

The struggle for citizenship: the key to understanding the Arab uprisings

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■ Executive summary

The remark that “ultimately, citizenship should be studied because it is the prism through which to address the political” applies as much to the Middle East as anywhere else. This report argues that citizenship rights are the main issue in the Middle East and provide the key to understanding the Arab uprisings. After introducing the core concepts of citizenship studies, the report traces the development of civil, political, social and cultural rights through Middle Eastern history, from the Ottoman Empire to the present. It shows how social rights became the dominant right during the end of the colonial period and why the social contract or “authoritarian bargain” between state and citizens in the 1960s and 1970s constitutes the major watershed in modern Middle Eastern history. It is the eclipse of this contract and the exchange of civil and political for social rights that lie at the basis of the emergence of rights movements during the three decades prior to the Arab uprisings. Although this has marked a major shift in power to citizens, the diversity of the various claims also constitutes the basis of the current difficulty in drawing up a new social contract.

Introduction

In 2010 and 2011 the Middle East and North Africa captured the world’s attention. People rose up en masse to end the regimes that had suppressed and humiliated them for so long. This was expressed in the slogan “the people demand the fall of the system” (or in the case of Morocco, the “reform” of the system). The people (*al-sha‘b*) as a key form of agency were back. Their aspirations were expressed in the demand for dignity (*karama*) through the ending of corruption, the implementation of justice and the creation of jobs.

Reactions to these demands by academic circles were diverse. Many believed that they proved to the world that Arabs can also demand democracy and that the uprisings ended the Middle East’s exceptionalism in terms of the third wave of democratisation. Others were more sceptical and believed that the Arab authoritarian state would reassert itself eventually, despite the uprisings. The eviction from office of President Morsi of Egypt on July 3rd 2013 seemed to prove their point.

This report will try to bring these two arguments together. I will argue that the concept and practice of citizenship (*muwatana* in Arabic) provides the key to understanding the

multifaceted nature of the uprisings. My interest in the term citizenship was not triggered by any theoretical debates, but by the use of the term by the participants in the uprisings themselves, and I was struck by the rights that members of the Muslim Brotherhood and even the Salafi movement claimed as citizens (*muwatinun*).

Citizenship can be defined as the relationship between citizens and state based on a “social contract”. The content, extent and depth of citizenship rights are regarded as the outcome of different citizen-state relations. This report tries to apply citizenship theory as it has been developed in Europe, the U.S. and the Middle East. It continues the pioneering work of Butenschøn et al. (2000). I agree with their argument that “citizenship can be considered the organizing principle of state-society relations in modern states” (Butenschøn et al., 2000: 11).

The purpose of this report is to provide a toolkit with which to analyse long-term political trends in Middle Eastern history. First I will give a brief outline of citizenship studies and will then apply the model to the Middle East. Due to the shortness of the report, I must limit myself to giving a thumbnail sketch of general developments.

I have tried to capture the narrative in figures and matrixes in the hope that they clarify my argument. I will refer to these figures in the text. For a longer version of the report with a full bibliography, please refer to the website of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, <<http://www.jus.uio.no/smr/english/>>.

Citizenship

Definition. In political terms, citizenship is not only associated with a passport and the formal membership of a nation state, but is also directly related to the right of the individual to have access to the resources of the state and decide on how these resources are divided through some form of political participation. Citizenship in its classic form also refers to loyalty to the nation as a cultural community.

Three types of rights. Crucial for the concept of citizenship is the idea of rights. Marshall, in his famous book *Citizenship and Social Class* (Marshall, 1992), which was first published in 1949, makes a distinction between three separate types of rights that emerged in Britain: (1) civil rights (the right to property and safety; equality before the law; the right to a fair trial; freedom of speech; and the right to practise one's faith) emerged in the 18th century; (2) political rights (freedom of organisation and the right to establish political parties) were introduced in the 19th century and extended further in the 20th century; and (3) social rights (the right to social welfare in the form of health care, education, a pension, unemployment benefits) were introduced after the welfare state emerged in the second half of the 20th century.

Extension of rights. Since Marshall, the model has become more refined, and economic, cultural (for ethnic minorities) and sexual rights (gay rights, etc.) have been included.

Comparisons. Mann (1987/2010) has extended the scope of the analysis to include other European countries, defining five different citizenship trajectories: liberal, reformist, authoritarian monarchist, fascist and authoritarian socialist. He argues that these trajectories are determined by ruling-class strategies. His approach can be regarded as a forerunner of the Middle Eastern "authoritarian resilience" theory, which can also be regarded as a "citizenship policy" directed "from above".

Different combinations of rights. In addition, Mann identified different combinations of rights in particular countries. For instance, at the beginning of the 20th century the liberal U.S. had strong political rights but weak social rights, while 19th-century authoritarian monarchies such as Germany, Japan and Austria developed weak political rights but strong social rights as a means to incorporate the working class.

Passive-active citizenship. Turner includes the notion of active and passive citizenry and points out the importance of *struggle*. Unlike Mann, he argues that "it is important to put a particular emphasis on the notion of social struggles

as the central motor of the drive of citizenship" (Turner, 1989/2010: 77-78). This he calls "citizenship from below". The fluctuations between passive and active, demobilisation and mobilisation, and depoliticisation and politicisation make the model dynamic.

Political participation. Closely related to the previous point is the importance of participation. Bellamy and Palumbo (2010: xix) argue that full citizenship rights can only be achieved if citizens actively participate in the political process. Rights therefore also imply duties and obligations.

Exclusion and inclusion. Another factor is the inclusion-exclusion dichotomy. This addresses the question of who is seen as a member of the political community and on what grounds.

Individual/communitarian. In the Middle East the community has mostly been the dominant factor. This is reflected in the notion of the citizen as part of a collective, not as an individual with specific individual rights.

Political philosophy. Citizenship also has a political philosophical dimension. It addresses issues of the *extent* (who belongs to the community?), *content* (the rights citizens have or claim) and *depth* (the commitment of citizens to the common good) of citizenship. Liberalism holds a "thin" concept of citizenship based on the protection of property and the freedom of the individual, together with a minimal participation in political affairs, amounting to a passive concept of citizenship, while civic republicans uphold a "thick" concept of citizenship, demanding a far greater commitment and contribution by citizens to the common good, to which the individual is subordinated. Communitarians resemble civic republicans in their emphasis on civic responsibility, but emphasise collective cultural rights and historical traditions. All of them believe in different combinations of rights.

Aside from these sophisticated concepts of citizenship, it is also necessary to identify notions of justice and how they lead to notions of (citizenship) rights. Very few people have clear-cut views about their rights, but they do have notions of social justice. An important key to understanding the mobilisation of the poor lies in identifying their notions of citizenship. Since the Arab uprisings it is a challenge to analyse the transition of the so-called "non-movements" (with the connotation of "non-citizens"), as described by Bayat (2009), to movements based on citizenship rights.

Another notion derived from political philosophy is the concept of "the political" and the idea that politics is necessary to solve conflicts. Questions as to how it has expanded or shrunk, and what its relationship is with the non-political as represented in Salafism should be addressed. One of the major developments leading up to the Arab uprisings was the tremendous expansion of the political, and in its train the demand for citizenship rights.

Table 1: Rights granted in the Middle East, 1500-2013

	Phase 1, 1500-1830	Phase 2, 1830-1930	Phase 3, 1930- 56	Phase 4, 1956-70	Phase 5, 1970-90	Phase 6, 1990-2010	Phase 7, 2011 continuing
Civil rights		*	*	*	**	*	
Political rights		*	**	*	*	**	*
Social rights			*	***	**		
Cultural/ minority rights	**	*			*	*	*
Economic rights		*	***	*	**	***	*
Inclusion	*	***	*	**		**	*
Exclusion	**	-	**	**	*	*	**
Mobilisation/ active	*	**	***	*	**	*	***
Passive/ depoliticisation	**	-		***	*		
Specifics	Millet ¹ system, traditional leaders	“Liberal age”, patronage (<i>za'im</i>)	Authoritarian movements	Etatism, “social contract”, corporatism/ collectivism	“Liberalisation”, neoliberalism/ political parties	Increased corruption, gap between rich and poor, repression	Popular uprising, elections, constitutional reforms

* Weak.

** Moderately strong.

*** Strong.

¹ The millet system in the Ottoman Empire allowed religious minorities like Christians and Jews to freely practise their religion and go to their own law courts, which functioned according to the laws of their religion rather than the official Islamic law of the Ottoman Empire.

Factors undermining citizenship in the Middle East. Despite the development of citizenship rights, numerous elements have also worked against them. These are not just the colonial and later the authoritarian state, but also the ingrained and ubiquitous system of patronage and clientelism. Although rights can also be claimed through patronage systems, on the whole such systems work against them.

Citizenship in the Middle East

The trajectory of citizenship in the Middle East can be represented in seven historical phases with different combinations of rights (see Table 1). This model applies especially to the republics Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Tunisia and Algeria, and to a lesser extent to the monarchies Jordan and Morocco (the Gulf monarchies I have left aside, although the central concept of the social contract also applies to them). At the end of the essay (Table 3) I give a

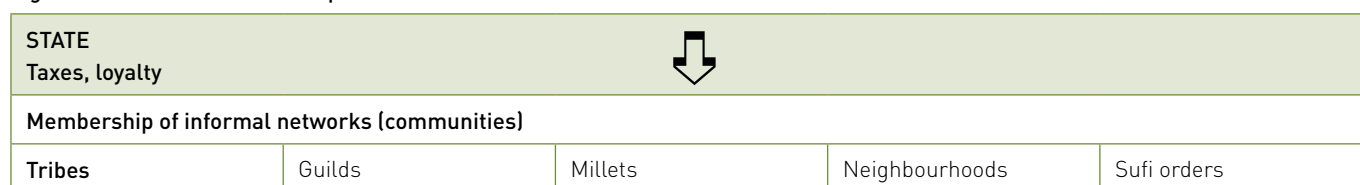
tentative overview of the combinations of rights political currents adhere to in the Middle East.

Classic empires

In the classic Islamic empires of the Middle East (phase 1, 1500–1830) there was no equivalent of the concept of the individual citizen (*citoyen, bürger*) with specific rights, as in Europe. The terms *ra'aya* (the flock) and public (*al-'amma*) connote subjects who do not belong to the privileged classes (*al-khassa*) and do not have specific privileges. The strong sense of the collective is reflected in the positive connotations of the word “society” or “community” (*jama'a* or the *Umma*).

In these empires the state stood above a segmented society with its different social formations organised as communities with a large degree of autonomy (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Pre-modern (limited) penetration of the state



Civil and political rights

The second phase (1830-1930) saw the crumbling of the Ottoman Empire; the establishment of the colonial state in Algeria (1830-70); the occupation of Egypt (1882); the protectorate over Tunisia (1883) and Morocco (1912); and the mandate system in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine after the First World War.

It witnessed the transition from the multireligious, -ethnic and -lingual empire (and heterogeneous forms of citizenship based on extraterritorial rights and the millet system, which institutionalised difference) to a series of homogeneous nation states and the creation of the citizen with equal rights.

For numerous reasons, this project failed. Firstly, the colonial state was based on asserting Western political, economic, and social dominance and legal privilege. Secondly, the process of unification and state subjection was often brutal, with Western armies often waging bloody wars of subjugation.

Only when traditional resistance to this process of unification was broken and resistance moved from the countryside to the growing urban areas and a new (Westernised) elite appeared in the 20th century – speaking the language of sovereignty and rights – could a new form of resistance appear based on citizenship rights.

In political philosophical terms, this period was characterised by reform (*islah*) and constitutionalism directed against the indigenous ruler who failed to defend the *Umma* against foreign invasion. Early liberal political formations were elitist and geared to preserve the privileges of the *ayyan* (notables).

When nationalism gained momentum after the First World War, the political remained limited to the struggle for independence and national unity. For instance, the major Egyptian nationalist Wafd party (1919) and the Destour (1920) in Tunisia spoke in the name of the people and tried to monopolise power, rejecting pluralism and condemning the term “party system” (*hizbiyya*) as promoting national division (*fitna*).

The term citizenship (*muwatana*) reflects this totalising tendency. The citizen (*muwatin*) was not an individual with rights, but first and foremost a member of the nation (*al-watan*), a collective and a community (*jama'a*).

In terms of rights, the emphasis in this period was on *equality* (civil and political rights) with Europeans (even with the settlers in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, i.e. *colons*) and the abolition of extraterritorial rights. It was inclusive of all inhabitants and minorities (Jews in Morocco and Tunisia, Copts in Egypt, Berbers in Morocco and Algeria, Kurds in Iraq and Syria, and Shia in Iraq), although the specific rights of minorities were denied in the process of unification.

Social rights

During phase 3 (1930-56) the “masses” became included. Nationalist parties such as the Neo-Destour (1934), the communist parties in Egypt (1940s), the Istiqlal in Morocco (1944) and the Communist Party in Iraq were able to mobilise a coalition of classes, ranging from workers and students to the bourgeoisie. The period witnessed the first mass demonstrations against foreign domination with the Wathba (the leap) (1948) and the Intifada (1956) in Iraq, the Workers and Students Committees in Egypt (1945-46), and mass demonstrations in Tunisia (1935, 1954) and Morocco (1952-56).

Through the inclusion and mobilisation of the lower classes, social rights became part of the nationalist movement. Trade unions were established in Tunisia (UGTT in 1946), Morocco (1954) and Egypt (in the 1930s). Social justice became one of the dominant themes in conjunction with independence.

Violence returned in this period. In Tunisia the *fellagha* functioned first as bandits and then as nationalist guerrillas (1952-56); in Morocco the National Army operated in the countryside (1955-56); while in Egypt a guerrilla war was waged against the British bases along the Suez Canal in 1952. In 1954 the Algerian liberation war started and would last until 1962. The resulting brutalisation of the population was to have long-term effects in Algeria and Palestine.

This does not mean that liberal, more inclusive programmes did not exist in this period. Liberals in Egypt, Iraq and Tunisia realised that a viable, independent nation state could only exist if all citizens were included and obtained civil, political and social rights.

However, minorities and foreigners in this period became confronted with an increasingly powerful exclusivist nationalist movement as the balance of power started to change to their disadvantage. As a result, between 1956 and 1963 millions of Europeans left the Middle East. The segregation, as well as the ambivalence in citizen status that was so conspicuous in the cosmopolitan colonial era, had ended.

The authoritarian bargain

During the fourth period (1956-70) the struggle for independence was successful. However, instead of increasing civil and political rights, these were suppressed almost immediately after independence (Figure 2).

How did this come about?

Firstly, all these movements claimed to speak in the name of the nation and the people. Secondly, after independence power became highly concentrated. The first president of Algeria, Ahmad Ben Bella, for example, was leader of the FLN as well as prime minister. King Hasan II of Morocco was prime minister for a long time. If power was shared, it was limited to a very small coterie, the so-called “people

of trust” (*ahl al-thiqa*) in Algeria and Egypt, the “people of the tent” in Libya, and the *makhzen* in Morocco. Thirdly, leadership was highly personalised. A personality cult was established around Bourguiba (Tunisia), King Hasan II, Abd al-Karim Qasim (in power in Iraq from 1958 to 1963), Nasser (Egypt), and later Hafiz al-Asad (Syria) and Saddam Hussein (Iraq). Fourthly, in almost all Arab countries a one-party system replaced the multiparty system. Typically, constitutions became a formality and functioned more as a declaration of intentions than of fundamental rights. Fifthly, the military came to dominate politics. Sixthly, security increased to an unprecedented scale in all of these countries. Seventhly, in the newly created corporatist state all civil institutions came under the control of the state and lost their autonomy.

As a result, the post-colonial Middle East witnessed the massive demobilisation and depoliticisation of the population. State-led one-party systems were meant to control rather than initiate debate. The situation gave rise in Syria to what Wedeen (1999) has called the “child-citizen”. The lack of civil rights was expressed in the severe restrictions on citizens that limited their ability to travel, acquire foreign currency and accumulate personal wealth. Their right to information was restricted to state media.

Figure 2: Rise and decline of the social contract in Egypt

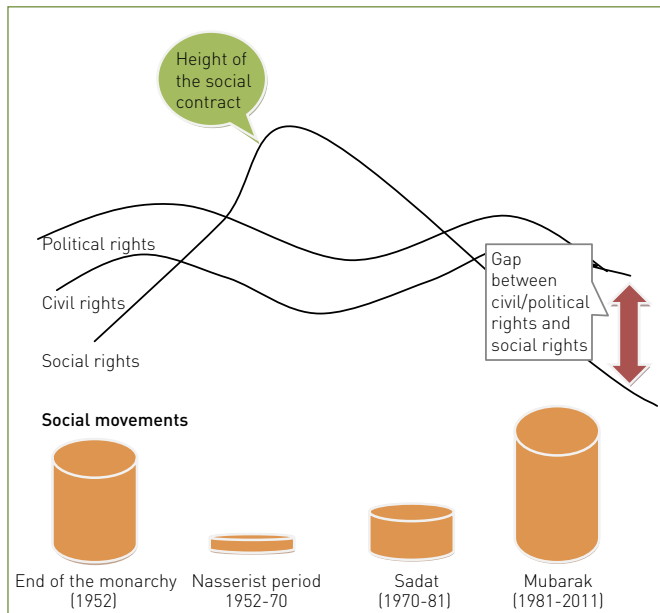
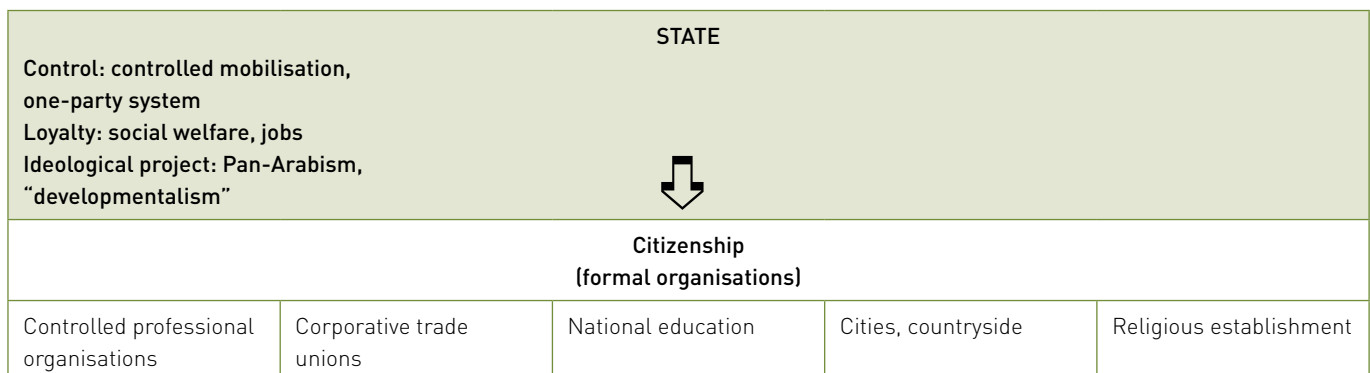


Figure 3: The modern state at the height of its power, 1960s-70s



Explanation of Figure 2.: Civil and political rights increased in the period 1830-1930. Social rights increased from 1930 to 1956, after which the social contract (the exchange of civil/political rights for social rights) was made during the Arab socialist phase under Nasser. Under Sadat social rights were decreased, while people started to demand civil and political rights. Under Mubarak the gap between social and civil/political rights widened dramatically, and social movements increased in importance. This gap explains the Arab uprisings. This model can be applied to Tunisia, Syria, Iraq and Algeria with a slightly different periodisation.

Depoliticisation, however, was not accompanied by exclusion. On the contrary, the authoritarian states pursued an inclusive policy towards major sections of the population, but it was limited to social rights. This has been called the “social contract” or “authoritarian bargain” of the populist authoritarian regimes: in exchange for the lack of political rights (the right to establish political parties) and civil rights (freedom of speech and organisation), broad sections of the population received social rights. These covered the numerous fields that the colonial regimes had neglected: the expansion of primary and secondary education; the establishment of national universities; the creation of jobs in the public sector; the implementation of land reform; and the introduction of agricultural cooperatives, massive public housing projects and free health care, in addition to the rapid expansion of transport systems, the extension of roads, the electrification of the countryside and bringing piped water to poor areas. For the first time food subsidies were provided, starting a policy that would burden the national budget during subsequent decades. This period did not only witness the inclusion of the middle and lower classes, but neglected regions were also included, such as upper Egypt, the interior of Tunisia, the Rif in Morocco, Kabylia in Algeria and the rural areas in Syria.

The expansion of the public sector, however, did not just mean that citizens lost their civil and political rights; they also often became state employees and lost their autonomy. State subsidies, bureaucracies and the growing public sector allowed the government to control citizens’ employment opportunities, the salary they would earn, the

consumer goods they could purchase, the price they paid for these goods, and most of the activities that they could engage in.

Demanding citizenship rights

During the 1970s the introduction of the *infith* (opening) policies towards a market economy marked a significant shift in government policy. While it did not immediately lead to the privatisation of the public sector, which continued to grow until the oil crisis of the 1980s, it did signify a retreat from many of its educational, social and health-care obligations, resulting in the dismantling of housing laws, rent protection and property ownership. Over the next thirty years the social contract was gradually unilaterally abrogated. The end was announced with the signing of International Monetary Fund structural adjustment agreements, the implementation of austerity measures and the removal of food subsidies. The initial response was the so-called “bread riots” of the 1970s and 1980s that cost the lives of hundreds of citizens, who were shot at with live ammunition by their countries’ police and military forces.

The long-term response was the emergence of citizenship rights, which acquired the same urgency as during the colonial period, only now this process was directed against the state. With the declining legitimacy of the state, people

started rediscovering their civil, political and social rights, as well as demanding new cultural rights and forming alternative, “parallel” communities of solidarity with shared norms and values.

Rather than a lack of rights, I will argue in this section that the Middle East was developing an overabundance of rights and concepts of citizenship. These not only challenged the state, but by their very divergent and often contradictory nature also made it difficult to create a new consensus on which to build new community and citizen-state relations after these states had collapsed during the Arab uprisings. This is a major difference from the previous period of mobilisation (Table 2). During the 1940s and 1950s rights had been focused on independence, national unity and social justice, and individuals had been subordinated to the communal rights of the nation (*watan*), but the demands of present-day citizens are much more complex and diverse.

Migration and its effect on citizenship. The initial response was not demands for rights, but an escape from the countries that had so poorly instituted their citizens’ rights to jobs, freedom of speech and social services. Migration flows would, however, affect citizenship rights at home. During the 1970s and 1980s Egyptians, Jordanians and Yemenis travelled in huge numbers to the Gulf. Migrants

Table 2: Comparison between rights in the struggle for independence over the last twenty years (1990-2010)

	Previous period of mobilisation, 1940-60	Mobilisation, 1990-2010	Contested	Main unresolved problems
Civil rights	Civil rights in the service of the struggle for independence and communal rights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unity of the nation unity of the people sovereignty of the nation (not the people) 	Splintering of civil rights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> human rights rule of law equality before the law rights for women freedom of speech freedom of organisation 	Main divisive questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in what form? based on which law? which rights? to what extent? for which organisations (NGOs, trade unions, the press, religious organisations)? 	Community vs the individual Stability vs rights Patronage vs independence
Political rights	In the service of independence and unity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> national struggle for independence 	Pluralism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> competitive elections the right to establish political parties 	Main questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> which system (majority rule/ recognition of minorities, pluralism)? division of powers? what kind of electoral system? 	Broad notion of the political vs religious restrictions
Social rights	Development of the nation, “social justice”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> jobs, education, social welfare, health 	Individual demands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> employment health care education 	Diversity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for whom? organised on what basis (religious, private, public)? 	Organised by the state vs private (religious) initiative
Cultural rights	Unity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> non-recognition of minority rights assimilation into the unified nation 	Ethnic community rights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berbers (Algeria, Morocco), Kurds (Syria, Iraq) Religious community rights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christian minorities (Iraq, Syria, Egypt) 	Main questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communitarian rights, protection, or individual rights as a citizen? 	Millet vs nation state Modern minority rights Federalism vs nation state?

from the Maghreb mostly went to Europe, where many of them became citizens, acquiring dual citizenship. In the meantime the rich acquired cosmopolitan rights, obtaining the right to travel freely and to send their children to Western schools and universities. The results have been mixed. On the one hand, migration and the expansion of travel enhanced the thin concept of citizenship that had been the result of depoliticisation. On the other hand, there was resentment of Western economic, political, and cultural predominance and demands for a deepening of “authentic” and exclusive concepts of citizenship based on an Arabo-Islamic culture and the sharia, leading to a wave of Islamisation in the 1980s in the Maghreb countries.

Human rights. While these more particularistic and communitarian forms of rights emerged, more universal rights were expounded by national human rights organisations that emerged for the first time in 1977, when the Tunisian Human Rights Organisation was established. These organisations protested against the extension of emergency laws (which kept the constitution suspended), torture, military tribunals, unlawful detentions and limitations on the independence of civil society.

Rule of law. Increasingly over the past thirty years the rule of law has become valued, partly by the regimes themselves, which realised that they could only attract investments if they installed an independent judiciary. The opposition has also become convinced of the rule of law as a means to secure civil and political rights. The focus has been on the independence of the judiciary and the expansion of the multiparty system.

Citizenship. The terms citizen (*muwatin*) and citizenship (*muwatana*) have become a common concept among many movements. Equal rights for women and minorities (e.g. Copts) have been accepted by liberals in the Islamist movement. Likewise, the concept of a contract (*‘aqd*) between citizen and state has become the foundation for political reform. In 1995 the Muslim Brotherhood accepted the principle of the people’s sovereignty and the *Umma* as the source of all power. The Egyptian Brotherhood’s concept of the “civil state” also implies citizenship. The same has been true for the Tunisian Annahda party, reconfirmed in its political programme, the Moroccan PJD and the Jordanian Islamic Action Front

Ending corruption and the demand for accountability and transparency. With the introduction of the neoliberal economy and the resultant increase in corruption, ending corruption and implementing a new culture of transparency and accountability became the common demands of all social and political movements as part of the reform of relations between state and citizen.

Political rights and parties. Political parties were partly re-established in many countries since the 1970s, but usually have been co-opted by the authoritarian regimes. Nevertheless, it is clear that regimes needed some form of

political representation and were upset when elections were boycotted. Although the uprisings were not about parliamentary democracy, but citizenship rights, it is remarkable that in countries where dictators did fall (or did not fall, as in Morocco) the holding of free elections was regarded as a triumph. By the 1990s all movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood, had accepted “party-ism” (*hizbiyya*).

Constitutions. The issue of constitutions and the renewed role of constitutional courts was typical of the 19th century and the early 20th century, but waned during the more radical phase of the nationalist struggle. Only during the period of economic opening in Egypt did a constitution gain importance for securing foreign investment. Since then interest in constitutions has grown and activists used, for instance, the ambiguities in the 1971 Egyptian constitution to expand civil rights. The major change from the previous period is that now individual rights are also being addressed in the new constitutions (Figure 4).

Pluralism. During the past three decades pluralism (*ta’addudiyya*) has gradually replaced the monolithic one-party and corporatist state of the 1960s (Egypt, Tunisia) that repressed freedom of expression and organisation. In the trade union movement voices have been raised to dissolve corporatist structures and found independent trade unions. The Islamist movement has opened up to liberal trends that moved significantly away from the totalising ideology of the early period of the Muslim Brotherhood and become more politicised. Coalitions between totally different political currents, thought unthinkable a decade ago, in the 2000s seemed quite possible in Tunisia and Egypt. The introduction of satellite TV, cellular phones and the Internet opened the Middle East to a diversity of opinions. After the fall of Mubarak, Qaddafi and Ben Ali in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, respectively, the press has witnessed an unprecedented freedom.

Liberalism. Although liberalism in the Middle East is not a strong current, it increasingly has influenced certain political currents. In the Islamic movement the *wasatiyya* (middle) trend is influential in promoting liberal Islam and a modern concept of citizenship. It has been active in broadening the political space for human agency by means of individual interpretation (*ijtihad*) and introducing terms such as the “interests of the community” (*maslaha al-‘amma*), which can also be seen as the “common good”. Although the end result is ambiguous and even contradictory, it is clear that the trend has been powerful and is completely new. Within secular currents, liberalism has also expanded and become an ideological force to be reckoned with.

Autonomy and the resistance state’s intervention and patronage. Increasingly also, autonomy and respect for one’s position have been valued as important. This applies, for instance, to the Supreme Constitutional Court, administrative courts, promotions and internal affairs in Egypt, and

trade unions and professional syndicates in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt.

Professional organisations. Professional organisations have become increasingly politicised over the past thirty years. Although they have often been taken over by the Islamist movement, they have become more aware of the interests of their members, and also of larger issues such as human rights and the issue of the Palestinians. Some organisations, like the Judges' Club in Egypt, have advocated control over elections. The Lawyers' Organisation in Tunisia actively participated in demonstrations during the uprisings in January 2011. The Doctors' Union in Egypt actively tried to break away from the Muslim Brotherhood's hold over the movement in an attempt to become independent. Anyone studying the Arab uprisings has seen that many institutions have demanded greater autonomy from the state and the right of self-rule, such as universities, trade unions and the media.

Citizen responsibilities and civic virtue. Although radical Islamism is always associated with violence and the unthinking self-sacrifice of the individual, this applies only to a small minority, and radical movements have also demanded citizenship rights. The Jama'at al-Islamiyya in Egypt used the concept of "commanding good and preventing evil" to instil greater communal awareness and civic responsibility among the poor in neighbourhoods like Imbaba in Cairo, as did other more peaceful organisations and informal networks. These movements regarded public activism as a personal obligation (*fard 'ayn*) and were able to build an independent "parallel Islamic sector" that presented an alternative society based on "commitment" (*iltizam*) and solidarity. They transformed the passive, demobilised citizen into an active, mobilised, "committed Muslim" (*al-muslim al-multazim*). One also finds the tendency towards establishing parallel communities based on an alternative ethos among the piety movements. But as we have seen with the Salafists in Egypt and Tunisia, they can become politicised very quickly. Remarkably, the Nour Party based its political programme not just on civic responsibility, but on citizenship and political and social demands (Figure 4).

Citizen initiatives. The uprisings have seen far-reaching citizen initiatives that have been totally independent of the state, such as "citizen councils" (*lijan al-muwantinin*) or "co-ordinating committees" (*al-lijan al-tansiqiyya*) in Morocco.

Youth movements. Youth movements have played a crucial role during the uprisings. To what extent they consciously and directly support citizenship rights is difficult to say, but it is clear that many informal networks formulated demands for dignity and the removal of the dictators. Almost every established political party has a youth movement that challenges existing hierarchical relations. This also applies to Islamist movements. It should be noted that long-term demographic developments support sociological transfor-

mation that enhances individualism, greater self-awareness and political consciousness. This is represented by the April 6th movement and the Tahrir movements, but also by football hooligans. The weakening of patriarchal relations in families allows for greater individualisation, self-awareness, and the emancipation of girls and women, which in turn lead to claims for greater autonomy and rights. This phenomenon is also apparent in the Islamist movements.

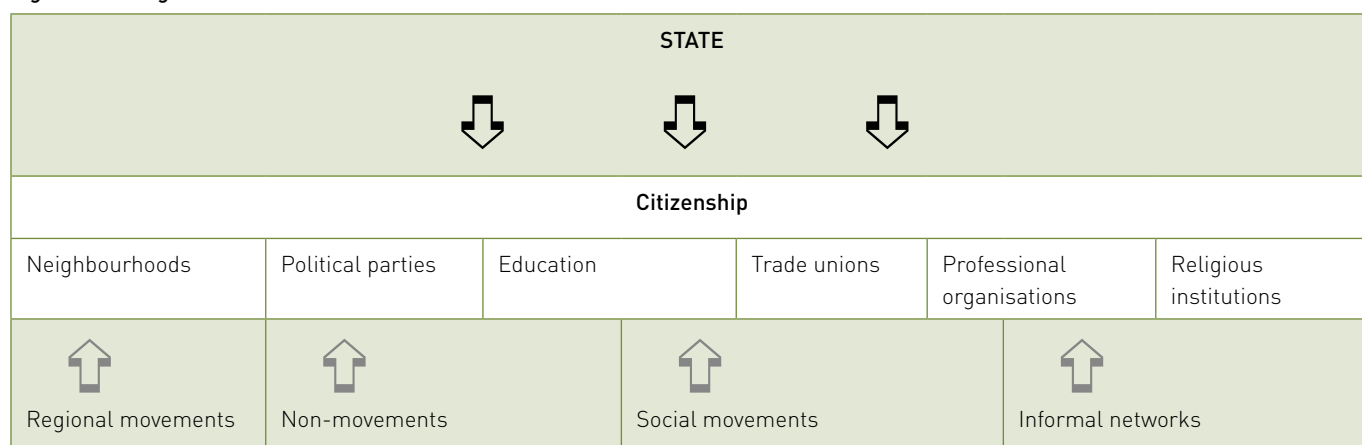
Regional autonomy movements. The collapse of the social contract has led to the emergence of protests by movements in regions that have been discriminated against or suppressed to demand recognition, government investments and attention. This applies to the interior of Tunisia, the rural areas in Syria, upper Egypt and Cyrenaica in Libya. These movements support communal, social and economic rights, not individual rights.

Ethnic and religious minorities (or majorities). In all these countries minorities reasserted themselves after it became apparent that the nation state had failed to unify the country. This is the case with the Berbers during the Berber Spring in the 1980s in Algeria and the Shia in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Many of these turned away from radicalism and gradually developed into civil rights movements demanding equal rights. This has gradually become more accepted. Whereas the Pakistani Abu Ala al-Mawdudi in the 1940s could state that "only those who share this official ideology can fully participate", the Muslim Brotherhood has recently argued that Copts should enjoy "equal rights and duties".

Informal networks and "non-movements". This is a huge term that can cover many different groups in poor parts of urban areas. We do not know what role they have played in the Arab uprisings, but it seems from what we know about mobilisation in the cities that they played a crucial role. We have little idea of the political concepts the inhabitants of the *sha'bi* districts have, but we do know that they are important. In terms of the prevalent patronage system and informal politics, the question is how these groups become mobilised (Figure 4).

Counter forces. Needless to say, all these developments have a flip side: constitutionalism has also been used to secure specific narrow interests and communal rights; minority rights are not necessarily based on equal individual rights, but on communal rights; most youth movements are non-political, but only claim recognition and tune into patronage relations; most NGOs are in fact traditional and do not challenge the notion of hierarchy, as is the case in Morocco; generally trade unions are interested in bread-and-butter issues and are not politicised; the judiciary and lawyers, although in favour of accountability and transparency, also promote their rights as a collective and uphold a thin concept of citizenship; and piety movements have not evolved into democratic organisations, nor have all of them become active. The Muslim

Figure 4: Rising resistance to the authoritarian state



Brotherhood’s ideology has remained shrouded in “haziness”, “vagueness” and “ambiguity” (or what the Arab left calls *ghumud*), while Qaradawi’s statement that “the right of the majority should be given precedence over that of the minority” prefigures many of the problems that emerged after the fall of Mubarak (Meijer, 2013). Even the so-called liberals have a tendency to give wide-ranging powers to the state as a moral guarantor and to interfere in the private lives of citizens, as became apparent during the military putsch of July 3rd 2013 in Egypt. The patronage system, clientelism, depoliticisation, demobilisation and passive citizenship instilled by the authoritarian state are still prevalent.

The point I want to make is that citizenship is one of the best ways of studying political contestation in the Middle East. In the end, politics rotates around the three elements of citizenship: its *extent*, *content* and *depth*. This has become even more so over the past three decades with the huge expansion of the political, when citizenship rights have become the key issue in the region. The collapse of the authoritarian bargain contract has left a vacuum that can only be filled by a new social contract based on rights. It is the diversity in civil, political, social and cultural rights, and the concomitant ideas of the common good and what politics is about, that has made it so difficult to create a new consensus.

Table 3: Matrix of Middle Eastern concepts related to citizenship

Practice as it occurs in the Middle East	Liberalism, individual freedoms	Liberal democracy/civic republicanism	Arab socialism	Muslim Brotherhood, communitarian	Salafism, communitarian, sectarianism
Civil rights	**	**	*	*	*
Political rights	*	**	**	**	
Privacy/passivity	*	*		***	***
Participation/activism	*	***	**	*	*
Cultural/political pluralism	***	**	*	*	
Religious rights	*	*	*	***	***
Social rights		**	***	**	***
Shared political values/majoritarian		*	***	***	***
Economic rights	***		*	**	*
Closed community				***	***
Role of the state	*** a	*(**) b	***	***	* c (***) Christian sects
Extra-human authority (God)	*	*	*	***	***

* Weak.
 ** Moderately strong.
 *** Strong.

Explanation of Table 3. In general in the Middle East all political philosophies, even liberalism, seek the support of the state. All currents share the concept of social rights. Religious movements promote passive citizenship, and only civic republicans are active. The purple squares in the table are potentially authoritarian. More specifically: (a) cultural liberals will seek protection from the state against Islamist movements; (b) civic republicans will be more suspicious of the state; and (c) religious minorities will also seek the protection of the state.

Conclusion

In this report I have tried to show that viewing the region from the perspective of citizenship leads to a rather different interpretation of Middle Eastern history. Firstly, it lowers the gaze of the researcher from the state to the subject: the citizen as both agent and subject of state policies. Adopting this perspective allows one to look at a much wider field. It forces the researcher to become much more concrete and look at the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, passive and active citizenship, depoliticisation and politicisation, and mobilisation and demobilisation. It analyses the combination of rights that can be demanded and the effects they have, as well as the space available for the political and the manner in which the state anticipates, counters, defuses or incorporates the demands that are made. It deals with a variety of activities that somehow affect relations between citizens themselves and between them and the state, ranging from depoliticised notions of civic virtue and recognition by non-movements to highly political demands for equal rights and fair elections. It includes different disciplines such as anthropology, political science, civil and constitutional law, political philosophy, social movement theory, migration studies, etc. As Nyers (2007) has stated, "it is the prism through which to address the political". Above all, taking this perspective provides a key to understanding the current upheavals in the Middle East. It forms the background to the social contract that must lie at the roots of the new deals that emerge from the present chaos and that in many countries must replace the previous one.

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