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After Protest: Pathways Beyond Mass Mobilization

Richard Youngs, editor

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CIVIC RESEARCH NETWORK

The Carnegie Civic Research Network is a network of leading experts on civic activism, dedicated to examining the changing patterns of civic activism in their countries and analyzing the implications for a new generation of civil society assistance. Additional reports by the Civic Research Network include *Global Civic Activism in Flux* and *The Mobilization of Conservative Civil Society*.

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INTRODUCTION

RICHARD YOUNGS

In the past ten years, a startling wave of large-scale citizen protests has washed over the political life of every region of the world. In countries as diverse as Algeria, Armenia, Korea, Iran, Venezuela, and Sudan, protests have exploded, often with little warning and sometimes with dramatic outcomes. Protesters have taken to the streets to speak out about corruption, economic injustices, environmental questions, repression, and a range of particular local issues. Several protests have driven political leaders out of office; some have triggered draconian government reprisals. Mass mobilizations have occurred in democracies and nondemocracies and advanced and developing economies alike. They are now a major feature of global politics.

These protests attract considerable attention while they are occurring. Media coverage is extensive as the drama of revolt plays itself out on the streets of cities around the world. Large numbers of observers offer their views on the sparks that led to the protests, the makeup of the protest movements, and the goals they seek. Iconic pictures capture the tumult of huge protests in Harare, Hong Kong, Kyiv, New York, Paris, and São Paulo, and millions of people across the world see them as symbols of this age of rage.

But far less attention is devoted to what happens *after* such protests die down. Do protesters simply go back to what they were doing before? Does all the sound and fury lead into new types of long-term civic activism? Does the high drama of street mobilization unleash a new type of politics, or does the momentum of change quickly unwind? Is there a new wave of political engagement by young people, fired up by their participation in protest movements? Do they seek to transform the political parties around them? Do new political alliances formed in the heat of revolt endure or easily splinter? How do civic activists cope with the government repression that can sometimes follow protests?

The relative lack of attention to such questions is a major omission. What happens in the immediate aftermath of a protest is just as crucial as what occurs during the protest. It is a major factor in determining whether mass protest becomes a force to restructure politics or ultimately remains a dramatic yet ineffective interlude in the status quo. Yet even though this is a vital question in contemporary politics, after each successive protest, the media quickly moves onto other issues and policymakers turn to the next dramatic

crisis. Vital postprotest trends and dilemmas can easily get lost from view.

Though much work has gone into devising analytical frameworks for the protests themselves, nothing comparable exists for the period following them. As protests become a pivotal aspect of global political struggle, a better understanding is needed of activists' strategic choices after their protests die down. In most countries where large-scale protests have taken place, mobilizations last for a certain amount of time and then disperse, after achieving varying degrees of impact. Protesters then face a series of decisions about what to do next: whether to redouble their efforts or step back from conflictive political activity, whether and how to change tactics, and whether to focus on different issues or simply to disengage.

As part of Carnegie's ongoing Civic Research Network, this compilation examines the crucial question of what happens when mass protests abate. It looks at the issue across ten countries, addressing three specific elements: how to *categorize* activists' preferred pathways beyond protest, how to *explain* why activists choose these pathways, and how to understand the *outcomes* of the different pathways.

ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

The country case studies that follow focus solely on large-scale protests that have involved considerable numbers of people, have lasted over a sustained period, have been based around considerable organizational efforts, have sought significant changes in the country's economic or political governance, and, in general, have taken on a high degree of political salience. The working assumption for this analysis is that these kinds of protests will have an identifiable *postprotest* period. Those involved in this period will need to make decisions that will determine what happens to their momentum of contestation.

Each case study covers one country where important developments have taken place in a period following large-scale protests. First, for each country, the types of postprotest strategies pursued by different civic activists are identified. These *postprotest pathways* include several options:

- Protesters move into mainstream politics.
- Protesters lie low, in part to protect themselves from government repression.
- Protesters move into traditional nongovernmental organizations.
- Protesters adopt new forms of organization and resistance.
- Protesters move into low-profile community organizing.

Second, the different balance between these tactical choices in their respective countries is *explained*. To this end, relevant factors are identified: the comparative effectiveness of the original protests, the political context, the breadth of participation in the protests, and the different themes driving the original mobilization. In particular, the studies examine whether the strongest explanation of postprotest strategies is evident in the division between successful and unsuccessful protests, or whether other, less obvious explanatory factors occasionally may be at least as powerful.

Third, the *outcomes* of the chosen postprotest pathways are assessed. Can conclusions be drawn about which pathways work best, and in what conditions? Is the move into mainstream politics most effective, or does it risk cooption? Which is best at keeping the spirit of the original protests going: the more radical activities or the low-key pathways? Do protesters abandon "contentious politics" too quickly, or do they stay too long stuck in a protest frame of mind and thus fail to move into other types of political engagement? Which

is the greatest failing in the wake of protests: under- or overinstitutionalization of activism?

KEY PROTESTS

The case studies show that a variety of postprotest pathways have been used. In a number of countries examined, protests were powerful enough to dislodge incumbent governments. In some cases, the change of government appeared to open the way to meaningful and structural political reform, but in others it did not. This difference presented protesters with contrasting choices. After protesters achieved their immediate aim of ousting those in power, they faced strong resistance in some countries but more favorable conditions in others. In other cases, protests disbanded without having achieved their essential aims, leaving protesters to debate alternative ways of maintaining some degree of contentious civic spirit and pressure against governments.

The case studies focus on the following countries and their main postprotest trends:

In Egypt, civic activist strategies after the 2011 revolution that ousted president Hosni Mubarak became highly polarized around a division between secularists and Islamists. This divide dominated activists' choice of postprotest pathways and led both camps into supporting nondemocratic political dynamics—a state of affairs that has suppressed most forms of civic activity.

In Turkey, postprotest repression made life more difficult for activists. After the emblematic 2013–2014 Gezi Park protests in Istanbul, most activists chose to adopt a lower profile and focus on relatively apolitical issues. Activists failed in their attempt to gain support for a new Gezi political party, and an increasingly authoritarian government clamped down on the more political forms of activism that emerged out of the protests.

In Armenia, civil society actors dramatically forced a change of government in May 2018 and then adapted to work in closer partnership with a nominally reformist prime minister. Successful protests opened the way for more partnership-based activism strategies, although activists also want to be ready to actively reengage if the new government does not follow through on its reform promises.

In Ukraine, since the 2013–2014 Euromaidan revolt, activists have moved into new roles of supporting the formally democratic government but also sought ways to resist the government's growing reluctance to reform fully. Some activists have remobilized in protests, and the largest activist group has focused on local-level volunteering and community-organizing tactics influenced by the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine.

In Romania, there have been numerous and regular protests since 2012 on several different issues, though, in recent years, protests have focused on the government's indulgence of political corruption. In this case, after each peak of protest passed, protesters were able to retain an impressive capacity to remobilize. They also have looked for ways into mainstream politics, and, in doing so, they have begun to reshape Romania's political party system.

In Zimbabwe, the military has gradually taken tighter control since the November 2017 protests that helped drive president Robert Mugabe from office. As leaders of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) moved to take power and impede the democratic transition, repression increased against activists, forcing many to lie low and move away from opposition politics. Gradually, however, activists in Zimbabwe have looked to reengage in new ways to contest this military rule.

In Ethiopia, protests forced a change of government in 2018 when prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn resigned. Demonstrating a common tactical dilemma, Ethiopian activists have wound down their contentious

mobilizations and tried to help the new government meet its promises of reform—though they remain prepared to move back into the streets as concerns grow that democratic change is stalling.

In Thailand, protests helped bring a military regime to power in 2014, and in the postprotest period, activists became much more highly politicized. Activists supportive of the army have been able to develop a whole range of new civil society initiatives; those hostile to the junta have found their activities restricted. Because activists were so closely aligned to either the yellow shirt or red shirt political camps, they looked mainly to move into politics in support of their respective projects.

In Taiwan, many activists in the so-called Sunflower protests of 2014 moved into mainstream party politics after the mobilization ended. Although some activists expressly kept to standard civil society campaigns, notably, some explored pathways into mainstream politics as a means to retain the reformist spirit of their protests.

In Brazil, protests in 2016 pushed president Dilma Rousseff out of office. Following the protests, right-wing activists intensified their activism through a mix of formal civil society organizations, political parties, and more sporadic targeted campaigns. Their actions had an equally profound postprotest impact, supporting the controversial election of President Jair Bolsonaro in 2018.

The collection concludes with a summary that draws out common findings across the different country studies. In most countries, the postprotest period bore several

pathways for activists: some chose to hibernate, at least momentarily; some entered politics, either joining the opposition or the government, where protests have succeeded; and some sought different forms of activism as policy goals changed, though they made efforts to maintain a kind of mobilization capital that could be reactivated if necessary. These pathways have tended to overlap significantly, with many activists hedging their bets among them. The most effective combination of tactics seems to vary across countries, as political contexts differ so significantly.

Above all, the experiences described in this collection indicate that postprotest choices truly matter and make a significant difference in determining whether protests achieve long-lasting change, or whether activists fall prey to the dangers of government cooptation. The case studies show that the standard criticism that activists singularly fail to move “from protest to politics” is no longer entirely fair—even if this might have been valid to some extent a decade or more ago. Yet they also suggest that maintaining effective postprotest activism can be far harder than organizing an influential protest and that all postprotest pathways easily encounter serious obstacles. The postprotest tactical choice is an understudied, underappreciated variable among the many factors that influence democratic transitions. Even though these studies are merely a schematic first attempt to address the postprotest conundrum, they nevertheless reveal the need for a more systematic understanding of the interplay between protest and postprotest forms of political change.

CHAPTER 1

EGYPT AFTER THE 2011 REVOLUTION: DIVISIONS IN POSTPROTEST PATHWAYS

HAFSA HALAWA

Much has been written about Egypt's revolution in 2011. Given that the military retook power only two years later in June 2013, the widespread view is that this revolution failed utterly. However, the protests of 2011 and 2013 left an enduring legacy—and elements of this legacy have influenced the postprotest pathways that Egyptian activists have adopted. No longer are Egyptians' national and international outlooks shaped primarily by the 1952 coup, the Arab-Israeli wars, or even the fall of the World Trade Center in 2001, but rather by the 2011 revolution. Today, Egypt is living in the “generation of Rabaa”—a reference to the military's infamous intervention in 2013 that left hundreds of protesters dead and shaped the views of an entire young generation.

The 2011 revolution still resonates in the hearts and minds of Egyptians. The current military-led regime, whatever the discourse it has spun about its own popularity, does not enjoy widespread support. Despite the creeping brutal repression the regime metes out, public opinion is growing against the various authoritarian measures that have taken hold since 2013. All this means that an underground ethos of resistance persists and a reshaped activism is struggling

to take root as and where it can in a highly repressive political context. In Egypt, the most significant factor is that a division between secular and Islamist activists heavily conditioned postprotest pathways—ultimately to the disadvantage of both these groups.

THE PROTESTS OF 2011 AND 2013

The Egyptian protests of 2011 were, at their heart, not only leaderless but “idea-less.” As is common in other large-scale protests across the world, anger was a far more powerful driver than hope. In 2011, protests broke out because the levels of frustration and hopelessness reached peak levels across a critical mass of the population.¹

Civic activists worked smartly and quietly in the months that led up to the breakout of protests in January 2011. They coalesced against specific regime measures, and different groups across the civic space reached a consensus on the aims of their actions. The purity of Egypt's uprising was not that it was led or organized by one group; rather, it was brought together by core ideas: bread, freedom, and social justice.

The action in Cairo's Tahrir Square was organized by well-known groups, versed in civic space and activism.² As ordinary citizens filled the square, these established groups came together to impart advice, put forward manifestos for change, and support smaller groups that were born within the square itself. More senior leaders formed political entities, such as the Revolution Youth Coalition and the Revolutionary Socialists, as political negotiations unfolded during the protests. As 2011 wore on, new political parties emerged from the square, and some movements splintered while others merged. Disaffected young Islamist youth abandoned the Muslim Brotherhood and its wider project. As is natural among such an eclectic mix of people, different ideologies spawned differing opinions over what was the best pathway to realize democratic gains and fulfill the hopes of a promised transition. These differences became more prominent as the resoundingly successful protest moved into a fractious postprotest period.

Egypt's protests continued throughout 2011. It was not the case that all citizens returned to their homes as the military council moved to control the transition. However, soon after the announcement of a transition roadmap by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the protest movement split. The target of the mass mobilization had been removed, and the unity of the protesters evaporated. Moreover, the protests were disrupting daily life, and civilian support for the movement gradually fell away.

As the transition progressed throughout 2011 and 2012, support for the protest movement ebbed and flowed as the target of the protesters' anger shifted from the ruling military council to the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood—whose chosen candidate and senior leader, Mohamed Morsi, became president in 2012. Targeted clashes ensued, and Egyptians witnessed mass civilian-on-civilian violence for the first time in living memory. The Brotherhood mobilized its supporters to take on the civilian protest movement, while its political leadership pursued supra-constitutional amendments to stifle opposition. This situation opened the way for the military, then led by major general Abdel Fattah el-

Sisi, to become the key peace broker and kingmaker in the failing transition.

As anger grew, a small petition movement named Tamarrod (Rebel) took over the protests and engineered a petition calling for fresh elections. The Egyptian security apparatus ultimately coopted this movement, enabling the coup that took place on July 3, 2013. The coup effectively aborted Egypt's democratic transition, resulting in a military takeover and an ensuing crackdown on the civilian protest movement. It appeared that activists' postprotest choices had rebounded dramatically and cruelly against them.

POSTPROTEST STRATEGIES

Even during the eighteen days of the 2011 protest, realpolitik and a misunderstanding of the deep interests of the security apparatus became apparent, as activists in the square were omitted from important negotiations. High-profile personalities in business and politics appointed themselves as leaders of the revolution, despite a lack of core, legitimate support from the street.³ This exclusion persisted through the rule of the SCAF during 2011 and 2012.

With the fall of president Hosni Mubarak came opportunity and openness. The immediate years that followed, from 2011 to 2013, were a flourishing opportunity for all quarters of society: civil society, politics, arts and culture, and entrepreneurship. There was almost too much for activists to do in 2011. Such diversity of choice for postprotest pathways should have been an advantage, allowing different activists to pursue their own paths and their own roles in society. However, for Egypt's Tahrir movement, it had a detrimental effect. It meant that activists failed to develop united political roadmaps to steer the transition in a durable direction. As the country prepared for elections and citizens returned home, the majority of those civic actors stayed where they felt most comfortable: the street.

Fewer activists than expected moved into new political parties, as many of these parties formed after 2011. When elections were held in November 2011, more than 190 parties registered and almost seventy won seats in the first post-2011 parliament. More than 125 domestic and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were accredited in 2011–2012 to observe the elections, while hundreds more civic actors participated in programs that supported political party engagement. However, the vast majority of civic activists stayed away from party politics. Indeed, tensions grew between new politicians and the activists.

By not engaging in mainstream politics, the protest movement lost support from among the general population and the opposition parties who wanted to advance the transition. Instead, large groups who had successfully organized in the past remained in the street, while the “revolutionary” political actors were swept aside by the Muslim Brotherhood.

For those who did move into the political space, the ruling SCAF soon hindered their activities. The military leadership moved ahead so quickly with elections that the liberal, secular, nonpolitical strand of Tahrir had little to no time to organize. Most of the new parties born out of the activism in the square had no financial or grassroots means to make inroads beyond small clusters of activists who were looking for political representation. This included a mix of young Islamists who had abandoned the Brotherhood’s political project, socialists and Nasserites, and those groups considered to be on the fringes of the mainstream. Some activists did found new parties, such as the Social Democrats, the Justice Party, and the Free Egyptians. The Social Democrats were the most successful in bringing in activists from the square but quickly became labeled the “protest party” as a result and failed to gain high levels of support.⁴

A further reason for the protest leaders’ lack of momentum from “street to ballot box,” or to political groups, was that the protest movement adopted a suggestive language of betrayal and abandonment.

Some prominent activists rejected fellow protest leaders or participants who chose to explore politics or engage in the political bargaining and horse-trading that dragged on through the transition. They accused those who showed interest in politics of betraying the revolution by helping the Muslim Brotherhood or by allying with the SCAF.

The country continued to think in terms of a binary political and social landscape: a strongman or Islamists. The protest movement and its offshoots proved to be no less immune to the dangers of such a trap. Activists did not develop new tactics, and security actors soon coopted and overtook the tried and tested tactics that had been so successful during the eighteen days of the Tahrir protests. Violence between the state and protesters became a regular part of daily life in downtown Cairo. As the Brotherhood came into power, the vengeful police force disappeared from the streets, creating the highest levels of insecurity across the country, particularly in rural areas, as petty theft and crime raged.

Even though activists eschewed political activity, they explored other postprotest pathways, most notably local activism and community-level organization. This approach was most successful within academia and state syndicates across the country. Elections were held in a number of areas, and activists largely supported them for their transparency and fairness. New candidates were sworn in, student unions changed by-laws and organizational structures, and the state was forced to do away with its heavy control on aspects of academic and social life from the selection of university deans to the sermons delivered at Friday prayers.

As the military council focused primarily on wider political movements, and controlling the country’s coffers (fast running out of money), little notice was given to day-to-day activities, including universities. Furthermore, over the years under Mubarak’s rule, the Muslim Brotherhood had amassed both a huge number of members and significant support within syndicates— notably the powerful ones, including the engineers’,

pharmacists', and doctors' unions—and swept to simple and easy victory once free and fair elections were held. The journalists syndicate shifted significantly to represent the activist movement and citizen journalism.⁵ Arguably, it was the full transparency of the processes in these smaller, localized elections that proved so successful for the wider movement. In addition, there was no security presence at the time. The military has no representation in syndicates or academia beyond its own institutions (for example, the military academy).⁶

As the Brotherhood took control, however, a narrative of anti-Islamism took root within the protest movement. The Brotherhood cadres undoubtedly did not help their cause, evidenced by their choice to endorse various extremist views from the religious Salafi movement and even engage those extremists responsible for historical terrorism in the country. The peak of confrontation came with the attempts by Morsi to place presidential powers above constitutional norms. The confrontations were violent and terrifying to the public. Images of Egyptian civilians fighting each other, resulting in the death of dozens of protesters, filled television screens in living rooms, and the beginning of the end of the transition was set in motion. The military stepped in to settle the differences among civilian parties, carving out their position as “protectors of the constitution and the country.”

At that critical moment, in late 2012, public opinion began to sway back in favor of the protest movement. As the Muslim Brotherhood grew to present a perceived threat against the secular nature of the country and a physical threat to the sizeable Coptic Christian minority—and also attempted to bypass constitutional norms hard-won through the protests—new life was breathed into the movement. As criticism and protest continued to grow, the Brotherhood became even more entrenched and insular in its efforts to defend the changing nature of the state under Brotherhood leadership. As the protest movement began to mobilize again, it showed itself to be quite different than it had been in 2011. In 2011, young Muslim Brotherhood members had been a pivotal part of discussions and engagement in Tahrir about the nature of a future

state, but, this time, the lines were drawn into “pro-Islamist” and “anti-Islamist” camps. The new wave of activists generated revisionist accounts of events in and since 2011 to suggest that the Brotherhood had always been to blame for violence and problems with the democratic transition.⁷

The Brotherhood itself did not help change the narrative, nor did it make efforts to appease protesters. The leadership pushed forward on a roadmap that became inherently isolationist, ignored protest demands in order to implement their “Grand Renaissance Project” to establish an Islamic state, and continued to leave Christian communities vulnerable to growing sectarian attacks. The supraconstitutional reforms that Morsi put in place in November 2012 would be the final nail in the coffin. Protests at centers of Brotherhood control, including the presidential palace, culminated in a series of clashes spearheaded by a more organized and streamlined leadership—which unintentionally provided an opportunity for the security forces to infiltrate the movement. Liberal activists sided with the military in the belief this would aid their return to the forefront of politics. As a consequence, the door opened for Egypt’s security apparatus to take control of the opposition protests to the Brotherhood’s leadership and pave the way for mass mobilization once again. Protests took place on the first anniversary of Morsi’s presidential inauguration. By then the protest movement had been fully suborned and had begun to call for an open return to military rule.

Predictably, the military’s removal of Morsi in July 2013 did not result in new gains or freedoms and certainly did not reset the transition or put the country back on a path toward a liberal democracy. Indeed, the opposite happened. In particular, interim president Adly Mansour’s move to enact the harsh security measures of the new Protest Law officially and legally killed off the protest movement. Since 2013, restrictive laws and targeted security attacks have destroyed what remained of the movement.

Were it not for a growing, empowered, and plainly stubborn young population, shaped by the spirit of 2011

and the trauma of 2013, nothing of the Tahrir spirit would have survived. Even though the state has sought to crack down on all kinds of opposition or dissent, small openings continue to exist, as groups move away from the physical street to occupy online spaces. The student movement, for example, continues to press for change. Even with increased monitoring of online social media platforms, and new legislation that has brought new dangers for bloggers and social media users, pressure has been exerted through hashtag campaigns and the use of YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter to support viral campaigns and uncover regime abuses.

Some protests continue as one-off spontaneous events in reaction to state policies. There is no longer one unifying symbol that can galvanize the movement. The movement cannot insert itself into a polarized society, one which many Egyptians insist that they were “saved from the Islamists” by the current leaders.⁸ The movement exists more in spirit than tangible reality. Still, the experiences of 2011 and 2013 continue to galvanize those activists, NGO workers, rights actors, journalists, and the few political representatives who aspire to a future democratic state.

OUTCOMES OF POSTPROTEST ACTIVITY

Between 2011 and 2013, different activists took different paths and remained committed to them throughout the transition period. Some took on the work of documenting those who were arrested or killed during protests, preserving their path in the struggle. Others committed to supporting human rights cases through to the present day. In the moments of violent clashes, however, activists distanced themselves from other sectors of society, and in their effort to preserve the Tahrir spirit they undermined potential alliances with other reformers. The protest movement itself began to cast out those who chose to run in elections, who endorsed the military’s transition roadmap, or who had supported working with the Muslim Brotherhood.

These particular inflection points allowed the movement to galvanize for a period of time, as noted above.

However, by shedding potential allies and supporters, it progressively lost the swell of favorable public opinion it had enjoyed during the 2011 revolution. Although the second round of mass mobilization in June 2013 undeniably was genuine, it was built not on reformist discourse but on a security narrative that pitted the Muslim Brotherhood against non-Brotherhood civilians and drew people out in the thousands. A hardening of postprotest tactics foreclosed activists’ options and influence as time unfolded. In the end, those actors who did engage politically but did not have the financial underpinnings, heavyweight political backing, or decades of grassroots organizing that the Brotherhood enjoyed were left playing catch-up behind the 2011 political elite. The protesters who came out of the square hampered their own cause through their constant infighting and ideological splits over constitutional roadmaps, economic systems, and social issues, preventing them from gathering targeted support from the electorate. As a result, a few dozen nearly identical political parties were formed simultaneously, diluting the liberal political space as politics vied for the attention of the Tahrir protestors.

As the transition disintegrated, the protest movement was temporarily buoyed by political support through the creation of the National Salvation Front—a group of almost all liberal and generally secular parties and figureheads who had been staunchly anti-Brotherhood during the transition phase. It included many important political actors who had emerged as possible opposition leaders during the post-Tahrir protest period. Driven by the growing protest movement, and not wanting to seem out of step with powerful activists who now had a platform, the National Salvation Front formed largely in response to a growing backlash against a number of political parties, both from within and from the street. However, the move proved disastrous, as the disconnect between politics and protest emerged at the most ill-fated time. Yet again, the liberal movement had coalesced around a single idea—in this instance, the removal of Morsi—and the binary nature of Egyptian politics reared its ugly head. Many protesters, who at the same time were members of political parties, lamented the actions of their leaders, and those same leaders urged

their members to simply “sit tight and wait,” claiming that “the military is coming.” Yet after the 2013 protests, activists failed to take to heart the lessons of 2011 and were coopted by the state. As anti-Islamist sentiment has swept through society, activists’ postprotest strategies have reinforced Egypt’s polarization.

The complexities of Egypt’s politics, the treatment of Islamists, and the dangers of getting involved in any type of activism now are all factors that have fostered a stronger and more rejectionist younger generation. This generation witnessed more violence and fewer gains than their elders. This emerging movement appears to be a more socialist, purely secular movement that fundamentally rejects any and all religious engagement. It is also emerging as inherently a-political, at least in how it defines itself. This puts younger activists at odds not only with their elders, who have worked in more moderate ways, but also with the general social trends of the country. This appears to have brought activist choices full circle back to the polarized conditions of the long years before 2011.

However, this movement nevertheless draws on the sentiment and ambition of 2011, and in that sense, it continues to espouse the original demands of Tahrir Square. The drive and success of the original protest movement still propels many actors who continue to force their way into the civic space, working for and advocating change on sensitive issues. These new civic actors are still motivated by the spirit of 2011, with the violence of 2013 remaining their biggest obstacle and their biggest point of division. The protest movement both lives on and struggles to adapt to the country’s more polarized conditions.

CONCLUSION

Egypt’s protest movement succeeded where it was never meant to: it overthrew a president and a regime. With the success came questions, responsibility, and new complications: with every problem solved, others

emerged. Protesters took on the task and the ill-placed responsibility of fixing the country, demanding accountability, and writing the future—a state of affairs that was neither feasible nor desired. Owing to its success, the people placed a level of accountability on the protest movement, a burden that simply was too great to bear.

Alongside the failures of the protest movement, Egypt’s postprotest period suffered further problems that eventually would kill off the transition. These problems included the actions of embedded security forces that were loyal to the state architecture and were unwilling to allow real progress or development. The infamous counterrevolutionary forces created a landscape that civilian actors—including the ill-fated leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, who made their own fatal mistakes—could not successfully navigate, not least because they were unwilling or unable to capitalize on their temporary strength: people power. As the protest movement failed to create a holistic roadmap that provided participants with buy-in for renewed political engagement at both points of Egypt’s turbulent transition, the pressure and momentum of the street protests came undone. In response, the security apparatus, which was able to capture the essence of the movement, capitalized on the protesters’ political mistakes and instilled fear across society about an uncertain future. The protest movement thus found itself weakened as it lost its capital with the people who had trusted the reformers to help improve their daily lives and create a better future. As civilians became impatient, so did the protest movement.

After every political door closed, the resurgent security apparatus became the only reliable partner, and it skillfully infiltrated the liberal, eclectic, and nurturing civil society movement. New leaders moved their supporters away from core goals of self-determination for the people and toward inserting the violence of the street directly into a fight for the country’s identity. To this day, it is the identity of the state and of its people that consumes the civic space and the wider political debate.

CHAPTER 2

THE LEGACY OF THE GEZI PROTESTS IN TURKEY

ÖZGE ZİHNİOĞLU

In May 2013, a group of activists staged a sit-in at Istanbul's Gezi Park, protesting the Turkish government's plans to demolish the park to build a replica of the Ottoman-era Taksim Military Barracks that would include a shopping mall. The forced eviction of protesters from the park and the excessive use of police force sparked an unprecedented wave of mass demonstrations. Around 3 million people took to the streets across Turkey over a three-week period to protest a wide range of concerns.

After these protests died down, activists had to adapt to a difficult political context. Many focused on local municipal issues and environmental concerns, while some civil society organizations focused on the more general state of Turkey's democratic regression. Most activists, however, chose to adopt a lower profile as repression increased and the space for activism narrowed. In Turkey, postprotest attempts to form a new political party did not succeed.

POST-GEZI ACTIVISM

The Gezi protesters originally came together to protest local environmental concerns. However, as the protests grew and spread, they turned into a larger

opposition movement. Many people protested against not only the government's urban development plans but also its refusal to allow citizens any influence over the restructuring of public urban spaces.¹⁰ Others protested the government's intrusive practices, with its lack of respect for diverse lifestyles and more broadly democratic rights and individual freedoms. Many protesters demanded a change in governance and a more inclusive political understanding at both the local and national levels.

The Gezi protests soon led to the creation of new groups that focused on related issues. One of the major issues that has gained prominence is the so-called right to the city used broadly to denote the right to shape the city according to one's needs and desires. The local forums established during the protests to discuss courses of action later scattered around the city to continue their work by focusing on local problems. Some of these groups mobilized on issues that touch upon people's everyday lives. A larger-scale initiative that spun off from the Gezi protests is the City Defenses, locally organized networks advocating the people's right to the city. Istanbul City Defense and various affiliated district-level City Defenses were established in 2014. City Defenses had an ambitious start and quickly organized local networks all around Istanbul.

During their initial years, City Defenses actively organized protests and demonstrations. They often collaborated with local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and citizens, and in the single case of Istanbul's Bakırköy, district with opposition parties. In addition, they focused on other local issues, such as the moving of bus stops inside Gezi Park (2014), unlicensed construction work on Beyoğlu Municipality's historical building (2015), and the police's use of violence against peddlers and small business owners (2015). These activists also protested the expropriation of an olive grove in Yırca by holding a demonstration in front of the constructor company's head office in Istanbul (2015). Their numbers often were limited to hundreds, but they persistently followed specific issues, particularly urban renewal plans in their district.

A second issue that gained more prominence following the Gezi protests is the ecological struggle. A major offspring of the Gezi protests is the Northern Forests Defense, which was established right after the protests to defend the ecological sustainability of the area north of Istanbul. Many other smaller, locally focused environmentalist initiatives sprouted during this period. Some of these small initiatives did not form strictly out of the Gezi protests, but many are likely to be a result of rising consciousness and civic activism following the protests.

In the immediate years after the Gezi protests, several protests on these issues continued to bring large crowds out into the streets. Thousands gathered to protest the mine accident in Soma (2014); the abovementioned expropriation plans to demolish an olive grove to build a power plant in Yırca (2014); the Green Road project, which aims to link highlands and tourist areas in Black Sea Turkish provinces (with anticipated environmental impacts) (2015); a gold-mining project in Fatsa (2015); and mining activities in Cerattepe (2015–2016). Other local-level protests also came together during these initial years on a smaller scale but more widespread.

Protesters made efforts to translate the gains of the Gezi protests into mainstream politics. Soon after the protests ended, a group of protesters founded the Gezi Party. The party aimed to reflect the Gezi protests' formative experience of acting together with different segments of society.¹¹ It served as a collective platform, bringing in people from different ethnic and religious minority groups as well as secularists. The party organized fifty-two meetings across the country to discuss common problems, organized concerts in different ethnic languages to forge solidarity and raise funds, and supported the campaigns of some of the other post-Gezi groups. Despite these initial ambitions, the Gezi Party failed to open enough provincial and district organizations necessary to contest the upcoming 2015 general elections.

In addition, several new initiatives emerged with the aim of contributing to the democratic political process. In the immediate aftermath of the Gezi protests, groups and projects were set up to provide greater election transparency and accountability increased in number and visibility. A prominent example is the Vote and Beyond (Oy ve Ötesi) initiative, established by the protesters as a nonpartisan citizens' group to monitor the electoral process in Turkey. The initiative attracted thousands of volunteers to monitor the local elections and continued to grow afterward.¹² Activists organized workshops to train initiative volunteers on election monitoring and developed software (known as T3) to digitize the counting and verify the results. Although similar initiatives (for example, Turkey's Votes, Election Time) followed suit, and earlier efforts, such as the Independent Election Monitoring Platform, gained traction, they did not enjoy the same level of attention and support as Vote and Beyond. Other groups took up other aspects of the elections. For instance, dokuz8HABER, a citizen journalism network established after the Gezi protests, started verifying election news in real time. The Checks and Balances Network, established in 2012 as a diverse coalition of NGOs working for a strong democracy, provided information about campaigning expenses after the 2015 general elections.¹³

The Gezi protests also led to a political coalition under the United June Movement. The Movement was established in 2014 as a broad political alliance bringing together left-leaning political parties, civil society organizations, members of parliament, academics, artists, and other individuals.¹⁴ It quickly organized in several provinces, established people's assemblies, and aimed at developing a collective opposition of the left. Apart from mobilizing around the general elections, the movement also organized a campaign for scientific and secular education in early 2015. Members have held demonstration marches in several provinces and organized boycotts at schools.

POST-GEZI PATHWAYS AND NEW STRATEGIES

Some of the post-Gezi groups that were active during the first few years after the Gezi protests began to adopt new pathways soon afterward. A sizable group of activists has chosen to lie low while waiting for new moments of mass mobilization. Activists affiliated with the City Defenses movement are one such example of this approach. Even though the City Defenses actively organized protests and demonstrations during their initial years, in recent years, they have faded for the most part.¹⁵ The networks they established continue to exist but have retreated mostly to social media. Occasionally, they can mobilize along with the local populations and local NGOs on issues of particular concern. For instance, following Kirazlitepe's new construction plan, Istanbul City Defense organized weekly protests in front of the municipal administration. Even then, the protests attracted only a limited number of activists, and the momentum soon faded without having an impact.

One exception to this slowdown in activity was the campaign against the plans to build a new hospital in place of the existing psychiatric hospital in the Bakırköy district of Istanbul. Under the new construction plan, the land (which has around 17,000 trees) is zoned for construction. Over the summer and fall of 2017, Bakırköy City Defense cooperated with local activist

groups, chambers of commerce, unions, associations, and opposition party members and staged several demonstrations. Even though this campaign lasted some time and attracted much attention on the part of various stakeholders, the protests were generally small-scale.

Some Gezi protesters made efforts to move into mainstream politics, but these attempts also largely failed. Despite the initial optimism, the Gezi Party soon lost momentum. The party could never open the number of provincial organizations required to participate in the elections. The party faded and closed down in 2017. The United June Movement, which was launched in 2014, was also quick to lose momentum. Disintegration started as early as 2015 following a disagreement on whether or not to support the Kurdish-led People's Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi) in the elections. The disintegration continued following other differences of opinion. Gradually, the movement shrank; although it was not completely deactivated, its impact soon faded.

Although some protesters have dispersed and others have chosen to lie low, most civic activists have combined different strategies. First, despite the deteriorating political environment and shrinking numbers of protesters, some civic groups have kept up their contentious discourse and activities. For instance, the Northern Forests Defense, established just a few months after the Gezi protests for the ecological struggle, has continued to organize campaigns and protests. In recent years, they have staged protests against hydroelectric power plants in Izmir's Aliğa (the "Break Free" campaign) and in the Thrace region and held a demonstration in front of the German Consulate in Istanbul to protest German government plans to cut down a large part of the Hambach forest in Germany for lignite mining operations.¹⁶ Most recently, environmentalist groups organized a collaborative campaign against the bill that allowed coal-fired thermal power plants to continue their operations without flue-gas filters until 2021. Their efforts were successful, as members of parliament have withdrawn the bill.¹⁷

The second strategy that has come to the fore is increased cooperation among different civic groups. Although cooperation is a regular part of civic activism, the considerable decrease in the number of people actively taking part in the campaigns has encouraged activists to work together with others.¹⁸ As a result, activists often cooperate with a diverse group of stakeholders on their campaigns, including unions, chambers, NGOs, other activist groups, and local members of the public. However, this is not to suggest that the Northern Forests Defense or any other group can bring large crowds to the streets with ease. In today's Turkey, even large collaborative efforts often end up with a small group of protesters.

Third, civic activists have devoted more of their time to organizing community events and social gatherings. For instance, environmentalist groups regularly organize trekking tours through some of the few forests that remain around Istanbul. Last fall, civic groups also jointly organized a camping trip. Northern Forests Defense recently started weekly movie screenings and gatherings with other activist groups. Such efforts may help prolong civic engagement, encouraging those who might otherwise have drifted away to remain in contact with the movement and take part in its actions. These additional strategies are not confined to new civic activists. Other groups that were active before the Gezi protests alternate between protests and social gatherings as well. For instance, LGBT groups have continued to march in their own Istanbul Pride Parade even though the authorities have banned the event for four years in a row. They also stage demonstrations and issue press releases, especially in response to violence against members of the LGBT community. At the same time, they also undertake less direct activities, such as offering movie screenings, communal meetings, and psychotherapy services for the community.

Finally, some groups have not altered their course in this period. For instance, Vote and Beyond has continued to organize election monitoring in successive elections in Turkey and has seen more volunteers working on

its initiatives.¹⁹ This is not to suggest, however, that Vote and Beyond enjoys across the board support for its work. Some media outlets have approached such monitoring work suspiciously, while others openly defame the initiative.²⁰ Nonetheless, Vote and Beyond has close to 50,000 volunteers now. Although its work intensifies during voting periods, it is important to remember that Turkish citizens have been to the polls six times since the Gezi protests: the 2014 and 2019 local elections, the June and November 2015 general elections, the 2017 referendum, and the 2018 presidential and general elections. When its preliminary preparations, including training programs, are counted in its work, this amounts to mobilizing tens of thousands of people around once a year. More recently, Vote and Beyond has been expanding its working area to better local governance through its Neighborhood project. With this project, the initiative aims to act as a platform that brings local people together with other local stakeholders (including municipalities, NGOs, and political parties) to solve the problems that locals identify in their neighborhoods.²¹

EXPLAINING THE NEW PATHWAYS

The domestic political context is the primary factor that shapes the post-Gezi pathways of civic activists, though individual and collective decisions may also play a part. Soon after the Gezi protests, the legal and political environment for civic activism deteriorated. The government proposed a highly debated domestic security bill in early 2015, following the massive protests against the government's nonintervention policy in the self-proclaimed Islamic State's siege of Syria's Kurdish-populated Kobane. Commonly referred to as the internal security reform package, the new law tightened restrictions on meetings and demonstrations and gave the police enhanced powers during demonstrations, including the authority to detain anyone without a prosecutor's order. The collapse of Turkey's domestic peace process with its Kurdish citizens in July 2015, the ensuing low-grade civil war in southeast provinces, and

the deadly terrorist attacks considerably narrowed the scope for civic activism in the country. In the aftermath of the failed coup attempt in July 2016, the Turkish parliament (with an overwhelming majority) approved a state of emergency to investigate and punish in a more efficient way those responsible. The state of emergency was extended at three-month intervals until it ended in July 2018. Although the government has the right and responsibility to pursue criminal proceedings against people involved in the attempted putsch, many interpreted the ensuing crackdown as an opportunity to silence opposing views.

The extraordinary measures adopted following the failed coup attempt had severe implications for the civic engagement. Recurrent bans and restrictions on public gatherings and assemblies under an extended state of emergency significantly narrowed civic space. At the same time, with a large number of arrests and closure of many civil society organizations, the boundaries of what was politically permissible in terms of civil society activities in Turkey has changed. The widespread uncertainty and fear that followed put immense pressure on civic activists.

These developments affected Turkish civic activism across the board. Many people who had actively joined in the protests a few years earlier started to shy away from demonstrations and limit their support to social media. As a result, activist groups shrank in size, fewer people turned out for the protests, and the impact of street activism waned. That said, the activist groups took different pathways and adopted new strategies to weather the current conditions. Understanding the difficulty in rallying people for protests, civic activists in some groups chose to lie low and focus their attention on community events and social gatherings instead. Activist groups shifted toward these alternate activities for two key reasons: increasing community cohesion and attracting new supporters.

First, even though activists emphasize the importance of people coming together for a cause, they also note

that, today, many people would not join civic groups solely to participate in a protest.²² Rather, activists have been providing community events, such as communal meetings, as an opportunity for people to come together around issues that concern them. In doing this, they remind their supporters of their cause. For instance, some of the LGBT groups want to live their identity more freely without clashing with the state.²³ Such events allow them this space, one which supports and reaffirms their identity without forcing a confrontation with the authorities. Likewise, meetings with other activists give participants the feeling that they are not alone at a time when many activists lie low and their activities are not visible. This becomes a source of motivation for activists and also helps them retain the established networks and prevent their supporters from completely breaking away.

This approach may help explain why Vote and Beyond continues to attract a growing number of volunteers as observers for successive elections. There has been widespread concern about election security in Turkey and suspicion that elections are increasingly manipulated. Election monitoring allows people to get involved in certain democratic processes without being directly involved in party politics. In this way, they can take action to address a problem that concerns them without taking to the streets and risking a direct confrontation with security forces.

Second, some of these events have become an avenue through which civic activists attract new supporters for their cause. In particular, during the trekking and camping activities, the environmentalists introduce their cause to new groups in an indirect way. With these walks, the activists also try to overcome the public perception that nothing is left of the northern forests. These activities provide an important opportunity to show people what is still at stake.

At the same time, despite the prevalent fear and shrinking numbers of supporters, environmentalists continue to stage protests. With only a handful of

protesters participating and no press attending or mentioning the event, they sometimes feel that they stage the demonstrations without wider support. In addition, they may be focusing on hyperspecific local issues with less ambitious targets, which prevents them from appealing to a broader audience. However, some groups continue their work because these demonstrations preserve the momentum for activism in the face of current unfavorable conditions. For activists, organizing protests is more than merely a way of reacting to a concrete grievance. No matter what the outcome may be, it also has become a tool for retaining hope and belief in civic activism, until the right moment comes for the next mass movement.

Given their fluid structure and social-media-based organization, it often is difficult for civic activists to retain momentum. To mitigate this problem, some groups have evolved into a structure that mirrors a traditional civil society organization. For instance, activists at Northern Forests Defense set up working groups, prepare action plans, and develop strategies, particularly for issues that require long-term attention. They still call their regular meetings “forums,” but these forums resemble the meetings of mainstream civil society organizations, where participants plan, discuss, and work on future or potential activities. Some of these groups have even established formal organizations; however, they chose to take this additional step because Turkish law requires organizations to have a legal identity in order to rent an office or raise funds.

Civic activists’ efforts at moving into mainstream politics have not been successful on the whole. The Gezi protests embodied a reaction to existing political structures and a call for a change in governance. Opting for the current political parties would have been against what many of the protesters demanded. Even though the Gezi Party tried to create a more inclusive, participatory, and less hierarchical structure in response, its emphasis on sustaining the shared sense of community more than focusing on policies that failed to meet people’s desire for quick solutions. During

its active period, the party acted mainly as a platform sustaining the “Gezi spirit.” In addition, the party could not cover the financial costs of organizing nationwide in order to stand in elections. Comparatively, the United June Movement, which brought together actors from existing political structures, also failed to overcome differences of opinion or establish a common ground, especially during the election periods.²⁴ The people’s assemblies did not reach out to new people. As the movement disintegrated, the assemblies quickly shrank and became passive.

CONCLUSION

In 2017, large numbers of people were mobilized in the run-up to the constitutional referendum that gave sweeping new powers to the Turkish president. In parallel to a series of “No” campaigns led by opposition parties, post-Gezi groups ran a number of civic initiatives. The United June Movement launched the No and Beyond campaign to support the no vote and called for election monitoring. Other initiatives did not form out of post-Gezi groups, but nevertheless enjoyed their support. For instance, a group of civic activists established what is known as the No Assemblies initiative. The civic initiative has organized local-level no campaigns. The first No Assemblies campaign kicked off in February and soon expanded to nearly thirty districts in Istanbul and in other places before the April referendum.²⁵

Following the Supreme Election Board’s controversial decision to approve as valid some 1.5 million unstamped referendum ballots—a figure that could have tipped the balance of the vote result—prompted allegations of fraud and mass protests. Thousands of people took to the streets in Istanbul and in several other cities in the subsequent days to demonstrate against the decision and the results. After thirty-eight opposition figures were arrested, and the protests faded, No Assemblies activists continued to demonstrate and organized a march in Istanbul under the slogan “You Are Not Legitimate.”²⁶ Soon after, a group of activists

staged demonstrations in support of Nuriye Gülmen and Semih Özakça, who had launched a hunger strike after losing their jobs in the purge following the coup attempt and were later detained. Some other groups also supported the main opposition leader's Justice March from Ankara to Istanbul as well as the Justice Watch in a local park in Istanbul.²⁷

The successive mass mobilization of large crowds in 2017 shows that a flame of contention—activist capital—had been kept alive. The legacy of the Gezi

protests continues. Even though not all post-Gezi groups were directly involved in organizing these campaigns and rallies, their earlier efforts contributed to a more resilient society and helped activists find ways to reinvent the civic space even after it closed down. It is difficult to know how long the activists can sustain this potential or when the new moment of mass mobilization will come.

CHAPTER 3

THE POSTPROTEST CONTEXT IN ARMENIA: DIVERGENT PATHWAYS FOR CIVIC ACTORS

ARMINE ISHKANIAN AND SONA MANUSYAN

Armenia's 2018 Velvet Revolution ended twenty years of rule by the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA). After large-scale protests, president Serzh Sargsyan unexpectedly resigned in May 2018. Protest leader Nikol Pashinyan became prime minister and began a process of political reform. There had been several years of small and large protests in Armenia before the 2018 events, and activists had become well-organized. After the change of government, they had to rethink their strategies.

In the year following the revolution, activists took divergent pathways. For many civil society actors, the past year was one of reevaluating and building more constructive relations with a reformist government. In the previous two decades, state–civil society relations largely had been adversarial and antagonistic, but this has shifted to some extent. However, even though many civil society actors now seek to work with government, some remain vocal in their criticism of government policies. Armenia is a case where a successful outcome of protests opens the way for a less contentious set of strategies, but where activists remain vigilant as the new government's promises of reforms still need to be followed through.

LEAD-UP TO REVOLUTION

Protests in Armenia during the 2010s were organized by activists working through social movements or smaller grassroots groups locally known as “civic initiatives.” Most of the protests in the 2010s tended to focus on single issues—to save one building or park, to stop transport fee hikes, or to prevent the privatization of pensions—but their emergence was also related to much broader concerns around corruption, the absence of rule of law, the lack of genuine democracy, the rise of oligarchic capitalism, and the failure of political elites to address the needs of ordinary Armenian citizens. Notable protests of the past decade included the 2012 Save Mashtots Park protest and occupation, which stopped oligarchs from seizing space in a public park to build cafes and boutiques; the 2013 100-dram movement, which mobilized against proposed transport fee increases; the 2014 Dem Em (“I am against”) protests on the privatization of pensions; and the 2015 Electric Yerevan protests against the raising of electricity rates.

Some of the protests achieved all or most of their immediate demands, as the government sought to appease protestors by making limited concessions.

But by making these concessions, the government avoided addressing the wider structural problems and underlying causes of popular discontent, such as the absence of rule of law and the prevalence of corruption. For the participants, involvement in the protests helped strengthen their experience in and understanding of politics and to expand their interpersonal networks. In this sense, the 2010–2018 period was one in which activists' social capital and experience was strengthened, even if their ability to achieve broader political transformations was limited.

Alongside the protests around socioeconomic issues, anger with the RPA-led government also intensified in April 2016 after a four-day escalation of Armenia's ongoing conflict with Azerbaijan over the territory of Nagorno Karabakh. Until the eruption of fighting, the RPA regime, led by Sargsyan, had sought to silence critics by arguing that the population must rally around the government in the name of national security.²⁸ Following the conflict, which led to the loss of lives and territory, it became clear that the frontline troops had been poorly equipped and government corruption and mismanagement was to blame. In the words of a 2017 Freedom House report on Armenia, the "significant political repercussions" of this moment in the conflict led to "a public outcry over corruption in the military and shattering trust in the Armenian authorities' ability to ensure security."²⁹ Thus, by 2018, trust in Sargsyan's government had fallen sharply, there was widespread dissatisfaction with the status quo, and the regime appeared to be holding on to power through the threat or actual use of violence.

Yet despite the widespread anger and discontent, few people foresaw the far-reaching consequences that would result when then member of parliament (and current prime minister) Pashinyan began his now-famous march through Armenia on March 31, 2018, launching the "Take a step, reject serzh" movement. Many expected that protests would emerge, and perhaps intensify and grow, as they had in previous years, but eventually they would die down as momentum would

be lost. Yet unlike in previous years, in 2018, the protests and momentum grew from one day to the next and expanded to cities and towns beyond Yerevan.

Initially, Pashinyan was supported primarily by members of his small Civic Contract political party and a modest number of civil society activists. Within a few weeks of launching his Take a Step movement, however, he managed to win the support of wide swathes of the population, and by mid-April the number of people attending the rallies in Republic Square in Yerevan exceeded 100,000. On some days, the crowd numbers were closer to 200,000. Pashinyan's demands for Sargsyan's resignation and for an end to oligarchic rule, corruption, and impunity resonated with many Armenian citizens.³⁰

In spite of the upswell of public opinion, it came as a shock when Sargsyan resigned as prime minister on April 23. On May 8, by a vote of fifty-nine to forty-two and under enormous public pressure on the RPA, the National Assembly elected Pashinyan to serve as Armenia's new prime minister. Upon taking up his post, he declared victory for the Velvet Revolution and announced the beginning of a new era in Armenia's history. But it would be another six months until the RPA truly fell from power: in the December 9 snap parliamentary elections, the ruling party suffered a resounding defeat, failing to clear the 5 percent threshold to enter the National Assembly, while the Civic Contract party secured eighty-eight of the assembly's 132 seats.

PATHWAYS AFTER THE REVOLUTION

Since the Velvet Revolution, civil society in Armenia can be seen as having taken two divergent pathways. The first pathway is characterized by the entry of civic activists into institutionalized politics, and the second pathway has involved activists' steadfast refusal to engage in institutionalized politics and to instead continue to work within civil society.

Institutionalizing Activism Into Mainstream Politics

Since the Velvet Revolution, many civil society actors took up posts in the new government led by Pashinyan. Others joined political parties, such as the Civil Contract party or the Citizen's Decision Social Democratic Party, and stood in the December 2018 parliamentary elections. For those former activists who chose to join the executive or legislative branches of government, a key factor informing their decision according to interviews with the study's authors was their desire to scale up their efforts and contribute to Armenia's socioeconomic and political development. It also was driven by their continued sense of ownership and responsibility for the revolution.

In interviews, those who made this decision described how they felt conflicted as to whether they could make a stronger contribution to the country's development by entering mainstream politics or by remaining in and working through civil society. As one respondent said,

I have been receiving and declining the offer [to join the government] for two months. . . . I had questions regarding the degree of freedom in decision making, room for action, and another dozen questions. When I was positively reassured, I had no further ground to decline [the offer], as it would mean I am avoiding responsibility. I personally feel somewhat responsible for April 2018 and I don't want to experience major disappointment.³¹

Thus, even though many activists have since opted to go into mainstream politics by joining the government or seeking elected office in order to work in a more structured manner, they have not done so without hesitation or fear of sacrificing the degree of autonomy they had as activists to speak freely and to engage in contentious action. But for those who have taken this pathway, the opportunity to be directly involved in shaping Armenia's future development outweighs the

costs to their personal freedom. In the words of another respondent who entered institutionalized politics:

Looking back at my choice now, while little time has passed to draw conclusions, I would rather consider it a correct rather than a wrong decision. The issues are plenty, so they must be addressed and possibly solved.³²

Critical Friends

For other activists, entering institutionalized politics was not a viable option. They were concerned that the influx of civil society actors into state institutions and the National Assembly, as happened in other postrevolutionary contexts—such as Georgia after the 2003 Rose Revolution and Ukraine after the 2004 Orange Revolution—could lead to the cooptation and silencing of civil society as well as a weakening of civil society's ability to hold government to account. Some activists argued that it was important to remain outside of institutionalized politics so as to maintain their independence and autonomy. Some also cited their decision to remain in civil society as being driven by their ideological opposition to what they perceive as the growing neoliberal turn taken by the Pashinyan government. As one activist said,

I realized that I would personally need enormous resources in terms of physical energy and mental preparedness after the power shift, because there will be a strong need to fight against neoliberalism which is to follow and I am prepared to do it.³³

Before and after the revolution, left-leaning activists have led the critique of neoliberal policies in the country, highlighting how these policies have led to growing poverty and inequality in Armenia. Many of these activists consider the new government's uncritical move toward neoliberal policies in certain social and economic policy areas as demonstrating an ideological inconsistency; some even consider this shift as a threat

to the declared core values and goals of the revolution. Thus, since the revolution, their activism has focused on various social and economic policy areas, notably the proposed flat tax and the country's continued reliance on mining. Some have described the battle over the future of Amulsar (a controversial gold mine project) as the “first major crisis” of the postrevolutionary government.³⁴

Recently, some activists have been working to support collective self-organization and trade unions, which they see as central to advancing the protection of workers' rights and capitalizing on an awakened civic consciousness in the public. To them, this line of activity would be an important way of widening civil society space by advocating and developing the principles and ideas of solidarity, political participation, and human rights into wider layers of society.

Many activists who have taken the second pathway continue to have varying degrees of informal ties with members of the legislature and the government, which gives them the opportunity to share their views and to criticize the policy decisions in private. This is not to say that they refrain from criticizing the government in public, but even the most radical activists have thus far avoided making particularly vocal critiques of the new government. They have opted instead to relay their concerns in private or, when making their concerns public, to use language that is more constructive than adversarial. This is done with the acknowledgment that the government is not yet strongly consolidated and that overly harsh criticism might be exploited by supporters of the former regime. As one government critic stated,

I have also decided to not air many of my criticisms publicly. I prefer to communicate these directly to my friends [who are now in government]. I do this so that my criticism isn't used to backstab them, and instead they can remain steadfast.³⁵

Another important consideration is that much of the media in Armenia, both online and on television, continues to be owned or manipulated by individuals loyal to, or constitutive of, the former regime. This makes open criticism a delicate matter, as criticism of the government becomes coopted by these media channels and the bloggers and social media influencers who actively post on Facebook. For this reason, many activists who consider themselves “critical friends” preface their critiques by stating their overall support of the government so as to differentiate themselves from those they consider pseudo-oppositionists. At times, this can also lead to self-censorship, and some fear that this cushioning of the new government from criticisms, and the latter's defensiveness to the same, may become a problem in the long term.

EXPLAINING THE PATHWAYS

The drivers behind these different pathways are found in structural factors and factors related to individual agency and subjectivity.

Structural Factors

Until recently, Armenia was categorized as a “semi-consolidated authoritarian regime” or what some have called a “managed” or “imitated democracy.”³⁶ During its twenty-year rule, the RPA presided over a political system that was characterized by corruption, clientelism, and the absence of the rule of law and an independent judiciary.³⁷ Until 2018, oppositional political parties, including Pashinyan's Civil Contract party, had tried but failed to build a credible and serious challenge to the regime's hold on power through elections. Under the RPA regime, many oligarchs were members of parliament or held government posts. Their political positions not only granted oligarchs immunity from prosecution, but also provided them with the opportunity to adopt and alter legislation in order to serve their economic interests.³⁸

Since the revolution, there has been an opening up of space and opportunities for new actors to enter the National Assembly. After the December 2018 parliamentary elections, a large contingent of freshman members entered the National Assembly. Although some critics have argued that some of these new parliamentarians lack the requisite political experience, others state that their principled and committed stances make up for what they may lack in political experience. Interviewees also stated that for some of these activists who have entered the government, their ability to affect change often is restricted by the rigidity of institutional bureaucracies. Moreover, some have reported resistance and obstructionist behavior, especially from middle- to low-ranking employees who work in the various ministries or for the previous authorities. In light of such structural resistance and blockage, some new representatives regard their actions in their official capacities as a form of activism in itself, in that they are actively working to put issues on the political or policy agenda in the face of resistance and opposition at every turn.

Individual Subjectivity and Agency

Alongside the opening up of political space and opportunities, the choice of pathways was also related to individual subjectivity: identity, ideological beliefs, and goals. For instance, left-wing activists who have a more radical critique of neoliberalism or who wish to advance more contentious issues (for example, LGBT rights, criticisms of irresponsible mining) do not regard entering institutionalized politics as a viable strategy. Their decision is driven by their commitment to the cause or issue they are advancing, as well as to the importance they place on retaining their independence, distinct identity, and activist capital. Meanwhile, some who chose to join institutionalized politics had to leave higher-paying jobs in the private sector or abandon their entrepreneurial activities in order to take up the public sector posts. These individuals spoke of decreased earnings as a sacrifice that was worth making so as to be able to play an active part in the new government.

When discussing individual choice and agency, the point is not to speculate on the motivations of individual actors, but rather to indicate that individuals' subjectivity plays a key part, alongside the opening of opportunities, in the selection of pathways. Naturally, it is difficult to determine the factors influencing individual choice, and some individuals also may have acted in an instrumental manner—that is, choosing to enter institutionalized politics for personal self-enhancement or career advancement rather than out of a commitment to a cause or ideology. Yet self-interest and ideological commitment are not mutually exclusive factors.

OUTCOMES

In postrevolutionary contexts, there often are heightened, if not unrealistic, expectations for the new government that are not easy to realize in the short term or even in the longer term. In addressing the question of which pathways work best, it is important to consider the putative goals of the activists. The revolution brought the need for sustained and even an increased level of political engagement but also for more diverse types of such engagement. Instead of the binary choice of being either with or opposed to the government, there is now more or less a spectrum of modes of relating to mainstream politics—all the way from moving to the government to remaining resolutely protest-minded and protest-generating, especially in the areas of mining and environment.

From historical and comparative literature, it is clear that, in addition to the dangers of state capture of civil society, activists must contend with a diminished ability to hold the state accountable and to pursue more radical and progressive goals.³⁹ Specifically, if the aims of activists are to advance greater social justice and to resist neoliberal policies, they are unlikely to advance these aims by entering institutionalized politics. Civil society often splinters into more compliant and more radical organizations, and this is what happened in

Armenia.⁴⁰ If activists opt to pursue more progressive demands or policy aims that might be considered “radical” in the dominant neoliberal political context, then maintaining a presence outside of government and within civil society is likely to provide them more opportunities and freedom to pursue those objectives. But their choices also depend on whether they want to maintain activist capital as their main mission or whether their aspiration is to change the political order.

Apart from the opposition to neoliberal policies, the postrevolutionary period is marked by the breakdown of the united front that emerged in the days of the revolution. During the protests, people from all classes, walks of life, and political and ideological persuasions were joined in their anger with, and rejection of, Sargsyan and the RPA-led regime. Protesters held banners proclaiming the revolution as one of “love and solidarity” and remarked how strangers seemed to treat each other with more kindness and courtesy during those days. It is, of course, unsurprising that the unity experienced in the heady days of the revolution has dissipated.

In the postrevolutionary period, old divisions, framed in part around ideological and identity issues, have reemerged, and the tensions are being played out in the space of civil society. In particular, marginalized groups within society, including members of the LGBT community, continue to face discrimination and even threats or acts of violence, not merely from government figures but also from actors and groups within civil society. Such divisions became vividly apparent in April 2019, when trans rights activist Lilit Martirosyan made a brief speech to the National Assembly. Following her speech, Martirosyan faced death threats from protestors who had gathered to express their anger with her speech.⁴¹

The conflict surrounding Martirosyan’s speech relates to wider issues of identity, human rights, and what some call “national values” or public morality.⁴² The uproar that followed her address to the assembly can be seen as representative of a wider rift in civil society between conservative groups that proclaim an antigender, anti-LGBT agenda in the name of traditional family values and the groups that advocate the human rights of all citizens of Armenia. Such tensions reflect the growing global conservative antigender countermovement. From attacks on gender studies and feminist or queer scholars and activists in certain countries (such as Brazil, Germany, and Hungary) to campaigns against LGBT rights and even domestic violence legislation (as in Russia), conservative groups throughout the world have mobilized against the demands for equality from women’s and LGBT groups and “have decried ‘gender ideology’ as a weapon aimed at destroying the nuclear family.”⁴³ This example indicates that we cannot view civil society solely from a normative perspective but rather should consider how civil society is an arena for public action in which diverse groups mobilize around shared interests and goals, articulating their divergent demands and claims. In the case of postrevolutionary Armenia, civil society space is not solely the arena of action for progressive, rights-seeking organizations but is also a sphere of action for conservative, right-wing, (ultra)nationalist groups.

It has only been a year since Armenia’s revolution, and it is far too early to draw conclusions about how Armenian civil society will develop. For now, it remains to be seen how the diverse set of civil society groups will develop, what types of state–civil society relations will emerge, and indeed, how the Armenian government will respond.

CHAPTER 4

FROM THE SQUARE TO POLITICS AFTER UKRAINE'S EUROMAIDAN PROTESTS

NATALIA SHAPOVALOVA

The Euromaidan protests, which brought millions to the streets in antigovernment rallies in Kyiv and other cities in Ukraine in the winter of 2013–2014, were the largest mass mobilizations since Ukraine's independence in 1991. Initially provoked by the decision of then president Viktor Yanukovich to not sign the Association Agreement with the European Union (EU), and galvanized by the police's brutal dispersal of peaceful demonstrators, the protests were driven by deep frustration with the way Ukraine was governed: the lack of democracy and rule of law, violation of human rights, and rampant corruption. The protesters pushed Yanukovich out of power, and a new government concluded an Association Agreement with the EU in June 2015. Yet the protests took over 100 civilian lives and triggered Russia's occupation of Crimea and armed conflict in eastern Ukraine.

After the Euromaidan protests, Ukrainian activists adopted a relatively wide range of pathways. Some activists moved to work in partnership with the new democratically elected government. Others kept a focus on sporadic street protests. The largest segment chose to develop new civic initiatives around volunteering and community organizing. Ukraine's particular political

challenges, especially the ongoing conflict in the east of the country, explain the specific types of activism developed in the protest's wake.

UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

Ukraine's Euromaidan protesters came from diverse backgrounds.⁴⁴ The protests brought together people of different ages, political views, and social backgrounds. Far-right nationalists, liberals and left-wing activists, church clerics and LGBT activists, office workers and residents of rural areas shared the Independence Square. Fewer than 10 percent of protesters belonged to a political party or civic organization.⁴⁵ Unlike the Orange Revolution of 2004, when the opposition called on people to protest against electoral fraud, in 2013, it was civic activists, journalists, and student youth that began the protests, and the political parties joined afterward. In February 2014, the protesters did not accept a political deal, brokered by European foreign ministers, between Yanukovich and the opposition.

Some of the immediate Euromaidan demands were quickly met. Ukraine's 2004 Constitution, which

limited the powers of the president but had been abolished during the Yanukovych rule, was restored, and early presidential and parliamentary elections were held in 2014. Postprotest civic activism kept pressure on the new government and contributed to important reforms, including on issues related to decentralization, anticorruption, tax, healthcare, and education.⁴⁶ Civil society became more organized after the protests and consolidated its internal structures better to monitor state authorities and influence policymaking.

Yet many of the activists' fundamental goals remain unmet, and this shortcoming negatively impacted civic space in Ukraine. One of the initial demands of the protests was to bring those responsible for police violence to justice; this has not been done.⁴⁷ The country is still awash in corruption, including at the highest levels of government.⁴⁸ The government resisted the establishment of fully independent anticorruption bodies, and the parliament approved legislation requiring anticorruption civic activists to declare their own financial assets—in effect, deliberately making their lives more difficult. Political influences on law enforcement agencies and the judiciary remain strong. The electoral system has not been reformed, and the parties remain closed clubs controlled by oligarchs. Civic freedoms are not fully protected. Civic activists and journalists are being killed, assaulted, and smeared in post-Euromaidan Ukraine, and dissenting voices often are discredited as foreign agents.⁴⁹

In the aftermath of the Euromaidan protests, Ukrainian civil society has become more confident, diverse, and vibrant with many new forms of organization, participation, and resistance.⁵⁰ Civic groups enjoy high levels of public trust.⁵¹ Some forms of civic activism, such as donating and volunteering, have become more widespread than before 2014.⁵² However, the number of citizens engaged in civic activism remains at the pre-Euromaidan level.⁵³

POSTPROTEST STRATEGIES

After the 2013–2014 protests, civic activists adopted an array of strategies to push for changes in the country. A significant share of activists returned to their work with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or funded new civil society organizations. A few Euromaidan and post-Euromaidan volunteer-based civic initiatives turned into professional NGOs. The number of registered civic associations, particularly charity organizations and housing associations, grew after 2014.⁵⁴ Many citizens who participated in the protests started to work to change communities from the bottom up by engaging in grassroots activism, organizing communities around local issues and attempting to influence local politics.⁵⁵

A potent coalition of civil society organizations and experts, the Reanimation Package of Reforms (RPR), shaped the parliamentary agenda and prepared many law drafts in the first two years after the Euromaidan. RPR's advocacy contributed to the establishment of new anticorruption institutions; the Ukrainian Parliament adopted nearly sixty laws from RPR's advocacy list.⁵⁶ However, the window of opportunity to cooperate with the Ukrainian government closed after 2015, and the RPR structures also became more bureaucratic and donor-oriented.⁵⁷

Street politics was also a part of the response. Most protests that have taken place in post-Euromaidan Ukraine have been rather small and remain peaceful. At the same time, there has been a turn toward more radical, violent actions. Protesters who resorted to violence, sometimes deadly, mainly represented far-right groups. One such example is that of the Svoboda Party, whose protest in front of the Ukrainian Parliament against the constitutional amendments providing for a special status of Donbas on August 31, 2015, led to the death of law enforcement officials. Other violent activist actions included efforts to enforce a trade blockade with noncontrolled Donbas from February to March 2017 and so-called National Squad protests in March 2019, which called on then president Petro Poroshenko to jail

an associate who had been implicated in a corruption scandal.

Violent attempts to seize public buildings also accompanied the 2017–2018 Mikhomaidan protests—named after their leader, former Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili, who was a governor of the Odessa region in 2015–2016 and was deported from Ukraine after an open conflict with the president. The protests initially demanded that authorities stop undermining the newly established anticorruption institutions and then called for the impeachment of the president. The danger of such radical, violent protests is that they attempt to legitimize political violence as an effective method in the struggle against corrupt politicians and political opponents.⁵⁸

In contrast to the 2004 Orange Revolution, many civic activists have moved into mainstream politics after the Euromaidan. A dozen Euromaidan activists were elected to parliament in 2014, and many more ran for regional and local councils from various mainstream party lists. They also joined ministries, government agencies, and local and regional administrations. Describing her choice to enter politics, a volunteer for the Ukrainian army who became an elected member of a regional council in eastern Ukraine said, “Everyone fights the war in their own way. For me, the war is also my deputyship.”⁵⁹ A Euromaidan activist who helped found an NGO and then ran for the regional elections explained his choice: “Being a local deputy gives me more tools to change something. My conversation with a governor would not be from such a strong position if I were not a regional council deputy.”⁶⁰ This small army of civic activists in politics did not change the nature of politics in Ukraine, but it has brought more diversity and more transparency into both local and national policymaking.

Activists’ postprotest pathways were more active in 2014 than after the 2004 protests. Yet a striking similarity is that, in both cases, protesters declined to form a political movement of their own. In the 2014

parliamentary elections, political parties based on a civic activism identity—such as Anatolii Hrytsenko’s Civic Position party or Power of People—did not manage to overcome the 5 percent threshold to enter the legislature. Even though civic activists were elected as members of parliament or regional and local councils, their numbers were too low and their presence too dispersed to fundamentally change the rules of the game and party politics in Ukraine. Though more than half of the members of parliament elected in 2014 were new deputies, the quality of parliamentarians did not radically improve.⁶¹

The mainstream Ukrainian political parties remain centered around charismatic leaders and depend on oligarchs or a handful of rich sponsors, with no internal democracy or strong grassroots structures. In the 2014–2019 parliament, former activists and young politicians formed an interfaction group of activist-linked Euro-optimists, but they had only twenty-four members out of 423 members of the parliament. In addition, the Euro-optimists held different opinions on many issues and did not vote together. During the 2019 presidential election, they also teamed up with different candidates. The mainstream parties coopted civic activists to their electoral lists in order to secure more votes but later sidelined them. By 2019, a number of civic activists within parliament left their party factions in a protest against the nature of party politics or were excluded for failing to respect party discipline.⁶²

Still, to a modest degree, the presence of civic activists and journalists among members of parliament has helped to increase transparency in institutional politics. They have helped raise public awareness about the clandestine, under-the-table political deals that frequently take place in the parties and parliament.

A good illustration of the failure of the post-Euromaidan civil society to change Ukraine’s politics is that none of the 2019 presidential candidate front-runners came from the civic movement formed during the Euromaidan. Instead, they were representatives of

the old political elite. The now President Volodymyr Zelensky was a new face, coming from the world of comedy and acting, but he offered no change to the populist politics long dominant in Ukraine. During his presidential campaign, Zelensky effectively shied away from answering hard questions or from open communication with journalists and civil society. His critics said that his campaign was sponsored by one of the oligarchs who owns the television channel on which his show aired.

As the 2019 parliamentary elections approached, a number of new political parties that united civic activists and new reformists expressed their intention to run for parliament.⁶³ However, many of them looked for celebrities or political heavyweights to lead the electoral lists in the hopes of generating attention from the mainstream media and the general public, rather than building party institutions and networks of activists. This was more of a new populism than a postprotest continuation of civic activism.

EXPLAINING POSTPROTEST PATHWAYS

Various factors explain why the Euromaidan's civic energy did not bring about a political movement that could win power through elections and implement more fundamental change. These relate to the political context, the structure, and the agency of postprotest activism.

First, the Russian occupation of Crimea and the armed conflict in the east diverted a significant part of civic energy. Because the state was weak, civil society took up some basic government functions, such as providing supplies for the army and dealing with the humanitarian crisis. In the first years after the Euromaidan, many civic groups focused on acting as a substitute for the state rather than reforming it.⁶⁴ Moreover, the prolonged armed conflict and foreign aggression plays into the hands of those currently in

power, who use the “Russian card” to silence those who speak out about corruption and the lack of rule of law. A journalist who discovered presidential involvement in corrupt deals in the defense sector was accused of having relatives in the Russian security service.⁶⁵ A local activist was called a “Russian provocateur” after asking the president to answer the question of what steps have been taken to address corruption.⁶⁶ The foreign threat is an easy pretext to silence dissent. Parts of civil society have also adopted self-censorship and conflict-avoiding strategies: many civic activists and journalists prefer not to make radical demands or use radical tactics in order to avoid upsetting the country's fragile stability or to inadvertently help those forces interested in undermining the country's unity.

Second, the postprotest choice of the pathways mirrored the key qualities of the protests themselves. The Euromaidan protests were leaderless, nonpartisan, and, to some extent, antipolitical. The protesters never had a charismatic leader who could become a political leader. During the first days of the protests, there were two separate Maidans: a political Maidan with party flags and a civic Maidan with Ukrainian and EU flags. The political opposition joined the protesters, but the civic movement kept separate from the political opposition and there was a degree of mistrust toward it. The civic Maidan made the revolution, but the political Maidan came to power as a result of it. Thus, the ruling elite has not qualitatively changed. Even at the local elections that took place in new amalgamated territorial communities established by decentralization reform—one of the Euromaidan's key objectives and achievements—the old elites came to power. According to a report by a Ukrainian nonprofit election watchdog, in the first elections in the united territorial communities in Ukraine, 80 percent of all the mayoral positions were won by candidates who previously had been influential officeholders, whether as incumbent city, town, or village mayors or as heads of their district councils or district administrations.⁶⁷

Third, many civic activists felt uncomfortable going into politics, fearing the reputation and resource losses that such a move implies. In Ukraine, politics is still perceived as something dirty. As a civic activist from Lviv explained, describing his choice to run for a seat in parliament: “If I want to be a member of parliament, I need to join a good party that has no chance to get into parliament, or I have to join an oligarchic party, but it would be harder to be independent.”⁶⁸ Mustafa Naiem, a journalist who often is regarded as the instigator of the the Euromaidan protests (as the one whose Facebook post first called citizens to the square), said that attitudes toward him changed after he became a member of parliament from the Petro Poroshenko bloc party list. He attributed this distrust to the negative public attitude toward parliament and politicians in Ukraine.⁶⁹

It is also easier to be a civic activist or maintain an NGO in Ukraine than to be a politician independent from big money. As one civic activist put it: “You should have some money from somewhere. . . . You cannot start from nowhere and become a member of parliament and get a salary. It’s possible to win local elections in Odessa, and we even got some small party into city politics. But you really need to invest an enormous amount of time and you should be really devoted to this process. If you want to live your life, it’s easier to be an activist and just work on some projects.”⁷⁰

Although foreign donors remain the main source of support to civil society organizations in Ukraine, political party funding should come from domestic sources. The civil society tactics of volunteering, collecting donations, and crowdsourcing, used to support the army and charities after the Euromaidan, are hardly employed elsewhere. Ukrainian civil society organizations have trouble finding domestic sources of support for their own activities, let alone to crowdsource for a civic political party.

Kyiv’s Maidan was too diverse to form one big umbrella movement. The only groups that were able

to consolidate politically after the protests, forming political parties and participating in the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2014, were the far-right groups. A liberal wing or a more centrist, Christian-democratic, or conservative one, are absent, and their niches remain unoccupied in the political sphere. Ahead of the 2019 parliamentary elections, civic activists and independent politicians announced the establishment of several civic groups.⁷¹ However, despite some efforts to join forces, they did not come as a united front.⁷² For all the innovative work of civic activists after 2014, they were not at the forefront of the political change that hit Ukraine in 2019. Although, just as in 2014, political parties attracted civic activists to their party lists, the election results of July 21, 2019, were more the reflection of popularity of charismatic party leaders rather than teams led by them. The impressive victory that Zelensky’s Servant of the People Party obtained in the early parliamentary elections (254 out 424 seats in parliament) was due mainly to his own popularity. Ukrainians voted for candidates with no name, no previous record of public policy, or no civic activism just because they came under his party brand. According to a public opinion poll conducted in June, on the eve of the elections, the largest share of Ukrainians saw Zelensky as the main reform driver (61 percent), followed by the upcoming parliament (46 percent) and future government (42 percent), with civil society organizations and volunteers having a more modest role (21 percent).⁷³ In July 2019, former Euromaidan civic activists who had turned politicians in 2014 failed to secure seats in the new parliament. In a way, populism has showed itself a force far more powerful than civic activism. Even a modest result for Sviatoslav Vakarchuk’s Holos party seems to be largely due to his own charisma and voters’ trust than due to a team of active people, including from civil society, who came to parliament from his party list. At the same time, public opinion polls show that citizens expect civil society to engage politically.⁷⁴ Thus, when the postelection dust finally settled down, civic activists resumed their role of government watchdogs and change agents both outside and, to an extent, inside the government.

CONCLUSION

A deep political transformation in Ukraine is a long-term process that may also require a change of generations in politics. In 2014, the protesters won the battle, but their revolution is still unfinished, and they may well need to win many more battles in a fight for a democratic and truly European Ukraine. What is important for civil society in Ukraine is to move on with this piecemeal revolution. Outside pressure on the government is important, but it is hard to imagine

institutional change in Ukraine's politics without a new quality of political parties and political leaders entering the scene at the local, regional, and national levels. Since 2014, Ukrainian activists have focused on the local level and practical volunteering related to the conflict, engaged in new rounds of protests, or joined the government or established parties. Although these postprotest pathways have had some impact and made activists a feature of Ukrainian political life, they have fallen short of what is needed for wholesale political change and democratization.

CHAPTER 5

AFTER PROTEST: PATHWAYS BEYOND MASS MOBILIZATION IN ROMANIA

CRISTINA BUZASU

Despite the apathy and fatalism that have traditionally characterized Romanian citizens, civic mobilization has increased significantly in Romania since 2012, culminating with massive anticorruption protests from 2017 to 2019. Several mass mobilizations have thus taken place over the past few years, mainly in response to government measures perceived to undermine the fight against corruption and privilege certain public officials.

Such large protests have grown in size and have diversified the repertoires used by civic activists, based on a steep learning curve and a global diffusion of protest tactics. From one protest to another, citizens learned about the powerful democratic tools at their disposal and understood their own effectiveness. Moreover, the number of protesters increased significantly from a few thousand in 2012 to several hundred thousand people, reaching a peak of 600,000 protesters in February 2017.⁷⁵ This dramatic rise shows that civic mobilization and civil society have become increasingly influential factors on the Romanian political scene. Even though many activists did not remain active after key protests, others have found a way to maintain a capacity either to mobilize or to engage in mainstream politics.

TIMELINE OF MASS MOBILIZATIONS

The wave of civil-society-led mobilizations in Romania began in 2012, with demonstrations against the government's proposal to privatize the Medical Emergency Intervention Service (Serviciul Mobil de Urgență, Reanimare și Descarcerare, SMURD), a specialized emergency service capable of treating and transporting serious cases. When then president Traian Băsescu subsequently dismissed the highly regarded health state secretary Dr. Raed Arafat, the founder of SMURD, popular opinion regarded the president's actions as unjust and discretionary. The direct result of the protests was the fall of the incumbent government of prime minister Emil Boc.

In September 2013, the government's approval of a draft law that would allow the Roșia Montană Gold Corporation to build Europe's largest open-cast gold mine in the small town of Roșia Montană triggered large mobilizations that lasted more than a month. Protesters demonstrated not only against the mining project but also against the political establishment and the alleged corruption of public officials linked with the project. The direct result of the protests was the

Romanian Parliament's rejection of the mining law in November 2013.

On October 30, 2015, a fire broke out in the Bucharest nightclub *Colectiv*, killing sixty-five people and injuring almost 150. This tragedy was blamed on the corruption of public officials, who had failed to undertake proper safety checks at several nightclubs and triggered the largest protests the country had witnessed hitherto. This protest episode led to the resignation of the incumbent prime minister Victor Ponta, which in turn de-escalated the mass mobilization.

In the aftermath of the *Colectiv* protests, former European commissioner Dacian Cioloș was appointed by parliamentary consensus to head a technocrat government for a year, until the end of 2016. In December 2016, the country's general elections were won, with an overwhelming majority, by the Social Democratic Party (*Partidul Social Democrat*, PSD). The PSD and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (*Alianța Liberalilor și Democraților*, ALDE) formed a center-left government, headed by Sorin Grindeanu. On January 31, 2017, shortly after the government was formed, the Ministry of Justice unexpectedly passed an ordinance bill (Government Ordinance 13) decriminalizing government corruption and abuse of office below a certain threshold. Right after the ordinance was adopted late in the evening, several thousand protesters took to the streets.

The demonstrations continued daily and reached their peak on February 5, 2017, when almost 600,000 people protested in many cities across the country and abroad. Even though the government repealed the controversial bill a few days later, protesters remained in the streets, further castigating the ruling coalition over its declared attempts to pass similar legislation through parliament, as well as subsequently proposed ordinances aimed at amending the justice laws. The protests of early 2017 were the largest protests in Romania's postcommunist history.

Thus, in the Romanian case, one can distinguish between several cycles of protests. Each protest cycle influenced and fed into the ones that followed, generating what could be referred to as "activist capital." From this point of view, each protest can be regarded as an episode in a broader series of citizenship identity formation and peaceful regaining of public spaces, public policy, and ultimately political involvement. Such protests can die down and reappear again and turn on and off several times over a long period.

The recurring theme of the Romanian protests has been anticorruption. Thus, the demonstrations also could be regarded as an expression of the citizens' stance against corruption and poor governance, which is perceived to be eroding Romania's fragile democracy and market economy.

Regarding the profile of the activists, they were predominantly made up of young urban elites, relatively well off and highly educated, who were joined by people from diverse social and economic backgrounds, including private sector professionals, teachers, artists, and even some elderly people. These demonstrators could be associated with a growing Romanian middle class, demanding that its rights be respected and its voice be heard. Their motivation for participating in street protests was linked to a deep frustration with the entire political establishment. As such, activists wished to differentiate themselves from this establishment and reject the type of hierarchical, leader-centered structure associated with it.

The mass mobilizations also indicate a growing alienation of Romanian citizens from the incumbent political parties and, in particular, PSD and ALDE. The public largely perceives these political parties as self-serving and incompetent, as well as generally corrupt. Consequently, the parties' credibility is at one of the lowest points since the fall of the communist regime. Although such sentiments toward political parties are not uncommon throughout Central and Eastern Europe,⁷⁶ in Romania, the country's populist and

nationalist tendencies come mainly from the left wing of the political spectrum. In this regard, the PSD, as the successor of the former communist party, promotes what could be termed as “left-wing conservatism”—in which socially conservative, religiously dogmatic, and nationalistic doctrines are accompanied by redistributive economic policies.

Considering the political associations of nationalist and populist movements in other countries, the Romanian case might seem counterintuitive. However, it must be pointed out that the center-right parties in Romania—which include the National Liberal Party (Partidul Național Liberal, PNL), Save Romania Union (Uniunea Salvați România, USR), and Freedom, Unity, and Solidarity Party (Partidul Libertății, Unității și Solidarității, PLUS)—are all moderate and act as a progressive, modernizing, and pro-European force in the country. Despite a slight dip in pro-European sentiment (related to the recent anti-European Union rhetoric of the ruling PSD party), the Romanian electorate is still very pro-European, and so right-wing nationalism and populism does not have the same appeal it has in many of Romania’s European neighbors. The results of the European Parliament elections, which were overwhelmingly won by the pro-European opposition parties, are telling in that regard.

TYPOLOGY OF PATHWAYS

After the mass protests in the winter of 2017, Romanian activists opted for various pathways. The majority of protesters decided to lie low, mainly waiting for new opportunities of mass mobilization triggered by major political events, without much of a “between protests” strategy. In this regard, many civic activists claimed that the protest movement has lost steam since 2017.

One major contributing factor was the governing party’s tactic of conducting a “trench war” of small steps aimed at gradually dismantling the country’s existing anticorruption legislation. One particular casualty was

the internationally praised National Anticorruption Directorate (Direcția Națională Anticorupție, DNA), whose head, Laura Codruța Kövesi, was dismissed in July 2018. The government’s strategy seems to have worn down the protesters. Although discontent continues to brew among a large number of citizens, they seem to be waiting for a decisive moment to participate in another mass mobilization.

Nevertheless, despite a certain degree of disappointment, some groups of civic activists adopted new forms of organization and resistance, with the objective of consolidating civic culture and leading to a genuine institutionalization of activism across the country. This trend occurred mostly in large cities such as Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, and Timișoara. The activist networks organized several campaigns aimed at mobilizing citizens and promoting their participation in decisionmaking, especially at the local level. The use of online resources greatly facilitated this task, allowing them to overcome many logistical obstacles.

Several successful civic platforms have consolidated their structures and expanded their activities following the 2017 mass protests. These platforms were generally set up in the aftermath of the fire at the Colectiv nightclub. After the 2017 protests triggered by Government Ordinance 13, these civic platforms grew significantly in size (in terms of number of members and supporters) and positioned themselves to take on the role of catalysts for further street protests.

For instance, Corruption Kills (Coruptia Ucide) is a civic network focused on fighting corruption. It was created following the Colectiv tragedy, which was linked to corruption in the public administration. The organization’s campaigns have helped end the decriminalization of corruption cases and have uncovered fraud and embezzlement cases in Romania. Its founder, Florin Badita, was named as one of Forbes’ 30 Under 30 Europe (Law and Policy section), as well as European Personality of the Year in 2018. The Corruption Kills Facebook page has become a national

phenomenon. Aimed at facilitating the organization of civic campaigns and protests, it has gained more than 100,000 followers. The civic network has also started an educational project, a civic entrepreneurship incubator known as Civic Starter, and the Activist's House, a space for knowledge sharing among civic activists.

Another successful civic platform created in the days of civic mobilization that followed the Colectiv tragedy is Initiative Romania (Inițiativa România). It was founded by a small group of activists in November 2015, with the objective of attracting citizens who shared the same values of integrity, competence, accountability, and respect for the rule of law. Initiative Romania soon was joined by hundreds of like-minded activists, with the declared mission of helping to create a new political class meant to represent voters' interests in a competent and ethical manner.

Apart from these civic platforms, new forms of resistance also materialized under the umbrella of viral hashtags such as #rezist (resist), #toti_pentru_justitie (all for justice), and, most recently, #si_eu (me too), a local movement advocating against corruption and the country's poor infrastructure. These hashtags triggered new and ingenious types of protests also revolving around the issues of justice, anticorruption, and good governance, including in the area of healthcare and public infrastructure.

These protest hashtags and civic networks, together with Romanian diaspora organizations, were instrumental in organizing a new series of large-scale mobilizations in Romania. After February 2017, the next mass mobilization took place on January 20, 2018, when close to 100,000 people gathered to protest against the government's proposed changes to the penal code and the justice laws.⁷⁷

Following the January protests, smaller demonstrations occurred almost on a daily basis, until another large-scale protest was organized on August 10, 2018, by diaspora civic associations. The Romanian diaspora is

very influential from an economic and political point of view, and it has strong ties to the country, particularly family members. It is also the most important investor in Romania, bringing in about 2 billion euros annually.⁷⁸ With almost 4 million Romanians living abroad, the diaspora accounts for more than 20 percent of the country's population.⁷⁹ Thus, Romania has the fastest growth rate of the number of emigrants among nonconflict countries.⁸⁰

The August 10 protest was aimed at encouraging diaspora members who were spending their summer holidays in Romania to protest against the government's passing of the new justice bills and the dismissal of DNA's head, Kövesi. Under the slogan "Diaspora at Home," the protesters demanded the resignation of the government and the elimination of corruption. The mass demonstration led to clashes between the protesters and the police marked by unprecedented violence. As shown by the subsequent investigation and partial declassification of secret files, the violent intervention of the gendarmerie against the overwhelmingly peaceful protesters was orchestrated by then interior minister Carmen Dan under the direction of the PSD and then president of the Chamber of Deputies Liviu Dragnea.⁸¹

From the ranks of the civic-minded activists who organized new forms of collective action and resistance, a third group of protesters emerged onto the mainstream Romanian political scene. Several new political parties were formed, the most prominent of which were the center-right USR and PLUS and the left-wing Democracy and Solidarity Party (Partidul Democrației și Solidarității, DEMOS).

USR, formed in 2016, has risen rapidly to become the third political force in Romania. Established by known civic activists such as the mathematician Nicușor Dan, USR is the youngest party represented in the Romanian Parliament. USR was created by ordinary people who had not been involved in politics before but who were fed up with incumbent politicians' corruption and

incompetence. Its declared mission is for Romania to be governed transparently by competent people who are guided by the public interest and, above all, the rule of law.

PLUS, set up in October 2018, is led by former Romanian prime minister and European commissioner Dacian Cioloș. In 2017, Cioloș laid the foundations of Romania 100, a platform aimed at attracting civic-minded individuals to a large-scale project intended to create lasting change at both local community and nationwide levels. Many members and supporters of Romania 100 then joined the ranks of the newly formed PLUS political party, which joined forces with USR to run together in the 2019 European Parliament elections under the umbrella 2020 Alliance.

The third recently founded political party, DEMOS, is a left-leaning platform created in autumn 2015, also following the Colectiv tragedy. It was formed in response to the need to organize progressive energies in the country, and in June 2018, DEMOS was registered as the political and electoral arm of the platform. Most of the platform's members and supporters had never been involved in politics before, but they are active at the civic and community levels. In the run-up to the 2019 European Parliament elections, however, DEMOS did not manage to raise the required 200,000 signatures needed to qualify for the elections.

EXPLAINING PATHWAYS

Several factors explain the balance of the different pathways beyond mobilization in the case of Romania. These factors include the effectiveness of the original protests, the breadth of public participation in protests, and the government's reaction to the large-scale mobilizations.

The mass demonstrations in Romania had significant immediate results. They led to the resignation of two governments and several public officials and the

rejection of important draft laws, such as the mining law. The protests also managed to reach the critical mass needed in order to be able to foster political change. For instance, in 2017, the anticorruption protests forced the government to repeal Government Ordinance 13 and trigger a cabinet reshuffle of four ministers, including the justice minister. But if the protesters' immediate demands were satisfied for the time being, the mass mobilization fell short of securing long-term outcomes in terms of preventing the ruling coalition from dismantling the justice system and undermining the independence of the judiciary. Thus, the activists' structural demands were not met.

As such, many activists considered that the protests only delayed the governing coalition's stronghold on public institutions and its attacks on anticorruption legislation. As the government's actions in 2018 and 2019 clearly showed, the PSD-ALDE coalition merely changed the means of achieving its goals; in particular, it chose to use parliament (which it largely controlled) to pass bills that would relax anticorruption legislation. The struggle for long-term impact explains why some protesters lost hope and decided to lie low, without a between protest strategy. In this regard, many Romanian citizens could have grown tired after several years of protesting against corruption without concrete results.

The government's reaction to the protests is another crucial factor in the choice of pathways, given its vital role in the escalation or diffusion of mass mobilizations. As mentioned earlier, a kind of trench war has been unfolding between the government and the protesters over several years. In line with the government's strategy to intimidate activists and prevent other people from joining the mass demonstrations, the police and gendarmerie became more aggressive toward the protesters. The violent police intervention on August 10, 2018, is a case in point.

Furthermore, in response to the anticorruption protests, the PSD also organized progovernment

demonstrations, most prominently a rally in Bucharest on June 9, 2018. This counterprotest, which involved around 100,000 participants, was aimed at showcasing the supposed legitimacy of the ruling party. However, this was not a spontaneous mobilization but rather was minutely planned by local and regional PSD structures, which coordinated bus transportation to Bucharest and paid for their protesters' food and drinks.

In the case of activists who opted for new forms of organization and resistance, their primary motivation was to lay the foundations of a new political culture in Romania, centered on the citizens and their power to freely choose the course of their country's development. What they were seeking was a bottom-up participatory process—what many referred to as an “IKEA effect” of people building their own decisionmaking processes and public policies. These groups of activists believed that if participatory practices and civic culture do not become rooted at the level of the ordinary citizen, democracy would remain an empty shell.

Many activists realized that only by getting involved in politics and setting up political parties of their own would they be able to exert lasting change—the end goal was to be elected to public office and take power away from the incumbent ruling coalition. Many activists now consider this approach as the only effective pathway for political change. In their view, the Romanian political system, which for years had been driven from the top down by political elites, needed to be reformed with a substantial input from civil society and new political actors. These activists also believed that political opposition should play a stronger role in preventing the abuse of power and democratic norms by the ruling coalition. Today, they continue to advocate for political participation at the wider level, so that the vast majority of citizens understand its benefits. As a consequence, the new parties that emerged in the aftermath of the mass mobilizations, in particular USR and PLUS, have become political forces in their own right.

That said, the abovementioned options are not zero-sum alternatives. There has been a symbiotic relationship between the three main postprotest pathways chosen by Romanian activists. For instance, protesters who decided to lie low in between mass mobilizations could be reactivated by participating in various civic campaigns, petitions, or mobilizations organized by activists who opted for the second pathway. The move from one pathway to the other also worked in the opposite direction, with activists who had established new forms of organization and resistance becoming demotivated and deciding to switch off for a while. Similarly, the second and third pathways overlap significantly, with activists moving back and forth between the civic and political arenas depending on the political context and their own personal motivation.

OUTCOMES

The success or failure of contemporary mass mobilizations is based not only on their ability to satisfy protesters' objectives but also on their capacity to create emancipatory movements and sustain activist capital. From this point of view, the outcomes of the postprotest strategies in Romania vary greatly.

For the first group of protesters, their decision to lie low without an in-between protest strategy led to an underinstitutionalization of activism, threatening the long-term sustainability of mass mobilizations and the protest movement more generally, including the activist capital dimension. Nevertheless, these activists could be reactivated, as shown by the ensuing protest episodes in the country.

Concerning the second group of activists, who opted for new forms of organization and resistance, the main outcome of their strategy was a gradual change in the mindset of the general public. This approach also laid the basis for the consolidation and evolution of civil society in Romania. From this perspective, civic mobilization can be regarded as a formative experience,

leading to a community of like-minded people—or as one activist put it, “an apprenticeship in applied democracy.”⁸²

Influential civic networks such as Corruption Kills or Initiative Romania, as well as viral hashtags such as #resist, #all_for_justice, or #me_too, proved to be the necessary catalysts for mobilizing large groups of people to join protests, advocacy campaigns, and antigovernment petitions. They also created systems of socialization and knowledge sharing, both protest-related (for example, organizational logistics) and issue-related (such as anticorruption legislation), thus sustaining activist capital.

In this regard, before 2012, Romanians did not have a “culture of protest” or a mature spirit of civic participation. It is these activists’ creation of the abovementioned civic platforms that paved the way for a higher institutionalization of activism in the country—to the extent of achieving some (although short-lived) results in terms of blocking the adoption of government bills or legislation they believed would lead to the country’s democratic backtracking. However, many activists remained stuck in a protest mind frame for too long and thus failed to move on into other types of political engagement. As Florin Badita, the founder of Corruption Kills put it, “the protest is nice, useful and a reactive way, but if we want long-term change we have to focus more on education, as well as sustained civic and political involvement.”⁸³

Thus, recognizing the limits of civic activism, the protester-led parties such as USR and PLUS became the new force on the Romanian political scene. In particular, the parliamentary party USR, through its political opposition role, managed to challenge the government and block several attempts to subvert the justice system. In this light, the move of these activists from the street into mainstream politics proved to be most effective postprotest strategy.

Indeed, in the European Parliament elections that took place on May 24, 2019, USR and PLUS—under the umbrella of the 2020 Alliance—managed to achieve a spectacular result of 22.4 percent of the total number of votes. Thus, they came in the third place, following the National Liberal Party (27 percent) and the incumbent Social Democratic Party (22.5 percent), with only around a 10,000-vote difference from the latter.

The election was a litmus test for the success of the activist-led political parties and their ability to take power away from the incumbent political coalition. It also marked the emergence of citizen-led politics in Romania, as a real alternative to the political establishment. *But the full extent of the shaping power of activist-led political parties will be known after the November 2019 Romanian presidential election and the 2020 local and general elections.*

However, one caveat must be taken into consideration. USR, PLUS, DEMOS, and the other emerging parties created by activists are movements that appeal mainly to urban audiences. To truly be able to exert lasting change on the Romanian political scene, these parties also need to engage with citizens from rural communities and small towns across the country. The PSD’s electoral success can be attributed to its regional and local party infrastructure, largely inherited from the former communist party, and activists should take this infrastructure into account in their next steps.

CONCLUSION

The recent wave of mass mobilizations in Romania across multiple protest cycles has managed to boost citizens’ democratic participation and create a contentious opposition toward previously well-established political forces. As such, it could be regarded as a form of mass civic activism against the political establishment, meant to trigger long-term political change.

The Romanian protests from 2012 to the present have a common underlying feature: the perception that the current representation system is flawed and must be reshaped. In this regard, they move beyond the simple ousting of certain political actors toward demanding better political representation in general. In their force of contestation and public interest representation, these protests have proven to be a powerful shaping mechanism. Thus, the mass mobilizations built up an evolutionary path through which activists and civil society gained voice and managed to shape the political process, without violence and with clear immediate results. In Romania, the shaping power of citizen activism has moreover provided a dual function of demanding better accountability from the political elites and fostering citizens' increased participation in the political process.

In the aftermath of the mass mobilizations, civic activists opted for three main pathways. The large majority of protesters decided to lie low, waiting for the next opportunity for mass mobilizations. A few smaller groups of activists founded new forms of organization and protest in the form of civic networks and platforms, as well as viral slogans and

online campaigns. Finally, some activists opted to become involved in politics directly by setting up new political parties, which proved successful with the urban electorate in particular.

Though the first group's strategy stemmed from its disappointment with the protests' lack of long-term outcomes, the second and third groups were driven by what they identified as a need to boost Romanian citizens' civic culture and political involvement. This motivation had its origins in the belief that only through the consolidation of citizens' civic and political participation would Romanians be able to exert long-term change on their political system and society at large. And whereas the first pathway threatened to undermine the sustainability of the protest movement and its associated activist capital, the second and third options proved to be more successful. In particular, the founding of new political parties by activists achieved real impact by reshaping the Romanian political landscape in favor of the political opposition. Nevertheless, the true extent of the contenders' victory over the incumbent political class will be fully known only after the upcoming Romanian presidential, local and general elections.

CHAPTER 6

CIVIC ACTIVISM IN THE POST-MUGABE ERA

MAUREEN KADEMAUNGA

In November 2017, mass protests in Zimbabwe demanded the resignation of president Robert Mugabe. Superficially, they succeeded, as Mugabe was forced from office after nearly four decades of dominance on the Zimbabwean political scene. However, the military became the key actor. In effect, Zimbabwe suffered a military coup when the Zimbabwe Defense Forces (ZDF) took over the national broadcaster and deployed armed personnel to the airport, parliament, president's offices, and State House.⁸⁴ The military refused to identify these actions as a coup, and the High Court of Zimbabwe ruled that the military's actions were constitutional. Many disenchanted ordinary Zimbabweans supported the coup as a way of achieving Mugabe's resignation.

This mix of protest and military control over Mugabe's ousting determined activists' postprotest tactics. As the military increased repression and thwarted democratic transitions, it targeted activists. Many chose to lay low. The repressive environment made it difficult for activists to move into mainstream opposition politics. Gradually, more activists looked for ways to reengage in contentious forms of activism. Zimbabwe may be on the cusp of a more radical form of activism mobilizing to confront the military-controlled regime.

MANIPULATED PROTESTS

Citizens knew the dangers of a military-assisted transition and that Mugabe's replacement might be problematic. Yet for the long-suffering citizens of Zimbabwe, these were problems to be dealt with at a later stage. Inadvertently, civic activists who had, in the recent past, led mass protests against the regime became cheerleaders for a military engaged in factional battles for control of the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the state.⁸⁵ Activist groups mobilized and organized mass marches in support of the military's call for Mugabe to step down. Civic activists like Evan Mawarire of #ThisFlag, Promise Mkwanzani of #tjamuka, Stan Zvorwadza of the National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe (NAVUZ), Vimbai Musvaburi, Doug Coltart, and many others spoke at public gatherings on the day of the citizens' march.⁸⁶ In the heat of the moment, civic activists overlooked the idea that the political system and its institutions of repression remained intact and that the overt engagement of the military in civilian political affairs augured ill for the cause of freedom and democratization.

Facing a parliamentary impeachment, Mugabe resigned on November 21, 2017, ending his thirty-seven-year rule. While Zimbabwe celebrated Mugabe's exit, the winning military faction completed its takeover of the state, replacing Mugabe with a deposed former vice president, Emmerson Mnangagwa—a man who was notorious for his cruelty toward his opponents and had been connected directly to the ethnic cleansing of Ndebele civilians in the genocidal Gukurahundi campaign in Matabeleland in the early 1980s.⁸⁷ In the process, the military positioned itself as part of the presidency: the former ZDF commander Constantino Chiwenga became vice president, and military officers occupied several key ministerial positions in government and senior positions in ZANU-PF.⁸⁸

The ousting of one of Africa's longest-serving autocrats came after nearly two decades of persistent civic action against the excesses of the Mugabe regime.⁸⁹ After the coup, Mnangagwa finished Mugabe's term, and went on to win a highly manipulated election on July 30, 2018. In the aftermath, civic protest returned, only to have the same soldiers who had been hailed as heroes in November 2017 open fire on the protesting citizens. Forty-eight hours after the elections, the Mnangagwa government gunned down eleven civilians and injured and displaced thousands more.⁹⁰ During revolts in January 2019, the military killed twice that number.

POSTPROTEST PATHWAYS

Activists adopted difference tactics in the wake of the 2017 protests. Many of them dispersed, and momentum was lost. In part, this was because they had attained their stated goal: the downfall of Mugabe. However, other factors came into play. To a degree, the new regime coopted civic activists and movements, weakening their authenticity and credibility with protesters. As a result, a significant section of Zimbabwe's civic movement lost its support base and its ability to organize.

The new regime also closed civic spaces through repression and harassment of civic activists and citizens.

The military contingent deployed during the protest remained on the streets, and this raised concerns about the personal safety and security of anyone who questioned the new establishment. In addition, disillusionment set in as many activists realized that the protests had not achieved much for the general populace and that Zimbabwe could possibly be in a worse situation with the government under military control.

Other civic activists and protesters entered into a cooperative relationship with the political opposition. They calculated that the opposition wanted to see Zimbabwe back on course to a democratic transition as much as the activist groups did, which spurred cooperation between the two groups ahead of Zimbabwe's 2018 general elections. This pathway became more defined as social movements and civic activists gradually moved into mainstream politics. Some endorsed the opposition, while others formed their own political outfits that publicly aligned with existing opposition political parties. The driving force behind this pathway was the need to reverse the negative effects of the coup: the situation became so serious that many activists felt that they had to get involved in mainstream politics. The intergroup fraternization that occurred during protests facilitated a new intimacy between opposition political parties and social movements and helped strengthen their cooperation.

Still, other protesters took a different pathway and began finding new forms of resistance and civic organization. There was a rise in postprotest collective actions as individuals embraced a feeling of empowerment and agency. Since the end of the protests, a new crop of empowered citizens is now at the center of organic forms of protests and resistance even in the face of a brutal military regime. The protests helped politicizing individual players who retained their postprotest agency and found expression in new spaces of civic engagement. Harare lawyer Fadzai Mahere became a prominent voice during the No to Bond Notes protests against the introduction of a pseudocurrency by the

Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, which began even before Mugabe's ouster. Vimbai Musvaburi, a registered nurse and television presenter, found her voice as an activist in 2016 while calling for Mugabe's exit and was prominent in the final protests of November 2017. Musvaburi has since launched a magazine, *The Parliamentary*, which focuses on parliamentary issues and members of the House of Assembly and their legislative agenda. These are only a few of the many people who found voice and agency and maintained their activism even after Mugabe's departure.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE PATHWAYS

The three pathways identified and discussed above are the main pathways that Zimbabweans have pursued in the post-Mugabe era. In an interview conducted during the writing of this article, Gift Ostallos Siziba, a vocal young leader within the Tajamuka/Sesjikile (We Are Fed Up/We Are Pushing Back) movement and the Occupy Africa Unity Square movements, who was abducted and tortured by ZANU-PF forces after one of the protests, has pointed out that "there has not been consensus within different groups on what constitute the national question post-Mugabe era."⁹¹ Each of the three pathways emerged from specific features of Zimbabwe's political developments, and this contextualization is key in accounting for activists' postprotest decisions.

Pathway 1: A Subdued Civic Movement and Lost Momentum

Even after Mugabe was deposed, there were no major political shifts or reforms to state institutions and institutions that support democracy. The new Mnangagwa regime did not abandon Mugabe's tools of repression, viewing democracy as intrinsically hostile to the regime's existence.⁹² The military contingent that was deployed during the coup continued to occupy the streets, policing citizens' movements and consequently constricting space for civic activism. Activist groups who faced threats to personal safety and security

began to self-censor. Promise Mkwanzani, leader of the Tajamuka/Sesjikile movement, has bemoaned the military nature of the new repressions, claiming that civic space has shrunk since the advent of the military regime. The regime has been responsible for shooting and killing more than twenty activists since it came to power. Although the Tajamuka/Sesjikile movement is trying to regroup, many of its members had to retreat to safer locations. Mkwanzani himself was placed on a wanted list by both police and military intelligence for his role in post-Mugabe protests and sought safety in neighboring South Africa. Large-scale protests disappeared. Smaller, isolated protests that took place in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second city, to demand that the government redress the Matabeleland massacres of the 1980s were brutally suppressed.⁹³ The restrictive environment led to a subdued civic movement as the knee-jerk reaction of civic activists was to retreat out of concern for their own safety.

Soon after the coup, the new regime managed to create a false sense of opportunity that affected the agency of civic activists, as some organizations and movements were targeted for cooptation. For example, the firebrand NAVUZ activist Zvorwadza publicly endorsed the Mnangagwa government. The women's movement under the umbrella body Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe also opted to engage the new government.⁹⁴ This false sense of opportunity would be short-lived and unsustainable in the face of harassment. However, the civic groups that succumbed to cooptation continue to criticize other civic and political actors who refuse to favor the military regime. Evan Mawarire, leader and face of the #ThisFlag movement—a man who ignited the 2016 protests using the flag as a symbol of both patriotism and discontent—has pointed out that the post-Mugabe regime had relented somewhat in its repressive activities, which led some activists to think that there was a genuine opportunity for political freedom. In Mawarire words, "This was short lived and soon most activists went underground or stopped altogether. The level of surveillance has dramatically increased."⁹⁵ Many other activists shared the same sentiments.

Of equal significance was the vulnerability felt by protesters as the international community withdrew despite the increase in military brutality. After twenty years of struggling with the Zimbabwe question, the international community was clearly fatigued. Some external powers seemed willing to ignore the coup's aftermath, and some were keen to give quick moral and logistical support to the new government in an effort to close the Mugabe chapter. With waning attention from the international community, Zimbabwe's civic activists were left in a precarious and dangerous position. Apparent shifts in priorities by development partners also saw resources for civic organizing reduced, which further affected activists' capacity to organize.

Pathway 2: The Shift to Mainstream Opposition Politics

On May 30, 2018, Mnangagwa proclaimed July 30, 2018, as the new general election date. Faced with the prospect of an election where the two main political parties, ZANU-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) alliance, were sponsoring new candidates, the citizens' base was reawakened. Activists and ordinary citizens were now disillusioned with the earlier promises of a post-Mugabe politics, and it was clear that the coup was incapable of removing the economic and political barriers to democratic reform. The election became an opportunity to invalidate the coup and to push for a legitimate, democratically elected government. Civic activists and the opposition political parties moved into a relationship of mutually assured autonomy.

However, the partisan nature of the involvement of some sectors of the civic movement weakened rather than strengthened them as independent voices. Some prominent activists and movements who had led and organized protests in 2016, such as the Tajamuka/Sesjikile movement, joined forces with opposition political parties, mainly the MDC Alliance led by the young and charismatic Nelson Chamisa. Evan Mawarire, the leader of the #ThisFlag movement,

launched a quasipolitical movement called People's Own Voice and participated in the local government elections; in general, his movement endorsed the MDC Alliance presidential candidate. With time, some abandoned this path to find their way back to civic activism, including Evan Mawarire, Fadzayi Mahere, Vimbai Musvaburi, and Patson Dzamara. Dzamara, the leader of the BringBackItaiDzamara (#BBID) campaign—named after his activist brother Itai Dzamara, who had been abducted by suspected Zimbabwean military intelligence in 2015—reflected, “The national election presented us with an opportunity to cure the coup but it was all a charade. The election was a sham and upon reflection the participation of civic leaders in the election certainly had a huge negative impact on civic activism.”⁹⁶ Since the election, Dzamara has decided to go back to civic activism to bring back a national discourse centered on articulating socioeconomic issues. Some activists continue to pursue this path, arguing that only elections will resolve the political impasse.

Newer election-focused movements also emerged around this time, including #SheVotes2018, founded and led by Maureen Kademaunga, and the Young Voters platform. These new platforms worked with traditional civil society efforts to mobilize citizens to register to vote. Tariro Senderayi, a young and articulate leader within #SheVotes2018, explained that she was driven by a passion to get young people involved in leadership selection through elections and therefore worked tirelessly with other young people to educate young citizens about their electoral mandate. However, she was “demoralised by the electoral outcome and her morale is still low.”⁹⁷ The adverse effect of this focus on elections was that the elections demobilized citizens as they abandoned other forms of participation. It also prompted a ZANU-PF-led campaign to delegitimize civic activists who had become political actors, branding them as opposition agents and hangers-on. In the process, the civic activists who led and organized some of Zimbabwe's massive protests of 2016 lost the moral ground that had enabled them to voice concerns and criticize the regime as nonpartisan entities.

Pathway 3: The Resurgence of Protests: New Forms of Organizing and Resistance

Zimbabwe's new protests have several characteristics that set them apart from the protests that took place before Mugabe's departure. Previous protests had clear leaders who officially communicated plans, but the new protests often have no prominent voices organizing the protests. Previous protests were organized centrally and in the city centers, whereas the new protests are decentralized within local communities. Previously, planning meetings were held and plans were announced openly, whereas the new protests use covert means of communicating, like the WhatsApp platform. Previous protests focused on a broad array of demands, but the new protests focus mainly on specific issues for each protest. These new methods make it difficult for the military to identify leaders.

The first post-Mugabe protest happened after the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission delayed the announcement of election results. Young urbanites took to the streets of Harare, marking the reemergence of an active citizenry working outside political parties. The protest was issue-specific with a clear demand, was organized through virtual spaces, and had no clear leader. In response, the regime unleashed a military taskforce against the protesters, resulting in the deaths of six people. Several others survived gunshot injuries, and some were arbitrarily arrested. Civic activists swiftly ended up on wanted lists as targets for arrest and harassment. The threats of individual harm became more profound than before, and arrests were blanket and arbitrary. More than at any other time in the history of Zimbabwe, civic activists temporarily escaped the country for fear of being murdered or being jailed on trumped-up charges. In the wake of the violence, Mnangagwa suggested that he did not know who had deployed the army against the protesters, even though Zimbabwe's supreme law clearly states the deployment of the military is the exclusive preserve of the president of Zimbabwe.⁹⁸ As commander in chief of the ZDF, Mnangagwa's role in

unleashing the military on peaceful protesters could not be more evident.

The experience of military brutality forced activists to abandon traditional ways of organizing and adopt covert, community-centered organizing. On January 13, 2018, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and the #ThisFlag social movement led the call for a general strike or "stayaway" in the Zimbabwean term, in response to fuel price hikes.⁹⁹ Although the fuel price hikes and the labor mobilization in response were the direct causes of the protests, they also had a strong element of organic discontent over lack of freedoms and opportunities for young people, who desire greater access and exposure to the outside world in order to imagine and aspire to greater economic freedoms.¹⁰⁰

Groups of disenchanted youth took to the streets in townships countrywide to protest. Impulsive and organic civic organizing that is neither funded nor led by known civic movements became the new order. This leaderless movement utilizes the covert use of social media platforms to agitate and organize. The regime responded with its customary violence. Mnangagwa once again deployed soldiers to the streets and unilaterally blocked the internet for more than forty-eight hours to disrupt grassroots coordination. It then reopened general internet access while still blocking social media platforms. According to the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, the casualties from the military crackdown on protesting civilians included 16 people dead, 17 sexually assaulted and raped, 26 abducted, 61 displaced, 581 assaulted, 873 arbitrary arrests including arrests of minors, 586 assaulted, and 81 with gunshot wounds.¹⁰¹

THE FUTURE: A POSSIBLE REALIGNMENT

Zimbabwe's socioeconomic crisis is worse now than it was in 2017 before Mugabe left office. One activist who requested anonymity aptly points out that

“the general feeling within activist spaces is that the situation in the country has worsened and civic groups must regroup and re-energise the base but this time to face a military dictatorship.”¹⁰² Activists on the whole share this sentiment. It has become apparent that the ultimate pathway must be to regroup and go back to the drawing board. Conversations with various civic leaders and activists reveal that they are considering several tactical shifts.

The general feeling is that the starting point is to reassemble. At the moment, there is no movement, even though the August 2018 and January 2019 protests suggest that citizens are willing and ready to mobilize in communities around sociopolitical and economic issues. At a time when the cost of living is higher than ever before and when the economy is in freefall, civic activists’ silence is deafening and discouraging. Civic groups will need to reengage with the issues affecting people, while remaining independent as an alternative voice of representation. Many activists share the view that the starting point after regrouping is to redefine the national question and identify the new actors involved, both allies and opponents of the movement. From that point, the movement may be able to decide what course to take, bearing in mind that extreme poverty and militarization are key features of the new reality. As one civic leader said, “Civic groups must always mutate, reinvent themselves and stay on their mandate of being independent voices that keep the government in watch. It is a fallacy that a nation can reach a point where its citizens must cease to reorganize. That utopian view is fronted by despotic regimes who wish to demobilize the social base by promoting a false sense of accomplishment so the trick is to organize, organize, organize and to stay relevant to the national question relevant to each period.”¹⁰³

To a lesser extent, activists have stated that it is time to consider radicalizing the movement and abandon armchair activism. This sentiment is most pronounced within the Tajamuka/Sesjikile movement, whose leader insisted that “the Tajamuka radical trajectory must be

explored to its fullest; there is no other way when we are faced with a ruthless military dictatorship.”¹⁰⁴ However, some of the interviewed activists were skeptical about this possibly risky trajectory. The general feeling was that the movement needs to strike a delicate balance between radical and nonviolent actions.

CONCLUSION

Space for social justice activism in Zimbabwe in the post-Mugabe era is more constricted than ever. Activists and independent voices face threats to their personal security such as abductions, systematic and unlawful arrests and judicial harassment, rape and sexual assault, and even death. To operate under the current constricted environment, activists need resources that are not immediately available because of shifting donor priorities. Prominent social movements that led protests in the period between 2016 and 2017 have been violently suppressed. Newer organic protests have resurged but face military brutality.

Civic activism has suffered the unintended adverse effect of its self-defeating role in supporting the coup with no clear post-Mugabe plan. Citizens’ protests seem to have been organized with limited strategic understanding of the range of tools at Mnangagwa’s disposal. Soon after the protests, the citizenry was faced with a brutal militarized regime that cowed them into silence. Civic activists also had not planned for a scenario in which the new regime would renege on the promise to pursue a path to democracy. Civic activists had not built capacity to deal with postprotest disillusionment and had not budgeted for protracted action beyond Mugabe. This made it easy for Mnangagwa to coopt some of the civic leaders, further weakening the movement as a whole.

The choice to participate in the elections either as newly formed political parties or through endorsing the opposition political parties also weakened the civic movement. On the surface, electoral cooperation offered the promise for the opposition to redress the

failings of the coup through an election. However, after an election in which their strategy failed to deliver their objective, civic activists struggled to reclaim their independent voice. The political cost was high; they lost their legitimacy and struggled to reorganize.

At this point, Zimbabwean activists' choice to go back to the drawing board and recast their struggle likely is the most effective of the paths open to them. The military regime will face a real challenge from a civic movement that is working to renew itself and to reorganize from the base. The new protests became a litmus test for the

new regime to prove its rhetoric that it was committed to reforms—and it failed the test dismally. The international community has renewed its attention on Zimbabwe, raising serious concerns about the military's role in the country's governance and the rise in human rights abuses. Zimbabwe's protesters have raised the political cost for the military regime. Should the civic movement do more to demonstrate its resilience, it may be likely that a new momentum may be attained wherein the regime might realize that it is less costly to reform than to maintain a hardliner stance.

CHAPTER 7

MODIFIED ACTIVISM AFTER ETHIOPIA'S NEW DAWN

ARTHUR LAROK

In November 2015, protests began in Ethiopia's populous Oromia region and gradually spread across the country. The protests, which focused on a wide range of grievances, eventually led to the shocking resignation of prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn in 2018. By 2019, the protests had died down, although ethnic-based clashes continued. The new government's inability to enforce the rule of law, the rise of ethno-based nationalism, and a splintering of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) are all cause for concern. Nevertheless, under the new reformist Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopia is making progress.

This progress presents both opportunities and tactical challenges for civic activists. Since the end of the protests, many activists have entered into formal or mainstream civil society organizations in an effort to work with the grain of government reforms. Others are in a wait-and-see mode to determine their next course of action. As reforms show signs of stalling, some activists might be set to remobilize. Ethiopia's complicated mix of ethnonationalisms has militated against activists moving into political parties.

FROM OPPRESSION TO RESISTANCE

For two decades after the overthrow of the military Derg regime in 1991, Ethiopia was ruled by the iron fist of Meles Zenawi, the leader of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). This faction was a minority ethnic group within the EPRDF ruling coalition, which also included the largest ethnic-based parties—the Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDO) (now known as the Oromo Democratic Party, OPD) and the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) (now known as the Amhara Democratic Party), among others. The TPLF dominated the ruling coalition, as well as key positions in the government.

For many decades, the central government used force and repressive legislation to quell ethnic unrest, forcing a sense of national cohesion while adding to the unaddressed grievances that would erupt into protests years later. The EPRDF's repressive reign was heightened after the 2005 general elections, in which thousands of demonstrators were killed and imprisoned. In the years that followed, the regime tightened controls on civic activism. Zenawi's death in 2012 widened the cracks within the ruling EPRDF coalition. Repression

continued under his successor, Desalegn. Draconian laws were enacted against civic activists, and many opposition figures were arrested under the pretext of an antiterrorism law.

The mass protests that started in the Oromia region in 2015 soon spread, reflecting an accumulation of years of frustration among ethnic groups that felt marginalized by the TPLF-dominated government. The protesters' list of grievances expanded from specific concerns related to economic development, land rights, and the like to include criticisms of the TPLF's disproportionate economic and political power, demands for the release of political prisoners, and calls for greater regional self-rule and shared rule at the national level. The galvanizing effect of youth-led protest movements, such as the Queerroot from the Oromia region, soon started to bear fruit as the government released jailed leaders who had been considered political prisoners.¹⁰⁵

The government response was to repress the population even more. In October 2015, a six-month state of emergency was declared. The government branded media houses such as the Oromo Media Network and the Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) as terrorist media. Other directives banned all forms of protests or assembly without authorization. Tens of thousands of young people were detained in military camps in the Oromia and Amhara regions and, after months of indoctrination, were released wearing t-shirts that said "Never Protest Again." These miscalculations by the government only galvanized the protests. Protesters began to express grave concerns over abuses of the security forces, the government's slipshod approach to development, and the unequal distribution of power and economic benefits in favor of those aligned with the government.

Before long, leaders within the ruling coalition from the regions where sustained mass protests were happening began to speak against the disproportionate response by the security forces, seen in indiscriminate shootings in areas such as Gondar.¹⁰⁶ The progressive parts of

the government began to realize that failure to address protesters' grievances would plunge the country into a deeper crisis. With the ruling EPRDF coalition unable to maintain cohesion or contain the increasingly violent protests, then prime minister, Desalegn tendered his resignation, signaling a beginning of the end of autocratic repression in Ethiopia.

REFORMS AFTER PROTEST

After protests died down in Ethiopia, activists made more substantive demands and pressed the government to allow media and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to operate freely, repeal repressive laws that were used to criminalize citizens calling for reforms, address historical grievances and the marginalization of some ethnic groups, and much more.

Following Desalegn's resignation, many protesters, especially from the Oromia region where mass protests began, increased their demands and proclaimed, "Enough is enough, down, down . . . TPLF."¹⁰⁷ To many, the only suitable candidates to lead Ethiopia out of the volatile situation were from the Oromia region. However, there was a split within the EPRDF over who to elect as successor. The TPLF-dominant group was not ready to elect a successor from Oromia. Despite this resistance, the ruling EPRDF coalition elected Ahmed from the OPD—a major move that encouraged activists to move off the streets and adopt more gradualist tactics.

The postprotest context also has been greatly shaped by the numerous reforms undertaken by the new prime minister and his commitment to even more profound changes. In less than a year, Prime Minister Ahmed lifted the state of emergency, unconditionally accepted the Algiers Agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia that had been dormant for nearly twenty years, and opened the land boundary between the two countries after he and his Eritrean counterpart declared an end to their long-standing war. He also closed the

infamous Maekelwai prison, released thousands of political prisoners, and removed the terrorist label from opposition parties. This last move allowed opposition leaders to travel freely and enabled them to participate in discussions about broader reforms.

To further address domestic grievances, Ahmed formally apologized to the Ethiopian public for the atrocities committed by the government and established the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. He also restored mobile internet to the regions where it previously had been switched off by the federal government in an attempt to contain the protest movements. The new prime minister also surprised many by appointing Birtuka Mideksa, a former opposition leader and dissident who had been living in the United States, as head of the Electoral Commission. In forming his new cabinet, Ahmed ensured that 50 percent of his cabinet positions went to women, and he nominated and got parliament's approval for only the second female president Ethiopia has held in nearly a century. Ahmed also has met with parties from outside the EPRDF, and Ethiopia's forthcoming 2020 national elections could see a broadened political space.

Further, the new prime minister has won regional and international acclaim and support for his reforms with successful visits and meetings in Italy and with Pope Francis in Vatican City, in addresses to the World Economic Forum in Davos and the European Union Parliament in Brussels, and in several bilateral meetings with international investors. These contacts likely will help keep Ethiopia a top destination for foreign direct investment in Africa. Finally, Ahmed's ascension was also enhanced by an alliance between the OPDO and the ANDM, two of the largest ethnic-based parties representing nearly two-thirds of the Ethiopian population. Their alliance diminished the influence of the TPLF, which had been a major concern among the country's activists. The new government looks balanced, in terms of institutional and ethnic dynamics within the EPRDF and key government positions—in particular, members of OPDO hold several important positions.

POSTPROTEST PATHWAYS

Despite all these reforms, an increasing number of activists have started to question their extent and sustainability. Interviews with activists suggest that Ethiopian civil society is divided between several pathways.

Near-Term Goals Achieved, Activism Dies Down

The most dominant pathway for most of the protesters is that of moderation. For many protesters, the resignation of Desalegn and the subsequent election of Ahmed provided a sense of fulfillment. The fact that the new prime minister was from the OPD was a bonus for those who had been involved in the large-scale protests that had begun in the Oromia region. Further, the reform promises that Ahmed offered gave the impression that activists had achieved their near-term goals, which led to a progressive slowdown in civic activism.

Federal and regional government reconfigurations and political appointments also demonstrate that the new leadership has been willing to accommodate or at least reflect on some of the protesters' grievances. This means that, to some extent, grievances stand a chance of being addressed in the longer term if Ahmed can remain on course. A final factor in the remarkable die down of contentious activism relates to the fact that the protest movement was made up of large numbers of university students who quickly returned to their student life after the former prime minister resigned and a new one was elected.

Protesters Move From the Streets to Mainstream Activism

Some activists moved into more mainstream and organizational forms of activism. The evolution of the protest movement into more formalized and officially recognized civic activism includes watchdog bodies

monitoring the new government. Some allies of the protest movement, including those in exile, such as the previously banned Oromo Media Network and ESAT, have found confidence in returning to the country. Some of their leaders—such as Jawar Mohammed, an Oromo journalist considered by many to be a remote organizer of the protest movement—are back in the country and actively working with local activists. They are contributing to pressure for reforms and keeping the new government in check. As the protest movement began to shift the struggle from the streets to constructive engagement in mainstream media, their movement naturally increased the hope of protesters that they are now more in charge of their destiny. It also contributed to the further slowdown of contentious protest, though protesters certainly could regroup if they felt that their progress could be threatened.

The political route has not yet been so prominent in Ethiopia as in other postprotest contexts. Given early signals of an opening of political space, several activists are considering entering politics as Ethiopia gears up for the 2020 general election. This election is likely to have an important bearing on the Ethiopian political landscape at state, regional, and local levels. However, there are increasing concerns of the deepening of ethnonationalism, with mobilization and organizing around ethnic-based parties. One activist fears:

There appears to be an emerging tension between the Amhara and Tigrayan communities and regional states. Amhara youth are being mobilized to defend themselves as an ethnic group, and the rise of groups, such as the National Movement for the Amhara (NAMA), sometimes plays to the narrative of superiority of certain ethnic groups and is contributing to the rise of ethnic nationalism.¹⁰⁸

The growing insecurity in the countryside has caused the army to take over conventional policing duties amid concerns that the new government may be unable to maintain law and order. The EPRDF coalition

therefore seems relatively weaker compared to regional governments.¹⁰⁹ This weakness limits activists' desire to enter politics.

On the civic front, the opening of the civic space means that activists and protest leaders are considering joining or forming new civic groups. A big boost to this pathway was the introduction of a new, much more progressive NGO law in early 2019—a decade after Ethiopia's infamous restrictive NGO law that pushed many Ethiopian activists underground and led to violent protests later. In the words of one NGO leader, two things happened after the NGO law was passed in 2009. Many NGOs closed and gave up, turning into private businesses or fleeing to exile. At the same time, others went underground and became part of a community that would reemerge as protest movements. Because there was no space to dialogue, many Ethiopians turned to protests as the only way to express their views and engage with the state.¹¹⁰ According to this narrative, the review and passage of the NGO law in February 2019 was a masterstroke by the new government to create space for civic activism in a more civil, measured way.

However, some activists state that they are worried that ethno-based political mobilization is likely to happen in the civic arena as well, especially with several community organizations being formed by the ethnic Amhara across the country. These new movements may be part of a more ethno-based political mobilization, rather than civic mobilization in an autonomous sense.

Localized Protest Movements and Actions

The third pathway that Ethiopian activists have developed is that of more localized organizing and protest movements focused on specific issues. For instance, in March 2019, hundreds and, in some areas, thousands of people in Ethiopia's Oromo region took to the streets in major towns to protest the way in which the Addis Ababa city administration allocated condominium buildings.¹¹¹ Another form of localized

protest is seen in sporadic snap actions that vary from visible ones, such as youth roadblocks, to subtle ones, such as market boycotts and other forms of resistance.

There are likely to be more radical variants in this pathway, signaled by tendencies that ethnic extremists from different regions, including pro-TPLF extremists, may be using their youth mobilization efforts to reverse the course the new government is taking. Similar fears have been repeated in other regions where young people are being mobilized—not for a collective enterprise but to defend “us” against “them.” This trend may not only destabilize the government but also could lead to more outright civil conflict that would threaten the unity of the country.

Lying Low, Waiting to Pounce

The final pathway that is discernable for many of the protesters is lying low, watching the developments and waiting to act when they feel the need to mobilize. According to an interview with one activist, many unemployed young people who were part of the protests were demobilized by the message that the protest movement had achieved its desired changes but nevertheless are ready to be mobilized when needed.¹¹² The bulk of this group remain on call through the network of youth that many call the shadowy and leaderless structure of the Queerroot. In this sense, one could argue that protesters are lying in wait, ready to pounce once they feel their aspirations are not being met.

CONCLUSION

The Ethiopian activism that contributed to the recent regime change has slowed down, largely because the reform actions undertaken by the new prime minister and his government have addressed many of the activists’ immediate grievances. Beyond the remarkable internal optimism and acclaim from the region and globally about the prospects of charting a new democratic pathway for Ethiopia, the new government

has signaled its intent to deal with the structural drivers of discontent in Ethiopia, including a possible rethinking of the ethnic-based federalism enshrined in the country’s constitution.

Some critics of Ahmed have raised concerns about the likely marginalization of the Tigrayans—the once powerful and dominant power group in Ethiopia’s ruling EPRDF coalition. They have argued that the prime minister may only be scratching the surface of the problems. A former minister in the Ethiopian government argues that the prime minister “represents the kind of tendency to gloss over things to try to telescope decades into months . . . acting in a rush.”¹¹³ These critics convey the strong message that sometimes the reforms by the new government look like personal initiatives of Ahmed. Other critics are beginning to doubt the prime minister’s and new government’s commitment to the rule of law, given the tendencies toward greater anarchism and even mob justice that have been witnessed across the country.

One protest movement activist argued for the need for more time to test the new prime minister’s resolve:

Most of the protests we have seen in Ethiopia in the past have not been against government per se but systemic issues, including bread and butter ones. . . . It is only when we begin to see new protests focusing on the failure of the new government and the leadership of the prime that we may test their resolve and ability to either listen to, accommodate or suppress dissent.¹¹⁴

It is still early days, and some of the Ethiopian economy’s structural challenges—including slowing exports, growing unemployment, and rising debt to China, along with more practical manifestations such as rising fuel prices—could affect many more people. But the resolve of the Ethiopian people and the signals by the new government present prospects of a surprising African success story of peaceful transition and

democratization, especially, if in the longer term, the new administration is able to deal with more structural issues, such as the problems of ethnic federalism, youth employment, corruption and resource redistribution, local development, and the expansion of new opportunities in all regions and urban settings.

The most dominant pathways discernable for the country's activists are a combination of those who have seen their near-term goals achieved and those lying low and waiting to pounce on the earliest signs of backsliding. The future of Ethiopia remains fragile, and contentious activism could still resurface.

CHAPTER 8

POSTPROTEST PATHWAYS IN THAILAND: BETWEEN THE STREET AND THE BALLOTS

JANJIRA SOMBATPOONSIRI

Prior to 2014, Thailand experienced a proliferation of street protests staged by divided political movements, known as red shirts and yellow shirts for their chosen identification. The coup of that year, followed by the ban on public assembly, has thwarted the occurrence of large-scale street protests, but small-scale activities have emerged despite constant crackdowns. As the election date approached in March 2019, numerous activists decided to join established and new political parties as parliamentary candidates and active members. Activists' choices over postprotest strategies in Thailand were shaped by the polarized political environment: those in the red shirt camp made different calculations from those in the yellow shirt camp. In general, activists rejected radical postprotest tactics and turned to mainstream politics.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

Between 2005 and 2014, Thailand witnessed multiple episodes of intense civic mobilization. These were rooted in a long historical struggle between a democratic and more authoritarian, conservative vision of Thailand.

Mass mobilization contributed to the oscillation between authoritarian and democratic regimes.

Elections in Thailand have been associated with “money politics,” where national and local tycoons achieve electoral success through vote-buying. The party system has been marred by patronage networks and factionalism.¹¹⁵ Royalist elites seek to undermine electoral and party systems, and politicians' alleged corruption and inefficiency have historically provided them with justifications to replace representative democracy with authoritarian rule.¹¹⁶ After a democratic breakthrough in the 1990s, the Thai Rak Thai (later known as Pheu Thai) party rose as the first programmatic political party. It directly challenged the royalist elites through pro-poor policies favoring constituents in the most impoverished regions in the north and northeast. Despite several illiberal practices, the party rhetorically promotes equal democratic citizenship among all parts of the population. This view is rejected by Thais who remain emotionally and ideologically attached to traditional institutions. Pro- and antiestablishment movements—yellow shirts and red shirts, respectively—emerged. Spearheaded by the

alliance of traditional elites and urban middle class, the former orchestrated mass demonstrations that toppled governments elected by red shirt constituents in 2006, 2008, and 2014. Meanwhile, red shirts took to the streets in 2009 and 2010 against a yellow shirt-backed government.¹¹⁷

In 2013–2014, both movements mobilized in parallel. During yellow shirts' protests against the red shirt-backed government, red shirt constituents mobilized to defend their government and counter the tactics of the yellow shirts. This confrontation culminated in a series of armed clashes carried out by militias of both sides.¹¹⁸ These deep divisions had an impact on the pathways that red shirt and yellow shirt activists took after the 2014 protests.

POSTPROTEST PATHWAYS UNDER MILITARY RULE

Hibernation, continued activism, and participation in mainstream politics were the strategic choices that red and yellow activists made after the 2014 putsch. The ban on political gatherings by the junta hinders the possibility of large-scale civic mobilization. Nonetheless, prodemocracy activists have opted for small-scale and symbolic actions to denounce military rule. The March 2019 election provided opportunities not only for remobilization but also for a shift from street politics to electoral competition.

Hibernation

The junta has outlawed public gatherings and political activities. As a consequence, the yellow and red movements ceased their activism, at least temporarily. Yet their experiences of hibernation have been markedly different. Yellow shirt activists achieved their ultimate goal in bringing down the red shirt-endorsed government in 2014. With the army in power, there

was no reason for continued activism.¹¹⁹ In this sense, political hibernation was a positive choice. After some years of military rule, several rank-and-file activists became disappointed and apologetic for paving the way for a military coup.¹²⁰ This sense of disillusionment may account for many avoiding any further political activism.¹²¹

Red shirt activists, by contrast, were forced to terminate all their activities. The ruling elites deemed their antiestablishment position dangerous, believing that red shirts had prepared for an armed counter coup. The army moved to confiscate firearms it claimed to have discovered in the provinces. It summoned thousands of activists to military camps and detained them; hundreds were charged and jailed, while many others fled the country.¹²² Extensive networks of red shirt media and education schools were uprooted, and the display of movement symbols, particularly the notorious red shirt itself was banned. Red shirts who were summoned to reeducation camps were re-indoctrinated with hegemonic national ideology.¹²³

A local red shirt movement leader admitted that this was the time for survival, not political activism: "We must learn how to stay away from trouble now." Some activists shifted to nonpolitical activities such as group bike-riding, folk dancing, or Buddhist merit-making in order to retain a sense of solidarity without appearing to be politically active.¹²⁴ In addition, the absence of leadership contributed to the movement's hibernation. The Pheu Thai politicians who led the red shirt movement were monitored and barred from participating in any political activism. One analyst argues that the red shirts' "deathly silence resulted from the top leadership's decision to 'capitulate to the military.'" ¹²⁵ The movement's political inactivity thus resulted from its organizational structure as well as the threat of crackdown.

Continued Activism

A handful of persistent yellow and red shirt activists have carried on their activism despite the junta's ban. The consequences for violating the junta's order have been markedly different between the two movements.

In mid-2015, at least nine leading yellow shirt activists established a political foundation. Their aim was to defend the junta's reform plan and Thailand's reputation, which might be tainted by international criticisms of the coup. The movement's top official, Suthep Theuksuban, explained that his foundation would "cooperate with the military government in order to keep the peace and move Thailand forward."¹²⁶ The foundation's social media page has gathered more than 100,000 yellow shirt veterans who continue mobilizing against the red shirts' political party. These post-2014 political activities seem to have received the blessing of figures within the military government.¹²⁷

Red shirt activists have sought to question the junta's legitimacy and thereby face repression. When the movement initially emerged in the 2006, it included red shirt-backed party cadres, and prodemocracy activists, and academics. After the 2014 coup, these groups joined force with independent journalists and civic networks working against the depletion of natural resources and staged countless small-scale symbolic protests against military rule. Creative acts of defiance included the collective consuming of sandwiches in public spaces (a public demonstration in lieu of an actual protest), the collective reading of George Orwell's masterpiece *1984* to remind Thais of the country's ongoing authoritarianism, the flashing of the three-finger salute popularized by the dystopian *Hunger Games* fiction series to demonstrate popular subversion, and witty theatrical skits.¹²⁸ In contrast to the authorities' lack of response to yellow shirts' pro-junta activism, prodemocracy groups experienced a cocktail of repressive measures, including short-term detention, jail sentences, and security forces' intimidation of their family members.

An additional challenge to anticoup mobilization stems from public fatigue with street protests. Thais have been subject to a decade of tit-for-tat demonstrations that paralyzed the country. This contributes to low participation in most recent antijunta protests and thereby undermines the effectiveness of campaigns. One such example is activists' commemoration of the 2015 coup. For violating the junta's ban on public assembly, fourteen activists were immediately taken to the police station. Later, they decided not to seek bail and accepted their fate behind bars.¹²⁹ This act of civil disobedience could have sparked public anger and precipitated an authoritarian breakdown as happened in other countries.¹³⁰ However, this was not the case in Thailand, where street protests are associated with chaos and memories of violence remain vivid. Over the course of five years under military rule, this failure to mobilize against the junta's repression occurs time and again. For this reason, although activists still rely on protest actions, they increasingly have contemplated an alternative.

Mainstream Politics

The junta's plan for national elections on March 24, 2019, motivated several activists to change their path from civic activism to electoral competition or to combine both. Two patterns of activists' involvement in mainstream politics emerged. In these patterns, the fault line dividing pro- and antiestablishment positions remains influential.

First, some activists moved into established political parties and mainstream political institutions. There were close links between the red shirt movement and its political party Pheu Thai. From the outset, the red shirt movement aimed to defend the representative democracy that has helped consolidate Pheu Thai's parliamentary stronghold. It is difficult to differentiate between Pheu Thai's constituents in the north and northeast and the red shirt movements' rank-and-file supporters.¹³¹ Pheu Thai politicians' rallies and speeches revitalized the sense of solidarity among red shirt

supporters.¹³² Some of the leading red shirt activists have been active in Pheu Thai and its proxy parties.¹³³ When their electoral rights are threatened, they have shifted back to political activism. However, when the window of electoral opportunity is open, they return to their parliamentary role. Prominent figures such as Jaturon Chaisaeng, Nattawut Saikua, and Jatuporn Promphan exemplify this oscillation between activist and political roles.

In a similar vein, key activists of the yellow shirt movement have taken part in mainstream politics when the opportunity arises. During the 2013–2014 protests, at least nine activists leading the yellow shirt movement were politicians from the Democrat Party, known for its centrist conservative position.¹³⁴ But there are differences with the red shirt movement's approach to politics. After the protests, only a few yellow shirts reverted to their former role in the party. Those with no formal affiliation with the Democrat Party have served in the junta-appointed National Assembly, Constitution Drafting Commission, and National Reform Committee.¹³⁵ Unlike Pheu Thai and the red shirt movement, whose overlapping infrastructure allows the revival of party movement networks to build on the party's gain in the 2019 election, the Democrat Party has shrunk and lost many of its former activists.¹³⁶

Second, other activists have created new political parties. Some key activists of the yellow shirt movement created a promilitary party, while red shirt allies found parties to oppose the army and royalist elites. The junta's 2016 constitution is designed to weaken major parties, while favoring small parties and factions. In this context, new proestablishment parties, such as Palang Pracharat and Ruam Palang Prachachart Thai, emerged. The latter was founded by Suthep Theuksuban, who was at the vanguard of the 2013–2014 anti-red shirt government protests. It is the true heir of the yellow shirt movement. The party has been welcomed wholeheartedly by yellow shirt veterans, including celebrities, right-wing monks, and rank-and-file participants.¹³⁷ Although this public celebration did not translate well into electoral gains, Ruam Palang Prachachart Thai has continued its role as

the mouthpiece for royalist elites. Its chief contribution is to frame antiestablishment parties as a threat to national identity and unity.¹³⁸

At the other end of the spectrum, new antiestablishment parties evolved from the broad coalition between red shirt movement and prodemocracy activists. Most of these activists carried out symbolic protests against the junta but turned to electoral politics as the election date neared. These parties include Future Forward (Anakot Mai) and The Commoner (Samanchon). The former has gained a reputation as the party of the younger generation resisting the junta's authoritarian legacies.¹³⁹ Although the spotlight has been on the party leader, erstwhile activist and businessman Thanathorn Juangroongraangkit, the bedrock of Future Forward is made up of antijunta protesters, the liberal-minded middle class, and young voters. Leading figures and active members of Future Forward were associated with a diverse array of antiestablishment groups, such as the legal reformists (Nitirath), the Liberal League of Thammasat for Democracy (LLTD), and the Democracy Restoration Movement.¹⁴⁰ In the March 2019 election, the party captured more than 6 million popular votes and received around eighty parliamentary seats. This success has stunned the royalist elites who regard the political agenda of Future Forward as dangerous. The junta, its Election Commission, the Constitutional Court, and conservative civic groups have filed numerous charges against party leaders and parliamentary candidates. These charges could land party leaders in jail or set the stage for the party's dissolution.¹⁴¹

The Commoner party shares some historical roots with Future Forward, but its mandate is shaped by the socioeconomic injustice inflicted on marginalized communities. Because of this focus, the party's leading members include representatives from some development nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) who once joined the yellow shirt movement but later became disillusioned with the aftermath of the 2014 coup.¹⁴² The other segment of the Commoner party includes prodemocracy advocates from the northeast,

who have worked in tandem with Bangkok activist groups, such as Pai Dao Din, the New E-Saan Movement, and the New Democracy Movement.¹⁴³ Party founders consider the Commoner party a political project whose long-term goal is to connect “the upper structure and the people below.”¹⁴⁴ In fact, the party retains some features of a social movement by resorting to popular mobilization and advocacy as a means to address issues of injustice. Engaging in mainstream politics is regarded as a vehicle to transform the existing political structure in order to alleviate inequality.¹⁴⁵ This mixture of political party and social movement comes from the idea of several activists drawn to the notions of nonviolent action and direct democracy.¹⁴⁶ Although the Commoner party failed to receive enough votes to gain parliamentary seats, it is determined to sustain this political movement and galvanize collective action for long-term change.¹⁴⁷

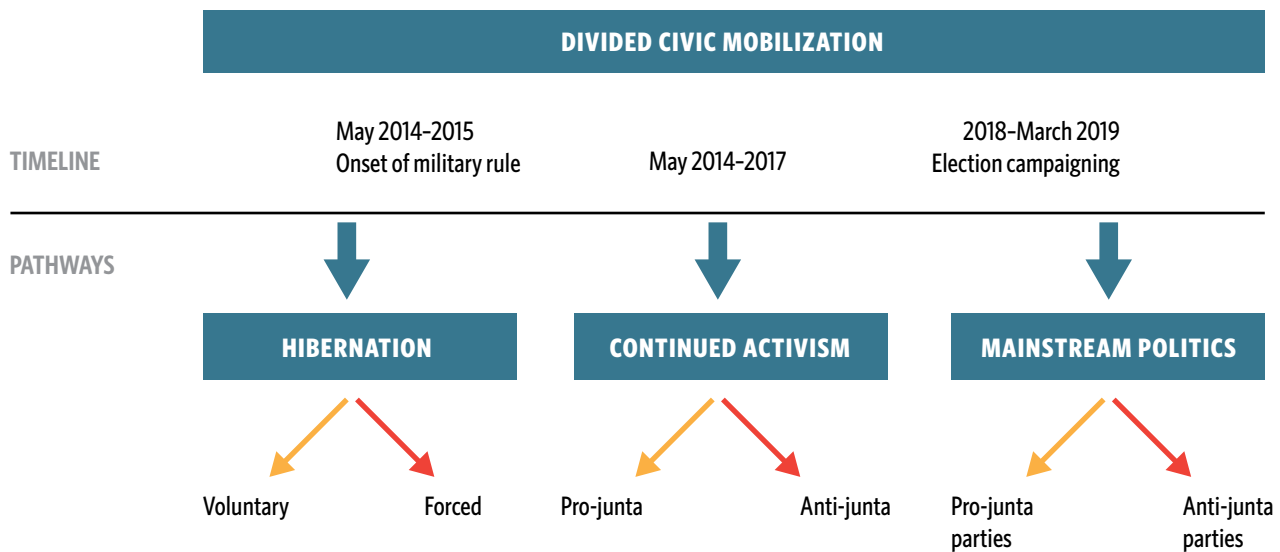
Figure 1 visualizes three postprotest pathways in Thailand shaped by the context of polarization and military rule after the 2013–2014 demonstrations.

UNDERLYING DRIVERS

The postprotest pathways of the red and yellow shirt movements have been shaped by Thailand’s changing dynamics during the five years under military rule. The junta’s ban on protests limited mobilization, but legitimacy deficits underpinning this rule also encouraged a small number of activists to subvert the ruling power. When the March 2019 elections were called, some activists preferred mainstream politics. They considered institutional politics a crucial channel for changes in parallel with street mobilization. The electoral results reflect continued polarization in Thailand, as parties clearly demonstrating their antagonism to the ideologically opposite camp gained the most votes compared with the shrinking votes for centrist parties.

The leadership of the red shirt movement did not favor intensifying activist tactics after the 2014 protests—an influential decision in the relatively top-down movement. Even though many red-shirt activists

Figure 1: Postprotest Pathways in Thailand



wanted to move into more radical strategies, the Pheu Thai leadership declined to support any kind of violent struggle.¹⁴⁸ Without direction from the party leadership, activists became less committed.¹⁴⁹ The party leadership even asked red shirt leaders to cooperate with the junta and to “keep quiet.”¹⁵⁰

The yellow shirt movement shares this same kind of top-down movement structure. Its activists took their lead from the then army chief, who signaled that demonstrations should end because he would “pick up the baton” in eradicating Pheu Thai’s influence. It was later disclosed that, back in 2010, the leaders of 2013–2014 demonstrations and the army top leadership discussed their shared interest that Pheu Thai and its political movement should be uprooted.¹⁵¹ Yet once the protests had helped these elites regain power, the leadership sought to pull them back from continued mobilizations.

Offsetting this caution, to some degree, was the strength of the activists’ ideological commitment. Those civic groups that remained active despite the military crackdown did so out of their devotion to democracy and human rights. Soon after the coup, thousands of protesters gathered to let the junta know that “what they did is wrong, the coup was illegal.”¹⁵² A student activist stated that “the army coup is against democracy and people want an election in a modern democratic Thailand.”¹⁵³ When asked if he was worried about the crackdown, another student activist said that he was compelled to speak out because he wanted to show the general public that the junta’s power is contingent on popular submission.¹⁵⁴ Other student activists have mixed feelings about the consequence of their activism. Not only are they concerned about possible legal charges, but they are also worried about their family’s well-being. The security apparatus seems to know everything about their families and can use this information to take them down.¹⁵⁵

As relatively small numbers of activists have shown this level of determination, much of the anticoup activism

has taken the form of a community-organizing strategy. This approach reflects activists’ recognition that one weakness of their street protests was the disconnect from ordinary people. “We should try new moves that are safer for the members and the network,” one said. “We can’t win by using small numbers of people, so we will expand our base and membership [through community-organizing activities]. We hope to connect many groups together.”¹⁵⁶ These activists were willing to run considerable risk in continuing their anticoup activism but changed tactics to build up greater support at the grassroots level—which, to some degree, helps explain the switch to lower-level, less contentious activism.

Compounding these factors, activists’ calculations changed once the junta began to intimate a willingness to hold elections. Anticoup activism seemed to subside after 2017 partly because of the likelihood that national elections would soon be held. In this light, activists chose to combine political activism with mainstream politics as they realized that this could bring about deep political change at the levels of government and society. Activists commonly point out that their experiences under the junta remind them of how mass mobilizations often fail to bring about political change. For change to materialize, they would need supportive forces in parliament. According to a former activist of the New Democracy Movement, organized protests have failed to bring out the masses required for far-reaching change. They want to break “away from the old ways of organizing . . . to do more policy work to tackle the political structure.”¹⁵⁷ A human rights activist who joined the Commoner party concurs with this view, suggesting that “collective action alone is not enough.” She emphasizes that street mobilization could only pressure those in power but may fail to transform policies.¹⁵⁸

Activists who have lost faith in current professional politicians felt that they had to take matters into their own hands by becoming members of parliament themselves. This disappointment in established

parties underpinned the rise of both the Commoner and Future Forward parties. Activists who joined the two parties have explained that they are fed up with politicians using them as pawns in their political struggle while failing repeatedly to represent voices of the people. A former student activist who was recently elected as a parliamentary member of Future Forward argues that established parties “represent the old generation of politicians whose corruption, cronyism, and unresponsiveness to constituents have led to the crisis we have today.” It took him one year to make up his mind to apply for the party candidacy. This was a major shift away from his previous plan to pursue a postgraduate law degree. However, he realized that the first step for bringing about political change is to show the public that there are politicians who genuinely care and address public interests.¹⁵⁹ A cofounder of the Commoner party similarly asserted that his main reason for establishing the new party was to “highlight that politics is not necessarily dirty.” He would “make sure that the party is democratic and that everyone is accountable.”¹⁶⁰

Finally, drawing on years of activist experiences under the junta, activists started to regard mainstream politics as complementary to, and compatible with, civic mobilization. New parties seek to advance their agenda in parliament, while resorting to civic activism to pressure the ruling power into implementing meaningful policies. The Commoner party considers itself a so-called party movement.¹⁶¹ In Thailand, the history of party movement can be traced back to the Communist Party of the 1970s, which had close ties with labor and farmer movements.¹⁶² Party members of the Commoner party also look to international party movements, such as the social democrat Akbayan Citizens’ Action Party in the Philippines or the Green Party movements in Europe and Australia.¹⁶³ For a Future Forward candidate, activism and parliamentary politics similarly serve as instruments that can instigate political change, albeit through different platforms. Civic activism cannot succeed without parliamentary representation, while politicians may ignore the voice

of the electorate if they remain unchecked and are not pressured by civil society. Although some of his friends remain unconvinced of his decision, he believes that he has set a precedent for his peers that an activist agenda can be effectively achieved through political institutions.¹⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

The pathways that Thai activists took after the 2013–2014 demonstrations exhibit the interplay of hibernation, continued activism, and activist involvement in mainstream politics. Those red shirts who went into hibernation did so because of the junta’s crackdown and because of their leaders’ caution. The inactivity of red and yellow shirts, although for different reasons, has helped sustain the military regime’s power base over the past five years.

Those who continued their antijunta activism adapted as they moved along a steep learning curve. These activists have realized that civic mobilization alone is insufficient, and structural changes would require parliamentary influence. Though the older generation of Thai activists tends to be cynical about professional politicians, the younger generation believes that the vicious cycle of authoritarianism in Thailand cannot be broken until public trust in representative democracy has been redeemed. As such, many activists have created new parties that promise to reconstruct Thailand’s parliamentary politics. Whether they will succeed remains to be seen, but the optimism that these parties have generated is a notable antidote to general disillusion with politics.

Civic groups’ engagement in mainstream politics potentially reinforces the trend of polarization by deepening political cleavages between pro- and antiestablishment camps. Thailand’s political divide reflects a historical continuity of the clash between liberal and traditional visions of the country. The rise of new parties follows the pattern of the red and

yellow shirt struggle but shows a shift in the marker of identity. Instead of red or yellow, new parties formed by prodemocracy activists use the labels of “democratic” coalition as opposed to the “authoritarian” camp. Meanwhile, royalist elites and mass supporters consider themselves patriotic citizens rather than liberal traitors. This ideological bifurcation has influenced the March 2019 election results, where parties who fell firmly onto one side or the other won more votes than parties considered to be centrist. Postprotest pathways have deepened Thailand’s polarization and shrunk the middle ground for political compromise. At the same time, the deepened divide compels parties to campaign based on ideological appeals. This emergence of ideological political parties could be a positive development in Thailand’s party system, which has long been affected by patronage and factionalism.

That said, it is unclear whether the partial switch from activism to politics will last. The 2019 elections were allegedly manipulated to enable the electoral victory of projunta parties. Electoral irregularities have sparked public outrage nationwide. However, opposition supporters have so far refused to take to the streets. They are afraid that street chaos could make it easier for the army to extend its rule. Even in the relatively calm atmosphere that has prevailed after the elections, street mobilization remains possible if the opposition parties are prevented from doing their job in parliament or are eventually dissolved.

CHAPTER 9

THE ROAD TO MAINSTREAM POLITICS: HOW TAIWAN'S SUNFLOWER MOVEMENT ACTIVISTS BECAME POLITICIANS

MING-SHO HO

On the evening of March 18, 2014, a group of Taiwanese students stormed the national legislature to resist a free trade deal with China. Unexpectedly, their hastily planned action evolved into a twenty-four-day confrontation. The so-called Sunflower Movement, named after the floral gift sent to protesters as a symbol of hope, won widespread public sympathy in Taiwan. Thousands of supporters camped on the streets surrounding the legislature, which made it difficult for the government to evict the intruders. Yet the government refused to accept demands from the protesters to postpone the free trade agreement. Seeing that the movement was losing steam, student leaders opted for a voluntary withdrawal and claimed to have achieved partial success.

After the protests, many of Taiwan's activists shifted their attention to institutional forms of politics, joining existing political parties or establishing new ones, taking up staff jobs in the government, or running for public office. Other Sunflower activists preferred to work through advocacy groups, nongovernmental

organizations (NGOs), or social enterprises. Even though many activists rejected the political pathway, institutional politics became the most visible pathway to channel the movement's energy after ebbing of the protests. The proponents of this political strategy claimed it represented a way for social movements to enter the political agenda.

PROTESTS AND THE FALLOUT

The Sunflower Movement represented the culmination of protests and activism that had gathered momentum since the return of the conservative Kuomintang (KMT) in 2008. More and more young people and students had joined political campaigns regarding environmental concerns, labor rights, media reform, forcible eviction, and so on.¹⁶⁵ Younger Taiwanese also joined the ranks of protesters partly because of their generation's economic plight, which has entrapped them in wage stagnation and informal employment.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, China's growing "sharp power" in Taiwan was clearly felt in

the steady erosion of press freedom, academic freedom, and other individual political rights. The Sunflower Movement became a political trigger point precisely because the disputed push for trade liberalization with China was perceived to benefit big corporations at the expense of individuals. Consequently, many citizens feared that closer economic integration with China would compromise Taiwan's political autonomy and self-governing status.

The Sunflower Movement had far-reaching political reverberations. Humiliated by internal divisions and its inability to solve the political crisis, the KMT suffered back-to-back electoral defeats. The independent-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidency and the legislative majority in a landslide in January 2016. Prior to this turnover of power, movement activists won policy victories in the areas of nuclear power and high school curriculum, and the campaign to legalize same-sex marriage also attracted support. In the first two years after the Sunflower Movement, political campaigns led by young people proliferated across Taiwan, mostly focusing on constitutional reform, legislature supervision, the amendment of referendum law, and other issues. Aside from this visible activism, other parallel attempts at the local level by Sunflower activists took place under the public radar. For example, some young Taiwanese activists experimented with community-supported agriculture through environmentally friendly farming initiatives, community organizing at the grassroots level, and social enterprises.

Existing research on social movement indicates that a widespread and intensive episode of contentious politics often bequeaths a prolonged political legacy, although it may take years or decades to observe the long-term impacts.¹⁶⁷ In the case of Taiwan, the post-Sunflower campaigns suffered from a “liability of newness.” Idealistic aspirations have evaporated under the economic imperatives of satisfying basic needs. Frustration and disillusionment have grown, driving people to devote their attention to private concerns. Over time, the memory of the Sunflower Movement

gradually disappeared from public debate. As it has done so, the Sunflower activists have split, as they have opted for different postprotest ways forward.

THE LURE OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

In recent years, the wave of protests that have sprung up around the globe have demonstrated a clear divide between institutional politics (understood narrowly as represented by political parties and elections) and the participatory and spontaneous ethos that energized the movements on the ground. Protesters have taken to the streets mostly because they are fed up with failures of political leaders, either from lifelong dictators or incompetent elected officials. Yet even though demonstrators clearly highlighted their dislike of political leaders, they often failed to articulate a common vision or platform, let alone organize an alternative political organization.¹⁶⁸ Seen in this comparative light, Taiwan's young Sunflower participants appeared unusual in that they were attracted to institutional politics in droves, and there were few who criticized their career choice as being a capitulation to the establishment. In fact, in the history of Taiwan's student movements, such pronounced preference for a political career is atypical. In the wake of the 1990 Wild Lily Movement, which played a critical role in expediting the nation's transition to democracy, it took a number of years for former student activists to join the DPP and become full-time politicians, whereas some Sunflower activists became political candidates only seven months after the end of legislature occupation.¹⁶⁹

There are several reasons for this development. First, Taiwan's civil society is largely free of many of the ideological tendencies that often define protest movements in the West. Whereas certain key groups of Western activists—including anarchists in the United States and the autonomous movement in continental Europe—insist on direct democracy and regard participation in institutional politics as

self-defeating cooptation, Taiwanese activists have a different institutional perspective. Since the end of authoritarian martial rule in the mid-1980s, social movements have mostly allied with the political opposition, DPP. With the DPP's increasingly centrist turn in the 1990s, dissatisfied movement activists have turned to elections in search of other political routes to affect the government's decisionmaking process. Starting in the late 1980s, there have been successive waves of new party organizing on the part of labor and environmentalist activists, indicating that Taiwan's social movement community has continued to put faith in the country's democratic institutions.¹⁷⁰

Second, even though the Sunflower Movement proceeded as a radical act of civil disobedience that paralyzed the functioning of a vital state organ for more than three weeks, the participants were not inherently antidemocratic as the movements detractors claimed. Protesters did not occupy the legislature because of a fundamental distrust of representative democracy; on the contrary, they believed that lawmakers had abandoned their duty of reviewing the free trade agreement in a transparent and responsible manner. In spite of the protesters' indignation of the incumbent's lukewarm responses and some episodes of police force, there were no incidents of vandalism. The participants took care to maintain a civil and peaceful presence, and meticulous efforts were spent on waste collecting, recycling, and sorting.

Third, even before the Sunflower Movement, several efforts had been made to channel protest activism into electoral politics in Taiwan. In early 2014, the Taiwan Citizen Union was formed with the collaboration of movement activists, though its organizing was upended with the outbreak of the Sunflower protests. Later, its participants split into the New Power Party and Social Democratic Party, both active players in electoral politics in subsequent years. Furthermore, Green Party Taiwan, founded in 1996, revived its electoral activities in 2008 after a prolonged period of quietude. Its resuscitation owed much to newer agitations, which attracted an influx of younger participants to the party.¹⁷¹ DPP

politicians watched the protest movement closely and intended to recruit some of the most promising young activists. Tsai Ing-wen, who led the party for six years out of its eight years in opposition, was not a typical DPP politician; she had a technocratic background in trade negotiations, which endeared her to young political aspirants. Without factional support within the party, Tsai appeared eager to promote young people to consolidate her basis. These and other preexisting forces helped draw young activists into the realm of party politics.

Finally, a push factor particular to the Sunflower participants influenced the movement. As mentioned above, the Sunflower Movement and its related protests were in part driven by a keenly felt sense of economic deprivation among young Taiwanese. Upon graduating from school, young activists generally have sought employment that is more or less consistent with their ideological leanings. Ex-student activists have frequently looked to academic positions as a popular career choice. Many of Taiwan's Wild Lily Movement participants, for example, ended up earning doctoral degrees and becoming university professors. Nevertheless, with the contraction of Taiwan's higher education and the increasing difficulty of obtaining a secure full-time position in academia, academic careers became less attractive. In a 2016 interview, a Sunflower activist spoke about their three possible career options: academia, social movement work, or political work. He pointed out that the first is now difficult to enter and the second offers only low-paid jobs with undesirable working conditions.¹⁷² This activist later was elected as a DPP councilor in Taichung City in 2018.

Another interviewee, who later emerged as a New Power Party councilor in Miaoli County, candidly revealed his anxiety about their future options. He was highly conscious of his "advantage of being young," which would "expire" once he turned thirty years in a few years. He claimed not to have a "special proclivity for political cleanliness," and he would be fine with any political party affiliation as long as it was not the KMT or its allies.¹⁷³ In short, a political career emerged as

a suitable choice because other alternatives were seen as less rewarding. Moreover, the boundaries between the established DPP and other newly formed outfits often were fluid. Young aspirants chose their party affiliation largely for personal reasons, even changed party membership as the need suited them.

THE WORLD OF POLITICAL POSITIONS

Institutional politics covers a wide-ranging array of positions, which include being hired by politicians, appointed by ministerial or local executives, or elected by popular vote. Aides or secretary positions are entry-level jobs that typically do not require specialized skills and, therefore, were attractive options for Taiwanese activists who lacked credentials but were keen to be involved in politics. Several interviewees, for example, revealed that at least ten Sunflower activists were directly involved with Ing-wen's presidential campaign in 2016. In the new legislature that first sat in February 2016, around a dozen Sunflower activists worked as aides to DPP lawmakers. After the inauguration of the DPP presidency, former student activists also found their way to jobs in the Executive Yuan, the Presidential Office, and the National Security Council, arguably the pinnacle of the state apparatus.

Although secretary positions are the most readily available option for former protest movement participants looking to enter institutional politics, appointed jobs with decisionmaking power were hard to come by because most Sunflower activists were too young (mid-20s to mid-30s in 2016) to have the necessary professional credentials. The few exceptions included two young activists who became the department heads in the DPP's national headquarters before launching their electoral campaigns, as well as one activist who briefly served as the director of the Changhua County Cultural Affairs Bureau.

Sunflower activists who entered party politics often described themselves as “political workers,” and they

have been willing to share the firsthand experiences of their new careers.¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, there was a clear hierarchy of desired political positions, with elected public offices at the top of their revealed preferences. Similar to the cultural penchant for entrepreneurship in the world of small business, many activists interviewed for this study saw elected positions as truly working for themselves—a status marker for bona fide politicians—whereas secretarial jobs meant only a temporary stint working under supervisors.

The road to elections differed between those who joined the DPP and those who joined newer or smaller parties, such as the Green Party Taiwan, New Power Party, and Social Democratic Party. As an established political party, the DPP relies on competitive primaries to select nominees, which created formidable challenges to young contenders who lacked existing family or factional ties to the DPP. Even though some DPP elites might have been interested in grooming the party's future leaders, there was another hurdle. The scions of the DPP's elder politicians (the so-called second-generation Greens) had come of age, and they became primary rivals for the Sunflower activists because they could compete equally on the grounds of being young and reformist. If Sunflower activists were able to secure the party nomination, however, they generally managed to win votes from DPP supporters. The DPP did not field any candidates related to the Sunflower Movement in the 2014 local election and the 2016 legislative election. In 2018, however, four Sunflower activists successfully received DPP nominations by defeating second-generation Greens in their primaries, and they later won their elections to become local councilors for the first time.

It was much easier for candidates to obtain nominations from small parties, but the downside was that candidates had to manage campaign financing on their own without a large party fundraising infrastructure, and they struggled to gain voters' attention because their affiliated party was not a household name. A Sunflower activist who joined the 2016 legislative election on the ticket of the Green Party Taiwan, for example,

revealed that she was the top spender among the party's candidates, having spent 2 million new Taiwan dollars (US\$66,700) on her own campaign, mostly from donations or her own personal funds.¹⁷⁵ In the end, she failed in the election, and her difficulties illustrate how cash-strapped small parties are able to provide only limited opportunities for candidates.

MOVEMENT-INSPIRED PARTIES AND CANDIDATES: FROM 2014 TO 2018

The legislative elections in 2016 witnessed the rise of the “third force”—an imprecise but widely circulated term used by the media to refer to the New Power Party, the Social Democratic Party, and Green Party Taiwan—all representing electoral attempts by Sunflower participants and their allies. In the end, the New Power Party obtained five out of 113 seats in the national legislature and emerged as the third-largest party in

Taiwan. Less attention has been paid, however, to the local elections, which were a more realistic point of entry for Sunflower aspirants. In particular, the election of intermediate-level councilors of counties, cities, and autonomous municipalities was an ideal testing ground for first-time contenders because most of the seats (907 in 2014 and 912 in 2018) were selected in multiple-member districts that favored small-party candidates, who needed to obtain only a sufficient percentage (not necessarily the majority) of the popular vote. The following table presents the participation of Sunflower-inspired parties in these two local council elections.

The 2014 local elections, which occurred shortly after the conclusion of the Sunflower Movement, witnessed a surge in movement-related parties' attempts to secure victory in the elections. These parties fielded thirty-six candidates in total, a record high in Taiwan's history. Two Green Party Taiwan candidates were elected, marking the party's biggest electoral victory

Table 1: Movement-Inspired Party Candidates in Local Councilor Elections, 2014 and 2018

Parties or Political Forces	Candidate Numbers, 2014	Elected Candidates, 2014	Candidate Numbers, 2018	Elected Candidates, 2018
New Power Party	-	-	40	16
Green Party	9	2	10	3
Taiwan Social Democratic Party	-	-	5	1
Wings of Radical Politics/Radical Party	5	0	12	0
Trees Party	8	0	5	0
People's Democracy Front	14	0	-	-
Obasang League	-	-	21	0
Total	36	2	93	20

Notes: Data from the Central Election Commission website (<http://db.cec.gov.tw/>, accessed March 6, 2019), arranged by author.

Wings of Radical Politics (2014), People's Democracy Front (2014), and Obasang League (2018) were not formally registered as political parties, and their candidates officially ran as being “nonpartisan or without party affiliation.”

This table does not include Labor Party (2014 and 2018) or Left League (2018) candidates because both outfits and their activists were not involved in the Sunflower Movement.

in its eighteen-year history. Four years later, with the national ascendancy of the New Power Party, as many as ninety-three candidates joined the competition for local councilors, and twenty were successfully elected, including sixteen from the New Power Party, three from the Green Party Taiwan, and one from the Social Democratic Party. The number of candidates standing for these parties illustrated the heightened enthusiasm for electoral participation, which demonstrates that institutional politics remained an appealing arena for young aspirants who thought they could both establish a professional career while simultaneously retaining their commitment to the movement.

The twenty newly elected representatives of movement-related parties, together with four from the DPP, marked the Sunflower Movement's arrival into Taiwan's political landscape. And these new entrants shared a similar outlook of progressive politics, owing to their shared experiences in movement activism and camaraderie forged during the preceding years. It is true that these individuals stood for only a small minority of the local councilors in the nation (twenty out of 912, or 2.2 percent), but they nonetheless represented the most promising, articulate individuals who likely would excel in politics in the years to come. It remains to be seen, however, whether these rising stars are able to reshape Taiwan's future.

The surge of electoral activities on the part of movement-related parties has helped empower those who were hitherto underrepresented in institutional politics. Even though women made up only 30.4 percent of nationwide local councilor candidates, they were a slight majority among those nominated by these new parties (forty-seven out of ninety-three). In particular, the recently formed Obasang League (*obasang* means senior women in Taiwanese) fielded twenty-one middle-aged mothers in these elections, with an electoral platform that emphasized child welfare and environmental protection. These new parties also facilitated young people's participation in

the elections. The nationwide average age of candidates was 50.4, whereas the average age of those nominated by movement-related parties—with the exception of the Obasang League—was 33.8. Moreover, prior to the 2018 election, Taiwan did not have any LGBT elected officials who had openly revealed their sexual orientation. The Green Party Taiwan has been the most persistent champion of LGBT rights by nominating lesbian and gay candidates in the past. In 2018, both the New Power Party and the Social Democratic Party also nominated openly lesbian candidates to be elected to Taipei City Council. In short, these new parties emerged as a more open platform for nontraditional candidates.

Generally speaking, these movement-spurred parties campaigned on a platform that leaned toward the progressive end of the ideological spectrum, with an emphasis on environmental protection, labor rights, LGBT issues, and others. Most of them were generally supportive of Taiwan's independence, but the Radical Party chose to emphasize Taiwanese identity and, more specifically, the threat from China, whereas the Obasang League and Trees Party (Taiwan's environmentalists) focused more on livelihood issues. The New Power Party dominated the field, not only because of its wider recognition through its presence in national politics but also because of its access to an annual subsidy of \$37 million new Taiwan (US\$124,000).¹⁷⁶ Some parties made pre-election efforts to coordinate nominations in order to avoid competing in the same district. In the end, however, the New Power Party decided to proceed on its own, whereas the Green Party Taiwan, Social Democratic Party, and Radical Party instead joined a tripartite collaboration. In hindsight, several New Power Party candidates could have been elected had there been no such intramural conflict.

CONCLUSION

The 2018 local election signaled the further absorption of Sunflower activists into the institutional arena of party politics. Five years ago, these individuals were angry protesters who disrupted the national legislature; now they are elected officials in local legislative bodies. This political sea change indicates the permeability and resilience of Taiwan's democracy, which was able to incorporate its erstwhile radical dissenters into the institutionalized political process, rather than drive them further toward political extremes.

Does the postprotest road to mainstream politics help social movements to place their own demands in the political agenda? To some extent, the answer is yes. Though a minority, New Power Party lawmakers were willing to take a more progressive stance on issues such as same-sex marriage, nuclear power, and labor protection, thereby enhancing pressure on the DPP government. Those who chose to enter the DPP faced more constraints as members of the governing team. Nevertheless, they were vocal in their demands for reforms. For instance, when the DPP showed hesitation in promoting marriage equality in December 2016, the former Sunflower activists launched a campaign to challenge the conservative voices within the party.

That said, the turn to mainstream politics does not appear to have exhausted the self-organizing capabilities on the part of civil society, as some young activists chose to remain in NGOs. Jennifer Lu of the Social Democratic Party, for instance, joined the 2014 legislator election and received 10.7 percent of the vote—a respectable result for a first timer. Yet Lu decided to work as a full-time campaigner for marriage equality rather than participate in the 2018 local election, in which she had a competitive edge. The New Power Party also failed to recruit young activists

in the labor movement because these activists decided to prioritize union organizing. In short, electioneering was one way to continue the movement commitment, but it was not the only postprotest pathway.

The political ascendancy of Sunflower activists, however, is clouded by the landslide victory by the conservatives in the same election. The KMT made a remarkable comeback by taking fifteen out of twenty-two local executive seats, whereas the incumbent DPP took a severe beating and saw its share of seats dwindle from thirteen to six. In terms of the popular vote, the KMT increased its share from 4.9 million (41 percent) in 2014 to 6.1 million (49 percent), whereas the DPP lost nearly 2 million votes (8 percent). In the national referendums, opposition to same-sex marriage and nuclear energy supporters also triumphed over progressive alternatives.

Do these results signal the coming of a conservative resurgence in Taiwan's politics, and by extension, the end of the Sunflower Movement's afterlife? It is possible that some activists will feel the need to return to more contentious civic action outside mainstream politics. Unlike in some countries, Taiwanese activists have made a relatively smooth transition from protest to politics, but they have not been able to stop a political turn that goes against most of their aims. So far, these young politicians have shown no sign of wanting to revert to protest activism. In the wake of the DPP's electoral debacle, more than eighty younger party members, including the four newly elected local councilors, signed a statement to remind the next party leader not to abandon the proreform values and to resist "populist temptations."¹⁷⁷ In this light, it seems that these former activists who decided to embrace mainstream politics were inclined to continue to work within their chosen institutions—at least for the time being.

CHAPTER 10

PATHWAYS AFTER PROTESTS: THE CASE OF BRAZIL

MARISA VON BÜLOW

The 2016 protests that led to the dramatic ousting of Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff continued to generate shockwaves long after they were over. In their aftermath, the protesters took three main pathways: participation in institutionalized civil society or political parties, pragmatic activism, and inaction. Protesters' choice of pathways depended on whether they had mobilized for or against Rousseff and whether they saw the new political context as an opportunity or threat. By channeling their energy through institutionalization and pragmatic activism, protesters were able to influence the political changes that swept the country after the 2016 mobilizations—chief among them being the election of an extreme right-wing politician, Jair Bolsonaro, as the country's new president in 2018. Brazil is a case where postprotest strategies were relatively effective, at least for one part of the political spectrum.

THE IMPEACHMENT CAMPAIGN

In August 2016, after twenty-two months of large-scale mobilizations that polarized the country and shook its political structures to the core, the Brazilian Senate voted to impeach Rousseff. Loose networks of right-wing civil society organizations led the impeachment campaign, while an equally broad set of actors criticized the initiative and mobilized against the ousting of Rousseff. For almost two years, the country witnessed clashes between these two groups in the streets, on social media platforms, and in the halls of parliament. Between November 2014 and July 2016, more than forty days of demonstrations took place across the country.¹⁷⁸ After a year of protests, in December 2015, the lower house of the National Congress began proceedings to impeach the president, based on charges that she improperly used loans from state banks.

The impeachment protest had specific characteristics that set it apart from other instances of mass

mobilizations in Brazil. First, there were clear winners and losers among the protesters. In spite of the emergence of a countermovement, which insisted that the impeachment process lacked legitimacy and was tantamount to a coup, the protesters who supported the impeachment achieved their main demand. They pressured legislators to find a legal path to oust President Rousseff and enjoyed overwhelming popular support.¹⁷⁹

Second, many participants in the proimpeachment protests did not have strong ties to established social movement organizations or political parties. In fact, in the first few months of protests, Brazil's political parties did not clearly support the calls for impeachment. This does not mean that protests were entirely spontaneous or leaderless. Protests were articulated by what Ângela Alonso and Ann Mische have named the "patriotic field": a broad coalition of actors that gathered under the coordinated leadership of a set of conservative and right-wing political organizations, identifying their movement by rallying around the national colors and singing the national anthem.¹⁸⁰ These groups were not born overnight; they had been mobilizing since the beginning of the 2000s in opposition to the policies enacted by the center-left coalition led by the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT). A new set of organizations with similar views emerged in the decade before the impeachment.¹⁸¹ Even earlier, beginning in the 1990s, an increasingly organized pool of voters elected enough politicians to build a powerful religious caucus in the National Congress.¹⁸² These conservative sectors became increasingly virulent in their attacks on feminism, LGBT rights, and Afro-Brazilian religious diversity.¹⁸³ These groups and promarket groups came together to support the impeachment, and they were backed by a wide spectrum of individuals who did not have a clear ideology but who criticized the government for a host of corruption scandals and blamed it for the country's economic crisis.

Finally, the proimpeachment movement was a case of "politics-centered protests": participants put their

critique of the political system at the forefront of their message and challenged electoral results, with antisystem and antiparty rhetoric. The themes that drive such mobilizations influence the pathways available after protests. In this case, protests clearly were tied to the electoral calendar and to debates about electoral alternatives. Some of the organizations that called for the impeachment, such as the Free Brazil Movement (Movimento Brasil Livre), openly defined themselves as political organizations and stimulated their members to run for elections. Through protests, these organizations opened a new path into politics. In their aftermath, several protesters affiliated with new or existing political parties ran for office in the 2018 elections. The impeachment protests thus had a strong impact not only on the ousting of Rousseff but also on the subsequent elections, contributing decisively to the shifts in Brazil's political tectonic plates long after the streets were empty.

WHERE DID PROTESTERS GO?

After Rousseff's impeachment, the protests lost steam. Even when the next president, Michel Temer, was accused of corruption almost as soon as he assumed office, protesters did not mobilize on a large scale. The impeachment of Rousseff functioned as a common rallying cry for both supporters and opponents, but attempts to launch a #foraTemer (#outTemer) campaign did not provide such a common ground. Absence of protest did not mean, however, an absence of activism.

Protesters took three different pathways in the aftermath of Rousseff's impeachment. The first was the institutionalization pathway. Protesters channeled their political activism toward participation in civil society organizations and political parties. The second was the targeted activism pathway, in which protesters returned home but remained available and willing to remobilize for specific causes. They did not abandon their political activism but rather reacted pragmatically to perceived

opportunities and threats. The third pathway was simply inaction, which was related to a growing sense of political impotency and frustration.

Figure 2 presents these three pathways. They are ideal types. But in reality, many protesters took more than one pathway or switched across pathways over time and in response to changes in the political context. Furthermore, as the figure shows, the first two pathways overlap.

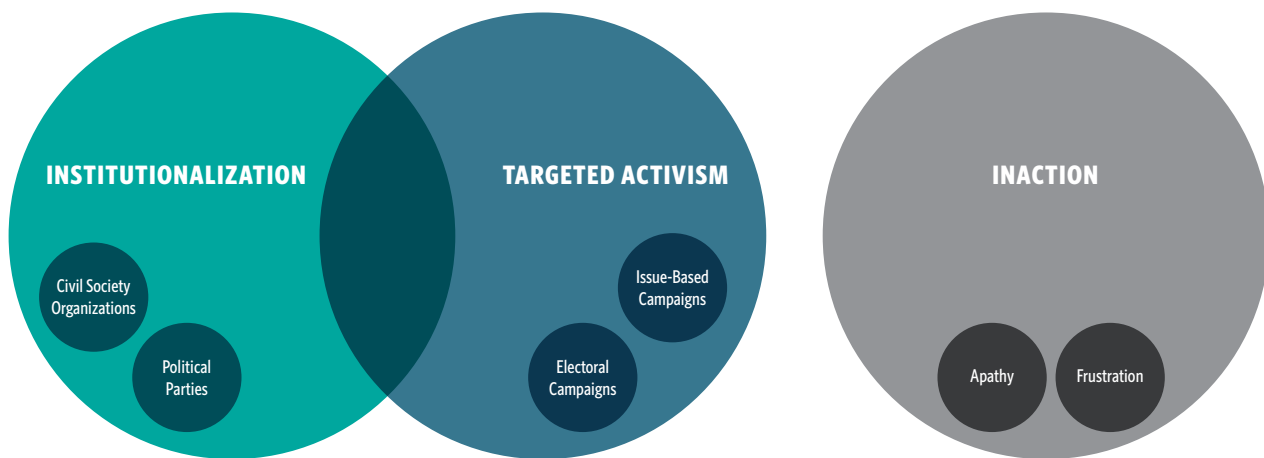
INSTITUTIONALIZATION: A TRADITIONAL PATHWAY, WITH NEW TWISTS

After protests, many participants who had no previous organizational affiliation decided to join existing civil society organizations or to participate in the creation of new ones. This is a fairly familiar outcome of protests. Protests have long been key moments of recruitment of new members for civil society organizations or arenas for the reinforcement of organizational loyalties.

What was relatively new in this instance was that for many proimpeachment protesters who did not have a previous history of party activism, institutionalization entailed joining political parties or founding new ones. Some even ran for office in the 2018 elections. In fact, some of the parliamentarians who received the most votes had become well known to the public through their participation in protests.

For those who joined existing political parties, there were many options. Various parties opened their doors to protesters. The Democratas (Democrats, DEM) and the Partido Social Liberal (Social Liberal Party, PSL) were particular options, but others in the center-right spectrum welcomed the newly minted activists. For instance, Kim Kataguiri was one of the most visible faces of the impeachment campaign, through his activism in the Free Brazil Movement, which had been created three years earlier. When Kataguiri ran for office, affiliated with the DEM party, he received the fourth-highest number of votes for representative of the state of São Paulo in the Chamber of Deputies, totaling more than 400,000 votes. Janaína Paschoal

Figure 2: Three Pathways After Impeachment Protests



is a lawyer who rose to fame when she presented the demand for the presidential impeachment in the National Congress. Running as a PSL candidate, she was the highest-voted state parliamentarian in the history of the country, securing more than 2 million votes. Both Kataguirí and Paschoal are examples of individuals who had never run for office and who used the popularity they gained during the protests to move into electoral politics.

Given the clear antiparty and antipolitical system rhetoric that dominated the impeachment campaign, as well as the overall decline in trust in political parties and elected representatives in Brazil, this move toward party politics was surprising. The new faces emerging out of the protests used this mistrust, anger, and frustration in their favor, channeling these feelings into successful electoral campaigns that emphasized their personal agendas and actually downplayed the role of political parties. Thus, their inroads into partisan politics did not help strengthen the political party system as such. Because Brazilian law prohibits independent candidates, these figures had to join political parties in order to stand for election.

Other participants of the proimpeachment protests decided to create new options, further fragmenting an already highly divided political party system.¹⁸⁴ The clearest example was the New (Novo) party, formally founded during the impeachment campaign in September 2015. This Party presented itself as a new option for right-wing voters who supported pro-market policies, a downsizing of the state, and lower taxes. Many of its founding members did not have previous political careers and became politically active during the impeachment protests—and Novo openly supported their campaigns.¹⁸⁵ That was the case for Júlia Lucy, a local Novo representative who was elected in 2018 in the capital Brasília. As was the case for many Novo candidates, Lucy had no previous history of activism. Her political baptism had been in the impeachment protests of 2015–2016.¹⁸⁶

These individuals became the bearers of popular aspirations for a change in politics. Empowered by the impeachment and the subsequent crisis of the left, they were in a prime position to reap the benefits of Brazilians' dissatisfaction with mainstream politics. Their success helps to explain the high turnover of politicians in the National Congress, the strengthening of center-right parties, and the election of many representatives who did not have a previous history of party-building activism.¹⁸⁷

For protesters who mobilized against the impeachment of Rousseff, the institutionalization pathway was not as important. Many of these protesters were already participants in civil society organizations and political parties. Furthermore, the aftermath of the impeachment deepened the crisis within such center-left organizations, which had been struggling to respond to the corruption scandals of the previous years. The crisis also led to fragmentation within this political camp, which arrived at the 2018 presidential elections deeply divided. Most of these actors' energy was spent in trying to build resistance against a closing political environment.

TARGETED ACTIVISM

Targeted activism is also a well-known pathway: protesters go home but remain politically active. As “serial activists,” they engage in various short-term political causes, but their activism is not sustainable over time. Nor is it channeled through their affiliation with organizations.¹⁸⁸ By its very nature, this pathway is less visible and harder to investigate, though it often overlaps with the pathway of institutionalization described above.

Targeted activism campaigns, which focus on short-term actions around a specific cause or event, were common after Rousseff's impeachment for both supporters and opponents of the impeachment

proceedings. The more conservative proimpeachment forces focused on “moral panic” campaigns.¹⁸⁹ One of the clearest examples involving at least some of the participants in the protests targeted the Queermuseu (Queer Museum) art exhibition in the southern city of Porto Alegre, which includes a display of 263 works of art by well-known Brazilian painters with a focus on gender identity and expression. Between August and October 2017, a network of conservative civil society organizations, political leaders, religious actors, and bloggers called for the cancellation of this exhibition. The campaign accused the artists and organizers of promoting blasphemy, pedophilia, and bestiality and of attacking Christian values. Furthermore, because funding for this exhibition came from tax exemptions, its opponents accused the promoters of using public money to promulgate morally detrimental ideas. The campaign used a broad repertoire of tactics: protests at the doors of the cultural center, boycotts of its sponsors, and a carefully orchestrated online campaign in which millions of social media users shared videos, memes, and posts. Less than a month after its inauguration, the exhibition was cancelled.

Other targeted activism campaigns sought to influence public policy debates. For instance, in parallel with the Queermuseu campaign, in October 2017, another campaign was launched to influence the National Congress as it discussed a legal framework for mobile transportation apps such as Uber.¹⁹⁰ Various YouTube channels and Facebook pages that gained prominence during the impeachment campaign called for people to mobilize against the regulation of these transportation services. This campaign used a similar variety of tactics, including online petitions and strategies for constituencies to put pressure on their parliamentarians through emails and telephone calls.¹⁹¹ The final version of the law, approved in February 2018, included several changes to the initial proposal in line with the campaign’s demands.

Electoral campaigns also rely on this reserve army of targeted activists. In the 2018 elections, much of the anti-Workers Party rhetoric that fueled the impeachment protests was used to promote the successful Bolsonaro presidential candidacy and candidates for other offices throughout the country. In general terms, supporters of Bolsonaro were not affiliated with a political party. In fact, as mentioned above, antipartisan feelings ran very high. Yet Bolsonaro’s supporters became intensively active, online and offline, in campaigning for their candidate and for candidates that supported him.

Opponents of Bolsonaro argued that much of his visibility came from the use of automated technologies that threatened the integrity of the electoral process. In response, when Bolsonaro took office on January 1, 2019, one of his supporters tweeted a taunt: “Go on thinking about robots and underestimating the adversaries. We appreciate it.” In fact, the Bolsonaro camp successfully used a mix of automated strategies and an army of supporters that formed “cyborg networks”—both machine- and human-based.¹⁹² For these supporters, many of whom had become politically active during the impeachment protests, elections were an opportunity to continue to exercise influence, and new technologies provided a channel for their voices to be heard.

For those who had rallied around Rousseff, the aftermath of the impeachment was a period of reorganization and resistance. These protesters also engaged in targeted activism, but of a defensive nature, attempting to avoid what they perceived as a process of erosion of rights and setbacks. They launched a series of countercampaigns aimed more at defending existing rights and policies than at expanding them—for instance, the campaigns against censorship (launched in the context of the abovementioned Queermuseu campaign) and against specific public policy changes, such as the proposal to loosen antislavery norms put forward by Temer in

2017. Furthermore, for at least some of these protesters, the most relevant goal after the impeachment was to mobilize against the government's threat to arrest and imprison former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (popularly known as "Lula"). When Lula was indeed imprisoned in April 2018, the mobilization shifted into organizing a campaign to free him.

In the context of the 2018 presidential elections, one good example of targeted activism was the mobilization around the #elenão (#nohim) campaign, which sought to unite women in opposition to the Bolsonaro candidacy by focusing on women's rights. This campaign was launched on social media first and later spilled into the streets. It started on Facebook a few weeks before the first round of the presidential elections and quickly recruited 1 million participants. A month later, the campaign organized one of the largest women-rights protests in the history of the country and the first to focus on the opposition to a specific presidential candidate.¹⁹³

As in the case of institutionalization, the targeted activism pathway is not a new one. The Brazilian experience highlights the impact of social media use on such targeted forms of activism. Social media platforms facilitate collaboration among activists, whether or not they are affiliated with organizations, and enable activists to participate in various short-term activist initiatives simultaneously.¹⁹⁴ Such segmented activism builds on different network structures than past collective action. Organizations remain relevant, but looser ties among actors play a greater role than in previous instances of collective action.¹⁹⁵

INACTION

In the aftermath of Rousseff's impeachment, the first two pathways—institutionalization and targeted activism—were the favored options for those who felt empowered by their ability to achieve important

political changes. Political inaction is a more common pathway when protesters feel that their voices remained unheard and their demands unmet, as in the case of those who mobilized against the impeachment. In the immediate aftermath of the impeachment, these activists were unable to maintain previous mobilization levels. Feelings of impotency and outrage dominated activists from this political camp, who felt tired and frustrated after nearly two years of a contentious, polarizing dispute.

In her survey of mostly center-left participants in a previous cycle of protests in Brazil (which happened in June 2013), Marcela Canavarro showed that, during those protests, the predominant feelings were of hope and excitement. However, by 2017—that is, after the impeachment—survey respondents argued that these emotions had changed to being ones of frustration, impotency, sadness, and outrage.¹⁹⁶ This explains why a significant number of protesters disengaged after the impeachment.¹⁹⁷ Even as one part of Brazilian civil society became more politically active as a result of the protests, another part withdrew from activism.

CONCLUSION

The case of Brazil's 2016 impeachment campaign sheds light on ways in which protest cycles may have long-lasting impacts. It also shows that participation in protests, party activism, and electoral campaigning are not mutually exclusive forms of action. They may complement each other, as protesters leave the streets but remain politically active or even engage in formal politics for the first time.

In Brazil, as in other countries around the world, contemporary protests have been marked by the rise of right-wing actors. The impeachment campaign was both the result of this rise and a driver of right-wing actors' further empowerment. They were not, however, the only ones in the streets. The protest cycle of 2015–

2016 was characterized by massive demonstrations in favor of and against the ousting of Rousseff, in a polarizing clash between right- and left-wing actors that led to important changes in the political system.

The most important pathways that proimpeachment protesters took after the protests were those of institutionalization and targeted activism. Protests effectively opened the way for emerging political leaders, who went on to become highly successful candidates in the 2018 elections. However, the pathway of institutionalization tells us only part of the story. Much of the network of protesters remained latent, becoming active in specific moments and around specific issues.

This trend helps to explain the outcome of the elections: the highly successful performance of various organizations, individuals, and political groups that had helped to organize the impeachment campaign and the defeat of traditional parties and long-standing political leaders.

For the protesters who mobilized against Rousseff's impeachment, the most popular pathways in its aftermath were either inaction or a defensive type of targeted activism. In the case of the latter, the campaigns they launched aimed at avoiding further losses and setbacks. In the context of the 2018 elections, many who had become disillusioned were active in political campaigns, but others stepped back from political engagement.

After three years, the protesters who took to the streets in favor of the impeachment of Rousseff had accumulated multiple victories in quick succession. It remains to be seen, however, whether they will be able to stay united in the new political context of the Bolsonaro presidency. The coalition between pro-market and conservative sectors likely will be shaken by contentious debates over issues like pension reform, security policies, and the religious agenda of the evangelical caucus. For the anti-impeachment camp, the future is also uncertain. This will remain a period of reorganization and resistance, and the ability of the opposition to Bolsonaro to mobilize on the streets and on social media will shape the country's political future. Three years later, the effects of the protests that led to the impeachment of Rousseff are still being felt in Brazil's politics.

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CONCLUSION

YOUSSEF CHERIF

Political transitions are difficult, and they require successful activism in both the protest and postprotest periods. The transition from participating in protests to longer-term activism can be especially complex. In our Civic Research Network, we feel that this element of activism and political transition receives relatively little analytical attention. Thus, we conducted nine country case studies to provide some deeper reflection on postprotest activist strategies in different contexts.

Social movement studies generally concentrate on the organization and strategies that lead to demonstrations. Political scientists, meanwhile, look at the institution building that follows such demonstrations. As the focus in transitions switches from protests to institutional reforms, the countless individuals who make up protests often are forgotten, and only the most prominent ones among them are celebrated or remembered. The nine countries examined shed light on the path that activists adopt once their protests finish—whether successful or not. Spanning four regions, the countries included Armenia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Romania, Thailand, Taiwan, Turkey, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe. The timespan covered 2013 to 2019, a period of global protests that followed

the 2011 wave of revolts concentrated in the Middle East and North Africa and the Western states hit by economic crises. The articles are written by firsthand observers, either academics or activists. Although the authors report a number of specificities unique to each country, certain general trends transcend the nine cases and reveal patterns in what happens after protests.

One of these trends is the move into mainstream politics. The authors therefore asked: under what conditions do activists take such a route? Often the choice to *join government* or a governing coalition in parliament can lead to the continuation of effective activism, mainly where protests have been relatively successful. There, activists can work from inside the system and implement what they fought for, helping to build democracy. They channel their energy toward concrete political actions and transform street activism into mainstream politics. In Taiwan, for instance, after the successful 2014 revolt, many Sunflower movement activists entered formal politics. In Ukraine as well, after 2014, a number of Euromaidan activists joined the government. Similar examples occurred in Romania, where figures of the 2012–2017 protest period entered

cabinet offices and parliament, and in Armenia, after the success of the 2018 Velvet Revolution. And although the voices of most of these activists were marginal in largely establishment-controlled governments, they spearheaded some advances in reform and many kept their spirit of activism alive.

However, the case studies reveal that entering the sphere of power, even if it is a regime that emerges out of successful protests, can lead to *cooptation*. This is seen as a failure of the ideals for which activists rose up in the first place. In fact, when they reach power, revolutionary forces usually mutate into ruling machines, and the bureaucratic political system ends up prevailing over idealism. Even in established democracies, many problems that triggered protests persist—which makes the activist-turned-politician complicit in the eyes of the general public. This is a relatively common problem, and it is only in Taiwan that activists who joined politics have (so far) generally avoided the accusation of being coopted.

The problem is most acute in authoritarian milieus, where activists are given a false sense of opportunity to act. Some get disappointed and leave politics, but many decide to stay and give legitimacy to the authoritarian regimes in question. They think they have real influence, but they end up mere figureheads used by authoritarian regimes. In Thailand, for instance, some yellow shirt activists went on to found proarmy political groups and even run for election as representatives of the establishment parties. In Zimbabwe, a number of anti-Robert Mugabe figures supported the military-backed government that succeeded Mugabe. In Egypt, many protesters who led the way before the 2013 coup cheered for the army and became part of the new regime.

To some extent, this trend has tarnished the concept of activism among the population. Zimbabwe is an example of this outcome: activists who stayed alongside the army and the new government are not seen as impartial, independent activists but rather as part of a pathological regime structure. The activist capital they amassed during the protests then vanished.

Another postprotest pathway relates to those who also entered politics but from an opposition angle. The nine case studies show that many activists either joined traditional political groups or created new ones—though the latter was more common. Activists who launched new movements proved that they can take their capacity to organize and lead civil society into politics. Their new movements are meant to break with established norms and be autonomous in applying their ideas and vision. Such models were seen in Taiwan, where democratic life continues to make gains and where new opposition groups were able to enter parliament through elections. In Thailand and Zimbabwe, where democracy is in tatters, some activists also moved into opposition politics. Thai red shirts and Zimbabwean activists, for instance, joined opposition groups and ran for election in 2019. In the authoritarian systems that prevail in both countries, the results of joining the political opposition were limited, and these activists were not able to advance their goals.

In Ukraine and Armenia, many activists did not choose to enter politics at all, concerned about the bad reputation of political life in their countries. Among the minority who stayed in politics, cooptation was difficult to resist. The withdrawal of potential opposition voices, therefore, allowed the far right to consolidate itself and become a strong and representative opposition force, ignoring the other groups and following radical—and occasionally violent and divisive—politics.

In some instances, activists refused categorically to enter politics and *continued to be involved in activism* from outside the system. In Armenia, for example, fear of cooptation kept many activists, especially the leftists opposing neoliberal policies, out of politics. They thus focused their efforts on opposing tax reforms and defending the working class, among other things, often in opposition to the new government. Yet they did not cut ties with their former colleagues who decided to join the government, and this allowed for channels of dialogue between the two sides. In the case of Ukraine, however, where the weakness of the central state has worsened the security situation and

encouraged violent groups to form, many activists resorted to radical, violent means to apply pressure on the government, adopting a far-right ideology. In Turkey and Egypt, most activists concentrated on pure activism and stayed out of mainstream politics because they did not have any other practical choice. In Turkey, where Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government morphed into a semiauthoritarian regime (a transition that accelerated after the failed 2016 coup), many activists mobilized to observe the 2018 elections from within election observation organizations. In Egypt, the story is different, not least because the level of repression is higher than other places discussed. The image of activism was distorted by postprotest events—which led to a consolidated dictatorship—and a strong antirevolutionary media that equated protests with chaos and foreign interference. Hardcore Egyptian activists have ended up marginalized and in a precarious situation: they are unable to join politics, and they face difficulties in mobilizing people around them.

In Egypt, as in other countries where authoritarianism emerged after the protest movement or where the latter was able to consolidate itself more deeply, activists remaining outside the system follow a different model. They adapt to the neoauthoritarian context, which restricts protests and political activism, and change the nature and structure of their movement. They create or join progressive, *alternative movements*. They can do so out of conviction, as in Taiwan and Ethiopia, or out of fear, as in Turkey, Thailand, or Zimbabwe. They defend *specific* causes that are seen as less polemical but nonetheless important, such as ecology and urbanism issues, the LGBT cause, women and youth empowerment, academic concerns, or trade union reforms. Many of these movements are *local* and decentralized. Thus, they appeal to a different part of the population than the cosmopolitan youth of the capital, who normally are prominent in protests but whose energy and commitment are not always easy to sustain. Local issues attract people who are directly concerned and so do specific issues because they will call on those who feel the problem directly. Even when the momentum of mass mobilizations has

faded, these smaller instances of what are sometimes collectively referred to as micro-activism keep the flame of resistance alight. In this vein, the internet remains a space for activists to sustain their efforts, regardless of their place in the political spectrum. Facebook and Twitter campaigns, social media hashtags, YouTube, and other video outlets are a preferred means for fostering alternative activism.

One final postprotest trajectory is more disconcerting for the fate of global activism: in the wake of failed protests, many activists have abandoned activism or at least gone into prolonged *hibernation*. They feel resigned to this option for a number of reasons. Governments often restrict public space after protests, which makes activism risky. Activists may sense that they have achieved enough through protests, even though such judgment normally proves premature; conversely, they may feel despair if the outcome of protesting is negligible or even counterproductive. The leaderless nature of many protest movements also makes sustained activism difficult to achieve. Hibernation usually denotes a failure of the protest movement.

The nine case studies are far from being an exhaustive overview of the postprotest pathways activists have taken around the globe. Yet they do offer enough empirical detail from a diverse range of situations to help advance debates on the question. There is no uniform recipe for success. The kind of postprotest route that works in one context can fail in another. In fact, most examples collected here commonly run into problems. Even though activists have sharpened their thinking about long-term strategies, our case studies show more instances of postprotest disappointment than resounding success.

Once protests succeed, the doors of political posts often do open and many activists end up in government. And our case studies do not support the common view that activists instinctively spurn mainstream politics. Some activists are able to influence their country's politics: this is a key way in which activism has evolved in the past decade. But the success of such a political move is

not guaranteed because of the risk of cooptation, which also has grown. Other protesters decide to continue their activism but in the ranks of the political opposition. They leave behind the pure activist mantle and become politicians opposing the government in parties and parliament. But when they do not make it to the highest levels, these activists can end up marginalized and lose the momentum that made them prominent in the first place. Others decide to stay where they started, campaigning and fighting as if nothing had changed, but they also risk losing popular support and becoming sidelined. Moreover, their hesitation creates a vacuum that may be filled by nondemocratic groups, such as the far right. Activists also may opt for alternative, decentralized types of activism, often to avoid political scrutiny under authoritarian regimes but also to garner support from new groups that may have felt alienated or were concerned little with the previous waves. This kind of alternative activism may succeed on its own

terms, but its ambitions are usually much narrower than the protests that precede it. Finally, some activists decide to give up and retreat from activism entirely, whether out of fear, disillusion, or disorganization.

The life cycle of postprotest activism is varied and complex. The mix of decisions, often contradictory, that activists choose helps explain why revolutions take the directions they take afterward. And while the protest momentum does not necessarily evaporate when protesters go home, moving beyond that stage in an effective way proves hard, even harder than protesting. The plethora of choices at the disposal of protest leaders and activists that we uncovered show the difficulty of finding a unified postprotest pathway. The success or failure of the civic process after a protest is linked to this cutting-up of forces, as the common goal of toppling a regime does not morph automatically into a united strategy for building democracy.

NOTES

- 1 A key piece of literature that explains the dire situation felt by the people across the region can be found in the data and conclusions in the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) *Arab Human Development Report 2002* (New York: UNDP, 2002), http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/rbas_ahdr2002_en.pdf.
- 2 Such activity is reflected in the Anti-Iraq War protests of 2003, the April 6 and Kefaya movements, and the 2008 Mehalla labor strikes.
- 3 Famous names here include Naguib Sawiris, Mohamed el-Baradei, and Amre Moussa. Despite calling for protests in the square since 2010, providing strong physical and financial support for online and physical civic activism, and producing activists who became an integral part of the 2011 protest movement, neither el-Baradei's National Association for Change nor the man himself were at the forefront of the protests that filled Tahrir Square and the surrounding streets with people.
- 4 A label that has hindered them to this day and resulted in major fractures within the party, which has seen most of its centrist, senior leadership quit the party, as younger activists installed left-wing, less prominent actors into the party's leadership. While support peaked for the party during the protest movement, it has fallen away significantly since 2013, although they do still enjoy four seats in the current parliament (2015–2020).
- 5 Egypt has never acknowledged digital/online media as journalism, and as an extension of the corruption, few new media outlets are registered, which is a requirement for journalists to gain their own syndicate registration. This discriminates mainly against young and emerging journalists, who were a major part of the 2011 protest movement.
- 6 Notably, most, if not all of these gains, have been reversed under the leadership of Sisi. Even where the military had no presence or control, the post-2013 landscape has seen major inroads in all aspects of civilian life, as the military encroaches on social life. This includes laws that order the presidency to deliver Friday sermons in mosques, laws that remove university deans and install new ones appointed by the president's choice, and security control over membership in syndicates.
- 7 These events were pivotal inflection points during 2011 and 2012. The Maspero Massacre of October 2011 was the first time that the military had used violence to quell street protests, which, in this instance, had erupted over the destruction of a church in Upper Egypt earlier that month. The Port Said football riot in February 2012 killed over seventy people, mainly young male supporters, though the blame for the incident would be placed on the police forces who failed to secure the stadium or quell the riots and allowed a stampede to ensue. The original verdicts, released under Morsi's rule, exonerated the police leadership, and outrage against the decision allowed violence and protests to rage across the Delta and Cairo for days. As the Egyptian leadership blamed the violence on the Muslim Brotherhood, a military-enforced curfew and security zone allowed the narrative and language to shift in favor of the SCAF and further entrench negative views about the Muslim Brotherhood. The clashes in Mohamed Mahmoud street near Tahrir Square in November 2011, occurred mere days before the country went to the polls. The Brotherhood's refusal to support the protests and join them in Tahrir so close to election period helped developed a strong narrative that heaped further blame upon them as the protest movement grew more hostile.
- 8 Interview with Egyptian politician, 2018.
- 9 Interview with a prominent protester and political organizer. The overarching subject of the interview was the continued messaging from high-level National Salvation Front leadership meetings in the months following the Port Said verdict through to the June 30 protests. Some lower-level aides predicted violence during the protests. Others even discussed provoking violence in order to allow the military to move in and take over leadership of the country: "if the Muslim Brotherhood doesn't bring their militias, we will find our own and start the war" (interviews, National Salvation Front, June 2013).

- 10 Gaye İlhan Demiryol, "Turkey's Arendtian Moment: Gezi Park Protests," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 20, no. 6 (2018): 531–546.
- 11 Interview with a founding member of the Gezi Party, April 30, 2019.
- 12 See the Oy ve Ötesi [Vote and Beyond] initiative's website, <https://oyveotesi.org/hakkinda/biz-kimiz/>.
- 13 "Seçim Kampanyası Finansmanı Değerlendirme Raporu 1 Kasım 2015 Genel Seçimleri" [Evaluation report on financing electoral campaign analysis, November 1, 2015 general elections], Report no. 5, Checks and Balances Network, http://www.birarada.org/upload/Node/22980/files/Sec_im_Kampanyasi_Finansmani_Deg_erlendirme_Raporu.pdf.
- 14 İzel Sezer, "Birleşik haziran hareketi'nde neler oluyor?" [What is happening at the United June Movement?], İleri Haber, November 14, 2018, <https://ilerihaber.org/icerik/birlesik-haziran-hareketinde-neler-oluyor-91560.html>.
- 15 Interview with a founding member of Istanbul City Defense, February 22, 2019.
- 16 "Birikışı 'Aliğa'da termik santral olmamalı' dedi" ["Aliğa should not be a thermal power plant," says Birirkişi], Evrensel, August 30, 2017, <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/330949/birikisi-aliagada-termik-santral-olmamali-dedi>; "KOS'tan Çerkezköy'de termik santral kapanış töreni" [Closing ceremony of thermal power plant in Çerkezköy], Northern Forests Defense, February 20, 2019, <https://kuzeyormanlari.org/2019/01/20/kostan-cherkezkoyde-termik-santral-kapanis-toreni>; and Pınar Tarcan, "Kuzey ormanları savunması'ndan Almanya'daki Hambach direnişine destek" [North Forest Defense supports Hambach resistance in Germany], *Bianet*, September 24, 2018, <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/ekoloji/201092-kuzey-ormanlari-savunmasi-ndan-almanya-daki-hambach-direnisine-destek>.
- 17 "Baskı sonuç verdi: Filtresiz termik santrallere izin çıkmadı" [Printing yields: No filter-free thermal power plants allowed], Deutsche Welle, February 15, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/tr/bask%C4%B1-sonu%C3%A7-verdi-filtresiz-termik-santrallere-izin-%C3%A7%C4%B1kmad%C4%B1/a-47528161>.
- 18 Özge Zihnioğlu, "The Prospects of Civic Alliance: New Civic Activists Acting Together With Civil Society Organizations," *Voluntas*, September 2018, 30, no. 2 (2019): 289–299.
- 19 See the Oy ve Ötesi website at <https://oyveotesi.org/hakkinda/biz-kimiz/>.
- 20 Aybike Eroğlu and Neslihan Önder, "Şaibe çetesine Soros desteği" [Soros support to Şaibe gang], *Yeni Şafak*, June 4, 2015, <https://www.yenisafak.com/secim/saibe-çetesine-soros-destegi-2155171>; and Sabah, "Oy ve Ötesi'nin Altında da FETÖ Çıktı" [FETÖ released under Oy ve Ötesi], October 22, 2015, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2015/10/21/oy-ve-otesinin-altindan-da-feto-cikti>.
- 21 See the Oy ve Ötesi website at <https://oyveotesi.org/mahalle-nedir/>.
- 22 Interview with a founding member of Istanbul City Defense, February 22, 2019.
- 23 Interview with LGBT activist and Istanbul Pride Parade organizer, February 12, 2019.
- 24 Sezer, "Birleşik Haziran Hareketi'nde Neler Oluyor?."
- 25 See the No Assemblies website at <http://tercihhayir.org/hakkimizda.html>; and "Hayır' meclisleri kuruluyor" [The "No" Assemblies are established], *Bianet*, February 17, 2017, <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/183749-hayir-meclisleri-kuruluyor>.
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