GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY IS NOT ENOUGH: HOW CULTURE SHAPED PLACEMENT, SPATIALITY, AND THE OUTCOMES OF THE ARAB SPRING'S UPRISINGS

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Abstract: This paper investigates the phenomenon of the Arab Spring against the background of cultural traditions and attitudes that sustained these protests and carried them across borders of more than twenty countries in the Middle East in a move of cultural contagion of conflict (Gelfand et al. 2012). Tracing the placement and spatiality of the Arab Spring uprisings, their media and ideascapes (Appadurai 1990), this paper draws upon theoretical frameworks of Homi Bhabha's (2004) third space, Margaret Kuhn's (2003) radical space, and Geert Hofstede's (2014) cultural indicators. Given the information about self-immolations as the events that stirred the uprisings in the Arab Spring's countries in 2010-2012, it explores how patterns of contagion of conflict have been operating through specific cultural conditions during successful protests that led to the change of regime as opposed to failed protests that did not. The paper offers a cultural profile of the Arab Spring countries, discussing its implications for the countries' governance regarding the existence of inter-networked places of protests, significance of their cultural traditions, and their linkage to success or failure of the protests.

Keywords: place, third space, radical space, the Arab Spring, cultural dimensions

INTRODUCTION

Multidimensionality, inter-connectedness, and inter-dependence shape interactions between countries across the modern world. National borders can no longer contain the ideas and or cultures born or sustained within, framing space and place as sets of contradictions rather than as something stable, predictable, and unchanged. As a result, ideascapes and mediascapes (Appadurai 1990) – the notions that reflect national and international creation and dissemination of ideologically-related information and images – may spread across the world almost overnight. Today, the most remote country's culture could become a fashion statement, fol-

lowed by the rest of the world, renowned and celebrated globally. The modern era, where global and local issues coexist, sometimes either complementing or contradicting each other, presents more paradoxes than solutions to communication researchers.

One of such paradoxes is the strategic communication between the publics in the so-called Arab Spring countries. A contagion-like phenomenon (Matesan 2012) that meshed ideascapes of mass unrest and mediascapes of unbearable human suffering, the Arab Spring as a series of protests across the Middle East engulfed more than twenty countries. These protests resulted in change of regime in some countries, bloodshed in others, and concessions to the public on the part of the governments in yet other countries. A series of mass protests that have led to regime change in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen; mass uprisings in Bahrain, Syria, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Oman; and minor protests in Lebanon, Mauritania, Iran, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan, the Arab Spring represents a phenomenon that facilitates spatial, cultural, economic, and political understanding of societies (Blight et al. 2012). Among many other questions, it also raises questions regarding government effectiveness and the role of cultural traditions when it comes to consequences (e.g., successes or failures of the protests) and pre-cursors of the revolutions.

The Arab Spring protests exemplify the revolution-related phenomenon that mostly happened during 2010-2012, but still continues in some countries today, and that demonstrated to the world the power of the public's discourse and rage (Karolak 2013). Because of some countries' successes and other countries' failures in changing ruling regimes, the Arab Spring uprisings represent a somewhat paradoxical phenomenon.

Assuming that spatial proximity (and therefore contagion of conflict) has had a role in revolutionary regime change, Algeria would have had a regime change, since it is situated near Tunisia and Libya, both of whom had successful regime changes as a result of mass protests. However, Algeria did not see a regime change during the Arab Spring. Can this situation be explained by the fact that its other neighboring countries, Mauritania specifically, had only minor protests? Can this be explained, albeit indirectly, by the fact that the protests in Morocco, another neighboring country of Algeria, were not as successful as those in Libya and

Tunisia? The answers to these questions will contribute to shaping an understanding of the fundamental issues when it comes to the pre-cursors of civil turmoil and its appeasement or reinforcement.

While the question of success when it comes to Arab Spring uprisings merits research attention (Hess 2013), its complexity calls for spotlighting every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life. Apart from the work on contagion (Matesan 2012), little research has been done on developing an explanation for the Arab Spring events that would fit the historical timelines of all countries-participants in the movement.

International scholars tended to descriptively study the Arab Spring on a case-by-case basis, often without theorizing about these uprisings. For example, research on the Bahraini protests explored revolutionary uprisings from the local stance (Al-Rawi 2015). Supporting the idea of contagion as the main force behind the Arab Spring, some mainly focused on the media coverage in the European newspapers (Golan 2013) and on the U.S. television (Guzman 2015). These studies demonstrated that western media framed the discourse of the revolutionary uprisings in the Arab Spring countries by promoting pro-democratic values, but failed to provide a roadmap, a cultural profile, to conceptualizing the Arab Spring as a phenomenon specifically and among other similar protests generally.

It would have been a mistake to say that there are many studies explaining what happened during the Arab Spring when it comes to the successes of failures of protests. A wave of research stimulated by the Arab Spring uprisings, provided descriptive accounts of these movements' successes regarding the people's use of technology (Gillespie 2013; Markham 2014), human bodies (Halverson et al. 2013; Kraidy 2016), and public spaces (Allegra et al. 2013; Lennon 2014), but, despite the cultural similarities of the Arab Spring nations, no attempts have been made to outline, let alone synthesize, knowledge about revolutions, successful and not, thus far, specifically in terms of culture, space, and place. No study has attempted to investigate why economic, political, social, and cultural factors influenced the success of the revolutionary movements in one country and not others.

This study sets out to explore how the patterns of cultural contagion of conflict have been operating through specific cultural conditions (e.g., cultural indicators), places (e.g., central squares

of the countries), spaces (e.g., third space, radical space), and ide-ological and cultural frames (ideoscapes, mediascapes, and cul-turescapes) during successful as opposed to failed popular mobili-zation movements of the Arab Spring in 2011-2012. This paper suggests that, given the spatiality of the protests, a look at the cul-tural indicators (Hofstede 2014) for the Arab Spring countries may provide an additional perspective toward developing an un-derstanding of what happened during the Arab Spring in the countries of successful versus unsuccessful revolutionary upris-ings. Exploring challenges faced by these countries regarding their territories, borders, and perceptions of place and space, this paper outlines a culture-related roadmap that may enhance an under-standing of Arab Spring among similar protests and popular mo-bilization movements-related phenomena.

The purpose of this paper is to trace the spatiality and place-ment of the Arab Spring uprisings, while applying the theoretical frameworks of third space, radical space, and cultural contagion of conflict to frame these events, given their mediascapes and ideascapes. Drawing on Geert Hofstede's (2014) cultural indica-tors, this paper aims to explore the role of cultural practices in the genesis of the protests and their successful resolution. It poses the following questions: How can the Arab Spring protests contribute to an understanding of cultural contagion of conflict across places and spaces? How can mediascapes, especially those associated with culture, as the pre-cursors of the protests, inform an under-standing of the Arab Spring uprisings' spatiality and their out-comes?

This article first considers the definitional issues related to the notions of revolution as opposed to protests and the differences between the two. Then, it introduces the background to the Arab Spring's protests, given cultural traditions of the counties in-volved. Next, it reviews the theoretical frameworks for space and cultural indicators. Finally, exploring the idea of the cultural con-tagion of conflict, which seems to have been adopted by the ma-jority scholars who have been studying the Arab Spring (Matesan 2012), this paper's discussion focuses on the interconnections be-tween the cultural traditions, placement, and spatiality of the revolutionary events with different outcomes, arguing that a more nuanced perspective is needed to understand the Arab Spring in light of cultural contagion of conflict. And the investigation of the

Arab Spring uprisings in light of cultural dimensions provides this perspective.

DEFINITIONS: REVOLUTION VERSUS MASS PROTESTS

Revolutions, protests, popular mobilization movements and uprisings have been continuously present in the world throughout its existence. Successful revolutions of Russia, France, and China are classic examples of this phenomenon (Skocpol 1989), whereas unsuccessful revolutions raise questions, many of which remain unanswered.

What constitutes a revolution has been subject of widespread debate among socio-political scholars (Snyder 1999). Some authors make distinctions between social and political revolutions (e.g., Skocpol 1989), while others imply that regime change constitutes a necessary condition under any definition of revolution (Yoder 1926). Terms like "mass mobilization protests", "democratization movements" and "popular mobilization movements" are typically associated with revolutions and misrepresented as such (Gothoskar et al. 1982; Tilly 1994; Collins 1995; Barker & Mooers 1997; Slater 2009; Fishman 2011). Similarly, affective and transitional states like "upheaval", "unrest", "turmoil", "instability", "disorder", and "disturbance" are often used to describe nations' socio-political circumstances in pre- and post-revolution time periods, but none of these particular circumstances themselves are necessary or sufficient conditions for revolutions.

Given the debate on the nature of revolutions and what can be considered successful revolution versus an unsuccessful revolution, this paper borrows the definition of the revolutionary situation, proposed by Vladimir Lenin, one of the most successful revolutionaries of the 20th century. Lenin (1915) identified volatile situations that precede revolutions as "revolutionary situations". Lenin (1915) indicated three components of revolutionary situations that, if combined, can lead to a successful revolution. Specifically, in his essay, *The Collapse of the Second International*, Lenin (1915) identified the following elements of the revolutionary situation – a situation that can precede a revolution: *a*) when it is impossible for the ruling class to maintain their rule without any change, when there is a crisis in one form or another in the upper

classes; *b*) when suffering and want of the oppressed have grown more acute than usual; *c*) when, as a consequence of the above, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in peace time, but revolt in other times. (Lenin 1915 [1925]: 213-214).

The application of these definitions to the Arab Spring uprisings' countries resulted in their classification into the countries with the most successful movements (group *a*), the countries with somewhat successful movements (group *b*), and the countries with unsuccessful movements (group *c*). The countries belonging to group *a*) had all key elements of the revolutionary movements present, the countries belonging to group *b*) had only two elements, finally, the countries belonging to group *c*) had only one element of the revolutionary activity present during the uprisings (see Tab. 1).

THE PROTEST CULTURE IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE ARAB SPRING UPRISINGS

The bulk of the Arab Spring protests lasted from December of 2010 to December of 2012, encompassing various nations, stimulating economic, social, cultural, and political trends. All countries of the Arab Spring had protests, even though these protests began, in some cases, as individual acts culminating in self-immolations or suicidal self-burnings in public space. Different in their intensity, the protests that followed self-immolations in the majority of the Arab Spring countries gathered people who were united in their desire for political and economic reforms. Specifically, Saudi Arabia and Oman saw minor protests, whereas Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya saw major protests, followed by the regime change. The governments' concessions to the public regarding the governance and reforms in Bahrain and Kuwait as well as monetary concessions in Saudi Arabia resulted in the gradual subsiding of protests in these respective countries.

Historically, a self-immolation of the street vendor in Tunisia on December 19, 2010 triggered the events of the Arab Spring. Many countries witnessed self-immolations of the street vendors, workers, and peasants. These acts of despair followed each other, virally spreading across the region (Hess 2013). The protests in all

Tab. 1. *Classification of the Arab Spring countries according to successes/failures of their revolutionary situations*

Countries	Nations (Year of Mass Protest)
Group 1 (nations with three definitional attributes of revolutionary situations)	Yemen (2011)
	Tunisia (2010)
	Egypt (2011)
	Libya (2011)
	Algeria (2010)
	Iraq (2011)
Group 2 (nations with two definitional attributes of revolutionary situations)	Mauritania (2011)
	Bahrain (2011)
	Syria (2011)
	Kuwait (2011)
Group 3 (nations with one definitional attribute of revolutionary situations)	Oman (2011)
	Jordan (2011)
	Sudan (2011)
	Morocco (2011)
	Djibouti (2011)
	Saudi Arabia (2011)
	United Arab Emirates (2011)

but four countries (Libya, Syria, Oman, and Djibouti) started with self-immolations (e.g., a suicidal self-burning of a street vendor in Tunisia). The wave of self-immolations spread through the Middle East to engulf Egypt and Yemen. Copycat self-immolations appeared in Algeria, Mauritania, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Sudan, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia.

Psychologically, a person's urge to slowly die in public from self-inflicting injuries comes from the situation when "suffering

and want of the oppressed have grown more acute than usual"
(Lenin 1915). Here, the act of public death may be not only be a
means of attracting attention to the issue of one's poverty and un-
employment, but also be an act of desperation that can transform
cultures of protests across the Arab nations into "a political hurri-
cane" (Höges 2011). Self-immolation is an act of not being able to
reconcile with life as is, an act of silent but powerful protest that
tells the public about unbearable suffering experienced by the
person, which, per definition of the revolutionary situation (Lenin
1915), often results in the person's willingness to revolt against the
regime or the government system even if the cost of this revolt is
his or her life.

Culturally, the public of Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, Iraq,
Morocco, Mauritania (Fadel 2011), Jordan (Associated Press 2011),
Bahrain (Toumi 2012), and Saudi Arabia (BBC 2011) began prac-
ticing "death by fire" or self-immolation before the Arab Spring
protests to escape "life not worth living" (Kimball 2011). This prac-
tice quickly became not only a means of showing an act of despair,
but also a political statement, a calling to the others who continue
to live without "human dignity" (Kimball 2011) to rise in protest, in
an attempt to change their situation for the better.

Fire is cheap to obtain and in the majority of the instances it
fulfills a goal of a person who is committing suicide. In fact, self-
immolation is a popular method of suicide in many of the Middle
Eastern countries, including Iraq, where approximately 150 wom-
en set themselves on fire in the Kurdistan every year (Stoter 2013).
However, in contrast to the acts of self-immolations in private or
semi-private spaces, if conducted in public space, "self-immolation is
a deliberate, determined and painfully expressive form of individ-
ual protest" (Bratadan 2012). One needs the audience for the act
of self-immolation to become an effective protest. For a break-
down of the Arab Spring countries, classified according to the
types of the revolutionary situations (Lenin 1915), see Table 1.

When the Arab Spring countries saw people's self-immolations
across the region, self-immolation, as a primordial medium, has
become a tool that united the publics of the Arab Spring countries
in their people's desire to overcome the message of prehistoric
fear, communicated by self-immolations. Relying on the ideascape of
non-conformity and the resistance to the regime, self-immolations
became the public's tools to express dissatisfaction with the state

of affairs, hoping for changes it by means of protests. Naturally, self-immolations alone could not have brought social change or change in the regime (Bradan 2012), since the act of self-immolation only constitutes one part of the revolutionary situation on the part of one person. But during the Arab Spring, these acts went viral, consuming the region, and becoming a symbol of protest. However, for the regime change to occur, more than one element of the revolutionary situation has to be in place, including, among other conditions, suitable cultural environment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Reflecting traditions and attitudes: Geert Hofstede's cultural indicators

Hofstede's (2014) project of cultural indicators was instrumental for research in outlining global cultural attitudes toward the major issues in societies. Hofstede surveyed the public's attitudes in 40 countries, expanding the number of countries to 93 in 2010 (de Mooij 2004).

As a result of his cross-cultural survey, Hofstede developed six dimensions of national cultures, the attributes of which reflect cultural values of: *a*) masculinity/femininity, *b*) power distance, *c*) individualism/collectivism, *d*) long term orientation, *e*) indulgence, and *f*) uncertainty avoidance. Each cultural dimension is measured on a scale of 1 to 100, with 1 being low and 100 being high on a particular dimension.

The dimension of masculinity/femininity (*MAS*) reflects a preference for "achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success" (Hofstede 2014). One of the major implications related to societies that score high on masculinity is the appreciation of an aggressive approach to business. In comparison, the more feminine the society is, the more likely its members care about each other's success.

Hofstede's dimension of power distance (*PDI*) refers to political, economic, and social mobility. It is described as "the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 2014). Social mobility is low in the countries that scored high on the dimension of power distance and vice versa.

The dimension of individualism/collectivism (*IDV*) refers to "a preference for a loosely-knit" as opposed to "a tightly-knit" framework. The members of the former are expected to follow nuclear family customs, whereas the members of the latter are expected to live by the extended family traditions.

Hofstede's dimension of long term orientation or pragmatism (*LTO*) refers to the maintenance of customs. People who live in societies scoring low on this dimension prefer to treat any changes in their lives with suspicion. People who live in societies that scored high on this dimension prefer to encourage education as "a way to prepare for the future" (Hofstede 2014).

The dimension of indulgence/restraint (*IND*) refers to tactics and strategies implemented by societies either to encourage peoples' gratification of restrain of their needs. Cultural traditions and customs also contribute to this dimension.

The dimension of uncertainty avoidance (*UAI*) refers to the ability of people to maintain composure and patience while facing uncertainty. The societies scoring low on this dimension "maintain a relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles" (Hofstede 2014). The societies scoring high on this dimension honor customs rather than challenge them. See available data for cultural indicators of the Arab Spring countries in Tab. 2.

All countries of the Arab Spring scored high on the dimension of power. For example, Iraq scored high on this dimension with a score of 95, which means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. At the same time, Iran receives an intermediate score of 58 on this dimension, so it is a hierarchical society, meaning that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat (Hofstede 2014).

On the dimension of masculinity, Kuwait scored 40 and is thus considered a relatively feminine society. In Feminine countries the focus is on "working in order to live", managers strive for consensus, people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favored. Focus is on well-being, status is not shown. An effective manager is a

Tab. 2. *Classification of the Arab Spring countries according to their cultural indicators*

Countries by group*	Nations (Year of Mass Protest)	Power Distance Index (PDI)	Masculinity Femininity (MAS)	Individualism Collectivism (IDV)	Pragmatism (LTO)	Indulgence Restraint (IND)	Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)
Group 1	Yemen (2011)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Tunisia (2010)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Egypt (2011)	70	45	25	7	4	80
	Libya (2011)	80	52	38	23	34	68
	Algeria (2010)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Iraq (2011)	95	70	30	25	17	85
Group 2	Mauritania (2011)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Bahrain (2011)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Syria (2011)	80	52	35	30	N/A	60
	Kuwait (2011)	90	40	25	N/A	N/A	80
Group 3	Oman (2011)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Jordan (2011)	70	45	30	16	43	65
	Sudan (2011)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Morocco (2011)	70	53	46	14	25	68
	Djibouti (2011)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Saudi Arabia (2011)	95	60	25	36	52	80
	United Arab Emirates (2011)	90	50	25	N/A	N/A	80
	Iran (2011)	58	43	41	14	40	59
	Lebanon (2011)	75	65	40	14	25	50

Note: Group 1 – Nations with three definitional attributes of revolutionary situations; Group 2 – nations with two definitional attributes of revolutionary situations; Group 3 – nations with one attribute of revolutionary situation.

supportive one, and decision making is achieved through involvement (Hofstede 2014).

At the same time, Iraq scores 70 on this dimension and is thus a Masculine society. In Masculine countries people "live in order to work", managers are expected to be decisive and assertive, the emphasis is on equity, competition and performance and conflicts are resolved by fighting them out (Hofstede 2014).

On the dimension of individualism, in comparison to Egypt (25), Kuwait (25), Saudi Arabia (25), and UAE (25), Morocco, with a score of 46 along with Lebanon (40) are considered collectivistic societies. This is manifested by a close long-term commitment to the member "group", be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group (Hofstede 2014).

On the dimension of pragmatism/long term orientation, the normative nature of Saudi Arabian society can be seen in its low score of 36 on this dimension. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results (Hofstede 2014). On the other hand, Egypt's very low score of 7 indicates that its culture is more normative than that of Saudi Arabia.

Given a successful revolution in Egypt and a failed revolution in Saudi Arabia, the connection between low pragmatism score and success of the revolution versus. high score on pragmatism and failure of the revolution can be made. As to the countries that have low scores on pragmatism and did not experience revolutions and vice versa, several conditions may be to blame. Among these are: external intervention, monetary concessions, state's repression against the protesters.

Similar logic can be applied to the cultural dimension of indulgence and restraint and its impact on the outcome of the revolutionary uprisings. The less restrictive the government of the country is, the less its publics are willing to participate in the revolution. According to this dimension, Egypt is shown as a very restrained country with a score of 4. Societies with a low score in this dimension have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism. Also, in contrast to indulgent societies, restrained societies do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires, whereas Iran and Jordan (40) and (43) respectively shown to be the countries that cultivate the culture of indulgence (Hofstede 2014).

On the dimension of uncertainty avoidance, Lebanon scored 50, meaning that the public of this country does not have a preference with regard to having an uncertainty-free or uncertainty-abundant lifestyle. In contrast, Iraq scored 85 on this dimension and thus has a high preference for avoiding uncertainty. Countries exhibiting high Uncertainty Avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas. In these cultures there is an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work) time is money, people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are

the norm, innovation may be resisted and security is an important element in individual motivation (Hofstede 2014).

Transforming space: Radical space, third space, radical-to-third space

As revolutions and mass protests transform places and spaces, and through those, hierarchies of societies, they mark the countries, sometimes scarring them either geographically, re-establishing new boundaries or psychographically, outlining the boundaries of the countries according to a novel set of rules. As spatial practices contribute to transformative politics of places and spaces, studying how different publics transform and spatially appropriate places is one way of understanding these movements.

Referring to how popular mobilization movements use public space to their advantage, Kuhn (2003) denotes their usage of the public spaces as radical democracy, i.e., "a variety of movements that shared the common goal of engaging in politics at the level of everyday life and transforming the social and economic bases of political power" (Kuhn 2003: 7). As a result, spaces occupied by the protesters belong to "radical space". These are political sites outside the state where the disenfranchised generate power. At the same time, these are the sites where "[g]overnments erect monuments and palaces to encourage emotional identification with the state" (Kuhn 2003: 6), which usually happens at the central squares of the nations. In times of peace, central squares of the countries enforce the public's emotional identification with the state. In times of turmoil, the public uses central squares according to the concept of radical democracy. Embodying power through their centrality, central squares exemplify the state, symbolically referring to its successes in economic, political, and socio-legal arenas. However, as a result of protesters' actions, central squares' space becomes radical space, re-established as a counter-site, i.e., a space created for "oppositional practices", for "critical exchange", and for "new and radical happenings" (Soja 1996: 129). If the central square is occupied by protesters, the link of the emotional identification of the public with the state is broken and replaced by protesters' perspective on what that identification should be.

All social spaces and places have an ability to stimulate soli-
darity. Kuhn (2003) focuses on the creation of casas del popolo
("houses of the people") as sites of resistance and transformative
political practices in turn-of-the-[twentieth]-century Italy. For
her, political groups can create distinctive places to develop new
identities and practices, while using such public spaces to democ-
ratize ever-widening sets of social relations. Building barricades
and tents on the central squares of the nations can be considered
as a first step toward re-establishing the public's authority over
the space that had been under government foresight. Building
barricades as a means of "moral" rather than "military" im-
portance in "a performance of solidarity", the protesters rely on
the "material embodiment" of the barricades for "cooperation
and mutual protection", reestablishing physical proximity that
fostered solidarity "by facilitating the implicit processes whereby
individuals share and constantly revise interpretations" (Kuhn
2003: 43). The central squares of the Arab Spring countries occu-
pied by the protesters became places of revolt, civic discussion,
and rage. And even though after the revolution or an attempt to
create one, these places then quickly returned to their original
state, their spatiality have been undergoing changes, sometimes
several times, during the societal turmoil. It could have changed
from that of social order to the one of radical space and from the
one of radical space to that one that exemplified the defeat of the
revolution, i.e., third space.

Because it embodies the political power of place that evolves
from the ability of the space "to link social, symbolic, and experi-
ential dimensions" (Kuhn 2003: 4), third space, among all other
concepts describing space, seems suitable to frame the spatiality of
unrests that did not result in the revolution. Third space exempli-
fies political power of transformative politics, which triggers
changes in social, cultural, economic, and political life of society
and which "comes from separating, juxtaposing, and recombining
these dimensions" (Kuhn 2003: 4).

When developing the concept of third space, Bhabha (2004)
outlined it as a space of radical openness and hybridity, the space
of resistance being opened at the margins of new cultural, social,
political, and economic conditions. Adapting the concept of third
space to explain the spatiality of post-colonialism, Blair (2014) re-
fers to it as something else besides "colonized and the colonizers",

a space that does not belong to the former or the latter. Borrowing this reasoning to interpret successful and unsuccessful uprisings and their spatiality, this paper outlines the third space as something else besides "revolutionary" and "non-revolutionary", in this case, the third space would describe a territory of the country or countries, a space that cannot be referred to as "radical", since, for the most part, especially in the cases of unsuccessful uprisings, the spatiality of those uprisings failed to become radical enough for the uprising to win.

At the same time, since even the protests that happened in the countries of unsuccessful Arab Spring uprisings were triggered by one or more revolutionary situations (Lenin 1915), the spatiality of those countries cannot be outlined in the usual terms of calm urban space without any revolutionary activities. Hence, third space, if applied to the analysis of political geography of the Arab Spring, becomes a space that is situated in-between radical space of those publics who cannot bear the state's oppression and the space of those publics content with their lives, i.e., the pre-revolutionary space that is ready to erupt on the one hand and is not ready to explode just yet on the other.

The emphasis on culture as an important variable in the development of mass protests and their sustenance provides this paper with an opportunity to talk about the concept of culturescapes as determinants of political, social, and economic situations of the countries in turmoil. Transgressions in national boundaries and cultural traditions form a culturescape, an environment that brings nuanced understandings of sometimes identical conflicts with different consequences that can be spatially spread across many regions of the world.

Analysis of cultural traditions in the Arab Spring countries

Given the historical, political, and economic contexts, the countries' scores on cultural dimensions reflect the success or failures of the revolutionary uprisings. An extended classification of the cultural indicators shows how they fit within the environments of the Arab Spring countries, mapping the revolutionary spaces of (no) cultural contagion (Tab. 2).

An analysis of cultural dimensions shows that almost all coun-tries of the Arab Spring had high power distance. The scores for this indicator ranged from 58 for Iran to 90 and 95 for Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Scoring high on power distance, the Arab Spring countries demonstrate no upward mobility and impossibil-ity for any ordinary citizen to influence the country's political and or socio-legal life. This observation contributes to the revolution-ary atmosphere of any country that hosted a successful revolution as defined by Lenin (1915). Egypt and Libya exemplify this situa-tion very well. The revolution is bound to happen in the countries with high power distance, especially if these countries do not make any attempts to appease the public either through monetary concessions (e.g., Saudi Arabia) or by making promises to con-duct political reforms (e.g., Kuwait).

With the exception of Iran, the Arab Spring countries also demonstrated similar high scores on the cultural dimension of masculinity, ranging from 43 for Iran to 70 for Iraq. As Iran is considered a relatively feminine society, where people value col-laboration more than competition, generally, in masculine socie-ties people appreciate competitiveness more than an ability of working "to work" and not working to "live". Even though the spirit of competition for power has been present in all Arab Spring countries to a different degree, the result of mass protests, however, were determined by a combination of cultural, political, and socio-legal factors.

The scores for individualism ranged from 25 for the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt to 46 for Morocco. Hence, all countries that hosted the Arab Spring are characterized as collectivistic societies, where people depend upon each other, knowing that they can succeed only by working together. Organ-izing mass protests is easier in a collectivistic society as opposed to a society high on individualism. That is one more reason why all Arab Spring countries experienced protests, even though some countries experienced large protests and some countries only saw minor protests. But the outcome of the protests and its numbers depend on the specific context of the country.

The scores for the cultural dimension of pragmatism tended to cluster together for all Arab Spring countries, ranging from Egypt's score of 7 to Saudi Arabia's score of 36. This fact offers additional evidence regarding a relationship between similar cul-

tural backgrounds of the Arab Spring countries and the outcomes of revolutionary movements.

Egypt's score of 4 is the lowest and Saudi Arabia's score of 52 is the highest on the indulgence/restraint dimension. Despite some differences on this cultural indicator, nevertheless, the cultural scores on this indicator in the Arab Spring countries provide an explanation for the impact of restrictive atmosphere in society on uprisings. Using Lenin's (1915) logic regarding revolutionary situations, if stimulated by some events, restrictive atmosphere is prone to ignite unrest among the disgruntled public who is usually silent in times of prosperity (e.g., Egypt). On the other hand, the atmosphere of ambivalence toward restrictions imposed by the government serves as a basis for a society's willingness to accept monetary concessions from the government in exchange for peace (e.g., Saudi Arabia).

Finally, with the exception of Lebanon, all Arab Spring countries have similar, relatively high, scores on the dimension of uncertainty avoidance, ranging from 50 for Lebanon to 85 for Iraq. This observation attests to the fact that the public of all Arab Spring countries, except Lebanese public, was eager to avoid uncertainty at all costs, including by sustaining revolutionary movements. As for Lebanon, having a score of 50, the Lebanese do not mind uncertain situations in their lives. It is worth noting that, per Lenin's definition of revolutions, other cultural, economic, and political factors should be taken into consideration when making conclusions about revolutions and their degree of success.

CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON THE SPATIALITY OF THE ARAB SPRING UPRISINGS

The following discussion elaborates on the patterns of cultural contagion of conflict in more detail. It discusses the spatiality of the Arab Spring uprisings in conjunction with their cultural dimensions.

Reconfiguring the meaning of spaces

Exemplifying the pinnacle of the people's frustration with the regimes, self-immolations of individuals, performed in central squares and renowned public places, fueled the anger of crowds, intertwining culture and politics, economy and law, order and disorder, despair due to the high unemployment rates and hopes for a better future. Establishing and maintaining radical spaces, Arab Spring revolutionary crowds occupied radical space in those countries where revolutions achieved their goals of changing the regimes. On the other hand, the public of those countries with unsuccessful revolutions, even though at first they were able to establish radical spaces for protests, failed to maintain it. As a result, in the case of failed revolutions, the radical space of the central squares were transformed into the third space, a space in-between success and failure, order and disorder, and, eventually, the protesters in the majority of these spaces were dispersed either by force or by the promises of the governments willing to make concessions to the protesters.

While at some point, the Arab Spring revolutionary movements identified themselves with radical democracy and transformed the central squares into the places exhibiting the attributes of radical space, they were not completely successful in the transformation of these places and spaces. As a result, they paved the way to an emergence of political spaces and power that could be no longer conceived as belonging to a radical space, because they had been reclaimed by authorities; and because the protesters failed to achieve their demands within it. Instead, even though these spaces remained in contention, they stayed stable, yet volatile and susceptible to changes, exemplifying third space, the space of either a failed revolution or an unfinished revolution in the making.

Sustaining revolutionary sentiments through culture

The spatiality of the Arab Spring's movements is interconnected with the cultural sentiments and traditions of self-immolations in these nations. Confirming previous research on Hofstede's (2014) cultural dimensions and their linkage to the

Human Development Index and prosperity (Gamlath 2016), all cultural dimensions, except masculinity, contributed to explaining how culture shaped successes versus failures of the uprisings in the Arab Spring countries.

For example, the dimension of indulgence/restraint may be instrumental in explaining why some countries' succeeded whereas others failed to change their regimes. Indeed, the lower the cultural dimension of indulgence/restraint, the more restrictive was the country during the Arab Spring (see Tab. 2). This study's findings go in line with the findings of Skocpol (1989), who argued that more restrictive societies have more chances of witnessing a revolution than less restrictive societies. Similarly, Hess (2013) found that societies with "very low levels of centralization" tend to deny popular mobilization movements and protesters any opportunity "to use an intrusive, centralized state as a common, unifying target for mobilizing national-level contention" (Hess 2013: 266).

The effects of cultural contexts and conditions on protests and uprisings can be traced with the help of cultural dimensions of indulgence/restraint, since there may be a relationship between a given country's score on cultural dimensions and the output of its uprising. With the cultural dimension of indulgence of 4, Egypt is the example of a highly restrictive society that has fallen under the pressure of revolutionary crowds. As a result, Egyptians overthrew their President and began a revolution. Similarly, in the case of Libya and Lebanon, the countries that scored at 34 and 25 on the dimension of indulgence/restraint, both experienced a change in the regime.

In contrast, having a score of 52 on indulgence and or restraint, the public of Saudi Arabia was relatively ambivalent toward whether Saudi Arabian society encourages either. Hence, Saudis seem not to be inclined to hold mass demonstrations for a long time in the event of social or political unrest. This attitude is attested by the fact that the Saudi Arabian society saw only minor protests during the Arab Spring and the government made monetary concessions to the public. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that among all Arab Spring countries, Saudi Arabia scored the highest on the cultural dimension of indulgence/restraint, meaning that Saudi Arabian society could be considered the least restrictive society among the Arab Spring societies.

There are some exceptions to the abovementioned assumption and a cultural profile of revolutionary situations regarding the relationship between cultural indicators and the outcome of the protests in the Arab Spring countries. However, these exceptions can be explained by additional factors, such as external pressures on the governments and publics of the Arab Spring countries. For instance, having a relatively low score of 17 on the dimension of indulgence/restraint, Iraq would have been also very close to the change of the regime, because of its public inclination to revolt against restrictive policies of the country; however, the presence of external influences and international forces in the country might have prevented the revolutionary sentiments present in the country to achieve their full potential.

Along with economic, social, and socio-political issues, cultural indicators contribute to explaining the situation in the country in times of turmoil. As all statistical tools and indices, these indicators are not ideal; they can, however, provide some insight and a roadmap for what may have happened or what may happen in the future. For instance, according to the Table 2, given no external intervention in their state affairs and no other events, it may be argued that Morocco and Lebanon, the countries that have both 25 as a score for indulgence, may be the next countries facing a possibility of a change in the regime.

To sum up, the following cultural profile of the Arab Spring revolutions can be outlined. The majority of the countries that have uprisings during the Arab Spring had *a)* high power distance, *b)* high restraint and restrictive government policies, *c)* collectivistic nature of society, and *d)* unwillingness of the masses to deal with uncertainty. Whether this cultural profile may also be considered as such that has cultural pre-conditions for revolutionary situations beyond the Arab Spring uprisings is a question for future research. As to the Arab Spring uprisings, one issue is certain: geographical proximity can account for some of the contagion of the Arab Spring revolutionary activities, but it cannot account for all of it.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Having highly contextualized individual economic, political, and social conditions, all Arab Spring nations have been interconnected through various sentiments, one of which, culture, has been given consideration in this paper. There is hardly a generalized, one-size-fits-all solution or a model when it comes to determining successes of the revolutionary protests because of context variability. Despite similar cultural conditions, like the ones present in the countries of the Arab Spring, other economic, political, social, and legal issues may have contributed to the success or failure of revolutionary movements. The seeds of these movements can be planted in one country and, triggered by a certain set of highly contextualized events, can be replanted in another country, which may be on the other side of the world.

Research on social, economic, political, and cultural issues of the countries' governance can inform future studies regarding the effectiveness of the uprisings and whether they can be predicted based on the indicators and indices measuring political, social, and cultural influences. Working together, policies, culture, economy, and law sustain the countries' social order or contribute to their disorder, depending on the history and current state of affairs.

The main implications of this study center on culture and its highly contextualized impact on the result of the Arab Spring protests. For instance, confirming the findings of earlier studies (Hess 2013; Stocpol 1989), this study demonstrated that the culture of indulgence helps to contain revolutionary sentiments, whereas the culture of restraint stimulates them to develop into full-scale revolutions, followed by a change of regime. Notably, those countries that experienced external pressures do not abide by this rule; in fact, these countries were more likely to experience a change of regime and a revolution despite their high cultural scores on indulgence. At the same time, a general rule is that the countries high on indulgence will be less susceptible to revolutionary sentiments, especially if their governments provide the public with either monetary or reforms-related concessions (e.g., Jordan, Saudi Arabia).

Highlighting the importance of cultural attitudes, this study outlines a direction that may be useful for future research on revolutions and how such tools such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions

(2014) may be employed in investigating the influencers and influences on the outcome of the revolutionary uprisings, places and spaces of the revolutions, and the networks of communication between the countries with major versus minor protests. A more nuanced approach to future research, employing, among other methods, case-comparison studies and conjunctive analysis, will benefit scholarship in the interdisciplinary field of social movements to investigate how they interact with each other, spatially and culturally. As it was shown in previous studies (Venger & Miethe forthcoming), economic, political, and socio-legal issues and their impact on the revolutionary uprisings can be explored with the help of World Governance Indicators and Fragile State Index that allow for such comparisons to be made. A similar approach can be used by future studies regarding the impact of culture.

This study is not without limitations. One of its main limitations is its descriptive nature. However, it provides a conceptual roadmap of how to account for culture when it comes to finding solutions to global and local paradoxes posed by politics, economy, law, and culture. One of the main contributions of this study to the field of globalization and culture research is in its making an attempt to combine interdisciplinary resources and concepts in order to find the answers that are sometimes hard to find while relying on the methods, theories, and literature coming from one discipline.

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