experts dispassionate about political ideology in order to 'sell politics in an unpolitical way'.[38] Similar to advertising, political marketing grew in popularity after World War II alongside the development of empirical market research and opinion management. This was marked by the recruitment of campaign or election managers who took the disappearance of the genuine public sphere into account by promoting its continued existence for their own ends: 'The temporarily manufactured political public sphere reproduces, albeit for different purposes, the sphere

[35] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.195.
[36] *Ibid.*, p.218.
[37] *Ibid.*, p.211.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

for which that integration culture prescribes the law; even the political realm is social-psychologically integrated into the realm of consumption.'[39]

In contrast to the previous chapter which noted limited examples of the specific types of phenomena analogous to those described by Habermas as indicative of an emergent public sphere, the empirical evidence consulted for this chapter demonstrates a greater degree of similarity with the trajectory of decline. But, while it is possible to observe increased instances of commercialisation and its corollary processes, once again they emerged from economic and historical conditions divergent from those Habermas described.

Publicist institutions in the MENA emerged from the beginning under state control. This contrasts with Habermas' European account which showed independently established publicist institutions to be brought under state control after a time of relative independence. The publicist functions of media technologies have proved to be a consistent concern for political leaders and rulers since the introduction of the printing press during the Ottoman Empire. Historical context in the MENA has dictated the specific means by which the state has attempted to neutralise or co-opt the potential threats from publicity. As ownership of 'new media technologies' has usually been restricted to the state when first introduced, the extent to which the state has sought to regain control over the publicist institutions increased steadily as media types (radio, television, internet) have multiplied. The state has thus sought to contain publicist threats through preventative measures aimed at neutralising the threat. The main areas of threat were, economically, the amount of money they had, and, rhetorically, the corollary influence that such money bought. In some cases the very establishment of the new media (film, radio, television and by extension, internet) was carried out by the state. In controlling the publicist insitutions, the state actively feudalised the public domain.

The most common manner in which the state maintained control was to turn these private institutions owned by privatised individuals into 'public corporations' (*öffentliche Anstalten*). This allowed the state to exploit rather than eliminate their commercial dimensions. As evidence, Habermas considered the historical development of the first telegraph bureaus in Europe into semi-public corporations. Reuters Ltd, as property of United British Press, required the highest possible judicial permissions to change any of its statutes, the director of Agence-France Press was appointed by the government, and the ten broadcaster shareholders of Deutsche Press-Agentur were themselves under public control. Newspapers (and film) were left in private control despite their tendency towards

[39] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.216-7.

concentration. The new media, however, evoked varied strategies of management between the United States (which permitted the formation of 'natural monopolies') and Great Britain, France and Germany (which alternatively saw new media controlled by public or semi-public corporations). This latter move was supposed to restrict the extent to which their capitalistic characteristic could dominate their 'publicist' function.[40]

Analogous phenomena can be identified in the historical development of MENA publicist institutions since the 1850s, though the precise economic conditions from which they emerged are divergent from those of Habermas' Eurocentric account. Publicist institutions in the MENA emerged exclusively under state control. The Ottoman Empire, for example, did not have the same type of capitalistic institutions and relied on external private capital companies to build modern infrastructure (trains, steamships, post office, and telegraph) in the absence of a suitably skilled domestic labour force and the requisite technical expertise. Such dynamics meant that only merchants could become 'private' capitalists, as all other land-based commodities were the property of the sultan.[41] The newspaper, as a form of communication, has played a specific role historically - that is, as the provider of the official version of events. Ownership of the technology required to produce them was restricted to elites (firstly the Ottoman sultan and his administrative agents, and subsequently the Arab state). This attitude towards communications media influenced the subsequent development of capitalistic publicist institutions.

In order to demonstrate these specific dynamics, then, it is necessary to detail the strategies employed by the state (in both its Ottoman and post-independence forms) to avoid all types of non-state concentration whether of opinion, ownership or both. Emergent semi-public and private public Arab corporations in the late twentieth century are then placed in their proper economic and political context. The empirical evidence suggests that the specifically capitalistic publicist institutions Habermas describes have yet to emerge. Since the 1970s, however, there are examples of what appear at first glance to be ostensibly private capitalistic companies (on account of the *infitah* or liberal economic reforms). However, upon closer inspection, this type of capitalism is state-supported in terms of both funds and market environment. Some are capitalistic, some are publicist, but never the two together.

[40] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.187-8.
[41] Immanuel Wallerstein (1979) 'The Ottoman Empire and the Capitalist World - Economy: Some Questions for Research' *Review (Ferdnand Braudel Center)* Vol. 2, No. 3 (Winter) pp.389-398; Halil Inalcik (1969) 'Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire' *Journal of Economic History* Vol. 29, No. 1 (March), pp.97-140.

4.2 Historical Conditions of Emergence For Publicist Institutions in the MENA Region

The tendency towards state control of publicist institutions in the MENA region is perhaps best exemplified by the Ottoman state reaction to newspapers. Newspapers were the primary means of gathering foreign intelligence by state officials before printing technology became more widely available. In contrast to newspaper companies being left in private control in the Habermas' narrative, Arabic newspapers began life as state- or authority-owned endeavours and were an effective strategic 'modernising' tool for the Ottoman Empire particularly. Preceded by a few French-language publications developed by Napoleon Bonaparte, an Arabic-language press developed more significantly under the rule of Albanian descended Mehmet Ali (Muhammad Ali), the Ottoman *wali* of Cairo (1805-1848).[42] The printing press was to play a significant role in realising the economic, military and social reorganisation reforms enacted by Ali upon his ascension to power in 1805. It allowed for previously handwritten administrative bulletins from several different departments of the Ottoman state to be produced and collated into a single dossier, known as a *jurnal,* which could be distributed in larger quantities at a rapid pace. This document was published officially by Ali's own press at the Cairo citadel around 1821 under the title *Jurnal al-Khidiw* (The Khedive's Journal) and was a bilingual Turkish-Arabic publication. The intended audience of the daily *Jurnal* was strictly state officials, its specific purpose was to keep the *wali* and his officials abreast of affairs of state. Its contents included official reports and notices about developments in the capital and Upper Egypt and excerpts from *One Thousand and One Nights.* As the intended audience extended beyond military officers and advisors to include future social leaders (teachers, local ulama), the *Jurnal* developed into a four-page paper *Waqa'i' Misriyya* (Egyptian Events). Its primary aim was 'to improve the performance of the honorable governors and distinguished officials in charge of [public] affairs and interests.' It was not for public consumption as it was both produced and made available to state officials. Its views could not be countered until the introduction of the telegraph in 1847.[43]

The Ottoman administrative preference for centralisation meant that an empire-wide press regime was soon underway subjecting the nascent publications scene to the whims of the Ottoman state. Censorship emerged as a response to unofficial voices that portrayed events in a manner contradictory to the official Ottoman version. In response to

[42] Ami Ayalon (1995) *The Press in the Arab Middle East* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.12.
[43] Ayalon, *The Press,* p.15.

criticism of the sultan in Istanbul, the *Nizam-i Matabi' ve-Matbu'at* (Printing and Publication Law) of 6th January 1857 re-established state control over the official version of events in principle.[44] The Printing and Publication Law required publishers to register for a licence and the submission of all pre-publication materials to Ottoman censors. In practice, however, its successful application in the outlying provinces was contingent on local socio-economic factors. In Lebanon and Syria, a privately-owned (i.e. not property of the sultan) publications scene has been documented beginning around 1855.[45] It had managed to operate relatively autonomously of Ottoman censorship on account of the ongoing local sectarian tensions which had seen a formal partition of the Druze and Maronites on Mount Lebanon in 1842, massacres of Maronites in Damascus in 1860 and the declaration of the Ottoman Mutasarrifate of Mount Lebanon from 1861 to 1918 to provide a Maronite homeland on account of the *Règlement Organique.*[46] During this period American Christian missionaries established printing presses to produce copies of holy books in the vibrant commercial centres of Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, Baghdad, Mosul, Kazimiyya and Jerusalem. Local residents such as Butrus al-Bustani and Mikhail Mishaq helped translate the books from French and English into Arabic.[47]

Simultaneously, the involvement of state power and influence in the ownership and running of newspapers continued in Ottoman Egypt under khedive Ismail. However, the proliferation of opposing views led those in power to attempt to sway what was being written by direct means. During the 1860s and 1870s Ismail Pasha supported the founding of independent newspapers to secure public support for his efforts to gain greater political independence from Turkey and greater financial autonomy from the European powers.[48] The political publication *Wadi al-Nil* and its other corollary publications were directly subsidised by khedive Ismail in 1866.[49] The Urabi revolt against the khedive in 1881 precipitated the Publications and Newspapers Act of 26th November 1881 which required all existing and new newspapers to register and 'acquire permission to print from the

[44] Donald J. Cioeta (1979) 'Ottoman Censorship in Lebanon and Syria, 1876 - 1908' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.10, No.2 (May), pp.167-8.
[45] See Leila Tarazi Fawwaz (1985) *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth Century Beirut* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).
[46] For an authoritative account see Leila Tarazi Fawwaz (1994) *An Occasion For War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (California: University of California Press); Ussama Makdisi (2000) *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: California University Press), p.161-4; Caesar E. Farah (2000) *The Politics of Interventionism in Ottoman Lebanon*, 1830-1861 (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies & I.B. Tauris).
[47] Ami Ayalon (2008) 'Private Publishing in the Nahda' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.40, No.4 (November), pp. 561-577.
[48] Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis (1991) *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), p.183.
[49] Albert Kudsi-Zadeh (1980) 'The Emergence of Political Journalism in Egypt' *The Muslim World* Vol. 70, No. 1 (January), pp.47-55.

Department of the Interior'. Article 17 of the new law also banned the smuggling of the French publication *Abu Naddara* from Paris. Anyone found with publications produced outside of Egypt would be fined between 1 and 2.5 Egyptian Pounds.[50] Once Egypt came under British occupation from 1882, Consul-General Cromer lifted the Ottoman censorship and journalists from all over the Empire arrived in Cairo. The tendency to subsidise the publicist institutions for political gain was, however, not restricted to solely Ottoman State officials; British intelligence officers also subsidised some Arab nationalist publications in Greater Syria between 1880 and 1920, with others receiving subsidies from the French Foreign Office.[51]

Since the declaration of the independent Arab nations in the twentieth century, the notion of public ownership has remained complicated, as each state has attempted to maintain control of the capacity for private ownership by nationalising the capacity for publication. The significance of this is the subsequent influences on the public realm and the socio-legal environment in which political action takes place. Since independence, Arab states have successfully avoided the specific conditions within which the capitalistic publicist institutions Habermas described were born, and they have sought to consistently contain the 'threat' from publicist institutions through censorship, subsidy and ownership at both the national and regional levels. The majority of Arab states have managed their respective institutions of 'publicist capacity' according to the 'national interest' in the following manner: the press and subsequently other forms of 'publicist' technology (radio, television, internet) emerge, firstly, as state-owned monopolies (nationalisation) and, then, as multi-national semi public corporations (partial, cosmetic privatisation).

Although evidence of phenomena similar to those capitalist publicist institutions described by Habermas is scarce, the greatest numbers of state-controlled publicist institutions have existed in most if not all Arab states in the Mashriq and Maghreb regions following independence (UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman emerged in 1970s).[52] This has allowed newspapers, radio and television stations to exist in principle and in practice but

[50] Ziad Fahmy (2011) 'Print Capitalism and the Beginnings of Colloquial Mass Culture 1870-1882' and 'New Media: Laughter, Satire and Song 1882-1902' in *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation Through Popular Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), pp.39-60.

[51] Eliezer Tauber (1990) 'The Press and the Journalist as A Vehicle For Spreading Nationalist Ideas in Syria in the Late Ottoman Period' *Die Welt des Islams* Vol.30, No.1, p. 168.

[52] State-owned radio and television 'companies' include *Radio Jordan* (1956), Algeria's *Entreprise Nationale de Télévision* (1956), Lebanon's TéléLiban (1959), Tunisia's *Établissement de la Radiodiffusion-Télévision Tunisienne* (1957), Egypt's *Egyptian Radio and Television Union* (ERTU) (1960), *Kuwait Radio* and *Kuwait TV* (1962) UAE's *Emirates Telecommunications Company* (1976); Qatar's *Ooremoo* (formerly QTel) (1987) Yemen's *General Corporation for Radio and Television* (1994). This was a feature of the corporatist state formation in the Arab World see Anoush Ehteshami & Emma Murphy (1996) 'Transformation of the Corporatist State in the Middle East' *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 17, No.4, pp.753-772.

limited their publicist power through the regulation of content and capacity for competitive business. Much like the Ottoman state, the newer Arab states have sought to control the official version of events for their respective audiences largely through censorship legislation, overtly in the earlier days, implicitly in the later stages. The capacity of the state to censor publicist institutions rested on its ability to determine the conditions of the domestic economic market (those conducive to state-monopoly). As companies these state-owned institutions were subject to corporate structures of management via a board of directors. As nationalised utilities, they were also subject to ministerial or 'public' oversight; the highest state official with responsibility for media would usually be the chairman of the board of directors. Ultimately a semipublic sector was created in which the government could maintain a pre-publication censorship regime. It has relied on a conflation of the 'press' as journalism or opinion with a monopoly on book importation and distribution.

The containment by means of national ownership strategy, not solely focused on newspapers but rather on publication and dissemination, is best exemplified by the Egyptian experience following the 1952 Revolution. Prior to General Naguib taking presidential office, a vibrant newspaper scene had already been in operation. Influential privately owned newspapers and publications had flourished in Cairo since the 1890s on account of the larger political information game being played out between supporters and opponents of the British occupation of Egypt through social elites who met in the *salons*. Private publishers and commentators were therefore relatively freer to operate in Egypt than counterparts in Greater Syria, who remained subject to Ottoman censorship legislation.

On 23rd July 1952 the new regime, headed by General Muhammad Naguib and the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) established its own publishing house, *Dar al-Tahrir* (House of Liberation), which in turn founded the daily newspaper, *al-Gomhurriyya* (the Republic) by December under a licence issued to Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir.[53] This move was to enshrine *al-mabadi' al-thawra* (principles of the revolution) by publicising the new ruling personalities and disseminating Arab socialist ideological content. Judged as 'prejudicial to the national interest', privately-owned publications were targeted directly by censorship and their corollary political parties were banned as President Naguib announced a new political organisation the National Liberation Rally on 1st January 1953. By 1960, the nationalisation of publicist institutions was firmly established. Newspapers could only be published with the permission of the country's only political organisation, the National

[53] Both Anwar Sadat and Gamal Abdel Nasser wrote for *Al-Gomhuriyya*, William Rugh (2004) *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio and Television in Arab Politics* (Westport, CT: Praeger), p.149.

Union.[54] This law transferred the four large private publishing houses (*Dar al-Ahram*, *Dar al-Akhbar al-Yawm*, *Dar al-Hilal* and *Dar Ruz al-Yusuf*), into the ownership of the National Union. The regime claimed nationalisation was in the interest of the emergent Arab socialist republic as the newspapers were owned by 'big capitalists' who dominated the expression of the 'means of guidance'. Public ownership of the press would therefore entrust the 'means of guidance' to the state and protect it from 'capitalist domination.'[55] A further four 'national' publishing houses were created in light of the national press law: *Dar al-Maarif*, *Dar al-Taawun*, *Dar al-Tahrir* and *Dar al-Shaab*. By 1971, all presses, libraries, nationalised publishing houses and government run facilities such as the National Library (*Dar al-Kutub*) were merged into a single unit, the General Egyptian Book Organisation (GEBO) which still operates today.[56]

Outright national ownership has also proved conducive to an effective de facto censorship strategy. Its corollary bureaucracy served to dissuade would-be private publishers from going into business. In practice, overall control of the press is guaranteed for the government. Day-to-day operations have been left to professionals who assume overall responsibility and personal liability.[57] In 1973, Anwar Sadat eased censorship restrictions by removing the government press monitors. The next year he installed the Supreme Press Council with the power to issue print licences and draw up a 'code of ethics' for the print media. This signified a move by the state to dominate the publications sector via indirect ownership as a type of public-corporation. Over the next two decades the press council would be handed a fifty-nine per cent stake of press ownership and the power to issue the publishing licences. Council members were in some way always connected to the government as either Ministers of Information or ruling party officials. By 1980, Law No.148 on Powers of the Press gave legal ownership of Egypt's five nationalised publishing houses to the *majlis al-shūrā* (Shura Consultative Council). The Council could then appoint the chairman, eight of the fifteen board members for each publishing house,

[54] 24th May in Law No.156; Under Nasser, The National Union was firstly known as the National Liberation Rally and then renamed the Arab Socialist Union under Nasir.
[55] William A. Rugh (2004) *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio and Television in Arab Politics* (Westport, CT: Praeger), p.150.
[56] The Egyptian National Library and Archives were separated from GEBO in 1993.
[57] Nadia A. Rizk & John Rodenbeck (1985) 'The Book Publishing Industry in Egypt' in Philip G. Altbach, Amadio Antonio Arboleda and Saravanan Gopinathan (eds.) *Publishing in the Third World: Knowledge and Development* (Portsmouth: Heinemann), p.101; Marina Stagh (1993) *The Limits of Freedom of Speech: Prose Literature and Prose Writers in Egypt under Nasser and Sadat* (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis).

subject to final approval to the Egyptian president. The president also approves the editor in chief.[58]

Technological advance in broadcast media has enabled regimes to pursue transnational strategies of neutralising political opposition through a specific type of capitalism.[59] Where Egypt chose to pursue a public ownership strategy to quell the threat of publicist institutions, the Gulf states have opted to run public corporations for profit as a means of controlling the capacity for publication. Since the early 1990s, several examples of 'privately-owned' publicist institutions emerged from the Gulf national state broadcasters Qatari *Ooredoo* (formerly Qtel), Kuwaiti *Zain*, Bahraini *Batelco* and Emirati *Etisalaat*.[60] Although these initiatives demonstrate a private commercial appearance, they are for the most part owned by agents of the state, usually with a connection to the ruling family, which gives them access to favourable, monopolistic business conditions through the bestowal of 'exclusive licences' to operate in a given state. They are often referred to as 'leading providers in the field' to give the impression of free market competition.[61] Legal demarcation of the 'market' as comprising 'telecommunications' rather than 'broadcasting' management of the 'market', however, has guaranteed that liberalisation has been partial and extended only to a limited number of companies which are accorded

[58] William A. Rugh (2004) *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio and Television in Arab Politics* (Westport, CT: Praeger), pp.150-154.

[59] Stephen J. King (2013) 'Sustaining Authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa' *Political Studies Quarterly* Vol.122,No.3, pp.433 -459 – see esp. p.438-446 'changes in domestic social structure favoured transformed authoritarian rule but not democratic outcomes' p.438, Stephen J. King (2009) *The New Authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press).

[60] The most notable of these privately-owned publicist companies is entertainment production heavy-weight Middle East Broadcasting Company (MBC) launched in London in September 1991 by Walid Ibrahim, brother in law to the late King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. Other Saudi private businessmen led initiatives include Arab Radio and Television (ART) was created in 1994 by Shaykh Saleh Kamel broadcast from Italy. Orbit group introduced by Khalid bin Abdel Rahman al-Saud emitted from Bahrain both television and radio channels. (Public satellite channels - State-owned and are split between Arabsat and Nilesat dishes); Ooremoo – 2006 law lifted QTel's monopoly. Its competitors now include Vodaphone, Saudi Telecom Company (majority Saudi Government Owned and Zain Kuwaiti government owned). Bahrain TV (formerly known as the Gulf News Channel), Abu Dhabi TV, Emirates Dubai TV, Syria Satellite Channel, Oman TV, Kuwait TV, Al Jazeera Satellite Channel, Jordan Satellite Channel, l'Entreprise nationale de télévision (ENTV Algeria), 2M (Morocco) These smaller channels were much like the periodicals market of Ottoman times with plenty of diverse opinion and the means of production still owned by the state: See Guaaybess, *Télévisions Arabes Sur Orbite*, pp.76-80.

[61] An example of this would be the business activities of Saudi's Prince Khalid, brother in law of King Fahd. Du – Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (EITC) - is owned 39.50% by Emirates Investment Authority (UAE Sovereign wealth fund), 20.08% by Mubadala Development Company (joint stock company chaired by Shaykh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi), 20% by Emirates Communications and Technology Company LLC (media real estate provider, subsidiary of TECOM investment, owned by Dubai Holding owned by Shaykh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum – ruler of Dubai - is a global investment holding company. One of its subsidiaries, TECOM investments, operates the ICT free zones including Dubai Media City and Dubai Internet City. It also owns the Arab Media Group (which DMI as TECOM bought in 2009) and 20.92% public shareholders. Du's ownership is thus 80.18% government. DMI (Dubai Media Incorporated) is the official media organisation of the government of Dubai. Its chairman of the board is Shaykh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, the deputy ruler of Dubai, third son of the ruling amir).

special privileges by the state. These tend to be leading providers because they are the only providers, and usually funded 51% or 49% by a state-owned source of finance.

The Arab state re-established indirect state control of the 'new media' (television, print and internet) during the early 2000s in the form of national 'regulation' of private media companies.[62] This was achieved by the foundation of regulatory bodies that were headed by the Minister of Information (usually a member of the ruling family), located organisationally within the Ministry of Information in most cases and are considered 'juridical entities'.[63] Although all Arab countries now have a nominal 'regulatory' body for telecommunications, their development has been most significant in the relatively young Gulf states, whose rapid economic growth has created new and capital intensive commercial centres in the Arab World. The regulations over which such committees preside are expressed in laws rather than light-touch guidelines, making contravention of the regulations subject to individual criminal prosecution rather than company sanction. The purview of regulation is extensive and not limited to one particular media type, but rather the telecommunications sector as a whole. Telecommunications laws have established telecommunications regulators and specified market competition and the issuance of operating licences as under the regulator's legal purview.[64] These bodies have

[62] Monroe Edwin Price (2007) 'Forward: Iraq and the making of state media policy' in *Towards an Understanding of Media Policy and Media Systems in Iraq* CGCS Report; (1995) *Television: The Public Sphere and National Identity*; (1994) 'The Market for Loyalties: Electronic Media and the Global Competition For Allegiances' *Yale Law Journal* Vol.104, p.667; Gher, Leo A. & Hussein Y. Amin (1999) 'New and Old Media Access and Ownership in the Arab World' *International Communication Gazette* Vol.61, No.1 (February), pp.59-88; Walid Nasser (1996) Broadcasting Law in Lebanon' *Arab Law Quarterly*, Vol.11, No.2 p.162; Paul Noumba UM (2004) 'A Policy Note on Telecommunications Reform in Algeria' *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* 3339, June pp.1-22; World Bank (2003) *Foundations for the Development of ICT in Algeria*, ESW Report No.25841, Washington DC; Carlo Maria Rossotto, Khalid Sekkat & Aristomene Varoudakis (2003) 'Opening Up Telecommunications to Competition and MENA Integration in the World Economy' *World Bank Working Paper Series* No.33, July; Aristomene Varoudakis & Carlo Maria Rossotto (2004) 'Regulatory Reform and Performance in Telecommunications: Unrealised Potential in the MENA Countries' *Telecommunication Policy* Vol.28, Issue 1, pp.59-78; Marwan Kraidy (1998) 'Broadcasting Regulation and Civil Society in Postwar Lebanon' *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* Vol.42, No.3, pp.387-400.

[63] See *The Telecommunications Law of the Kingdom of Bahrain* (2002) Art. 2a, p.10. The Director General is proposed by the Council of Ministers which is appointed by the King of Bahrain (*Constitution of the State of Bahrain* (1973) Art. 33d). The Council of Ministers can issue a decree based on the recommendation of the board (which is in turn proposed by the Council of Ministers) to fire the general director 'on grounds of material breach of his employment contract, gross misconduct, inefficiency, fraud, dishonesty or inability to perform the duties of office arising from infirmity or body or mind' (Art. 12a) General Director is thus supervised by the Board (Art. 9). For a historical view of media development in the Gulf region during the 1990s see Fayad E. Kazan (1993) *Mass Media, Modernity and the Arab States of the Gulf* (Westport, CT: Praeger).

[64] See *The Telecommunications Law of the Kingdom of Bahrain* (2002) Art. 78, p.54 (Licensee Obligations Concerning National Security) 'Every Licensed Operator shall undertake to provide, at its own expense, all technical resources, including Telecommunications Equipment, systems and programs relating to the Telecommunications Network that it is licensed to operate and which allow security organs to have access to the network for fulfilling the requirements of national security, provided that the provision of the service shall continue whilst the required technical resources are provided, giving regard to technical development and in accordance with the provisions of the regulations and decisions issued by the Authority' & Art. 79

advertised themselves as tasked with ensuring a national transition into an ultra-modern information communications technology-ready society through the provision of the highest quality telecommunications infrastructure.

In practice, however, the powers and jurisdiction of these regulatory bodies have not been immediately clear. The regulatory bodies themselves were designed to 'regulate' the telecommunications market (all aspects of radio, television, internet market and infrastructure) but in some cases are also given scope to regulate the publicist dimensions of the telecommunication technologies themselves. For example, Bahrain's Information Affairs Authority (IAA) sits alongside its preexisting Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), describing its remit as 'in charge of the affairs of internal and external formal media in the kingdom, and supervises all media outlets, including newspapers, magazines, publications, radio and TV stations and websites'.[65] Its proclaimed function is 'achieving national interests and safeguarding national unity, security, stability and civic peace so as to ensure the continuity of the political and democratic reform march and economic development and protection of human right and basic freedoms, in a way that reflects the landmark strides attained during the prosperous era of King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa'.[66] As the Ministry of Information, it is also tasked with issuing Bahrain's official gazette, which has published information on royal decrees, laws and ministerial regulations in addition to advertising, statements, official communiqués and court rules on a weekly basis since 1948.[67]

More recently state attempts to control the publicist institutions have emerged at the regional, in addition to the domestic, level. Publicist institutions are further subject to regional regulatory frameworks such as the Arab Satellite Charter in 2008. [68] A lack of detail in the language of provisions put forward in the Charter meant that its jurisdiction

(National Safety and Martial Law) 'It shall be permissable, if a state of national safety or martial law is declared, for the competent Authority to requisition the Telecommunications services and networks of any Licensed Operator as well as the personnel of such operator working in the operation and maintenance of such services and networks, to address the circumstances in respect of which the state of national safety or martial law has been declared. The licensed Operator shall be entitled to compensation for any damage which it suffers as a result of the exercise of the power provided for in this Article.'

[65] Information Affairs Authority, Kingdom of Bahrain 'Functions and Duties of the Bahraini Information Affairs Authority' available at [http://www.iaa.bh/FunctionsDuties.aspx]. At the time of writing the Minister for Information, Shaykh Fawwaz bin Muhammad al-Khalifa (since July 8th 2010), also serves as presiding director of the IAA. This was announced in Bahraini Royal Decree 33.

[66] Information Affairs Authority, Kingdom of Bahrain 'Establishment and Organisation of the Bahrani Information Affairs Authority' [http://www.iaa.bh/overview.aspx] (retrieved 14th Feb 2013).

[67] Published in the *Official Gazette*, October 2002 Issue No. 2554; similar initiatives have been documented in the UAE Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA). It was also tasked with the strategic direction of telecommunications development for the federation, issuing Three National Strategy plans. See also Kingdom of Bahrain (2012) *Third National Telecommunications Plan* Section 5, p. 6.

[68] Naomi Sakr (2007) 'Law and Policy on Ownership and Content' in *Arab Television Today* (London: IB Tauris)

went beyond just television content, but affected each level of the process of content production, including the use of transmission and broadcast stations, of which there existed relatively few locations from which one could broadcast (they were controlled by Egypt and Arabsat). Much like the Ottoman Law of 1857, it itemised specifically the penalties for contravention of the 'regulation'. These included the removal of licences for both journalists and companies. The actual applicability of the charter was of course questionable. Article 5, paragraph 3 of the Arab League Charter drew on the Council of Europe's Convention on Transfrontier Television country of origin principle which stipulates that only content which is considered inappropriate in the country of origin could be legally restricted in target countries.[69] The significance of these attempts to control the publicist institutions lies once again in their subsequent influence on the formative conditions of the would-be public realm and its political significance. As the state takes control of ownership of these institutions, it precludes the type of political autonomy that Habermas originally associated with the early press outlets of Europe.

The evidence shows that rather than taking control of the publicist capitalist institutions once they become big enough to constitute a 'threat', the state (in both its Ottoman and Arab forms) has taken to avoiding an organic emergence of these institutions altogether. This has been achieved and renewed consistently until the present day through state dominance of the 'publicist capacity' in the form of direct censorship, publications-specific laws, public ownership of the publicist capacity, control of market dynamics through direct subsidy of certain publications at the expense of others and the drip-feed privatisation of the telecommunications sector. As technology has improved, regimes have turned to crony capitalistic practices to maintain their grip on the public realm. Telecommunications legislation has created a façade of competitive markets, but the reality is government-owned companies trading with each other. If only regime sanctioned actors can enter the market, the capacity for private ownership is not as politically significant in this context as it was for Habermas' European examples.

4.3 Commercialisation in the MENA Region: Advertising and Public Relations

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, Habermas identified the existence of advertising and public relations as indicators of mass commercialisation. Such processes encouraged the consumption of, as opposed to the debate of, culture. Together, advertising and public relations contributed to the development and shaping of public opinion as a

[69] Monroe E. Price (2008) 'A Charter of Contradictions' *Arab Media and Society* (March) [http://www.arabmediasociety.com/articles/downloads/20080314091241_AMS_Monroe_Price.pdf].

medium that had to be listened to. This was made possible through the commodification of particular material that had once emanated from the private sphere, reshaping it into 'symbols'. Habermas presents French *réclame* as an example of the 'processes of concentration' characteristic of industrial capitalism. The business advertising observable in 1820 can only be associated with advanced capitalism despite the current tendency to consider it a mere basic feature of a 'market economy'. Advertising signalled the emergence of the mass market orientation and a long term sales strategy was required to maintain a market segment and avoid monopolistic restriction of the market.[70] At the outset, business advertisements were considered largely to be 'disreputable' and did not occupy more than a twentieth of the space available in the business intelligence journals of the day. They also focused on unusual objects or 'curiosities'.

Although the new media has expanded the publicist capacity of the advertising agencies, their role has not changed much since their emergence. Their activities remained restricted to the 'simple sales pitch'. Television was to prove an exception to the general tendency that exposure to mass media was likely to increase with increasing social status. Technological and luxury 'commodities' that had been restricted to higher status groups 'trickled down' causing their profile and desirability on the part of the lower classes to rise as they 'consumed' in a pattern oriented towards raising their status in a symbolic manner.

It is possible to observe analogous phenomena of both advertising and public relations in the MENA region. However, the conditions from which they emerged and within which they continued to operate were different to those Habermas described with reference to his European examples. Advertising business activity is considered to have been limited in the Middle East generally until the 1950s, on account of underdeveloped economies and lack of literate consumer bases and differing historical and trading conditions. It takes off as technology improves. There are reports of multinational company advertising and market segmentation into discrete consumer groups during the Ottoman Empire.[71] However, the majority of evidence of press advertising aggregates

[70] Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* p.189-193.

[71] See Yavuz Köse (2008) 'Nestlé in the Ottoman Empire: Global Marketing with Local Flavour 1870-1927' *Enterprise and Society* Vol.9, No.4, pp.724-761 and Palmira Brummett (2007) 'Gender and Empire in Late Ottoman Istanbul: Caricature, Models of Empire and the Case for Ottoman Exceptionalism' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East,* Vol. 27, No. 2, pp.283-302; (2000) *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press*, 1908–1911 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), p.13. The view that the Ottoman Empire was being introduced into the world economy is a view shared by Kenneth M. Cuno (1992) *The Pasha's Peasants: Land, Society and Economy in Lower Egypt, 1740-1858* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Peter Gran (1979) *Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt 1760-1840* (Austin: University of Texas Press); Huri Islamoğlu-Inan (1987) *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Reşat Kasaba (1988) *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: The Nineteenth Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press); Roger Owen (1993) *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914* (London: I.B. Tauris); Şevket Pamuk (1987) *Ottoman*

around late nineteenth century Egypt and post-World War I Lebanon.[72] Like Habermas' German example, the press played a decisive role in enabling the circulation of advertisements, as it was the papers themselves who promoted the services of their own presses and publications as a 'community information service.'[73] This was not, however, economically significant as a mass operation, as advertisements usually took up less than 5 per cent of the newspaper's space and were most frequently promoting local services and small goods such as doctors, beauty salons, pharmacies and European-owned department stores. It was dominated at first by announcements for literary-related activities, public libraries and printing presses.[74]

The rationale for the emergence of advertising in the MENA was, therefore, different to the specific economic historical context Habermas described in *Structural Transformation*. In Egypt, press advertising came of age during Egypt's economic boom due in large part to the expansion of the cotton industry and subsequent British colonial administration. These political dynamics allowed for an influx of foreign investors and companies keen to exploit profit opportunities and market their foreign products to the growing *effendiyya* customer base.[75] As the *effendiyya* was an elite social group, advertising activity in its early stages was not oriented towards a mass audience but rather sought to cultivate consumption of 'luxury' goods such as cigarettes. Tobacco advertisements were carried by *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Muqattam*. The cigarette was one such 'luxury' product, manufactured from imported Greek tobacco rather than Egyptian grown tobacco on account of the *régie* reforms. Greek tobacco merchants, including Nestor Gianclis, were instrumental to developing standardised industrial practices, by extending the scale of their operations from single shops where one could have cigarettes rolled individually to entire factories where the rolling was done on a mass production scale. Cigarette names were changed to suggest membership of an exclusive group.[76]

Empire and European Capitalism 1820-1913: Trade, Investment and Production (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

[72] Ayalon, *The Press*, p.203. See also Tom J. McFadden (1953) *Daily Journalism in the Arab States* (Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press).

[73] Ayalon, *The Press,* p. 203 'In Egypt in the official Waqa'i' al-Masriyya, which publicised the Bulaq printing press as early as the 1930s; in Hadiquat al Akhbar in the late 1850s; in al-Jawa'ib in the 1869s; and in al-Jinan in the early 1870s' See also William A. Rugh (2004) *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio and Television in Arab Politics* (Westport, CT: Praeger), p.22.

[74] Ayalon, *The Press*, p.203.

[75] Robert L. Tignor (1977) 'Bank Misr and Foreign Capitalism' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol.8, No.2(April), pp.161-181; Relli Schecter (2003) 'Market Welfare in the Early-Ottoman Economy: A Historiographic Overview with Many Questions' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* Vol. 48, No.2, pp.253-276; (2003) 'Press Advertising in Egypt: Business Realities and Local Meaning, 1882-1956' *Arab Studies Journal*, Vol. 10-11, No.2-1 (Autumn/Spring) pp.44-66.

[76] Relli Shechter (2003) 'Selling Luxury: The Rise of the Egyptian Cigarette and the Transformation of the Egyptian Cigarette Market' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.35, No. 1(February), p.66, 68.

Press advertising was not limited to solely private services. It was not long before government agencies also took advantage of the advertising medium to inform the readerships of state activity. This had a political dimension, as over time, the business of government agencies increasingly constituted patronage of individual publications as they bought greater amounts of advertising space; they would then use their position to control the publication in question by threatening to withdraw their business or take it elsewhere. Such was the lack of advertising activity that *Al-Hilal* editor Jurgi Zaydan took it upon himself to explain the principles of advertising to his readers and emphasised its role in business promotion in an article, 'Advertising in Newspapers and Magazines', published on 1st July 1895.[77] The colonial state provided the conditions conducive to commercialisation of a product that was not even to be consumed by the majority of Egyptians, favouring 'newly arrived tobacco men over established merchants by banning local cultivation and changing tobacco-import regulations'.[78]

In Greater Syria, advertising fees were low and the market was dominated by foreign companies to an even greater extent than in Egypt. Papers gained circulation via subscription (thus this lack of financial support (small advertising and low subscription) meant that they were forced to look for subsidies to stay afloat (this opened the door to influence). Non-political publications could also receive a benevolent subsidy from religious patrons looking to protect or promote Islamic culture in some way, which often took the form of a purchase of block subscriptions or subventions which would keep the journal operating on a basic level. Examples of these types of benevolent subsidy include khedive Ismail's support of Salim al-Bustani's work in *Al-Jinan* and his father Butrus al-Bustani's encyclopedia project *Dairat al-Ma'arif* by subscribing to 500 sets in the 1870s; the Egyptian Health Ministry's support for Shibli Shummayyil's monthly medical journal *Al-Shifa* (Medicine) in 1886; and Ottoman Justice Minister Jevdet's decree that Niquka Tuma's *Al-Akham* (Legal Rules) should become required reading at Istanbul's Imperial Law School and conseuqnet order of a large number of subscriptions.[79]

Although it began after World War I, Egypt was the Arab country with the most advertising activity accounting for 80 per cent activity in the wider Arab World. Later in the 1930s, the establishment of the first Egyptian national bank, Bank Misr, was supported by the editor of the nationalist newspaper *Al-Akhbar*, Amin al-Rafi'i, who ran features on the bank and carried front-page advertisements to encourage Egyptians to deposit their

[77] *Al-Hilal* (1895)1st July, p.840.
[78] Shechter, 'Selling Luxury', p.71.
[79] Ayalon, *The Press*, p.211-12.

money in the bank as a patriotic act.[80] Although there is evidence of the existence of advertisement agencies, they were not of the British or American capitalist type on account of the state dominance of business conditions through subsidy and patronage. The market is thus forced to sustain itself through distribution rather than advertising revenue. An example of this would be to tax a percentage of the value of a private publisher's advertisements at an elevated rate. Although much has been made of the tax advantages of 'free zones', where it should be possible to escape the tax, other press players are government funded and thus do not pay the tax despite being outside of the free zone.[81]

The possibility of individual private ownership meant the birth of hundreds of 'private' channels expected to take advantage of the 'dual-product' finance model, given an advantageous position as transnational broadcasters capable of reaching viewers across the Arab states and around the world. In a dual product model of broadcasting, advertising revenue provides the finances for broadcast content. This allows the broadcast owners to provide viewers with content while simultaneously providing an audience in front of which advertisers can market their items at specific breaks in the programmed content. The interest of advertisers in a particular channel or time slot depended on how effective it was based on demographic calculations about viewers' purchasing capacity, ages and leisure pursuits. This then influenced the broadcasters attitude to content for viewers; they thus broadcast content which would keep advertisers coming back to pay for their time slots.[82]

Television advertising accounted for 90 per cent of all advertising spending (on consumer goods) and reached $6.56 billion in 2006. Although this total includes all Arab states, there exist large disparities from country to country on advertising spending per capita, e.g. $4 in Egypt, $36 in Jordan, $267 in Qatar and $372 in the United Arab Emirates.[83] TV too has been subject to other subsidy mechanisms including payments (monthly or yearly) by political patrons to introduce certain ideas into television content.[84]

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[80] Robert L. Tignor (1977) 'Bank Misr and Foreign Capitalism' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 8, No.2 (April), p.163; Relli Shechter (2009) 'From *effendi* to *infitāḥī*? Consumerism and its Malcontents in the Emergence of Egyptian Market Society' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.36, No.1 (April), pp. 21-35; Ragaei El Mallakh & Mihssen Kadhim (1977) 'Capital Surpluses and Deficits in the Arab Middle East: A Regional Perspective' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 8, No.2, pp.183-193; Mona Abaza (2001) 'Shopping Malls, Consumer Culture and the Reshaping of Public Space' *Theory, Culture and Society* Vol.18, No. 5 (October), pp. 97-122.

[81] Ralph D. Berenger (2005) 'Tax Economics and Censorship of Foreign-Licensed Publications Distributed in Egypt: The Case of the 'Cyprus Press' *Journal of Middle East Media* Vol.1, No.2 (Autumn), pp.71-89.

[82] Robert Picard (1989) *Media Economics: Concepts and Issues* (London) p. 17-19; Todd Gitlin (1994) *Inside Prime Time* (London, 1994) pp.29-30, 56-62.

[83] Tourya Guaaybess (2008) 'Orientalism and the Economics of Arab Broadcasting' in Kai Hafez (ed.) *Arab Media: Power and Weakness* (London: Continuum Publishing), p.207.

[84] Advertisement breaks on al-Jazeera are dominated by Qatari state-owned companies including Qatar National Bank (QNB), Qatar Telecom (QTel/Ooredoo) Qatar Airways, Qatar Petrochemical Company (Qapco). For a typology of press titles receiving state subsidy in Lebanon see Nabil Dajani (1992) *Disoriented Media in a Fragmented Society: The Lebanese Experience* (Beirut: American University of

Given the fact that these small broadcasters are not supporting themselves through advertising revenue, the allocated sums must be considered a type of subsidy. At the same time, it would seem that state broadcasters had no choice but to expand private activity as they could no longer sustain their state-apportioned budgets. The only way to make revenue was through types of programming such as reality television and 'Arab' versions of highly successful global reality show formats.[85]

Advertising expansion in the Arab media market has also been stalled by the lack of clarity over ownership of audience preference information.[86] Without reliable information, advertisers cannot accurately pitch their consumption suggestions. Only large companies with in-house advertisers can afford to put together adverts for their products and then disseminate them along the different arms of the company. The empirical evidence suggests that this is not the case for the Arab market as there is no money spent

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Beirut), pp.49-53; Leïla Vignal (2003) 'Géographie de la publicité au Moyen-Orient: entre échelle mondiale et échelle locale: Le cas de l'Égypte, du Liban et de la Syrie', Melhem Chaoul (2003) 'Constitution et fonction d'un hypermarché de l'image télévisée dans le monde arabe: la station Orbit' and Alain Battegay (2003) 'La publicité au Moyen-Orient: recompositions régionales et discours professionels' all in Franck Mermier (ed.) *Mondialisation et nouveaux médias dans l'espace arabe* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose), pp.349-378, 73-90 and 379-408 respectively; Riyadh Ferjani 'Entre logiques sociales et rationalité économique: La télévision en Tunisie' in Yves Gonzalez-Quijano & Tourya Guaaybess (2009) *Les Arabes Parlent aux Arabes: La révolution de l'information dans le monde arabe* (Sindbad: Les Actes Sud); Morris Kalliny, Grace Dagher, Michael S. Minor & Gilberto de Los Santos (2008) 'Television Advertising in the Arab World: A Status Report' *Journal of Advertising Research* (June), pp.215-233; Fahad S. Al-Olayan & Kiran Karande (2000) 'A Content Analysis of Magazine Advertisements from the United States and the Arab World' *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 29.No 3 (Autumn) pp.69-82; Hilary Cooperman & Relli Shechter (2008) 'Branding the Riders: 'Marlboro Country' and the Formation of a New Middle Class in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey' *New Global Studies* Vol. 2, Issue 3 pp.1-41; Safran S. Al-Makaty, G .Norman Van Tubergen, S. Scott Whitlow & Douglas A. Boyd (1996) 'Attitudes Towards Advertising in Islam' *Journal of Advertising Research* (May/June), pp.16-26; Mushtaq Luqmani, Ugar Yavas & Zahir Quraeshi (1989) 'Advertising in Saudi Arabia: Content and Regulation' *International Marketing Review* Vol.6, No.1(November-December); Naomi Sakr (2007) 'Business Strategies of Leading TV Firms and 'Calculations behind News, Sport and Talk TV' in *Arab Television Today* (London: IB Tauris); Muhammad I. Ayish (1997) 'Arab Television Goes Commercial: A Case Study of Middle East Broadcasting Centre' *Gazette* Vol.59, No.6, pp.473-493; (2003) *Arab World Television in the Age of Globalisation* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut); Marwan M. Kraidy & Joe Khalil (2009) *Arab Television Industries* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

[85] Joe Khalil (2006) 'Inside Arab Reality Television: Development, Definitions and Demystification' Transnational Broadcasting Studies No.15, pp.5-68; Marwan M. Kraidy has written extensively on Arab Reality TV and its political consequences. See Marwan M. Kraidy (2010) *Reality TV and Arab Politics: Contention in Public Life (2008)* 'Reality TV and Multiple Arab Modernities: A Theoretical Exploration' *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* Vol. 1, No.1, pp.49-59.

[86] The ownership of audience preference information is important because it determines future allocation of advertising business. It is perhaps best exemplified by a conflict in 2003 over information from the Arab Advisors Group (AAG), a telecommunications consultancy firm. Those media companies who performed well in industry wide polls and metrics according to the AAG, would be targeted by advertising distributers and those who did badly would lose their market share of advertising. Similar reactions to audience preference information have been observed in Zogby International's poll of Six Arab countries in 2005 which concluded that *Al Jazeera* was the 'most popular news channel'. Its competitors - Future TV, Dubai TV, MBC, Saudi TV - all disputed the poll's findings suggesting its methodology was biased. The question of informational control rears its head also in the types of questions asked in these polls: for example in a 2006 joint BBC Reuters poll, the questions asked by researchers depended on the country in which the poll was taking place. For example, in some states when asked about comparing trust in media and trust in the government, the latter part was not asked. Naomi Sakr (2007) *Arab Television Today* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp.12-13.

on advertising or the formation of large advertising conglomerates. Broadcasters must be getting their budgets from somewhere else, most likely from patronage and subsidy. [87]

The second indicator of the process of commercialisation for Habermas was 'public relations', a practice which made economic advertisement aware of its political character. It finds its main expression as 'news' and began as opinion management after the end of World War II dominating the public spheres of Western countries. In fact it, as a technique, allows for the diagnosis of the 'condition', 'tenor' or dynamics' of the public sphere: public opinion. [88] The public relations of which Habermas speaks is not simply the professional practice of public relations by firms, although there is evidence to suggest that this is practised widely in the commercial centres of the Arab states.[89] It is rather 'news' that makes economic advertisement aware of its political character. Until the advent of al-Jazeera in 1996, 'news' for Arab audiences was limited to state-broadcasts via the state television channel of government officials' daily activities, including diplomatic visits to other Arab states, and informing the citizenry of new developments. The archetypal Arabic-language international news channels (al-Jazeera, al-Arabiyya, al-Hurra, al-Manar emergent from 1996 to 2005) provide convincing analogous evidence of the phenomena Habermas describes as 'public relations'.[90] Although much attention has been given to the

[87] Muhammad I. Ayish (2003) *Arab World Television in the Age of Globalisation* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Insitut), p.53.
[88] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p.193.
[89] Muhammad I. Ayish (2005) 'Virtual Public Relations in the United Arab Emirates: A Case Study of 20 UAE Organisations' Use of the Internet As a PR Outlet' *Public Relations Review* Vol. 31, No.3 pp. 381-388; Pamela J. Creedon, Mai Abdul Wahed Al Khaja & Dean Kruckeberg (1995) Women and Public Relations Education and Practice in the United Arab Emirates' *Public Relations Review* Vol.21, No.1, pp.59-76; Mohamed Kirat (2006) 'Public Relations in the United Arab Emirates: The Emergence of a Profession' *Public Relations Review* Vol. 32, No.3 (September), pp. 254-260; Mohamed Kirat (2005) Public Relations Practice in the Arab World: A Critical Assessment' *Public Relations Review* pp.323-332; Dean Kruckeberg (1996) 'A Global Perspective on Public Relations Ethics: The Middle East' *Public Relations Review* Vol.22, No.2, pp.181-189; Ali Rizk (2005) 'Future of Public Relations in United Arab Emirates Institutions' *Public Relations Review* Vol.31, No.3 (September), pp.389-398; Marina Vujnovic & Dean Kruckeberg (2005) 'Imperative for an Arab Model of Public Relations as a Framework for Diplomatic, Corporate and NonGovernmental Organisation Relationships' *Public Relations Review* Vol. 31, No.3, pp.338-343
[90] *Al Arabiyya*, launched in March 2003 on $200 million start-up capital from a consortium of Saudi, Lebanese and Kuwaiti business, was bought by MBC in 2006 - Hugh Miles (2005) *Al Jazeera: HowArab TV News Challenged The World* (London: Abacus), p. 221; El Mustapha Lahlali (2011) *Contemporary Arab Broadcast Media* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press); Norman Patiz (2004) 'Radio Sawa and Al Hurra TV: Opening Channels of Mass Communication in the Middle East' in William A. Rugh (ed.) *Engaging the Arab and Islamic Worlds through Public Diplomacy: A Report and Action Recommendations* Washington DC Public Diplomacy Council, p.69-89Arab news and journalism has been widely documented since the 2000s. The following are of particular note: Noha Mellor (2005) *The Making of Arab News* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield); Tourya Guaaybess (2008) 'Orientalism and the Economics of Arab Broadcasting' in Kai Hafez (ed.) *Arab Media: Power and Weakness* (New York: Continuum), pp.199-213; Lawrence Pintak and Jeremy Ginges (2009) 'Inside the Arab Newsroom' *Journalism Studies* Vol.10, No.2, pp.157-177; Naomi Sakr (2006) 'The Impact of Commercial Interests on Arab Media Content' in *Arab Media in the Information Age* (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research) p.61-85; (2006) 'Challenger or Lackey? The Politics of News on Al Jazeera' in Daya Kishan Thussu (ed.) *Media on the Move: Golbal Flow and Contra-Flow* (London: Routledge), pp.116-132; Naomi Sakr (2004) 'Al Jazeera Satellite Channel: Global Newscasting in Arabic' in Chris Paterson and Anabelle Sreberny (eds.) *International News*

programming choices and show formats that are considered characteristic of al-Jazeera, what the entry of these channels also indicated was the introduction of a larger number of players into a market which had been dominated by Saudi-backed private broadcast entrepreneurs.

Habermas' conception of 'public relations' invoked in its audience of advertisement consumers, the idea that part of their consumer choice is made by use of their critical capacity as citizens. Mass media presents 'news' items which have been selected on the basis on their *resonance* with dominant socio-cultural values to evoke a mass identity response to political issues. Analogous phenomena can be observed in the MENA region. This practice is common among satellite broadcasters trying to sustain operations through profit, but it is perhaps more interesting that in the Arab context this takes place most widely on state-owned channels that do not 'need' to make a profit in the same way. Al-Jazeera's 'new' style was characterised by dramatic presentation of news and views, in contrast to the more moderately delivered al-Arabiyya news. It was applied to the type of news covered, the show formats available and the rhetorical delivery of its presenters. This particular presentation of the news, which often evokes a significant degree of leadership criticism and the airing of political views in front of others, has also had direct political consequences on the regional stage. Every Arab state, with the exception of Qatar, is a legitimate target for criticism and Saudi Arabia in particular considers itself a consistent victim.[91] Al-Jazeera, self-characterised as the Arab World's first entrant into the 'global media market' guarantees its market share by its presentation of the 'news' in a highly provocative talkshow such as Sami Haddad's *Akthar Min Rai* (More Than One Opinion) and Ahmad Mansour's *Bila Hudud* (Without Borders). The al-

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in the Twenty-First Century (Eastleigh, Hants: John Libbey), pp.147-186; Naomi Sakr (2005) 'Channels of Interaction: The Role of Gulf-Owned Media Firms in Globalisation' in Paul Dresch and James Piscatori (eds.) *Monarchies and Nations: Globalisation and Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp.234-250; Joe Khalil (2004) 'Blending In: Arab Television and the Search for Programming Ideas' *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* Vol.13 (Autumn/Winter); Joe Khalil (2005) 'Inside Arab Reality Television: Development, Definitions and Demystification' *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* Vol.15, pp.51-68; Marwan Kraidy (2007) 'Idioms of Contention: Star Academy in Lebanon and Kuwait' in Naomi Sakr (ed.) *Arab Media and Political Renewal: Community, Legitimacy and Public Life* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp.44-55; Suleiman Shamri (1998) *The Opposite Direction: An Academic Study* (Riyadh: King Saud University); Mohammed I. Ayish (2003) 'American-Style Journalism and Television in the Arab World: An Exploratory Study of News Selection at Six Arab Satellite Television Channels' in Kai Hafez (ed.) *Media Ethics in the Dialogue of Cultures* (Hamburg:Deutsches Orient-Institut), pp.117-133; Faysal al-Kasim (1999) 'Crossfire: The Arab Version' *Harvard International Journal of Press Politics* Vol.4, No.3 (June), pp.93-97, Phillip Seib (2008) *The Al-Jazeera Effect: How the New Global Media is Reshaping World Politics* (Washington: Potomac Books); Abdallah Schleifer (2005) 'Al-Jazeera: Once More into the Fray' *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* Vol.14, pp.100-107.

[91] Ahmed Y. Assya (2002) 'Al-Jazeera Under Fire Once Again: This Time The GCC Threatens Sanctions' *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* Vol.9; Hugh Miles (2005) *Al-Jazeera: How Arab TV News Challenged the West* (London: Abacus), p. 54; Andrew Hammond (2008) 'Maintaining Saudi Arabia's Cordon Sanitaire in the Arab World' Madawi Al-Rasheed (ed.) *Kingdom Without Borders: Saudi Political, Religious and Media Frontiers* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp.335-351.

Jazeera brand's flagship programme *al-Ittijah al-Muakis* (The Opposite Direction) pitches individuals representative of opposing political spectrums against each other in discussion of political topics 'relevant' to Arab audiences (for example, Palestine, Arab Nationalism, or terrorism).[92] Al-Jazeera navigates the breaking of socio-cultural taboos by tasking the presenter to 'provoke' interviewees and viewers by asking loaded questions. Faisal al-Kasim, presenter of *al-Ittijah al-Muakis* from 1996 until 2012, had the following questions as part of his interviewing technique when discussing the issue of Palestinian statehood: 'Israel is America, isn't it? America is Israel, isn't it? 'Doesn't the establishment of the state mean forsaking 80 per cent of Palestine?' 'Why this excessive obsession with the question of state, overtly or covertly?' 'Why did the state become the antithesis of, alternative to or a replacement for national objectives, while in the political discourse of other liberation movements it is considered the final step in the struggle and the crowning and embodiment of national rights? In Palestine, the state has become an alternative to national rights instead of being part of them?' 'Hasn't the Israeli side found in the Palestinian side's eagerness to establish a state an opportunity to lure and to blackmail it in other matters?'[93]

In addition to 'news', opinion management of Arab consumers by public relations practitioners can be observed in the same areas of 'human interest' described by Habermas.[94] These have appeared largely as entertainment television programmes available via satellite connection. While there are limited examples of programmes of 'romance' (with the exception of *musalsals* such as the Syrian Arabic dubbed Turkish serial drama *Gumuş* watched between 2000 and 2005)[95], religious programming has received considerable scholarly attention.[96] It is important to be specific about the extent

[92] *al-Ittijah al-Muakis* is based on a CNN primetime talk show 'Crossfire' which pitted guests of opposing political viewpoints against each other in debate.
[93] Pre-Intifada episode of *Al Ittijah Al Mu'uakis* September 19th 2000.
[94] Joe Khalil (2004) 'Blending In: Arab Television and the Search For Programming Ideas' *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* Vol. 13; (2006) 'Inside Arab Reality Television: Development Definitions and Demystification' *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* Vol. 2, pp.5-68.
[95] Soap opera 'Noor' depicted the relationship between Noor the main female protagonist and her husband Muhannad who supports her careers aspirations as a fashion designer. Their marriage is depicted as a partnership between equals. The programme was dubbed into colloquial Syrian Arabic rather than the customary MSA usually used on media, making it more widely understood. Christa Salamandra (2005) 'Television and the Ethnographic Endeavour: The Case of Syrian Drama' *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* (Spring); Christa Salamandra (2013) Syrian Televison Drama: A National Industry in a Pan-Arab Mediascape' in Tourya Guaybess (ed.) *National Broadcasting and State Policy in Arab Countries* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), pp.83-95; Christa Salamandra (2013) 'Arab Television Drama Production and the Islamic Public Sphere'in Christiane Gruber & Sune Haugbolle (eds.) *Visual Culture in the Modern Middle East: Rhetoric of the Image* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), pp.261-274; Christa Salamandra (2012) 'The Muhannad Effect: Media Panic, Melodrama and the Arab Female Gaze' *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 1, pp.45-77
[96] Lila Abu Lughod (2005) *Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt* (Chicago, ILL: University of Chicago Press).

of the differences. Where Habermas described culture consumption on a mass scale, the media markets in the MENA also incorporate social and religious dimensions as part of the consumer identity. But this is not a single type of religious preference; many different religious styles are represented. Where the aforementioned examples reinforced a traditional view of authority figures as older learned men in appropriate attire and language, a 'new' type of preacher emerged in the form of Armani-suit wearing Amr Khaled.[97] Khaled, whose shows include *Words from the Heart*, alongside news producer Ahmad Abu Haiba, inserted religion into all entertainment formats, rather than restricting it to specific religious shows, pitched in a particular style whose 'feel-good blend' of self-help, management-training jargon and religion associated with evangelical preachers of the United States has proved to be particularly popular with young adults.[98]

The 'Islamic entertainment' format has proved lucrative. The owner of *Rotana* film and music channels, Prince al-Waleed Bin Talal, launched *al-Resala* with the help of Ahmad Abu Haiba who became head of its Cairo bureau. Bringing together *Rotana* themes and *Iqra*'s production strategy, allowed for an instantly recognisable, profitable format which comprises TV talk shows, reality and game shows, in the process putting Islamic religious and social values into an 'attractive shape'.[99] Its general manager, Tareq al-Suweidan, is a former host for MBC and a member of the Kuwaiti Muslim Brotherhood. These are usually for a general Sunni audience (Qu'ranic recitations, sermons and religious rulings) but there are also programmes and channels specifically targeted at women. Examples of these include Dubai's *Al-Alan TV*, *Heya TV*, and its flagship programme *Al-Makshouf* (Dina Matar). Although expressly a news channel, *Al-Jazeera* also includes programming of religious talkshows such as *Sharia w-al-Hayat* (Sharia and Life) presented by Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi and *Minbar Al-Jazeera* (Al Jazeera Pulpit) presented by a host taking calls from viewers on political topics. *Al-Jazeera* has also made attempts to promote 'positive values, broadness of mind and respect' into its children's programming, launching *Al-Jazeera* Children's Channel (JCC) in 2005.[100] These processes of

[97] For further detail see Aron Rock (2010) 'Amr Khaled: From Da'wa to Political and Religious Leadership' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 37, No.1, pp.15-37 and Lindsay Wise (2004) 'Amr Khaled: Broadcasting the Nahda' *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* Vol.13.

[98] At one point his shows accounted for 80 percent of Iqra's advertising revenue.

[99] Naomi Sakr (2007) *Arab Television Today* (London: I.B. Tauris), p.155 Al Resalah broadcasts on both Arabsat and Nilesat.

[100] Although associated with the ostensibly state-owned al-Jazeera network, JCC proclaimed itself to be 'private company' committed to a 'public service mission' with an annual budget of $50 million and bureaux in Qatar's Education City, Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Rabat and Paris. The chief stakeholders are in reality al-Jazeera (10%) and the Qatar Foundation For Education, Science and Community Development (90%), in essence state-funding. The channel is a private shareholding company. To assist its content programming, JCC consulted with Lagadère International Images, a French company. Among the programmes selected was Welsh channel SC4's animation about an extended family of mixed-race opera singing sheep, *The Baaas,* on

commercialisation have specific consequences for consumer identity by selecting topics of interest associated with specific buying habits within a specific identity market. Thus the content of advertising and public relations incorporates an acknowledgement of authority figures for validation and the affirmation of a particular ethical position associated with this emerging dominant commercialised order.

4.4 Conceptual Implications of Empirical Evidence

Once more, as a result, it could be inferred initially that the criteria for a Habermasian public realm has been satisfied, on the basis that such phenomena can be observed in the MENA region. But, this is a premature conclusion. Although these phenomena exist, it does not mean that they are of the specific type described by Habermas. While publicist institutions exist, they lack autonomous capitalistic capacity; where advertising can be observed, it emerged in a colonial historical context; finally, where the human interest topics and consumer identities reflect those described by Habermas, they also include an additional topic, religious observance. The resulting picture of the public realm is one characterised by authoritative instruction (popular religious television programming and state control of publicist institutions) and refeudalisation (advertising of publically owned stations, where private interests have been made public once more). This reality thus locates private economic interests played out in public as a *foundational* component of this public sphere rather than as a result of the convergence of market standardisation processes. Once more, the Habermasian trajectory pursued in this chapter emphasises an economically ordered social reality where analogous examples appear limited in number and regional spread. This serves to downplay other dimensions and examples which may demonstrate the full extent of differentiation in operation in the MENA region.

Organised and interpreted from the Habermasian standpoint, the empirical evidence drawn from the MENA context here too presents a restricted analysis. Similarly to Chapter Three, this chapter finds that the majority of evidence is once again geographically restricted for the most part. However, instead of a concentration around the major urban centres of the Levantine region, this time, the resource-rich Gulf states take on greater prominence. Market-leading transnational media and telecommunications companies are located in the Gulf on account of advantageous business conditions supplied by ‘free

account of its focus on ‘family, citizenship and harmonious relations’. Chair of the al-Jazeera Group Board Shaykh Hamad Bin Thani al Thani described the channel as a ‘bright and dynamic alternative’ to the ‘violent and inappropriate material’ that children are exposed to everyday. Even Hamas’s Al Aqsa channel has children’s TV as well as *Al Manar*. SpaceToon Kids TV is located in Dubai’s media city, owned by Dr Shihab Jamjoon who used to be a deputy minister at the UAE Ministry of Information.

zones'. This means that there is a significantly greater amount of empirical evidence parallel to the Habermasian decline criteria of commercialisation, exemplified by advertising and public relations.

This finding, however, oversimplifies the Arab regional media market and serves to obscure the extent of differentiation within the market as whole. This is particularly true in in assessing the significance of religious television programmes. For the Habermasian trajectory, it constitutes a topic of human interest designed for consumption rather than debate and as the opinion management strategy of public relations practitioners. This contrasts sharply with the findings of commentators on Islamic public spheres who point to these shows as conduits for political and religious contestation and confrontation.[101] By virtue of restricting its scope to the economic foundations of social life, the Habermasian trajectory thus downplays the presence of religion and the practices of piety in public life. In doing so, it also underemphasises any political consequences they might demonstrate. Ramadan *musalsals* (serials) for example, aired after *Iftar* each evening of the fasting month, have become something of an annual tradition. They are similar in style to Latin American *telenovelas* and often draw on historical Islamic figures and events. *Baab al-Hara* (The Neighbourhood's Gate) for example chronicles the daily events in a neighboorhood in Damascus during the inter-war period. As Damascus was at this stage under French rule, the show portrays the local population's desire for independence. *Musalsals* are also considered to have political impact as they often deal with social attitudes. For example, *'al-Da'aey'a'* (The Preacher), aired in August 2013 immediately following the removal of Muhammad Morsi from power, entered into the Egyptian political debate over the place of religion in public life and the nature of Islamist movements that promote a strict singular interpretation of Islam. It took a critical look at ultra-conservative preachers and their affairs.

The Habermasian trajectory overstates the catalyst effect of private commodity ownership on the emergence of a public realm of political significance in the MENA. Private commodity ownership has proved to not be of the same type as Habermas described in *Structural Transformation*. This is because the conditions for capitalism are different: they are more conducive to regime survival than they are to profit maximisation. Lebanon's 1996 Audiovisual Media Law is often cited as the start of private commodity

[101] Jon W. Anderson & Dale F. Eickelman (1999) & (2003) *New Media and the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).

ownership in the MENA.[102] This move extended ownership but only to select elite groups who were able to exploit market conditions to their advantage.

The economic foundations focus of the Habermasian trajectory also appears to confirm the political importance of these satellite channels for elite groups. This is because the development of capitalism has been restricted to elite groups who steer the market in line with elite interests. The Habermasian trajectory downplays the political nature of actors such as public service entities such as Arabsat, Nilesat and *Al Jazeera*. Saudi Arabia, for example, took a 29.9 per cent stake in the newly formed Arab Satellite and Communications Organisation (Arabsat) created by the Arab League member states whose express purpose was to acquire capacity for newly available satellite technology.[103] Arabsat remained ostensibly a public body. Its board of directors is comprised of the Information Ministers of member states. Each provided a share of the operating budget dependent on GDP. Those member states with larger stakes can exert influence to harmonise the goals of Arabsat with their own. The signing of a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1976 cost Egypt its membership of both the Arab League and Arabsat. With the member state with the most television-specific technical expertise removed from proceedings, Arabsat launched the first Arab-owned satellite in 1985 and its broadcasts were dominated by Saudi Arabia's coverage of the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. This series of events proved to be particularly useful for Saudi Arabia which has since proved to be the dominant player in Arab satellite television and always appears to be first to modify the market conditions. It was only after a decade out in the cold that Egypt regained some its influence with the launch of its first satellite Nilesat in April 1998 and providing extra capacity for those channels which may not have made it onto the Saudi-dominated Arabsat. In the meantime, Saudi Arabia came to dominate the regional broadcast market in terms of both satellite capacity and ownership.

Qatar's state-owned al-Jazeera has proved to be a possible threat to Saudi regional supremacy. It is a state-funded public service channel and views of the Qatari political

[102] This move officially dispensed with the state-owned broadcaster and permitted the issuance of licences to private companies.

[103] Adel A. Ziadat (1988) 'Arabsat: Regional Development in Satellite Communication' *ZLW Vol.*37, pp.35-45; Saudi Arabia still holds the majority stake in Arabsat (33.3%) according to Naomi Sakr (2003) *Satellite Realms: Transnational Television, Globalisation and the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris); Douglas Boyd (2001) 'Saudi Arabia's International Media Strategy: Influence Through Multi-National Ownership' in Kai Hafez (ed.) *Mass Media, Politics and Society in the Middle East* (Cresskill: Hampton Press) pp.43-60; Crista Salamandra (2007) 'Saudi Arabia's Media Empire: Keeping the Mass At Home' *Arab Media and Society* No.3 (Autumn); Schleifer, S. Abdallah (2000) 'The Dubai Digital Broadcasting Miracle' *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* No.5 (Fall/Winter).

establishment are often sewn into content and coverage.[104] The political nature of al-Jazeera can be seen clearly in its coverage of the Arab Uprisings in general and Egypt in particular.[105] Recent industry rumours suggest that Qatar is attempting to put its own state-funded but 'privately-owned' satellite in the sky, Eshailsat, ahead of the Fifa Football World Cup in 2020.[106] If successful Qatar will no longer have to rely on Saudi-dominated Arabsat, Egyptian-owned Nilesat or Jordanian-owned Noorsat for satellite capacity to air its channels.

If, then, there is a greater amount of evidence to support the decline phase of the public sphere's developmental trajectory than the emergence phase, it could be inferred that the empirical evidence can be designated as a Habermasian public sphere, but one that was in the very late stages of decline. The forecast for subsequent meaningful political action is thus pessimistic as economic structures preclude the emergence of this type of emancipatory action in Habermas' view. Furthermore, this finding does not account for the nature and scale of political action during the Arab Uprisings. These events, rather, demonstrated the public realm to have sufficient political significance to overthrow longstanding political regimes, despite these prevailing economic conditions. It appears then, in light of these findings and those of the previous chapter, that the Habermasian trajectory is not particularly useful when considering political action in the MENA region.

4.5 Conclusion

This second empirical chapter presented a series of phenomena on the basis of their dimensions analogous to those identified by Habermas as evidence of the decline of the bourgeois public sphere in *Structural Transformation*. It uncovered evidence analogous to publicist institutions, advertising and public relations, evidence more substantial than

[104] This is often in order to antagonise Saudi Arabia which has been considered to lead the region politically since Egypt's peace treaty with Israel. Saudi Arabia accuses Qatar of using al-Jazeera as a way of sewing dissent among the members of the Arab League and encouraging criticism of the regimes. Al-Jazeera journalists in states other than Qatar are often imprisoned and the news bureaus shut down in the wake of critical coverage.

[105] Al-Jazeera has provided detailed coverage of all of the Arab Uprising protests across the Arab states most famously covering the fall of Husni Mubarak in Egypt. Its English-language channel, al-Jazeera English, aired multi-award winning feature film'Bahrain: Shouting in the Dark', on ongoing anti-regime protests in Bahrain which have received limited coverage in the Western media. Following the January 25th movement in Cairo, the state of Qatar has publically supported the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. As Muhammad Morsi's government was ousted, Qatar provided some high profile MB members with political refuge. Saudi Arabia on the other hand opposes the Muslim Brotherhood, considering it a terrorist organisation. This conflict recently came to a head with a diplomatic row that saw Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain withdraw diplomatic enoys to Qatar and commence a boycott of Qatari businesses, including al-Jazeera offices. See 'Saudi Arabia Closes Local al-Jazeera Office Over Qatar's Backing for the Muslim Brotherhood' *The Independent* 12th March 2014'.

[106] Digital TV Europe (25th July 2012) 'Al Jazeera Signs Deal with Es'hailSat' [http://www.digitaltveurope.net/26530/al-jazeera-signs-satellite-deal-with-es'hailsat/];

found in the previous chapter of an emerging public sphere. The more recent evidence was restricted geographically to the Gulf region, because the Arab regional media market is based in free zones of Gulf cities such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Jeddah where business conditions are designed to encourage capital investment. On balance, the Habermasian trajectory finds more evidence of a declining public sphere than one in emergence. The consequence of this, for this thesis, is that a declining public sphere, having been infiltrated by economic interests, cannot command the type of autonomy required for political action under the conditions of authoritarianism. Nor would it be inclined to, as the economic infiltration tends towards a political passivity for citizens. This finding is then at odds with the empirical events of something like the Arab Uprisings because the Habermasian trajectory shows the public realms of Arab states to lack the capacity for autonomous political action.

As the greatest evidence yet of a public realm of political significance to the prevailing authoritarian order, the Arab Uprisings are deeply significant. The dismantling of longstanding political elite regimes in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya has given empirical weight to the claim that the events of the Arab Uprisings constitute long-awaited political revolutions, signifying for some the emergence of a fourth wave of democratisation and the beginning of a new order.The findings of Chapter Three and Chapter Four thus present a conflicting and confusing picture of the rationale for a Habermasian approach to political action in the MENA. As such, to designate the empirical evidence as indicative of a Habermasian public sphere, as some commentators have done, distorts the empirical evidence in a manner that downplays the political significance of phenomena which, although analogous, are not as widespread as those presented by Habermas. These findings, in addition to objections highlighted in previous chapters (regarding the historical specificity of the Habermasian public sphere framework), present a *prima facie* case that the Habermasian approach may not accurately reflect either the dynamics or the political significance of political action under the conditions of authoritarianism.

Given the significance of the Arab Uprisings as the most widespread examples of sustained political action in public to date, it perhaps makes sense to consider other approaches which are *not contingent on a specific trajectory of economic development.* A preliminary tentative alternative conceptualisation of a public realm of political significance may be found in the work of German-American political theorist Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) who has also written specifically on political revolution as a result of human action in concert in the public realm. Both *On Revolution* and *The Human Condition* may provide material suggestive of a model of political action which is more

reflective of the empirical reality presented by the Arab Uprisings, particularly concerning the challenges faced by those movements.

Chapter Five

Preliminary Alternatives to Habermas: Hannah Arendt, the Space of Appearance and the Arab Uprisings

'*For what eventually set the world on fire was precisely a combination of these two, of national revolutions or revolutionary nationalism, of nationalism speaking the language of revolution or of revolutions arousing the masses with nationalist slogans.* '[1]

'*Not constitutions, the end product and also the end of revolutions, but revolutionary dictatorships, designed to drive on and intensify the revolutionary movement, have thus far been the more familiar outcome of modern revolution-unless the revolution was defeated and succeeded by some kind of restoration.*'[2]

Introduction

The contention of this chapter is that our understanding of the significance of direct political action to prevailing authoritarian orders in the MENA might be improved by stepping away from Habermas and the public sphere concept. The previous chapter explored the economic foundations of a putative Arab public sphere by attempting to identify items reflective of those highlighted in the Habermasian trajectory of the public sphere in *Structural Transformation.* While it was possible to simply identify evidence of commercialisation, it did not demonstrate the same relevance to the MENA region as it did for Habermas' public sphere of the European bourgeoisie. Publicist institutions emerged from different historical conditions and have remained in some capacity under state control. Advertising too did not have the same relevance as in the Habermasian trajectory because it emerged under different market conditions. Furthermore, the connection of this public sphere's emergence to satellite television and subsequent publicist technologies suggested that it has more in common with the later stages of the Habermasian public sphere's historical trajectory. This is, therefore, a public sphere of limited autonomy and by extension, political significance of the type described by Habermas.

This finding is significant in the light of the ongoing Arab Uprisings. The recent events of the Arab Uprisings in their entirety are considered to constitute a *positive* forecast for the putative public realm of political significance in the MENA.[3] The generally positive

[1] Hannah Arendt (1968) [1963] *On Revolution* (London: Faber & Faber), p.157.
[2] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.157.
[3] Philip N. Howard & Muzzamil M. Hussain (2013) *Democracy's Fourth Wave: Digital Media and the Arab Spring* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), Jean-Pierre Filiu (2011) *The Arab Revolution: Ten Lessons from the Democratic Uprising* (London: Hurst & Co.); Marc Lynch (2012) *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East* (New York: Public Affairs); Jack A. Goldstone (2011) 'Understanding the Revolutions of 2011: Weakness and Resilience in Middle Eastern Autocracies' *Foreign Affairs* Vol.90, No. 3, pp.8-16; Blake Gopnik (2011) 'Revolution in a Can' *Foreign Policy* Vol.189, pp.92-93; Arang Keshavarzian (2012) 'Beyond 1979 and 2011: When Comparisons Distract' *International Journal of Middle*

characterisation of these events therefore contrasts sharply with the empirical reality and the findings of the Habermasian trajectory in the previous chapter. A public sphere of limited autonomy and thus significance to the prevailing political order cannot command the type of power necessary to present itself as a political force. 17th December 2010 is the date used to indicate broadly its origins following an act of self-immolation by unemployed graduate Mohammad Bouazizi after the stall from which he was selling vegetables was seized by police in the provincial Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid. Bouazizi's indignity and humiliation was the start of what became an exuberant wave of sustained protest and civil disobedience. This has broken over Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Syria, Morocco, Kuwait, Libya, UAE, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and Palestine. What is certain however is the political significance of these events for the diverse societies of the MENA, none of which has been left untouched.[4] The term 'Arab Spring' suggests a uniformity of experience between these states but these revolutionary movements have demonstrated varying outcomes.[5] The televised departure of the figurehead of long-time authoritarian leadership, Husni Mubarak, attracted the attention of commentators to Egypt in particular.[6] The authoritarian state context of political action in Egypt has shown the public presence of citizens in concert to be an integral dimension to the commencement of the revolutions. This presence has come to be described as 'the people', 'the square' and 'the street'. Beyond this, however, Egypt has struggled to found a new enduring political order.[7] Its colonial history and resistance and nationalist character have conspired to create volatile conditions for political legitimacy. Ongoing debate over what constitutes political authority has stalled the momentum of the January 25th revolutionary movement. A military intervention which removed Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mohammed Morsi, on July 3rd 2013, has cemented the political status of the Army as a political caretaker.[8] It has presented itself as the only

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East Studies Vol.44, No. 1, pp.159-161; Marwan M. Kraidy (2012) 'The Revolutionary Body Politic: Preliminary Thoughts on a Neglected Medium in the Arab Uprisings' *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* Vol.5, pp.66-74; Eva Bellin (2012) 'Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons From the Arab Spring' *Comparative Politics* Vol.44, no.2 pp.127-149

[4] Mohammed Noureddine Affaya (2011) 'The 'Arab Spring': Breaking the Chains of Authoritarianism and Postponed Democracy' *Contemporary Arab Affairs* Vol. 35, No.4 (2011), pp.463-83.

[5] Lisa Anderson (2011) 'Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences between Tunisia, Egypt and Libya' *Foreign Affairs* Vol.90, No. 3 pp.2-7; Jack A. Goldstone (2011) 'Understanding the Revolutions of 2011: Weakness and Resilience in the Middle Eastern Autocracies' *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 90, No.3, pp.8-16.

[6] Dina Shehata (2011) 'The Fall of The Pharoah: How Hosni Mubarak's Reign Came to an End' *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 90, No.3, pp. 26-32.

[7] Khaled Elgindy (2012) 'Egypt's Troubled Transition: Elections Without Democracy' *Journal of Democracy* Vol.35, No.2, pp.89-104.

[8] The Army's public rationale for the removal of Muslim Brotherhood-backed Muhammed Morsi included his November 2012 declaration which claimed to protect the Constituent Assembly from judicial interference. The larger significance of this move was that it removed judicial review of presidential actions; giving Morsi unlimited powers to take whatever measures were necessary to protect the revolution. On 1st

national institution upon which the Egyptian citizenry can rely for stability and security. These conditions show any supposition of a coherent account of 'the people' or 'the square' to be fundamentally misleading. 'The people' does not appear to be connected to the larger political order.[9]

If it is more fruitful to be guided by empirical reality in the MENA when devising a theoretical approach to political action, then something which is not as restrictive as Habermas is required. It does not mean however, that the Habermasian public sphere approach is now irrelevant. Rather this provides scope for the pursuit of questions beyond those concerned with economic foundations. Specifically these questions emanate from the empirical context and include colonialism, nationalism and the significance of the Arab Uprisings to the prevailing authoritarian order. This thesis thus presents Hannah Arendt as a preliminary alternative source from which to draw a theoretical approach to the public realm.[10]

In contrast to Habermas' attempt in his larger body of political philosophy to shield the public sphere from political institutions, Arendt perceives the public realm to be constituted by the founding of such institutions. As a consequence, the substantiation of social life's economic foundations and the development of media, characteristic of the Habermasian trajectory, take on more modest roles for Arendt. This provides greater scope for considering contexts which, like the MENA region, do not mirror strictly European

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July 2013 the Army issued a statement gving Morsi forty-eight hours to meet the demands of 'the people' or be removed from office. The Egyptian constitution was suspended until the new one came into effect on 18th January 2014. This constitution re-outlawed the formation of political parties based on 'religion, race gender or geography', effectively removing the Muslim Brotherhood from political opposition. It has been criticised by some for giving expansive powers to the military. For wider reading on the role of militaries in Arab state-building see: Mehran Kamrava (2000) 'Military Professionalisation and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East' *Political Science Quarterly* Vol.115, No,1 pp.; Elizabeth Picard (1990) 'Arab Military in Politics: From Revolutionary Plot to Authoritarian State' in Giacomo Luciani (ed.) *The Arab State* (Berkeley: University Of California), pp.189-219; Zoltan Barany (2011) 'The Role of the Military' *Journal of Democracy* Vol.22, No. 4, pp. 24-35.

[9] Laleh Khalili (2011) 'Too Early To Tell: When is a Revolution a Revolution?' in Laleh Khalili, Jillian Schwedler, William Zartman & Eid Gamal (eds) *Revolution in the Arab World: The Long View* Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies Occasional Paper Series Georgetown University, pp.3-8.

[10] Applications of Arendt to the MENA have begun to emerge: See 2013 Special Issue 'Revolutionary Spirit' in *Zeitschrift für politisches Denken* Vol. 7, No. 1 which includes Jens Hanssen's (2013) 'Translating Revolution: Hannah Arendt in Arab Political Culture' and John LeJeune's 'Hannah Arendt's Revolutionary Leadership'(available at [http://www.hannaharendt.net/index.php/han/article/view/301] papers 437 and 413 respectively). Jeffrey Andrew Barash (1996) 'The Political Dimension of the Public World: On Hannah Arendt's Interpretation of Martin Heidegger' and David Ingram (1996) '*Novus Ordo Saecolorum*: The Trail of (Post) Modernity of the Tale of Two Revolutions' in Larry May & Jerome Kohn (eds.) *Hannah Arendt: Twenty Years Later* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp.251-268 and pp.221-250 respectively. For a comprehensive overview of Hannah Arendt's thought see Margaret Canovan (1992) *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Habermas also refers to her conception of the social in *Structural Transformation* and engages with her concept of power directly in Jürgen Habermas (1977) 'Hannah Arendt's Communications Concept of Power' *Social Research* Vol.44, No.1 (Spring), pp.3-24. He observes that where he emphasises the employment of power (i.e. as communicative action), Arendt emphasises its origins.

historical trajectories. Like Habermas, Arendt is critical of capitalism but not just of its effect on social formations in Europe. For example, Arendt sees a more distinct separation between capitalism and the type of political principles asserted in the French Revolution and created within the American Republic. As such Arendt is profoundly conscious of a stark difference between the status of the bourgeoisie and that of the citizen. Her discussions of nineteenth-century imperialism in Egypt and India demonstrate her awareness of the effect of capitalist pursuits on non-European contexts. Imperialism was something that Arendt considered to be quite different from nationalism and even much earlier types of empire building. She associated it directly with 'the bourgeoisie'. Imperialism's characteristic drive for seemingly limitless expansion was at its simplest an economic phenomenon which could not be uncoupled from capitalism: 'Nothing was so characteristic of power politics in the imperialist era than this shift from localised, limited and therefore predictable goals of national interest to the limitless pursuit of power after power that could roam and lay waste to the whole globe.' The danger of this for Arendt was the type of politics it incorporated, 'a politics of cutthroat competition and limitless expansion.'[11]

Where Habermas described a strictly Eurocentric experience of capitalism, Arendt, in contrast, considers the non-European experience. Specifically she notes capitalism's connection to imperialism and the impact this had on the political condition of non-European contexts such as Egypt. Using British imperialism as an example, she notes a single-minded pursuit of profit came to determine the fate of overseas territories. Arendt points out that 'imperialist drive to conquest' quickly lost its ties to economic rationality and became a political 'principle in its own right.'As a consequence, it disrupted stable national political institutions, in the same way that 'capitalism had disrupted stable family property.' [12] She is referring here to the creation of the 'bureaucracy' of imperial administration.

To demonstrate some of the potential utility of the Arendtian approach, this chapter outlines the specifics of Arendt's alternative conception of the public realm, action and political revolution. It draws on *The Human Condition* (1958), *On Revolution* (1963) and *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1967). This demonstrates that Arendtian approach better reflects the historical context and types of challenges encountered by political action undertaken in front and alongside others. She acknowledges the possibility of dismantling an old order and founding a new one in its place but tells a cautionary tale. The case of

[11] Hannah Arendt (1967) *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Allen & Unwin), pp.207-21.
[12] Margaret Canovan (1992) *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.29-31.

Egypt will show the importance of institutions and the devastating impact of colonial activities which have served to restrict their legitimacy. This shows the question of authority remains unsettled. It is hoped that the Arendtian approach will shed more light on the political status of the public realm in the postcolonial authoritarian state context than the Habermasian trajectory.

5.1 Arendt on Action and the Space of Appearance

The political philosophy of Hannah Arendt presents the public realm as something *created* by humans. It is intended to *institutionalise* a new political order. As such, the public realm holds a distinctly political purpose: 'If we equate these spaces of freedom - which [...] we could also call spaces of appearances - with the political realm itself, we shall be inclined to think of them as islands in a sea or as oases in a desert.'[13] In contrast to the emphasis customarily ascribed to its instrumental dimensions, political action, for Arendt, is considered to constitute an end in itself. In *On Revolution*, she draws on the American Revolution to further specify the meaning and political significance of the space of appearance, drawing attention to the role of constitution-making as a key factor to its overall success. In contrast to the relative 'failures' of the French and October Revolutions which lacked authority to 'lay down the law of the land', the success of the American Revolution instead stemmed from 'the foremost and noblest of all revolutionary deeds', the process of constitution-making. [14] The power to constitute allowed for the institutionalisation of a public realm of political significance. Constitution-making provides the framework within which political action can be deployed. Arendt draws on the metaphor of the Greek *polis*, those political institutions of the Greek city-states where a public realm within which action and speech could take place, was constructed amid a group of free and equal citizens: 'The *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organisation of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be.'[15] The *polis* thus connotes a 'space of appearance' in which individuals intend to 'appear' explicitly and which can always be recreated where individuals are congregated for political reasons i.e. wherever they are together 'in the manner of speech and action.' Despite the enduring nature of the laws which institutionalise the conditions for its existence, the fact that is it created by the action of

[13] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.279.
[14] Arendt, *On Revolution,* pp.158-159.
[15] Hannah Arendt (1998) [1958] *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press), p.198.

individuals means that it is a highly fragile entity and can only exist when it is brought into being by speech and action:

> 'unlike the spaces which are the works of our hands, it does not survive the actuality of the movement which brought it into being, but disappears not only with the dispersal of men – as in the case of great catastrophes when the body politic of a people is destroyed – but with the disappearance or arrest of the activities themselves. Wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever.'[16]

The space of appearance can be guaranteed when individuals come together to discuss and deliberate issues of public concern.

The political significance of the space of appearance and by extension the public realm is twofold. Its significance is linked to Arendt's *sui generis* definition of power, the capacity to act in concert with a public-political purpose. Arendt's power is thus a product of action and its potency emanates entirely from persuasion which secures the consent of others. Its only limitation comes in the form of the existence of others and is actualised wherever action is undertaken for communicative purposes (as opposed to instrumental or strategic). Legitimacy is thus derived from individuals, the original act of gathering together: 'power needs no justification, being inherent in the very existence of political communities; what it does need is legitimacy…Power springs up whenever people get together and act in concert, but it derives its legitimacy from the initial getting together rather than from any action that then may follow.'[17]

Power, much like the space of appearance, exists only in a potential form, constituted when individuals gather for public deliberation and subsequent political action. As such it cannot be accumulated and kept hidden for a future use: **'**Power is what keeps the public realm, the potential space of appearance between acting and speaking men, in existence.'[18] Arendt's theory of action thus places power within the foundations of a political community, foundations from which the legitimacy of political institutions is derived:

> 'It is the people's support that lends power to the institutions of a country, and this support is but the continuation of the consent that brought the laws into existence to begin with… All political institutions are manifestations and

[16] Arendt, *The Human Condition,* p.198-9.
[17] Hannah Arendt (1972) *Crises of the Republic: Lying in Politics; Civil Disobedience; On Violence; Thoughts on Politics and Revolution* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), p.151.
[18] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p.200.

> materialisation of power; they petrify and decay as soon as the living power of the people ceases to uphold them.'[19]

Its second kind of significance is apparent in the role played by the space of appearance for individuals which is the opportunity for them to confirm their own reality, which happens through action and speech undertaken in the presence of others:

> 'Without a space of appearance and without trusting in action and speech as a mode of being together, neither the reality of one's self, of one's own identity, nor the reality of the surrounding world can be established beyond doubt. The human sense of reality demands that men actualise the sheer passive givenness of their being, not in order to change it but in order to make articulate and call into full existence what otherwise they would have to suffer passively anyhow.'[20]

The point of the space of appearance is the capacity for self-disclosure, an act which Arendt invests with great political significance as perhaps humanity's 'highest achievement.'[21] Without a space of appearance, individuals cannot manifest the capacity of self-disclosure, leaving them 'deprived of reality', unable to 'affirm their identity.'[22] Arendt also has a positive vision of what politics is. Not all instances of individuals engaging in self-disclosure through speech and action while gathered together count as a legitimate deployment of politically relevant action for Arendt. They must be undertaken in the public realm as only it provides the structures for the formation of the body politic: 'Action needs for its full appearance the shining brightness we once called glory, and which is possible only in the public realm.'[23]

5.2 Arendt on Political Revolution and the Creation of Authority

The Arendtian conceptualisation of the public realm and the space of appearance rests on a set of particularly fortunate historical preconditions specific to the experience of the American Revolution which she considers to constitute a *par excellence* example of a successful revolution. It was successful because the existence of these preconditions meant that there were not the opportunities for the sabotage and terminal decline of the revolutionary movement by private interests which other revolutions had fallen victim to. The first precondition was that the American revolutionaries were not pre-occupied by the 'social question' during their quest for political freedom unlike their European counterparts.

[19] Arendt, *Crises of the Republic,* p.140.
[20] Arendt, *The Human Condition,* p.208.
[21] Canovan, *Hannah Arendt*, p.135.
[22] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p.199.
[23] *Ibid.*, p.180.

The American Revolution, by contrast, was not driven by social want and necessity but rather political concern, *i.e.* the 'form of government' rather than the 'order of society.'[24] By 'social question' Arendt is referring to the existence of poverty characterised by 'constant want and acute misery' which puts humans under the dictates of necessity ('the absolute dictate of their own bodies'). Such necessity, while providing the inspirational material for the French Revolution, was also a factor in its failure, the first such revolution to be burdened in this way. For when on the 'scene of politics', the poor appeared in terms of their poverty rather than as political actors, 'freedom had to be surrendered to necessity, to the urgency of the life process itself.'[25] The subject of poverty emerged as a political issue around which crowds have congregated and subsequently been mobilised, rather than as a feature of everyday existence. If, then, life dictated by necessity was the norm for most of humanity, the political freedom that did exist for the resultant minority had been achieved through the 'violent injustice' of surplus extraction by slavery and serfdom.[26] While the French revolution mobilised the poor multitudes, putting the social question on the political agenda, it could not solve the problem of poverty by political means; this could only be achieved through economic growth. In her comments on Cuba, Arendt's observations on the outcome of a revolution sprung from conditions of 'mass poverty and economic backwardness' reflected the tragedy of the French revolution: 'the marvellous exhilaration of liberation for the down-trodden, followed by the inexorable slide into tyranny.'[27]

The significance of the social question for Arendt relates to how poverty, once exposed in politics, is addressed. Once acknowledged, the social question evokes a compassion which can prove to be a formidable but ambivalent political force.[28] Arendt explains that in the French case, the early inspiring principles of the revolution (freedom from tyranny and oppression) gave way to the pursuit of happiness (*le bonheur)* on account of the inclusion of the poor multitudes within the French nation. It was further intensified by the casting of the original values as having their origins in the lower middle classes, exposing their hypocrisy and turning society against itself. Once the wretched masses appeared 'on the scene of politics', so too came their dictates of necessity, something which compelled Robespierre to reorient the values of the revolution, declaring: 'everything which is necessary to maintain life must be common good and only the surplus can be recognised as private property.' In so doing, Arendt points out that Robespierre

[24] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.63.
[25] *Ibid*., pp.61, 54.
[26] *Ibid*., pp.114, 119, 233.
[27] Canovan, *Hannah Arendt,* p.231.
[28] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.68.

abandoned the platform of the Rights of Man (foundation of freedom) in favour of the 'rights of the Sans-Culottes'. In order to meet these goals, the pursuit of *le bonheur* required untethering *la terreur,* confronting the social question with violence.[29]

The second historical precondition to the success of the American Revolution, in Arendt's view, was America's escape from the unitary development of the nation-state in Europe: 'America was spared the cheapest and the most dangerous disguise the absolute ever assumed in the political realm, the disguise of the nation.'[30] The significance of this was America's liberation from two things. Firstly, a specific intellectual perspective which had historically placed the divine absolute at the centre of the political community defined as the 'nation.' The European tradition of nation building had specified nature's God and divinely informed reason as embodying the highest authority. Nationalism, a political community of the old world, predated the revolution speaking of a general or even national will that demonstrated the same characteristics of the absolute prince: 'it would be ridiculous to assume that the nation is bound by the formalities or by the constitution to which it has subjected its mandatories'. It was thus not subject to positive law; 'both power and law were anchored in the nation, or rather in the will of the nation, which itself remained outside and above all governments and all laws.'[31]

Arendt points out that the revolutionaries were still conscious of the old traditions in a theoretical capacity seeking to defend those liberties which had been considered lost on account of the demise of the authority of the body politic of the Roman Republic. One such liberty was the perceived exile from the realm of 'true freedom', considering their leisure to be something of an enforced activity. They thus felt compelled to employ this leisure of 'idle entitlement' for the benefit of the *res publica, la chose publique*.[32] This meant that they were not engaged in a quest for the 'truth' as they saw it, but for political freedom, the liberty to effect politics.[33] This required the practical application of a balanced political model, an innovative reading of Montesquieu's theory of the separation of powers within a body politic, something that European revisionists had rejected because it was inconsistent with their ideal of national sovereignty as an undivided centralised power.

The French experience sought to put the nation in the place of authority formerly occupied by the divine absolute ruler. This nationalism was underscored by the notion of *raison d'état,* pragmatically strengthened by Robespierre who saw an opportunity to

[29] Arendt, *On Revolution,* pp.55, 224.
[30] *Ibid.*, pp.195-6.
[31] *Ibid*., pp.160, 162.
[32] *Ibid*., pp.119.
[33] *Ibid*., pp.120.

command the multitude as a singular (*le peuple* and the nation) - a fiction - reinforced by the conception of a common enemy. He then applied this idea from the realm of foreign affairs to domestic affairs, formulating from it a 'unifying principle'. Instead of however, seeking to locate this common enemy outside the nation's borders, Robespierre relocated it within the capacity of each individual citizen, a concealed but ever-present enemy.[34] It sets up the political systems as in need of an absolute power around which everything else is organised.

The act of foundation itself removed those absolutist commitments to the divine which may have caused the authority of the new body politic to eventually crumble in the face of modernity. Arendt points out that it was not the embodiment of authority within a 'self-evident truth' which protected the would-be revolution from failure but the very act of foundation itself. [35] The nation-state was only saved from total collapse by the willingness of individuals to take the 'burden or glory of dictatorship upon himself': 'Napoleon Bonaparte was only the first in a long series of national statesmen who, to the applause of a whole nation, could declare: *I am the pouvoir constituant.*'[36]

In addition, America was liberated from the idea of a national community which stressed a common national identity as a precursor to the assumption of rights.[37] The triumph of America was that it created a constitution untainted by nationalism in which anyone could 'enjoy the freedom of becoming a citizen without having to pay the price of assimilation.'[38] The French example showed that the nation-state contained significant contradictions within its founding ideal which combined 'the declaration of the rights of man with the demand for national sovereignty.'[39]

The third precondition to the success of the American Revolution for Arendt was the role of organised 'constituted bodies'. These bodies were different from the conglomerations of interests characteristic of the Old World which rested on 'privilege, birth and occupation.'[40] The *pouvoir constituant* wielded by the framers of the Constitution of the United States was not questioned in any serious manner; rather the Constitution derived its authority from a series of institutions already constituted by the colonies when establishing governments of their respective states. For Arendt, the Federal Convention, which created and constituted a new 'federal power', allowed for the smaller institutions to

[34] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.72.
[35] *Ibid.*, p.196.
[36] *Ibid.*, p.162.
[37] Arendt's own experience of being an immigrant to America influenced her perspective on this issue.
[38] Hannah Arendt (1975) 'Sonning Prize Speech' located in Box 70 Library of Congress, Washington, DC as cited by Canovan, *Hannah Arendt*, p.245.
[39] Hannah Arendt (1951) *The Burden of Our Time* (London: Secker & Warburg), p.230.
[40] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.179.

keep their own authority intact by preserving their power. The organisations which drafted state constitutions (provincial congresses) were comprised of delegates who derived their power from the 'subordinate, duly authorised bodies – districts, counties, townships' and thus repeated this framework on a national scale for the national constitution.[41] The political significance of these subordinate bodies was that they were constituted by promises to live with each other under the guidance of the law:

> 'they received their authority from below, and when they held fast to the Roman principle that the seat of power lay in the people, they did not think in terms of a fiction and an absolute, the nation above all authority and absolved from all laws, but in terms of a working reality, the organised multitude whose power was exerted in accordance with laws and limited by them.'[42]

These constituted bodies are considered by Arendt to have been a key factor in the differing outcomes of the conflict between the king and parliament in France and that of the English government and the American founders. This federal arrangement allowed the new America to avoid the pitfalls of the nation-state framework as the basis of the political community, the vicious circle of *pouvoir constituant* and *pouvoir constitué.*[43] In the Old World, it was a lack of such constituted bodies which allowed the unlimited exercise of power and violence in the wake of the revolution. The monarch was supposed to act publically as 'a single enlightened person' against existing private interests. Yet at the same time he retained the consent of subjects.[44] As one of the very few nations of the Old World, the French conflict threw its political community into a 'state of nature'; 'it dissolved automatically the political structure of the country as well as the bonds among its inhabitants, which had rested not on mutual promises but on the various privileges accorded to each order and estate of society.'[45]

This reoriented the power previously invested in the political community of the nation into a pre-political, natural state which could not be bound nor quelled by institutions. The French Revolution's subsequent attempt to reorder its privilege-ordered society took the task of restructuring quite literally. In the absence of a nation of political agreement, the new community of power, that of the people, could only be bound together by the iron band of tyranny, as demonstrated by the uncontrollable violence with which it removed all traces of the *ancien régime*.[46] The singular nature of the deified French people,

[41] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.164.
[42] *Ibid*., p.165.
[43] *Ibid*., p.165.
[44] *Ibid*., pp.179-180.
[45] *Ibid*., p.180.
[46] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.181.

under whose authority the revolutionary constitution and laws were pursued, was thus open to manipulation and imposition by anyone 'willing to take the burden or the glory of dictatorship upon himself' such as Robespierre and the Jacobin factions and ultimately Napoleon Bonaparte, the great usurper who declared himself to be '*le pouvoir constituant*.'[47] In short, it was not possible for any of the constituted bodies of the French Republic to command enough authority to compel adherence to the law; 'they lacked the power to constitute, by definition they themselves were unconstitutional.'[48] The end result was the loss of the revolutionary spirit on the part of the French revolutionaries who became desperate men as the revolution had failed to provide lasting institutions which could carry out the new laws.[49]

Furthermore, even under the fortunate circumstances the United States found themselves in, they had another problem. In the business of founding a republic, a central requirement was constitution making- a critical part of which was the establishing of an authority. She considers its particular success to have been the Colonies' creation of a new authority in the place formerly occupied by its colonial links to the British king and parliament. Such was its novelty and innovation in 1772, that it compelled Edmund Burke to remark, 'we thought, Sir, that the utmost which the discontented Colonists could do, was to disturb authority; we never dreamt they could of themselves supply it; knowing in general what an operose business it is, to establish a Government absolutely new.'[50] Having liberated themselves from the prevailing authority, the American revolutionaries managed to establish a new order in two ways, specifically through the constitution of liberty and the foundation of freedom. The foundation of freedom made necessary innovation on the part of the revolutionaries. They had to create authority (much like the Romans) and could not depend on new interpretations of old ideas of violent foundational myths (Arendt cites Romulus and Remus, Cain and Abel) imported from Europe.[51] The

[47] *Ibid*., p.162.
[48] *Ibid*., p.164.
[49] *Ibid.,* pp.234, 244. Jérôme Pétion de Villeneuve, 16th November 1790 observed 'There is no true political union, a union engaging all the members of society, unless its conditions have been regulated by the individuals who compose it. An engagement without will is null; this truth is safe from all attack and the United States have rendered it solemn homage during the formation of their government. There is no point at which France has had a genuine political federation. Each of the provinces which compose this beautiful empire was a separate state which had its particular statues, its privileges...One could perhaps say that the provinces of an empire, whatever title may be attached to it, find themselves bound together by a tacit consent...it is not necessary to allow oneself to be misled here by this appearance of consent; it is nothing other than the submission of weakness to the empire of themselves by a free vote, there is no association, there is no alliance; force along establishes the relationship; but force violates the law instead of consecrating it.' Source Jules Basdevant (1901) *La révolution française et la droit de la guerre continentale* (Paris: Larose and Forcel), p.191.
[50] David P. Fidler & Jennifer M. Welsh (1999) (eds.) *Empire and Community: Edmund Burke's* W*ritings and* S*peeches on International Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), pp.127-8.
[51] Arendt, *On Revolution,* pp.31, 172-173.

authority also had to be big enough to fit into a legitimacy which had previously been reserved for the absolute, divinely appointed. The new authority, upon its embodiment in the American Declaration of Independence, no longer emanated from a divinely appointed source but instead was based upon several self-evident truths: 'all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness'.[52] It was no longer necessary to rely on a God-given authority for legitimacy.

Once created, the new authority secured an authoritative basis for a supreme law through its embodiment initially in the Articles of Confederation and then subsequently in the Constitution. The Constitution specified a novel framework, acknowledging the sovereign nature of the existing states while simultaneously including them in a larger confederation. Arendt argues that the emphasis on creating institutions and specifying their arrangement also demonstrated a desire on the part of the revolutionaries to construct something with a claim to *endure.* The evidence for this was the establishment of the new United States of America as a 'perpetual union' of sovereign entities in a federal arrangement which enshrined a separation of power across three branches of government to guard against tyranny.[53] In order to demonstrate a power which resides in the people (*potestas in popolo*), the Americans then opted to emulate the Roman institutions of government, collecting all of their political experience in a general congress while placing 'authority' in the senate (*auctoritas in senatu*). This was a crucial step as the break of the colonies from the King and parliament necessitated, not the creation of a new power, but the establishment and foundation of a new authority to replace the old British one.[54]

The significance of the American successful experience of revolution is most apparent in Arendt's comparative evaluation of the French attempt to relocate the source of the absolute monarch in '*le peuple.*' This approach stopped short of creating a wholly new authority however. It rather replaced the prevailing figure in the seat of authority: thus '*le peuple*' now occupied the seat formerly held by the King. As an absolutist entity, '*le peuple*' became imbued with the same absolute sovereign nature and divine derivation. Consequently if all power was located within '*le peuple*', so too they remained the basis of the law. Rousseau's conception of this authority as the general will was thus one that needed 'to will in order to produce law'; law thus served as the very expression of the

[52] *The Unanimous Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen United States of America made to Congress on July 4th 1776.*
[53] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.226.
[54] *Ibid.,* p.178.

general will.[55] The connotations of '*le peuple*' were determined by those who had no experience of the extreme wretchedness of the multitude from whom they derived their legitimacy.[56] The idea of '*le peuple*' as a united entity of political significance evolved from the specific historical events at the outset of the French Revolution which had witnessed the failure of the Girondin faction to produce both a constitution and a republican government after the execution of Louis XVI on 21st January 1793. The specific background events which lead to the popularisation of Rousseau's ideas of the general will also highlighted the political calculations made by Robespierre in order to usurp the outcome of the revolution. Leading the Jacobins, Robespierre stepped into the political void, undercutting the Girondin concerns about forms of government and appealed to the idea of the people rather than the institutions and constitutions of the republic.[57] This was a 'shift of emphasis' from the *volonté de tous* (the will of all) to the *volonté générale* (Rousseau's 'general will') with serious consequences for the people's consent from which 'all power must derive its legitimacy.'[58] According to Arendt the very word 'consent', with its overtones of deliberate choice and considered opinion, was replaced by the word 'will,' which essentially excludes all processes of exchange of opinions and an eventual agreement between them.'[59] The general will thus rested on a presupposition of unanimity, not of agreement among its members, but one of a *singular* opinion applicable to all those included within its confines:

> 'The will, if it is to function at all, must indeed be one and indivisible, 'a divided will would be inconceivable': there is no possible mediation between wills as there is between opinions. The shift from the republic to the people meant that the enduring unity of the future political body was guaranteed not in the wordly institutions which this people had in common but in the will of the people themselves.'[60]

The French Republic was now conceived of as a nation constituted and directed by a single will, which may be subject to change at any time without experiencing a crisis of legimitacy: 'It was precisely in this sense that Robespierre demanded: 'It faut une volonté UNE….It faut qu'elle soit républicaine ou royaliste.'[61] That it needed to be singular in order for it to function in the aftermath of the crisis of the Girondins did not mean that it could provide political stability.

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[55] *Ibid.,* p.183, and cites *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* Article VI (1789)
[56] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.69.
[57] *Ibid*., p.70.
[58] *Ibid*., p.68.
[59] *Ibid*., p.71.
[60] *Ibid*., p.71.
[61] *Ibid*., p.71.

The Americans did not have the idea of the people standing above power and law. Instead they created a form of authority and a guardian for the new authority (the Supreme Court) to stand over the people. The people were therefore constrained by the provisions of the Constitution, otherwise their actions were considered unconstitutional. The French in contrast believed the pre-constitutional notion of *le peuple* to be the source of both power and the law: 'the fateful blunder of the men of the French Revolution consisted in their almost automatic uncritical belief that power and law sprang from the self-same source.'[62] As such, they were not able to create a new source of authority for the law, because they did not have a viable political organisation with which it could be identified; all they had were the old bastions of privilege. The French had to think in those pre-community terms, with the law derived from pre-political settings. The collapse of the French regime dissolved it into a state of nature which itself remained outside and above all governments and laws.[63]

In order to further determine the utility of the Arendtian approach, this chapter now turns to consider those events of the recent Arab uprisings which have come to be characterised as instances of revolutionary political action. The Egyptian historical experience of revolution particularly stands out as a possible case for which the Arendtian framework of a public realm of political significance and its corollary concepts may prove to be more fruitful than the prevailing Habermasian 'public sphere' approach (as detailed in Chapters One, Two, Three and Four) in revealing the specific nature of the challenges faced by these revolutionary movements. Where the Habermasian trajectory privileged the procedure of political action (how communicative action can be realised), the Arendtian approach privileges its institutionalisation, *i.e.* the foundation of a capacity to appear as a political agent.

5.3 Challenges to Authority Creation in the MENA region: The Case of Egypt

Political legitimacy has been a significant challenge for the Arab states since independence.[64] Although the lengthy tenure of leaders such as Husni Mubarak and Zine al-Abdine ben Ali may have brought the semblance of stability to Egypt and Tunisia, the recent revolutionary events in these countries demonstrated the question of legitimacy and,

[62] Arendt, *On Revolution*, pp.159-163, 164.
[63] *Ibid.*, p.163.
[64] Michael C. Hudson (1977) *Arab Politics: The Search For Legitimacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press); Michael N. Barnett (1998) *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order* (New York: Columbia University Press)

by extension, political authority, to be not yet settled.[65] The postcolonial states in particular have experienced significant political upheaval as a consequence of the struggle over who and what should govern. Where many have rejoiced publically over the demise of these longstanding regimes, their centralised bureaucratic nature has proved detrimental to the efficient foundation of the new political order.

Arendt addresses the case of Egypt directly in *Origins of Totalitarianism*. Its experience of the administrative mechanisms of the British Empire in particular attracted her attention when forming her views on imperialism. Arendt pointed out that imperialism was something of novelty in the history of political theory as it did not appear to be derived from a pre-exisiting idea or value. Without a heritage in political thought, it was to be considered something quite original.[66] Its central underpinning tendency of expansion was derived from its origins in business rather than politics. The problem presented by imperialism was achieving the levels of expansion necessary to maximise profitability. Arendt described this as 'the imperialist character'. The 'law' of expansion permitted the imperialist bureaucrats and secret agents to act in secret and break any laws necessary to further the operations of imperialism in Egypt. It was the heady combination of this secrecy and the administrators' self-styled involvement of an 'alliance with the secret forces of history and necessity' that provided later leaders of totalitarian movements with historical antecedents to draw upon.[67] Arendt provides Lord Cromer and T.E. Lawrence as examples of real functionaries intoxicated by their belief in their role as 'agent of the secret forces which rule the world.' Cromer's government of Egypt drew on these.[68] Such idealism undermined the pursuit of civilised politics based on law. This was supported by secretive conditions.

In addition to dealing with this heritage, Egypt's attempt to move forward has had to confront similar issues to the ones experienced by France, the social question and mass poverty, the use of nationalism to put the many into one (but that excludes any political opposition especially religious groups) and the presence of constituted bodies. The

[65] The 2011 Egyptian Revolution resulted in the dissolution of parliament by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces on February 11th 2011. At the time of writing, the 2012 constitution refers to the lower house of parliament as the House of Representatives. Simultaneously the constitution is being redrafted by the Constituent Assembly of Egypt. Since the coup d'état in 2013, the Supreme Constitutional Court has become the highest governmental power; only it can specify judicial control regarding determination of constitutionality and the interpretation of the law.
[66] Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p.125.
[67] *Ibid*., p.221.
[68] Timothy Mitchell (1991) *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press): 'Colonising does not simply refer to the establishing of the European presence but also to the spread of a political order that inscribes in the social world a new conception of space, new forms of personhood, and a new means of manufacturing the experience of the real.' p.ix.

Arendtian approach better reflects the empirical conditions of the public realm in Egypt, thus providing a clearer picture of its significance to the larger political order.

This section proceeds with a close examination of the Egyptian experience in terms of the four dimensions of Arendt's assessment of revolutionary political action presented in the previous discussion. Egypt is considered to have been profoundly affected by political action in front of others on several occasions during its history. Deeply impacted by the administrative legacy of its colonial past, Egypt has struggled to locate authority in its political institutions. As such, the rhetorical promises brought by charismatic leaders such as Nasir, Sadat, Mubarak, Morsi cannot be reconciled with the state structure which is inherently centralised. Briefly, these dimensions were the social question, the nationalist agenda, the existence and nature of constituted bodies and, finally, the establishment of an enduring authority. This serves to demonstrate the extent of revolutionary action's political significance, providing a preliminary indication of the challenges the revolutionary movements are likely to face in their attempt to establish a new order with the capacity to endure.

Arendt considered the absence of the extreme poverty experienced in Europe to have been a key factor in the overall success of the American revolutionaries. As they were not compelled to urgently address living conditions as a political issue (as was the case in France), the revolutionaries were free to concentrate on the business of constitution-making first and foremost. The act of constitution-making then ensured the subsequent longevity of the revolutionary movement, allowing for the foundation of the new order based upon an authority around which everyone could live. The question of poverty as a political issue has consistently been reflected in the modern political history of Egypt which remains one of the poorest countries in the MENA region.[69] Similarly to the French attempts to address the social question at the outset of the revolutionary movement, Egyptian Presidents Nasir, Sadat, Mubarak and Morsi have each faced a political contestation over the social question whose urgency has grown incrementally rather than diminished since the declaration of the Republic on 18th June 1953. The invocation of a political multitude can be observed in Nasir's economic reform programme and public appeals to workers and the wider Egyptian labour movement in the Republic's early days. The military coup conducted by the Free Officers was an attempt to dismantle the prevailing political order of excess, inefficiency and impotence regarding colonial

[69] Egypt was ranked 112th out of 186 in the most recent United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report 2013 *The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World* pp.16-18. According to the World Bank demographic indicators Egypt's population grew to 80.72 million and GDP $257.3 billion in 2012. Charles Tripp (2013) 'Imposition and Resistance in Economic Life' in *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.134-174.

influence under King Farouk. The domination of the political scene by the privileged few was thus one of the key dimensions of political life in Egypt ripe for reform by the new Republic. In addition to the seizure of royal assets, Nasir dismantled the old elite networks through the Agrarian Reform Law No. 178 which removed land from elite control (by friends of the monarch, the British, landlords and industrialists). The traditional Ottoman peerage titles *pasha* and *bey* were also abolished.

With the national wealth nominally in the hands of the 'Egyptian people', Nasser used the 1956 constitution to create a mass workers class who would be ideologically pre-disposed to support the new military regime. The redistribution of wealth for the benefit of all included the foundation of a new economic order (Arab socialism) which confronted the social question head on. It established a welfare state for the new mass workers class which would eventually provide:

> '[t]he eradication of all aspects of imperialism; [t]he extinction of feudalism; [t]he eradication of monopolies, and the control of capitalistic influence over the system of Government; [t]he establishment of a strong national army; [t]he establishment of social justice; [and] [t]he establishment of a sound democratic society.'[70]

These economic pledges were supported through the ongoing enlargement of the public sector, the nationalisation of French and British companies, job creation through rapid industrialisation and the extension of social insurance to government workers and their families and the establishment of limits on feudalism.[71] Nasir set out his approach to the social question in the *mithaq watani* (National Charter) which stipulated a five-year plan for economic growth characterised by an economy supervised by the government, a huge public sector and a single party system to emphasise social solidarity.

The political primacy of the putative workers class brought into being by Nasir's Arab socialism soon gave way to mass poverty as the true economic cost of the Egyptian welfare state began to reveal itself. While these measures stood to enlarge the public sector and provide economic support for the worst off in society, it also opened the door to an ever-increasing national debt which has proved to influence subsequent political decisions. Anwar Sadat's 1974 *infitah* (open door) economic policies, adversely affected the poor by

[70] *Constitution of the Republic of Egypt* (1956) Preamble.
[71] Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis (1991) *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak* 4th Edition (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press), p.396. In November 1956 the government took control of 15 000 French and British companies, and banks including Bank Misr in 1960 Bent Hansen (1991) *The Political Economy of Poverty Equity and Growth: Egypt and Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp.126-127**;** Law no. 419 created social insurance for workers in private and public sectors; See Art 12 of the 1956 Egyptian Constitution on land reform. On the 1950 public assistance law see Jean L. Garrison (1978) 'Public Assistance in Egypt: An Ideological Analysis' *Middle East Journal* Vol.32, No.3, p.284.

increasing inflation, amongst other things. [72] Sadat then implemented poverty alleviation initiatives including the extension of social insurance to the vulnerable, casual and self-employed workers. In real terms however, the pension scheme introduced payouts that were below the real needs of human life. Further economic grievances were also aired during the 1977 Egyptian bread riots which saw the poorest members of society protest against austerity measures mandated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (cessation of state subsidies on flour, rice and cooking oil). The state reaction to popular unrest, in addition to containing the protests by violent means which left 79 people dead and over 550 injured, was to reinstate the state subsidies rather than risk further loss of legitimacy and provoke further public action. This strategy further increased pressure on Egypt's public finances, putting off the inevitable political standoff that would come with introducing austerity measures in order to stimulate economic growth and lift Egypt out of mass poverty for a later date.[73]

Political attempts to redress the poverty balance by the installation of several measures to ensure representation of workers have proved to be a double-edged sword, where attempts to improve social solidarity have also been a political tactic to ensure leader support. This has presented a challenge to the most recent Tahrir Square revolutionaries who welcomed the support of the masses in the first instance. As the conditions of everyday life for those living in poverty cannot be hidden from public view, the revolutionary movement was obliged to acknowledge them urgently. This served to take precedence over the constitution-making, the business of revolution: 'liberation from necessity, because of its urgency, always takes precedence over the building of freedom.'[74] These measures however have proved to be a significant economic burden for Egypt, having culminated in a corporatist, clientalistic political system which has proved to be a

[72] Law no. 43 (1974) legalised foreign investment reversing the limits on this put in place by the national charter, Law no. 97 (1976) permitted foreign exchange accounts in public and private banks allowing for migrant remittances to be paid and Law no. 118 of (1975) abolished the government monopoly on imports allowing private companies to import anything other than wheat, wheat flour, corn, broad beans, sesame, tea, sugar, edible oils, vegetable and animal fats, tobacco, raw and spun cotton, jute, coal, petroleum, petroleum products, chemical fertilisers, pesticides, arms and military products. See Mourad Magdi Wahba (1994) *The Role of the State in the Egyptian Economy: 1945-1981* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press), p.191. For greater detail on the *Infitah* laws and reforms see Nazih N. Ayubi (1991) *The State and Public Policies in Egypt Since Sadat* (Reading: Ithaca Press); Garrison, 'Public Assistance in Egypt', p.282.

[73] The issue of poverty soon returned when surging food prices proved to be one of several catalysts for public political action during the 2008 General Strike and the more recent Egyptian Revolution of 2011. High inflation left many Egyptians (particularly in Upper Egypt) unable to afford basic foodstuffs such as bread (which was already subject to the state subsidy reinstated by Sadat), with the total number of Egyptians in food poverty rising from 14 per cent in 2006 to 17.2 per cent in 2011 or 13.7 million people. This time, however, the issue of poverty shared political relevance with police brutality, bureaucratic corruption, censorship and electoral fraud. See United Nations World Food Programme (2013) *Preliminary Summary Report on The Status of Food Poverty and Food Security in Egypt: Analysis and Policy Recommendations* (May), p.1.

[74] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.114.

significant economic burden for the government, increasing the visibility of the social question for each subsequent generation of Egyptian citizens.

The founding of freedom has been further complicated by the inability of the institutions of power to command legitimacy and authority. This is firstly on account of the prevailing authoritarian conditions which have sought to embed a particular type of nationalism in the constitution as to promote regime survival. The Egyptian Republic has not been able to escape the use of nationalism as a political force which creates a link between political unity and a national identity. The precise influence of the nation-state framework on Egyptian governance institutions differs from that of Robespierre appealing to the French nation as it is further influenced by a divergent series of historical dynamics. Nationalism was a key policy upon which Nasir's new order was founded. Nasir spells out the geographical dimensions of nationalism via the three circles theory in *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution*.[75] The Egyptian Republic was founded on a link between political unity and a national identity drawn from at least three contributory historical dimensions: Ancient Egypt (3050 - 332 BC), the Arab Muslim conquest of Egypt and subsequent rule by the Ottomans (from 649 AD onwards) and the colonial experience under the British (1882-1953). It thus combined smaller pre-political communities including Egyptian Copts, Arab ethnic Muslims with Upper Egyptian peasants into a singular national identity. The 'Egyptian people' thus became the new location of authority in contrast to its previous location in the divinely-appointed monarchy.

This unifying nationalism bears some similarities to Robespierre's attempts to control the French multitudes as a singular whole. In the case of Egypt, there was an identification of colonialism as an enemy common to all Egyptians, but also to other newly independent states in the MENA region.[76] This is a different type of nationalism to that of the European experience, however, as it could not specify nature's God and divinely informed reason as embodying the highest authority because of the religious diversity present in Egyptian society. This was a use of nationalism to put the many into one. This political attempt to command the many as a singular entity was further increased by

[75] Gamal Abdel Nasser (1956) [1955] *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Washington: Public Affairs Press), pp.52-55. He specified three dimensions (circles) of his nationalism. The Arab circle is 'as much a part of us as we are a part of it, our history has been mixed with it and that its interests are linked with ours', the African circle is 'It is not in vain that our countries lie to the northeast of Africa, a position from which it gives upon the dark continent wherein rages today the most violent struggle between white colonisers and black natives for the possession of its inexhaustible resources' and the Islamic circle, 'Can we ignore that there is a Muslim world with which we are tied by bonds which are not only forged by religious faith but also tightened by the facts of history?'.

[76] Most of the nationalism comes from Nasser himself, who commanded significant popular support from other countries following the Suez War of 1956. With the creation of the United Arab Republic (1958-61), Nasser tried to create a federation to avoid a communist government in Syria.

associations made with similar newly independent states who were supporters of Arab nationalism and the unification of the Arab lands as a single nation. Nasir was a particularly prominent figure in the promotion of Pan-Arabism (*qawmiyya*-Arab nationalism based on tribe or ethnic identity, rather than homeland or nation). Nasir's capacity to command the international masses came in part from his handling of the Suez crisis. This popularity allowed him to try and unify two Arab states that had become newly independent from the Ottomans (Egypt and Syria) as the United Arab Republic in a political union lasting from 1958 to 1961 (until Syria seceded).

The Nasirite version of Arab socialism replaced Marx's conception of class struggle with a multidimensional nationalism which combined economic socialism with a dual-national identity ('Egyptian' and 'Arab').[77] According to Nasir, capitalism had only been successful as a source of economic development because of the existence of colonialism. The tendency to not consider the needs of the 'whole living generations for the sake of others still unborn' had also discredited political attempts to establish communism in his eyes. In order to achieve the goals of the economic programme, Nasir asserted the idea of the 'people's control over all the tools of production and over the direction of the surplus according to a definite plan.' The 'people's control' was to be brought about firstly by the creation of the public sector 'that would lead progress in all domains, and bear the main responsibilities of the development plan' and secondly through the support of the private sector 'to participate in the development within the framework of the overall plan.' This was the building of a nation with an approach that was about economic development coupled with organisational theory that resulted in a non-political model of nation-building. This was not a political community but an administrative one which worked on particular assumptions about the role of participation and action.[78]

The influence of both these nationalisms can be found in the drafting and amendment of the Egyptian constitution since 1956. The Egyptian republic has faced significant challenges to the authority of its constitution and corollary legislative procedures. The practice of constitutionalism has faced several changes on account of the historical malleability of the actual document which has created an ambiguity regarding the issue of exactly where authority resides. This can be seen historically in the various

[77] The 1962 National Charter specified the rationale for this.

[78] James Heaphey (1966) 'The Organisation of Egypt: Inadequacies of a Nonpolitical Model for Nation-Building' *World Politics* Vol.18, Issue 2 (January), p.177-178, 180, 189 'A comparable and equally unsatisfactory, condition exists in Egyptian industry. Because the Egyptians analogise the polity to an organisation they are unable to deal with the 'command and obedience' aspect of factory life. Note that we are saying that there are open and obvious command and obedience relationships, and if discrepancies between ideology and practice cause workers to distrust communications from management, then Egypt's plan for worker participation is in trouble.'

attempts by presidents to change multiple constitutional provisions at a time by mass referenda. Constitutions have been used to ban political parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood and silence dissenting voices. They have given presidents such as Mohammed Morsi unrivalled powers which can then be taken away at a moment's notice by the Army. Likewise the judicial institutions are also handpicked by whoever is in charge; the Egyptian constitutional court cannot make changes to the constitution.

The Egyptian constitution in its various forms since the establishment of the Republic is influenced heavily by nationalism on account of the specific historical conditions immediately preceding its announcement.[79] Because of the domination of the political sphere by the military, through the Revolutionary Command Council, the period between 1952 and 1970 was characterised by an erratic constitutional development.[80] There have been, however, several attempts either to rewrite the constitution entirely (formation of the Arab Republic) or to introduce the Sharia as the principal source of legislation.[81]

Secondly, the constitution lacks legitimacy and thus authority on account of normative differences in Egyptian society. The extent of this normative difference has also been amplified by the exclusion of religious influences from politics by the state.[82] The 'Nation' therefore includes those who support the state, those groups who do not support the state are excluded from Egyptian nationalism and were systematically purged from it from Nasir to the present day. After years of public repression, the Muslim Brotherhood's victory in the presidential elections provided an opportunity for the Islamist normative perspective to find a place in the constitution of Egypt. Islamist views on governance, institutions and policy are influenced to a greater extent by political issues such as

[79] There have been several drafts of the constitution since the declaration of the republic: 1956, 1958 (UAR), 1963, 1971, 2011 (provisional), 2012 (suspended since July 2013).

[80] This period saw the military constantly issuing and revoking constitutional edicts that were at best self-serving and hindered the development of any effective multiparty democracy that the 1952 revolution was designed to accomplish. Accordingly, three constitutions would be issued and repealed in the twenty years in between. The first was the Constitution of 16th January 1956. The Second was the Unity Constitution of 1958, following the creation of the United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria, and the third was the Interim Constitution of 25 March 1964, issued following the dissolution of the Egypt-Syria union. This Constitution remained in place until a new one in September 1971. In 1971 (11th September) the constitution preamble stated the law as sovereign and the basis of all legal authority, but Art. 3 it states that the Egyptian people to be sovereign and tasked the people with theprotection of this sovereignty within the guidelines of the Constitution.

[81] *Constitution of the Republic of Egypt* (1971) Art. 2.

[82] The Nasserist regime attempted to undermine the *ulema* and create a state religious monopoly by nationalising Al Azhar University in 1961. Malika Zeghal argues that this attempt to throw the ulema into disarray had unintended consequences which led them to form a 'new political behaviour' oriented towards creating new spaces for religious intervention. Malika Zeghal 'Religion and Politics in Egypt: the Ulema of Al Azhar, Radical Islam and the State (1952-94)' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 31, no. 3, August 1999 pp.373-75) Charles Tripp (1996) ' Islam and the Secular Logic of the State in the Middle East' in Abdel Salam Sidahmed & Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.) *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), p.54

solidarity with the Palestinians and public decency. This however had its limits for the Egyptian state. Morsi's attempt to change the constitution and give himself additional powers provided a context in which the state could retake power.

Since the revolution in 1952, for Egypt, the founding of freedom has however proved to be less straightforward. Where authority resides has never been very clear since the formation of the Republic. Since its foundation in 1952, the constitution has been rewritten several times, firstly by Sadat and undergone several amendments (under Nasir, Sadat and Mubarak) but at each amendment has sought to rewrite the political powers.[83] Despite concerted attempts to found a new order, it was not of the enduring character that Arendt highlights as necessary to a successful revolution. Thus many aspects of the Nasirist order have been questioned and overcome since. This confusion has meant that even the courts have had problems acting as an autonomous expression of the law. Sadat created the Supreme Constitutional Court, as an independent body, to uphold the law and interpret the constitution to some extent. But the judges themselves were appointed by the president who turned them into a rubber stamp body.[84]

Constituted bodies in Egypt, then, have existed by law, but have been open to manipulation by political elites. This has also allowed the authority of these institutions to be questioned and diminished as the constitution is constantly questioned and redrafted in line with the political ambitions of leaders. The most recent experiment at drafting the constitution is now considering the introduction of new constituted bodies such as the House of Representatives. Egyptian revolutionary political action has achieved the dismantling of the old regime, but it still languishes in the unspecific, unknown political order, which continues to sink further into confusion regarding the location of authority, and thus the founding of freedom. In particular, long-held political suspicions about the Muslim Brotherhood have proved to be an obstacle. While they were constrained by nationalism in order to counter the colonial influence, theEgyptian revolutionaries were also in the business of creating something new. The contours and membership of the

[83] Since its foundation in 1952, there have been at least six versions of the constitution (1956's Constitution of the Republic of Egypt, 1959's Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 1971's under Sadat, 2006 under Mubarak, 2012 under Mohammed Morsi, 2014 Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt).

[84] *Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt* (1971) but was amended in 1980, 2005, 2007; Law No. 48 of 1979 (Law on the Supreme Constitutional Court, amended by Law No. 168 of 1998), *Al-Jarida Al-Rasmiyya*, 9 June 1979, art. 25. Tamir Moustafa (2009) *The Struggle for Constitutional Power: Law, Politics and Economic Development in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), discusses the expansion of constitutional power by the Supreme Court in Egypt from 1991-2005. Interesting chapter on what he calls 'the politics of domination: law and resistance in authoritarian states' following the creation of constitutional power in 1979 (pp.19-56); 'The Rapid Expansion of Constitutional Power' pp.118-176; Tamir Moustafa (2003) 'Law Versus the State: The Judicialisation of politics in Egypt' *Law and Social Inquiry* Vol.28, No.4, pp.883-930 (October). For further detail on elections under Mubarak see Lisa Blaydes (2011) *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

political community varied wildly under Nasser who added Syria and Yemen in a political union for several years.

The Egyptian experience also demonstrates the formal absence of the type of constituted bodies upon which the Americans were able to found a new authority in the period leading up to the 1952 Revolution. Prior to its abolition, the monarchy presided over the establishment of a bicameral parliament (legislature) composed of a Senate and a House of Representatives consistent with the provisions included in the 1923 Constitution.[85] Each province was entitled to consider itself an electoral district and then elect a Senator in the Senate.[86] These were not however autonomous bodies as standing cabinets were frequently dissolved when there were disputes of opinion along with the British interference. The responsiveness of these bodies to bribery and corruption opened the door to Nasir's revolutionary claims about the extent to which the prevailing order was not acting in Egypt's best interests. The 1923 constitution further stipulated that should the House of Representatives be dissolved, so too shall the Senate's sessions be suspended.[87] Nasir, once having replaced the old constitution with the founding constitution of the Republic in 1956, replaced the congress of parliament with the National Assembly in 1957. This introduced the one party system under the National Union, a unicameral system, effectively removing all legislative openings and demonstrated some political shrewdness. In Arendtian terms, Nasir effectively dissolved both authority and law in a single move.

The constitution was not considered to wield any great power until the institutionalisation of the *al-Mahkama al-Idariyya al-'Uliya* (Supreme Constitutional Court) in 1979. Sadat by contrast reintroduced the 'rule of law' and representative government through the reestablishment of the lower house of parliament renamed the *Majlis al-Nuwwab* (the People's Assembly) and *al-Mahkama al-Idariyya al-'Uliya*.[88] The rationale for this was suggesting the existence of a functioning legal framework in order to assuage the fears of would-be *infitah* foreign investors.[89] The upper house was not established until a Constitutional amendment in 1980 which specified the creation of the Shura Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*) with limited legislative powers.

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[85] Art. 73 *Constitution of Egypt* (1923).
[86] Art. 75 & 76 *Constitution of Egypt* (1923).
[87] *Constitution of Egypt* (1923), Art. 1.
[88] *Constitution of Egypt* (1971), Art. 174, 175, 176, 177, 178.
[89] Tamir Moustafa (2009) *The Struggle for Constitutional Power: Law, Politics and Economic Development in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) discusses the expansion of constitutional power by the Supreme Court in Egypt from 1991-2005. Includes an interesting chapter on 'the politics of domination: law and resistance in authoritarian states' following the creation of constitutional power in 1979 (pp.19-56) and 'The Rapid Expansion of Constitutional Power' (pp.118-176); Tamir Moustafa (2003) 'Law Versus the State: The Judicialisation of Politics in Egypt' *Law and Social Inquiry* Vol.28, No.4, pp.883-930 (October). For further detail on elections under Mubarak see Lisa Blaydes (2011) *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

5.4 Implications of Arendtian Framework For Conceptualising Political Action

Returning to the Arendtian framework, the demise of the Nasirist, Mubarak and Morsi regimes demonstrates a capacity in Egypt to successfully dismantle the symbols of a prevailing political order. However, the manipulation of constitutional drafting has shown the founding of a new enduring order to be particularly difficult. These conditions have culminated in a lack of trust in the political process or its institutions of government. In Egypt it has been difficult to found and live by political institutions on account of historical colonial interference. Arendt points to Lord Cromer's administrative style of Egypt as a 'hybrid form of government without precedent' which relied on a specific type of extreme 'secrecy' underpinned by 'bureaucracy'.[90] The unofficial status of the British in Egypt meant that Cromer's government 'without name or precedent' lacked any form of accountability. Despite this, Cromer was able to rule Egypt through the use of ad hoc decrees unconstrained by preexisting Egyptian legislation. Furthermore these conditions were not put into being for the good of Egypt or its peoples; Cromer saw his administration of Egypt merely as 'a stepping stone to India'. The outcome of these conditions for Arendt was the undermining of civilised politics based on law.[91]

After the undermining and subsequent destruction of unquestioned institutions by the colonial presence, the postcolonial state has relied on replicating similar patterns of centralised authority. This has served to create the impression that anything below the state lacks authority.[92] Political institutions, such as the constitution, therefore cannot command the type of authority upon which a new political foundation could be constructed. This was the context which permitted the emergence of an authoritarian centralising postcolonial state which destroys the legitimacy of all types of power. The power of the state permeates everything; anything which it does not permeate becomes opposition. As a consequence, politics becomes a case of fighting the state, which infiltrates everything, and denies it any authority.[93] This explains why the Muslim Brotherhood appeared positively as a possible political alternative to the Mubarak regime in the first democratic elections in 2011.

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[90] Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism,* p.213.

[91] Margaret Canovan (1992) *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.29-31.

[92] Yusuf Qa'id, (1986) *War in the Land of Egypt* (*al-Harb fi barr Misr*) tr. Olive Kenny & Christopher Tingley (London: Al Saqi Books).

[93] Charles Tripp (2013) 'Contesting Public Space: Resistance as the Denial of Authority' in *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.116-126; Salwa Ismail (2006) *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters: The Everyday State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press); Salwa Ismail (2003) *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the State and Islamism* (London:I.B. Tauris).

Against this backdrop of centralised authoritarian regimes which have systematically removed any political meaning from the public realm, *the events of the Arab Uprisings are a public realm of political significance*. They are composed of individuals acting in concert with the power that they have created. As a consequence of this created power, they give themselves significance against the prevailing authoritarian order which has systematically eroded their institutional capacity for action. Egyptians thus derive political legitimacy from the space of appearance. Presenting themselves in the space of appearance is an intentional institutionalisation of politics oriented towards the creation of a new order. The space of appearance thus allows for the self-disclosure of political identity to create political significance in a system where the public realm has not afforded any. The public realm provides the structures for the formation of the body politics under authoritarianism**.** The historical conditions of Egypt suggest that this newly created political legitimacy (as a group of individuals gathered together) may yet be diverted by those issues Arendt suggested have diverted revolutions in the past. These were the social question, nationalism and a lack of constituted bodies which command authority.

Arendt provides a model which is in some ways more open to action than Habermas is. Moreover it is a model of political action in the public sphere which identifies some crucial challenges faced by the Arab Uprisings movements and indeed all other movements which can be understood as attempts to liberate men from tyranny. The error a number of commentators have made in celebrating the Arab Uprisings as an assured political change was to not grasp the enormity of the task. What we can see in the Arab experience is some intuitive recognition of issues that Arendt flags up as being crucial to successful revolution. Successful revolution for Arendt, comprises both freedom from oppression and the idea of a completely new beginning simultaneously.[94] This is realised through the institutionalisation of the public realm, something that can only be achieved by setting up a source of authority 'distinct from a source of power'. The liberation is in fact the first step. The second is the creation of a new political order that commands authority. Therefore, these movements need to be able to establish new political arrangements as the source of legitimacy for authority.

Arendt identifies how difficult it is for any society to do this, once beset with problems such as the social question, to create institutions upon which they can build legitimacy for power and authority, particularly in a post-theocratic setting. Recent events in Egypt seem consistent with the Arendtian framework, though the precise character of

[94] Arendt, *On Revolution,* p.21-22, 27

them is different. The Egyptian experience shows that there is a vision of a public realm though it is difficult to achieve amid the considerations of poverty and nationalism. Despite successfully tearing down the symbols of the ancien regime, the revolutionaries have not yet been successful in creating a new authority around which everyone can live. The absence of enduring constitutions which guarantee the freedom of the people is part of the problem. Historically, Egyptian constitutions have proven to be instruments of the dominant political elites. As such they are instruments in which power, and not authority, resides. The vulnerability of the constitutions to elite political influence has produced an account of the people which is persistently incoherent. The consequence of this can be seen in the outcome of the first democratic presidential elections. Despite a well-documented physical presence in Tahrir Square, the revolutionaries *qua* the people were not able to organise themselves in a way which correlated with Egyptian political institutions. They were thrown into electoral competition with al-Ikhwan which already had structure and organisation in place

5.5 Conclusion

In order to demonstrate further the limits of the Habermasian trajectory to political action in the MENA for this thesis, this chapter presented an alternative conceptualisation of the public realm. It drew on the work of Hannah Arendt, specifically sections from *On Revolution* and *The Human Condition,* and specified her views. The suitability of Arendt's political philosophy for this task lies in her specific perspective on political action which construes power as a resource that can be created at any time by individuals acting in concert in the space of appearance. These views concerned how action in the 'space of appearance' can lead to the dismantling of an old order and the creation of a new one.

The Arendtian approach contrasts with the Habermasian trajectory in several ways. In contrast to Habermas' views which construe the public realm of political significance as a public sphere built upon the specific economic foundations of monopoly capitalism, Arendt's space of appearance uncouples political action from economic foundations to invest the individual with a greater liberty to engage in political action. The specific historical and economic conditions of the MENA region (divergent from those of European capitalism) formed several nascent nationalist public realms. However the authoritarian government structures, alongside which these public realms are said to exist, preclude the type of political autonomy Habermas described. The differentiation observable in the political outcomes of the Arab Uprisings shows these nascent public realms to incorporate *varied* potential capacities for political action. An Arendtian perspective does not

downplay the significance of the impact of colonialism on the MENA. It also does not emphasise the trans-national media market. Nor does it de-emphasise the diversity of the region.

There is a *prima facie* case that in some respects an Arendtian model of the public realm is more helpful than a Habermasian public sphere. Firstly, it identifies the challenges faced by the revolutionaries engaged in the events of the Arab Uprisings *i.e.* the creation of something new, which has a claim to endure around which everyone can live. Secondly, the Arendtian approach is optimistic (when compared to Habermas) for political action in the space of appearance. It conceives of the political community in terms of action rather than institutions. The Arendtian approach allows us to ask different questions about the nature and significance of political action in the MENA region. It also allows us not to ask whether a public sphere has made itself known, but rather what the future of revolution could look like. The Arendtian approach also emphasises the profound difficulties of political action in the public realm both for dismantling the postcolonial authoritarian state and creating a new order in its place.

Unlike a public sphere approach which depicts the various differentiated MENA social realities in deficit terms - i.e. the economic institutions and development it does not have - the Arendtian approach dilutes the emphasis on economic social foundations just enough to conceive of a framework in which individuals are given an action dimension as an active part of their 'human condition'. The action dimension to the condition of humanity at this level allows for the inclusion of acts which may not be described as 'politically significant' to a more institutionalism-based approach, but can be described as having properties significant to political action. The Arendtian approach thus contributes to the wider debates on the authoritarian nature of power in the MENA region.

Rather it is an approach which considers the creation of power in the public realm to allow for the enshrinement of authority in institutions. This thus provides the foundations of a new order. However, her two-step prescription for a successful revolution (the tearing down of the old order, the foundation of a new one) has yet to be fulfilled by the empirical conditions of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the wider Arab uprisings. Although liberation from oppression has happened, there are still challenges to be faced in the foundation of freedom. The challenges faced by this revolution reflect those Arendt identified in the French Revolution. This is borne out particularly by the case of Egypt which struggles with multiple interpretations of political legitimacy and authority. It is however, too early to infer whether or not this is a successful revolution, largely because not enough time has passed yet in order to observe the empirical fulfilment of her criteria.

The example of Egypt demonstrated that Arendt is more open to differentiation than the Habermasian approach as it better reflects the specifics of political experience in the non-European context. Egypt's struggle is a clash between differing kinds of legitimacy. While it is impossible to know the outcome of the Arab Uprising events, the Arendtian model does give us some idea of the challenges and perhaps more importantly the scale of such tasks.

Conclusion

This thesis shed light on the problematic nature of a Habermasian public sphere approach to recent political action in the various states and societies of the MENA region. In order to determine the precise conditions of the debate surrounding the public sphere, it conducted a review of the relevant scholarly literature in both political science and Islamic studies. The specific tenor of these discussions revealed consequences for how the relationship of the public realm to the political order has come to be understood. This process determined the existence of several usages of the public sphere concept and identified several *empirical claims* about public spheres in the MENA context. Specifically these were that both 'Arab' and 'Islamic' public spheres are characterised by several common elements: emergence from political repression, language and cultural uniformity, direct political opposition to prevailing authoritarian rulers and, consequently, contingency on information and communication technologies for their existence. The debate thus reveals an *implicit theoretical claim* about the significance of the public realm to the prevailing authoritarian political order in the MENA context, i.e. that the public realm *is* of such significance to the prevailing political order that it can drive political change autonomously.

The significance of this theoretical claim for this thesis lies in its conceptual framework. Specifically, the public realm's political significance has been expressed by the majority of commentators, through the language of Jürgen Habermas' public sphere motif. However, this has proved to be a selective interpretation of Habermas' public sphere work and thus obscures several dimensions which would appear problematic when raised in the specific historical, political and social contexts of the Arabic-speaking MENA states. It was therefore necessary to revisit the Habermasian public sphere framework in detail in order to discern a theoretical framework which was more representative of Habermas' views than that presented initially by commentators in Chapter One.

As Jürgen Habermas' *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* is used as the primary theoretical source for the public sphere concept, Chapter Two began with a systematic review of its contents. This highlighted a historical-normative approach, characteristic of Habermasian political philosophy, which had consequences for the subsequent construction of this thesis' theoretical framework. This historical-normative approach fused historical chronology with specific normative developments in such complexity they could not be easily separated from each other. The historical aspect revealed a chronology which followed closely the order of events in Europe. The

normative aspect was tied to cosmopolitan perspectives on the relationship of authority, legitimacy and law and the state. Ultimately it found that, for Habermas, the public sphere motif was connected fundamentally to European historical experience.

In light of this, the subsequent theoretical framework took the Habermasian historical-normative chronology into account and identified four other Habermasian positions in *Structural Transformation* which had been obscured by the debate on 'Arab' and 'Islamic' public spheres. The first of these issues was Habermas' assertion that the public sphere both emerges *and then* declines. This countered the scholarly literature's first empirical claim that 'Arab' and 'Islamic' public spheres have emerged as a direct consequence of the transnational capabilities of mass media technology. The second issue was Habermas' assertion that the public sphere's emergence was contingent on a specific development of the public and private realms. This development saw the public realm emerge *from a preexisting private realm* which was built upon, but extended far beyond, private commodity ownership. This thus contrasted with the literature's second empirical claim that 'Arab' and 'Islamic' public spheres came into being upon the creation of the capacity for private commodity ownership in the MENA states.

The third issue was Habermas' assertion that the public sphere motif operated within a set of idealised communicative conditions. These centred on the nature of debate in the bourgeois public sphere and its precise purpose. Debate in the public sphere was supposed to be unconstrained (no restricted topics), open to all (anyone could participate) and exclusive of status (one individual's views could not hold greater influence on the grounds of their status). Specifying these communicative conditions invested the bourgeois public sphere motif with a practical relevance for the prevailing political order. In other words, the public sphere was something which *should be* of significance to the prevailing political order and which realised its significance by adhering to these conditions. This again countered the third empirical claim, made by the scholarly literature in Chapter One, that the public debate underway in 'Arab' and 'Islamic' public spheres brought about by technology focused specifically on domestic political affairs, international policy politics and religious affairs. The second part of this claim held that 'Arab' and 'Islamic' public spheres, by virtue of their very existence, were of *de facto* consequence for the prevailing authoritarian political order.

The fourth and final obscured feature of the Habermasian public sphere framework was its relative downgrading of identity politics. This occurred as a consequence of the public sphere's idealised communicative condition which disregarded status in principle and privileged discussions of authority rather than legitimacy. This counters the final

empirical claim of the reviewed literature that the simultaneously existing 'Arab' and 'Islamic' public spheres are both engaged in debates over their own singular identities and do so for different purposes. The 'Arab' public sphere was concerned with how Arab identity contributed to political legitimacy whereas the 'Islamic' public sphere was concerned with how Islamic identity related to religious authority. Putting these issues in their proper philosophical context required engaging with Habermas' later work in *Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two: Lifeworld and System* (1984), *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (1994) and *Between Facts and Norms* (1998). This resulted in a two-stage chronological trajectory of the 'Habermasian public sphere' comprised of an emergence and decline. Relevant empirical material from the MENA was then identified and measured against it as evidence of the emergence of 'Habermasian public sphere' in Chapter Three.

Proceeding in this way quickly revealed the analytical limits of deploying a Habermasian public sphere framework in a non-European historical context such as the MENA region. The theoretical approach, based on Habermas' insights in *Structural Transformation*, identified analogous evidence of, firstly, a private sphere, secondly, a public sphere which emerged from the private sphere and, thirdly, conceptions of identity based on a specific division of ethical and moral questions. Where it was possible to identify analogous evidence of these elements in the MENA region, it appeared restricted both geographically and in quantity. As the evidence did not demonstrate the same spread that Habermas presented in *Structural Transformation*, it would have been easy to conclude simply that this was insufficient evidence of the emergence of a Habermasian public sphere. However, this would have provided only part of the picture. As a method of investigation, the Habermasian framework was found to influence how the significance of these historical phenomena is interpreted and thus suggests an expected trajectory. However, the Arabic novel, for example, though similar in form to the European novel, did not do for the MENA region what it did for Habermas in *Structural Transformation*. Where Habermas links the novel form to the expression of a new form of private sensibility for the European bourgeoisie, the Arabic novel is linked to the experience of Arab nationalism and the coming to terms with the colonial experience. This highlighted the principal limitation of the Habermasian approach to political action in the MENA region: *it resulted in a depiction of an economically ordered social reality first and foremost*. That is to say, it presents an historical account which is structured by economic developments.

The implication of this outcome was that only cases which demonstrated the same patternof capitalistic development as Habermas' European examples in *Structural Transformation* were likely to demonstrate the same type and spread of analogous evidence. The modern Arab states, although not left untouched by capitalism, did not experience the same trajectory of capitalism and therefore could not demonstrate such evidence. This finding presented a second limitation of the Habermasian framework in non-European contexts that an economically ordered social reality downplayed historical events and phenomena which could not be said to have expressly economic foundations. By adhering to the Habermasian chronology, several fundamentally important aspects of the historical experience of the MENA region had become obscured. Specifically, it downplayed, firstly, the existence of colonialism and, secondly, the implications of the colonial legacy for subsequent Arab state formation and consolidation. This presented a third limitation of this theoretical framework: overlooking historical events of differing economic foundations further obscured their significance to the prevailing authoritarian political order. The phenomenon of Arab nationalism proved particularly vulnerable to underemphasis as a consequence of the Habermasian approach.

Chapter Four repeated this method of investigation but followed the Habermasian chronology of the public sphere's decline at the hands of the mass media in *Structural Transformation*. In contrast to the previous chapter, it was possible to identify evidence of analogous phenomena from the MENA region in much larger quantities and with a wider geographical spread. Once more, the theoretical framework proved to influence the interpretation of the empirical evidence and privileged historical events of economic foundations similar to the European experience over other types. This time it distorted the larger socio-political conditions within which the economic institutions appeared. Where it was possible to observe advertising, public relations and larger commercialisation processes in the MENA experience, they have not experienced the same developmental trajectory as the European examples provided by Habermas. Rather, they emerged from and currently operate in an economic climate influenced more by the survival of the prevailing political order than the capitalistic practices associated with a profit motive. Similarly, the theoretical framework is ill-suited to capture the diversity and differentiation observable in mass media development and content in the MENA specifically. An example of this type of diversity was the presence of religious programming. The comparatively larger amount of evidence of decline of the public sphere highlighted an additional limitation of the Habermasian theoretical framework: inability to account for moments of political action such as the Arab Uprisings despite the conditions of a declining public

sphere. Furthermore, the empirical evidence revealed the empirical claims made by the scholarly literature about events in the MENA in Chapter One, to be selective and distorted, presenting a restricted picture of the significance of media development. Capitalism and technologies also emerged earlier than the modern Arab states. The economically ordered social reality then means that economic developments take greater prominence in the trajectory than other social or political developments (such as Arab state formation). Also where an economic event could be observed, its supportive conditions were not the same as those described by Habermas. These preliminary findings suggested that the Habermasian public sphere framework was of limited analytical utility when examining political action in the MENA region. Together, Chapters Three and Four demonstrated that it was the peculiarities of Habermasian thought which limited its applicability in the MENA context. It was therefore not any exceptionalism on the part of the MENA region which provided this conclusion.

In order to further specify the extent of these limitations, the thesis considered alternative approaches to the public realm. This was to see whether an approach to the public realm which was not tied to a specific chronology of economic development would yield greater analytical potential. The specific historical context of Arab state formation, for example, required greater recognition of political action in the MENA. In addition, this step was of special relevance for the events of the Arab Uprisings, which took most commentators by surprise in 2011. Against the Habermasian trajectory, these events appeared at the very late stages of a declining public sphere, not a nascent one.

Hannah Arendt's conceptualisation of the public realm as a 'space of appearance' was one such alternative approach. This approach, derived from sections of *The Human Condition* and *On Revolution,* offered greater scope for the examination of the type of direct political action seen in the recent Arab Uprisings. Where Habermas' public sphere framework had emphasised the presence of the economic social foundations of monopoly capitalism, Arendt's space of appearance highlighted instead the empirical *capacity of individuals to create power by acting in concert.* Where the Habermas framework concluded there was more evidence of a public sphere in decline in the MENA, the Arendtian framework suggested instead an ever-present capacity for action. This is a type of action capable of tearing down the prevailing political order and building something completely new in its place**.**

As such, the Arendtian approach appeared much better suited to the historical specificities of the postcolonial state of Egypt. The significance of Egypt for this thesis lay in its prolonged struggle to locate authority within its political institutions since the

military-led 1952 revolution. The unsettled nature of political legitimacy in Egypt has made it challenging to establish the kind of authority Arendt described. Arendt's two step framework allowed us to discern carefully the challenges faced by the Egyptian revolutions of 1952 and 2011. This showed the 1952 revolution to have successfully dismantled the prevailing political order but to then have failed in its attempt at founding an enduring new order. The course of the revolution came to be hijacked by a series of issues. These included the existence of extreme mass poverty, the use of nationalism to put the many into a single body politic, the structural impotence of constituted bodies and their vulnerabilities to elite manipulation, and the establishment of an enduring authoritative constitution. In the Arendtian frame, the 2011 revolution, therefore, constituted a further attempt to establish the new order in light of its diversion by other interests. It too has proved susceptible to hijacking by the Islamist agenda and Muslim Brotherhood, which proved to be well-structured and organised when thrown into electoral competition with the revolutionaries. Furthermore, the Arendtian approach demonstrated how difficult the process of founding a new order has been for Egypt. It highlighted how revolutions can also be derailed by other actors such as the Egyptian military which presented itself as caretaker of 'the people' in times of constitutional crisis.

The significance of these findings for this thesis is that the Arendtian approach suggests a markedly more positive forecast for political action directed at the prevailing political order in the MENA. Arendt's two-step framework also bore similarities to the progression of events in Egypt since the first revolution in 1952. This is reflective of the Egyptian revolutionaries' original demands for the suspension of the political status quo via the departure of Husni Mubarak and the drafting of a new constitution.

The thesis thus presents a *prima facie* case for reconsidering the justificatory basis for a Habermasian approach to political action under the conditions of authoritarianism. As Chapters One and Two have demonstrated, the operational interpretation of the Habermas' work and comments on the public sphere had consequences for the subsequent evaluation of empirical evidence. A greater degree of accuracy is required when formulating a Habermasian definition or interpretation of the public sphere to be put to work in this empirical context. Citing *Structural Transformation* as the source of a theoretical framework privileges the view that private economic interests are to be treated with suspicion and as something to be overcome in the quest for freedom from domination. Habermas believed too that public opinion constitutes a total fiction, managed as it was by the commercial media in lieu of private economic interests. Citing *Between Facts and Norms* changes the operational definition of the public sphere. There he emphasises that

private economic interests are now a practical fact of life in established democracies and cannot be overcome in the revolutionary Marxist sense of the early Frankfurt School theory. The potential but not institutionalised transformative public sphere of the bourgeoisie has now become the empirical public sphere of democratic will formation with an institutional influence over the state. This evolved perspective gives greater prominence to the category of public opinion, the status of which has become one of fact rather than norm. Similarly describing something as either an 'incidence of communicative action' or as a 'subaltern counterpublic' also characterises his account of the the public sphere in this later period. It incorporates a specific normative outlook consistent with the perspective of Anglo-American citizenship theory.

The current conceptualisation of the 'Arab public sphere' presents a single transnational homogenous 'Arab' identity public 'enabled' to debate 'political' issues in public locations by transnational satellite television news stations such as al-Jazeera. This presents a selective picture of the diverse social realities which operate within the MENA region and occludes any differentiation in its various societies, particularly for those individuals and communities who may not consider themselves 'Arab' or to share in the single 'Arab-Islamic' heritage around which it has been formed. The tying of the Arab public sphere's emergence to private ownership in the 1990s also presents a selective account of the Arab states' political history. As Chapters Three and Four both demonstrated, empirical evidence of phenomena analogous to that described by Habermas can be observed from the 1850s in the Mashriq region. Its significance however is weakened by the fact that it cannot be tied to an explicit economic identity on the scale of Habermas' bourgeoisie. Thus when placed alongside the Habermasian trajectory, it appears to be limited in size, scope and location. As a consequence, historical incidences of political action in the region also go unacknowledged (such events would include the Arab Revolt, the first Egyptian revolution of 1952 and independence from the colonial powers) and thus casts political action (as encapsulated in the Arab public sphere) as a phenomenon that is both new, without historical precedent, and oriented against the state.

Furthermore, these findings highlight a scale of 'normativities' at work in the public sphere literatures in political science and Islamic studies which necessitates acknowledgement in order to reduce the theoretical confusion. These normativities assume processes under way in the public sphere with specific objectives. In Islamic Studies, this would mean that an Islamic public sphere underpinned by an Islamic normativity is tasked with the realisation and thus reproduction of Islamic social life (even though it has been deployed as an empirical category only). In Political Science, a transnational Arab public

sphere underpinned by the normative orientations of the later literature on the Habermasian public sphere is tasked with the realisation and thus reproduction of the public sphere of liberal democratic will formation. This is supposed to take place within the boundaries of the political community which considers itself the provider of public opinion. Transnational political institutions established to recognise Arab public opinion (as an institutional influence) are not currently observable at this level in the region. This reading suggests that public opinion does not therefore contribute to democratic will formation within Arab states, and as a result citizens and non-citizens alike are forced to take direct action. Additionally, the public sphere framework in political science remains grounded in a psychological explanatory basis for the empirical events of the region, despite the concessions made to address criticisms of political culture.

These findings present several implications for the implicit theoretical claim made by the scholarly literature in Chapter One. Briefly, this claim presented the public realm as commanding such significance to the prevailing authoritarian political order that it could drive political change directly. In contrast, this thesis has shown that applying a Habermasian public sphere framework to the specific historical context of public realms in the MENA states does not substiantiate this claim. Instead, the Habermasian public sphere approach shows the public realms of the MENA states to be of limited significance to the prevailing authoritarian political order. As the events of the Arab Uprisings have shown, the public realm's political significance is limited to such an extent that it necessitates a physical confrontation by extra-institutional means. The aftermath of the Arab Uprisings has also shown the process of political change in the Arab world to be more complicated than the Habermasian approach allows for. This complexity comes chiefly from the region's divergence from a European historical trajectory that counts liberal constitutionalism as a developmental milestone. Egypt shows, rather, the process of political change under authoritarianism to be one of complexity and hardship. This complexity lies beyond that which the idealised Habermasian approach can illuminate.

This thesis thus calls for greater engagement with the basis for a Habermasian approach to political action in the diverse societies of the MENA region. As demonstrated, the Habermasian model poses both theoretical and methodological problems when raised in this specific empirical context. Its trajectory offers a pessimistic outlook for political action which is construed as risky for humanity at large and requires specific economic foundations. It suggests instead that the work of Hannah Arendt might offer greater scope when approaching questions of political action. Her work more readily allows those events that do not fit the Habermasian trajectory to be accorded the necessary significance in the

analytical framework, thus presenting a more realistic picture of political action in authoritarian states. Meanwhile it is hoped that this thesis offers some theoretical insight into the specific problematic issues when a strictly Habermasian grounded definition of the public sphere is invoked, in the process providing a comprehensive overview of its usage deficits.

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