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REVOLUTION IN JORDAN

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To Sultan and Maia

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Introduction

When I arrived in Amman for my first fieldwork trip in December 2010, my plan was to pursue a project on urban development and the reconfiguration of social relations in the city. I was stationed at the Amman Institute (AI), a think-tank and urban planning consultancy owned and run by the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), where I thought I would be involved in some of their projects as a participant observer. A few months into fieldwork, no urban planning work seemed to be forthcoming. Like several public institutions at the time, the AI and the GAM came under a parliamentary investigation for corruption. Despite its claims to hiring only the most competent and qualified, the AI was suspected to be a nepotistic scheme to benefit friends and acquaintances of the mayor and hire them at exuberant salaries. Everything, from the institute's mission, accomplishments, projects, salaries and expenditures was scrutinized and investigated including, ironically, an Arabic translation of Robert Klitgaard's "Corrupt Cities: A Practical Guide to Cure and Prevention" which the institute had published and distributed for free.

Luckily, the $1,000 fellowship award I had received from the AI was dispensed in January 2011, rather than December 2010. Otherwise, colleagues at the institute assured me, I would have been investigated for corruption too. Crippled by this atmosphere of public distrust and uncertainty about its fate, the institute was hemorrhaging employees at a rapid pace. By mid-March the mayor, along with all other mayors in the country, was dismissed and municipal councils dissolved. Two weeks later, the director of the AI followed suit, and the institute was on its way to dissolution. For the next two and half years, all cities in Jordan were run by temporary

committees. No municipal elections took place, and no new development projects. My original research project evaporated.

Those were exceptional and extraordinary times. In December 2010, a Tunisian street vendor sparked mass protests when he set himself on fire in protest for the confiscation of his vegetable stall, and his humiliation by a female municipal inspector. The protests in Tunisia forced President Zein al-Abidin Bin Ali to flee the country and resign less than a month after they had started. Less than two weeks later, another uprising in Egypt led to the resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Soon, protestors were flooding the streets in Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan in an unfolding regional event that came to be known as the Arab Spring. In Jordan, the constant protests resulted in the formation and resignation of five different cabinets in less than two years.

That historical moment is by now past, with the enthusiasm and hope that marked its early months giving way to a more sober attitude later, even pessimism and despair, particularly following the civil wars in Libya, Yemen, and Syria, and the reinstatement of military rule in Egypt. Yet there was also a sense in which that extraordinary moment was accentuating and giving expression to something rather ordinary, perhaps banal. What I had been witnessing at the AI and GAM at the beginning of my fieldwork was a microcosm for what was happening on the national scale. It also reflects the ongoing dynamic of political discontent beyond the political moment of the Arab Spring. Activists in various towns were protesting wide-scale corruption in the country of which almost every public official stood accused. For these activists, corruption was the name and the cause of all the ills of state and society. Similarly, it was the reason why public debt had risen from $8 billion to $23 billion (72% of GDP) within 10 years, without any palpable improvement in the quality of life; why the promise of development never materialized;

why the usual means of social mobility such as education, business and commerce no longer achieved that end; and why some people were able to accrue wealth and political power while others could not. Talk about corruption was not new in the country, but there was a general sense that it had increased and become uncontrollable in the past years. Corruption had become closely intertwined with how most Jordanians understood their personal and collective failures.

This research is an attempt to make sense of that particular historical moment, but also to think through it, in order to reflect on corruption as the mark of the political present in Jordan and the Middle East. Hence, while my dissertation takes the political scene and protests in Jordan during the Arab uprisings as its site, this is not a study of the Arab uprisings as such. And while the dissertation provides a certain historical account of Jordan and reflects on various strands of Jordanian historiography, this is not its primary aim either. Rather, it is an investigation of the salience of the concept of corruption; as the name of a political evil, as a rallying point for political mobilization, and a focal point around which citizens as political subjects apprehend and transform themselves, their relations to each other, to their political community, and to the state. The question that directs my inquiry is this: How did corruption become such a focal organizing political concept, and to what effect?

The first part of the dissertation asks what it means for Jordanians to think of all the ills of their state and society in terms of the problem of corruption. Considering that corruption has been the main rallying point, not only for Jordanians, but also for social movements worldwide since the turn of the millennium, I use the Jordanian case to reflect more broadly on the political present on a global scale. I focus on a widespread practice of patronage and intercessory mediation known as wāsṭa, simultaneously considered a form of corruption and an ethical practice. I argue that popular perceptions of corruption express a generalized sense of distrust

and suspicion towards political authority that grows out of the palpable discrepancy between the juridical state's promise of citizen equality and the glaring fact of social inequality. I draw on genealogies of capitalism and modern politics to shed light on the historical specificity of our modern conceptions of justice and corruption and argue that the latter should be understood not as a legal problem (a problem of commutative justice), but as an ethical problem (a problem of distributive justice). In doing so, I argue that liberal theories of justice that stress the rule of law obscure and exacerbate, rather than illuminate popular suspicion towards political authority.

The second part of the dissertation focuses on popular anti-corruption movement in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, a poor, tribal neighborhood in central Amman which played a leading role in the 2011-2013 protests. I consider how the concept of corruption informed the movement's activism, historical sensibilities and forms of moral and practical reasoning. I draw on the metapragmatics of ethical life to consider the movement as an ethico-political project that did not merely seek to actualize a set of political-economic demands but to transform self and society. I demonstrate this transformation in the collective and personal lives of activists through the careers moral concepts and social typifications salient at the time. In particular, I consider the concept of *karāmah* (dignity), the set of social types it informed and the ethical claims it had on patriotic activists. I also show the limits of such ethical transformation by considering controversies around public speech. I ask why a vibrant movement whose activities focused on naming public officials as corrupt violently disintegrated when the object of its criticism was the King rather than lower-rank officials. I argue that the activists' polarized stances around accusing the King of corruption were not simply critical stances towards the person of the King. Rather, they were critical stances towards their own subjectivity as Jordanians. The practical problem the activists faced was how to speak authoritatively *qua* Jordanians when the monarchy and its history

provided the ontological grounds for their being Jordanian and hence acting as Jordanian. What was at stake was not only the activists' relation to the current monarch, but their relation to their own self and their own past as narrated in relation to the modern state, and hence, to the monarchy.

Corruption and the Rule of Law

Anti-government demonstrations born out of political-economic grievances have a longer history in Jordan that dates back to the late 1980's. Between the oil crisis of 1973 and up to the early 1980's, Jordan had enjoyed unprecedented economic growth boosted by outside assistance and loans, increased exports to the Gulf States, and remittances of Jordanians working there. By 1982, the crash in oil prices instigated a major regional economic slowdown, which adversely affected the performance of the Jordanian economy. To resuscitate a collapsing economy, the government embarked on an extensive spending program financed through external borrowing. The consequence was a deteriorating current account deficit, a general rise in prices, and a rapidly mounting foreign debt. This ultimately led to a serious economic crisis by October 1988. In April 1989, mass riots spread from the southern town of Maʿān to al-Salṭ, only 20km away from the capital city Amman. Just as it was during the wave of Arab uprisings in the early 2010's, corruption as seemed to be the heart of the problem in the late 1980's. In the popular imaginary, the culprits of the economic crisis and the object of mass anger were a class of kleptocratic ruling elites who enriched themselves at the expense of the larger population. But while corruption in the late 1980's referred more specifically to acts of embezzlement and bribery, by 2010 it had become a generalized category that referred to any form of financial or bureaucratic mismanagement, and reflected widespread panics about public morality.

The increased salience of the concept of corruption in political discourse in Jordan had to do with the way it was taken up as a central theme for political and economic development introduced in the 1990's by the IMF and the World Bank induced structural adjustment program. The focus on fighting corruption was part of a larger global phenomenon in the post-cold war era that created a globalized and globalizing regime of morality and rationality (Sampson 2005). Global non-governmental and civil-society organizations quickly became global "integrity warriors" crusading against corruption as the impediment to social equality and bureaucratic efficiency. Organizations like Transparency International (TI) conducted annual assessments of the world and ranked countries according to the degree to which businesspeople, international corporations and economic experts perceived them as corrupt or not. These were economically consequential assessments closely tied to transnational regimes of aid, credit, investment and other forms of wealth distribution and regulation. Developing and post-socialist countries most dependent on these circuits of investment and finance were often eager to improve their ranking in TI's Corruption Perception Index in order to increase their chances of attracting international investment and aid. By now, there is hardly a country that does not have a national organization dedicated to fighting corruption.

This globalized regime of aid, investment and finance had a temporal structure. At a time when liberal-democracy and its market logic seemed to be all that there is at the temporal and aspirational horizon of history (Fukuyama 1992), one of the core premises in technocratic and popular discourses on corruption pitted hierarchical relations of patronage against the egalitarian relations of citizenship, capitalist production, and free exchange. The former was taken to be rooted in traditional authority, the latter in rational-legal authority as the presumed foundation of liberal-democracy and hence modernity. Both in scholarly and technocratic discourses,

corruption was increasingly operationalized as a developmental trope, something that needed to be curbed if liberal-democracy is ever to be ushered into "developing" postcolonial and post-socialist countries (Pierce 2016, 9–20). As anthropologists Akhil Gupta and Sarah Muir have recently noted (Muir and Gupta 2018), drawing on Michel-Ralph Trouillot, corruption has become one of those "North Atlantic Universals" which "project transhistorical relevance while hiding the particularities of their marks and origins, including their affective load" and are thus "as difficult to conceptualize as they are seductive to use" (Trouillot 2003, 36).

To get around this difficulty, recent anthropological literature on the topic has avoided the impulse to define corruption, and to consider it instead as a living concept, always polyvalent, emergent, perspectival, evaluative, and used with various effects. In short, this literature has moved away from positivist approaches to corruption as a problem, and looked at its performativity as a politically deployed concept that yielded tangible effects. It focused on corruption as a marker of transgression, the blurring of the boundaries between the public and the private (Gupta 1995, 2012), and as an elusive quest for their separation (Bratsis 2003). It has also sought to articulate the roots of the concept in globalized European political philosophy and history with its uptake in local and post-colonial discourses, languages and political contexts (Bayart 1993; Blundo and Sardan 2001; Haller and Shore 2005; Pierce 2016). As such, this literature highlighted how the definitional ambiguity and polysemic nature of corruption is part of its productive power, rather than a liability or a sign of imprecision.

In this dissertation, I draw on the valuable insights of this growing anthropological literature, but attempt to take a step further by shifting attention away from the performative dimension of corruption as a label, and focusing on the conditions under which corruption emerges as a problem that demands a separation of private and public. Could the demand to

separate private and public, and hence the seductiveness of corruption, be related to a more insidious view of human action and life that has become an ahistorical universal in its own right? In attending to this question, I start with the observation that all definitions of corruption turn on some notion of "the conflict of interest," which presupposes that human action is interest-driven. Then, I move on to explore the varied material and conceptual historical itineraries by which action becomes interest driven, or becomes narrowly apprehended as such. I do so through a historical and ethnographic investigation of *wāsṭa*, a prevalent practice of patronage and intercession in Jordan that is ambivalently perceived as a form of corruption and a legitimate, even ethical practice.

Ethnographies of corruption (e.g. Sardan 1999; Blundo and Sardan 2001; D. J. Smith 2001, 2008; Pierce 2016) have long noted similar ambivalent attitudes towards patronage in different parts of the world. However, they tended to explain this ambivalence in post-colonial settings by reference to a contradiction between bureaucratic norms introduced by colonialism, and the pre-existing patrimonial norms of kinship. According to this argument, patronage could be perceived as corruption or not depending on the social norms applied in evaluating it. Viewed from the perspective of kinship relations, it is a form of virtuous care, but from the perspective of bureaucratic norms, it is a form of corruption. My inquiry into the history of *wāsṭa* problematizes this view. I argue that contemporary political patronage cannot be simply mapped onto pre-modern relations of kinship since capitalism and modern governance transform the relations and ethics of patronage from their pre-modern form, grounded in tribal virtue, into an economy of favors by which patrons and their clients or supplicants pursue their own interests while at the same time maintaining the older moral registers.

Moreover, through an ethnographic account of the practice of *wāsṭa* in electoral politics, and of street-level bureaucrats at the Royal Court, I trace ambivalent attitudes towards patronage to a structural contradiction within the bureaucratic and legal logic. As Talal Asad (2004), echoing Schmitt ([1922] 2006), points out, bureaucratic governance draws on the principle of legal equality and hence on formal legal criteria that are applied to individual persons abstracted as citizens. As such, bureaucratic governance translates human desires, hopes and purposes into interests that must be regulated through the indifferent or "disinterested" application of law and its formal criteria by individual bureaucrats. Yet, precisely because citizens are regarded as equivalent, and hence as fungibles among which the bureaucrat can choose, the choice is by definition free in relation to the law and the dictates of bureaucratic justice. It requires an act of discretion, or an extra-bureaucratic difference to supplement bureaucratic indifference. *Wāsṭa*, I suggest, is one historically specific manifestation of bureaucratic discretion. It is not, as often construed, the opposite of the rule of law, but rather a structural feature internal to it.

The upshot of this argument is that the rule of law is the condition of possibility for corruption, and the frame by which the problem is articulated. The rule of law promises citizens equality, but is never able to deliver the equality it promises. In this gap between the promise of legal equality and the glaring fact of social inequality, *wāsṭa* emerges as a problem and an interpretive frame for social injustice, its cause and yet its most viable remedy. At the same time, corruption becomes a paramount ethical and political problem, but always appears, empirically, as halfway between paranoid suspicion and a truth waiting to be uncovered, and which demands an expansion of the rule of law into more intimate domains.

Ethics, Semiotics and the Politics of Virtue in the Modern World

Part of the seductiveness of the concept of corruption, and its ethos of suspicion, lies in the way modern political discourse relies on abstractions, and how modern political subjects understand themselves and each other as abstract citizens with potentially conflicting interests. Does modern political life then preclude a different kind of politics that escapes this logic? This is a broad conceptual question I pursue in my ethnographic study of activism in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh and the politics of patriotism among the members of its protest movement. In a sense, this was an inevitable question. As the chapters that follow shall show, it was a question my own interlocutors in the field faced and attempted to respond to. But it was also a central question that another set of interlocutors, namely anthropologists of the "ethical turn" (Fassin 2014), have been grappling with. My attempt to respond to the question, then, is as much an analytic engagement with my ethnographic material as it is an engagement with that anthropological literature.

Whether ethics (Faubion 2001) or moralities (Howell 1997) are new objects of anthropological study, or not, is a matter of ongoing debate (Fassin 2013). What is certain, however, is that what spurred much of the recent anthropological interest in ethics was the work of the moral philosopher Alsdair MacIntyre, whose book *After Virtue: A study in moral theory* ([1981] 2007) has become a cornerstone for most anthropologists working on the topic. Building on Elizabeth Anscombe's (1969) argument that modern moral philosophy was incoherent, MacIntyre's book sought to restitute an Aristotelian/Thomist conception of ethics which, he argued, was lost in the modern world, divided as it is into distinct spheres of human activity, and

informed by the ideologies of capitalism and liberal-democracy.[1] Thus, he sought to undo the Enlightenment's view of human freedom as achievable through a break with tradition, and to place tradition back at the center of ethics and political life—an argument long anticipated by Hannah Arendt (1968). Thus, many anthropologists of the ethical turn have attended to the role tradition plays in the fashioning of virtuous subjects in the modern world, and how this world challenges, or enables certain ways of ethical living with tradition—particularly in the work of Talal Asad (1986, 2009), and his students (Mahmood 2005; Hirschkind 2006; Pandian 2009; Agrama 2012).

MacIntyre developed his whole sociology of the good life and of virtue as an antidote both to the compartmentalization of human life into different domains governed by different norms in the secular, modern world, and to the concomitant conceptualization of human life as "naturally" fragmented by modern philosophers and social scientists. He sought to direct attention to the role *teloi* play in directing human action towards coherence and how they ground social life in general. From the particular *teloi* of particular social roles and settings, and the particular virtues that sustain these roles and settings, MacIntyre argued that ethical (*eudemonic*) human life is the life of a quest for the good. Being a quest, her argued, the good life does not take the *telos* as already established. Rather, it takes it as something that needs to be constantly figured out in the process of living within the communities and traditions of which one is a part. His intervention allowed for an appreciation of how religion, and religious communities, can provide the conditions for a unitary outlook to life in which the good life can be lived as an aspiration, even in the secular world.

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[1] Arguably, these same concerns were also present in Marcel Mauss's seminal essay on *The Gift* ([1954] 2002)—See Parry (1986)

In this dissertation, by contrast, I explore the possibility of an ethics and politics of virtue for modern subjects who are either do not understand themselves in relation to a living tradition, or for whom their received tradition no longer sheds light on their lived present, as was the case with my interlocutors in Jordan. Indeed, as I shall show below, my activist interlocutors strove to live out a patriotic life through their activism at a time when the older forms of patriotism no longer made sense to them. In discussing my ethnographic material, I draw on Jonathan Lear's (2008, 2011) argument for the centrality of irony as a virtue that aids ethical life for modern subjects living out their social roles unaided by tradition. In such situations, he points out, there is always the possibility of a gap opening up between social norms that express the role on inhabits, and the ends internal to that role. Unlike the traditional virtues which draw on the past, irony is a virtue that strives towards a future that is yet to be figured out in such moments of radical uncertainty.

Lear has given at least two different accounts of how this uncertainty comes about. In his reflections on the uses of irony in the psychoanalytic situation (Lear 2005, 2011) he considered cases in which the social-normative dimensions of practical identity remains stable in the social world of the analysand, but whereby moral adherence to them undermine the unity of the self by repressing other practical identities whose source is the unconscious. By contrast, in *Radical Hope* (Lear 2008) a book that dealt with ethnographic descriptions, he discussed an inverse situation whereby the social norms themselves are disrupted because the infrastructure that sustains a certain way of life has broken down. In this latter case, the social understanding of the virtues breaks down in a way that makes adherence to them practically unintelligible.[2] In this

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[2] MacIntyre and Lear have debated the centrality of irony to ethical. The former argued that it is not essential, and the latter argued that it is an essential manifestation of "truthfulness," the quintessential virtue necessary in the quest for the good life. It is not my aim here to weigh in on

dissertation, by contrast, I discuss a situation in which the infrastructure of ethical life breaks down, but also when new descriptions and frames of reference make the older ways of ethical living abhorrent. If what gives life its coherence is an aspiration to narrative unity, as MacIntyre had argued, I suggest that this unity is susceptible to breakdowns when the narrative frames that sustain it themselves change. If ethical life is a quest for the good, it is a quest that must be navigated across shifting frames of narration and reference. In making this argument, I draw on another dimension of virtue ethics which stresses the centrality of narrativity to human action and ethical life in the community of others. This is a dimension that has been explored by various anthropologists, such as Cheryl Mattingly (1998; 2000; 2010) who draws on Paul Ricoeur's argument for narrative identity (1992; 1990), and others informed by Heidegger's existential philosophy (Zigon 2007). My argument here is a contribution to that field of inquiry.

Fieldwork Sites and Methods

My dissertation draws on a total of 24 months of fieldwork conducted among anti-corruption activists, anti-corruption organizations, parliamentarians, bureaucrats, and on corruption court cases and trials. In 2011 and 2012, I conducted 14 months of fieldwork among the nativist, anti-corruption activists in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh in Amman. I followed the Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh protest movement since its start in 2011; and lived in the neighborhood in 2012 where I also taught English language courses to young men in the neighborhood. During my time in the neighborhood, I partook in the cycles of its everyday life, collected oral histories and stories on corruption, and participated in various meetings and protests organized by its the movement. This allowed me to observe how members of the neighborhood community strove to achieve

this debate, but to explore how Lear's concept of irony sheds light on experience of the Ḥirāk Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh activists.

their personal desires for social mobility with limited means, their discourses on corruption and the ethics of gain, and how they articulated their daily experiences with larger commentary on society and the state.

My presence as a single man precluded much participation in domestic life in the neighborhood, but it allowed me to develop close relations with the activists, all of whom were male, and most of which were young. Initially, they saw in me a possible recruit, and a useful academic who would document the history they believed they were making. With time, however, I became more of a friend and an educated interlocutor with whom they could discuss their views and to whom they could occasionally turn for opinion in moments of disagreements. Yet those were also times fraught with much suspicion. A participant in the protests could also be a spy, or a police collaborator, and rumors often circulated as to who may be one. I was the subject of some, I was told, and on a couple of occasions I was quizzed to see if I was a CIA agent! In my early months in the neighborhood, my closest interlocutors were my students, who with time extended my circles to their kin and friends. A retired man who knew my father from his previous work and respected him helped introduce me to others. With time, however, I became a regular face at protests, and could develop friendships beyond that initial group.

Between 2013 and 2015, I returned to Jordan and to Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh for short follow-up trips. During those trips, I conducted fieldwork on electoral politics in the neighborhood and in the offices of several members of parliament in the neighborhood and in a provincial town in northern Jordan. In the summers of 2014 and 2015, I conducted fieldwork on street-level bureaucrats at the Royal Court, and interviewed anti-corruption professionals at the Jordanian Anti-Corruption Commission, and Transparency International's local chapter.

Throughout the 24 months, I conducted archival research on public discourses on corruption in newspapers, parliament archives, and political and academic writings since the economic crisis of the mid-1980s. I also followed corruption trials of two of the state's top bureaucrats and politicians: a former minister of tourism, and a former deputy mayor of Amman, the analysis of which have ultimately not been included in this dissertation. I attended court sessions, noting how journalists reported them and how political activists read and contextualized the journalistic reports. This allowed me to follow the discourse on fasād as it circulated across institutional sites and through different discursive genres—legal, journalistic, rumors, and political speeches and chants.

Chapter Outline

The first two chapters investigate the vexed status of the practice of *wāsṭa* in Jordan, as both an ethical practice and prevalent form of corruption. In chapter 1, I trace the practice back to its pre-modern-state forms of tribal authority rooted in patriarchal organization, ethics and politics. Then, I describe how it is practiced in modern day politics by looking at the role it plays in electoral politics and in interactions between members of parliament and supplicants from their electoral constituency. I show how the practice has changed with the expansion of modern governance during 19th century Ottoman reforms (*Tanzimat*), the incorporation of local tribal leaders into the bureaucratic structures of the state, as well as the expansion of capitalism and the introduction of private property. I show how these administrative and economic changes disembedded the practice from the moral-political-economic world of which it was a part and re-inserted it into one in which political ascendancy could be translated into political and economic wealth and vice versa. While contemprary *wāsṭa* still draws on images of tribal authority, it is rather organized as an economy of favors whereby parliamentarians extend *wāsṭa* to members of

their constituency in the hope of securing more votes. I conclude by describing how maintaining this economy of favors requires maintaining images of tribal virtuousity to smooth over what is in fact an instrumental form of exchange.

The second chapter focuses the legal and bureaucratic status of *wāsṭa* as both a legitimate practice and an illegal form of corruption. I address this paradox by way of a multi-sited ethnographic study of *wāsṭa* between the offices of parliamentarians and street-level bureaucrats at the Royal Court, and a discussion of the legal debates around crminalizing the practice. I show how, on the one hand, *wāsṭa* is a way by which citizens pursue their legitimate claims to state welfare, but which also raises suspicion within the logic of bureaucratic practice. I trace this suspicion not a contradiction between different two moral orders (patrimonial vs. rational-legal), but to a structural contradiction within bureaucratic practice and the rule of law itself.

Chapters 3-5 turn to the anti-corruption protest movement in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh to discuss how the concern about widespread corruption in the state precipitated a process of ethical self-transformation among the activists and a change in the meaning of Jordanian patriotism. In chapter three, I focus on the personal and collective transformation many activists in the neighborhood underwent in and through their activism as they came to understand their political existence through the concept of *karāmeh* (dignity) as citizens in relation to an entity called al-niẓām (the regime), a term that was rarely in circulation in local political discourse prior to the protests, and which, once it gained practical significance, largely supplanted other terms that were hitherto salient in referring to those who ruled, such as *al-dōleh* (the state) and al-ḥukūmeh (the government). Within this semiotic space, activism took the form of a wide range of affective and passionate stances ranging from *muwālāh* (loyalism) to *muʿāraḍa* (opposition). These stances, in turn, were crystalized through a set of stereotyped figures through which the Ṭafāyleh

activists and non-activists could see themselves and others: the *ḥirākī* (activist) as opposed to the *balṭajī* (regime thug) and the *saḥḥīj* (sycophant). At stake in deploying these various concepts and stereotyped figures was the problematization of the figure of "the patriotic Jordanian" as a practical identity.

Chapter four continues exploring how this process of ethical-self transformation entered the life projects of biographical persons in the neighborhood. First, I discuss protests in the neighborhood as a form of moral critique that sought to point out a gap between the aspirational dimension of patriotism, and the way it is materialized in existing social norms in order to elicit a process of self-transformation. Then, I turn to the self-narration of one "regime thug"-turned-activist to show how the cultivation of a new practical identity and habitus of patriotism created a narrative problem for activists who now construed their past patriotic deeds as forms of thuggery. By apprehending past actions through the new descriptions it became difficult give an intelligible account of themselves.

The final chapter continues the same theme of the narrative identity of patriotism by focusing on moral and practical reasoning among activists in the neighborhood in relation to corruption accusations directed at the person of the King—known as "breaching the ceiling." It considers how moral disagreements around the practice ultimately structure what counts as an apt performance of patriotic Jordanianness. I argue that the activists' polarized stances around accusing the King of corruption were not simply critical stances towards the person of the King. Rather, they were critical stances towards their own subjectivity as Jordanians as embedded in the state's historical imaginary. As such, the practical problem the activists faced was how to speak authoritatively *qua* Jordanians when the monarchy and its history provided the ontological grounds for their being Jordanian and hence acting as Jordanian. What was at stake was not only

the activists' relation to the current monarch, but their relation to their own self and their own past as narrated in relation to the modern state, and hence, to the monarchy as the existential ground of being Jordanian. I conclude this chapter and the dissertation by considering the effects of this transformation on emergent trends in Jordanian historiography.

Chapter 1:

Wāsṭa and the Transformation of Patrimonial Ethics in the Modern State

It was already a quarter past ten in the morning, and the room was quickly filling up with people. Karīm, the parliamentarian, had not arrived at his office in the center of the provincial district he represented at the Lower House of Parliament. Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm were his regular hours for receiving petitions and requests from his constituency. He was unusually late that morning because he was getting ready to lead a tribal delegation in a customary ceremony of asking for a bride's hand in marriage from her tribe— a role he was expected to play as a local dignitary. As time passed, it was increasingly unclear whether Karīm was going to make it to the office at all. Some people decide to leave and come back later. Others decide to wait a little longer including an old man and his daughter in the early twenties. As we all waited, the father explained the reason for his visit.

The daughter had graduated with honors from the district's public university with a degree in economics and public relations. Like most university graduates, she could not find employment immediately. She applied and waited to land a job, and kept herself busy meanwhile by doing small jobs in businesses owned by members of her extended family. When she received a job offer as a bank teller in the capital city, her father convinced her to turn it down. He deemed it unsafe and inappropriate for a girl to make a two-hour daily commute to the city, especially in the evenings. A few months later, there was another opportunity to work closer to home. The district's electricity company where she had interned while at college called her up, and invited her, along with many others from her cohort to apply for a secretary position. A week later, they called her up for a written exam. This time, however, she was not among the three finalists selected for an interview. Suspecting an unfair treatment, the father wanted Karīm to intercede with the general

manager of the electricity company, to have the daughter interviewed nonetheless. After all, he argued, it was not clear on what basis the finalists were selected. The exam seemed "deliberately obscure as if to make sure that no one could pass it." Moreover, "the questions," they complained, "were unrelated to the job description!" "It is all wāsṭa*!" the two insisted. Fayṣal, the MP's assistant, concurred: "It is all nonsense! By God, even if they put their hands in God's hand, I will never be convinced that a selection process is genuine and honest. It is all wāsṭa!"*

Another half hour passes by as other visitors take turns in commenting on the unfairness of job selections, and offer stories of their own to confirm it. By then, it was clear that Karīm will not make it to the office that day. The father and daughter decided to leave and catch up with him at the wedding.

The father and daughter were seeking to repeal what, in their opinion, was an unfair rejection of the daughter's application. They were convinced that other candidates were selected because they had *wāsṭa*, or personal connections to the company. But *wāsṭa* was also what the father and daughter were seeking from Karīm in order to repeal the unfair decision. If the MP could mobilize his personal connections, the girl might make it to the final short list, or even get the job.

English speakers might translate *wāsṭa* as "nepotism," but that would be at the cost of important nuance. Unlike the English term "nepotism," the Arabic term *wāsṭa* does not always carry a pejorative sense–its status is rather ambivalent.[1] In the Arabic language, *wāsṭa* means

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[1] It might be worth noting here, by way of historical comparison, that the term 'nepotism' was coined in the 17th century as part of accusations of corruption levelled at the institution of the papacy. In Medieval times, it was common and quite ethical for popes and Catholic bishops to care for their kin or nephews (*nepos*) by elevating them in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. St. Thomas Aquinas considered such a practice a form of piety (Summa Theologia 2 II q.63 and q.101). The influential theologian of the Counter-Reformation St. Roberto Bellarmine made similar arguments in the 16th century (Reinhard 2002). Such arguments may seem absurd for us

both "mediator" and "means." Scholars of *wāsṭa* often distinguish between two forms: The first is the practice of mediating between two parties—e.g. between adversaries in a tribal conflict, or two families in a marriage proposal (cf. Antoun 2000). The second is the practice of interceding on behalf of a supplicant to obtain some advantage from a third party (Cunningham and Sarayrah 1993; Makhoul and Harrison 2004; Moreau 2010). Both senses of *wāsṭa* harken back to an ideal image of the tribal leader prior to the modern state. While both forms continue to be practiced in the present, my concern here is with the intercessory variety rather than the mediatory one.

Wāsṭa is a widespread practice, not only in Jordan, but the entire Middle East. Organizational life relies heavily on personal relations, both in the private and the public sectors, not only to get a job, but also to perform it. Employees, in their professional capacity, need personal connections to facilitate getting their work done. For this reason, having connections and the ability to function as a *wāsṭa* for one's job is a highly prized professional asset and a valuable social capital. This is particularly the case in corporations that deal routinely with the state bureaucracy. NGOs, commercial and industrial companies, as well as financial institutions like banks and insurance companies often employ retired public servants to facilitate their dealings with the state bureaucracy and expedite the processing of their paperwork. Similarly,

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moderns, but they can be rendered more intelligible by considering how the Roman and medieval virtue of piety (*pietas*) was closely related to fulfilling one's obligations towards kin and to the moral bonds that exist between patrons and clients. The practice of privileging kin only bore a decidedly negative valuation after the American Revolution when the founding fathers sought to institute a non-hereditary political system (Bellow 2003; Stedman Jones 2014). Needless to say, nepotism continues to be a feature of American political life nonetheless.

In the Middle East, by contrast, it was only after the Ottoman administrative reforms (*Tanzimat*) in the 2nd half of the 19th century that the concept of common good started to be understood in terms of an opposition to the private interests of individuals. For instance, prior to that it was normal for officials to benefit from their positions and to pass on their holdings to other members of their family (Moumtaz 2012). The reevaluation of patronage as a negative practice seems to have gradually developed with the advent of modern education and the legalization and bureaucratization of Ottoman administration (Findley 1989; Kırlı 2015)

public servants often rely on their *wāsṭa* connections to advance professionally. The career of any individual public servant is likely to include one or several *wāsṭas*. (S)he may need one *wāsṭa* to find a job as a day-wage or temporary employee, another to be switched to a permanent contract, another to be transferred to a different department or location within the bureaucracy, and perhaps a few others to receive promotions or allowances or be granted early or deferred retirement. Ordinary citizens are likely to seek the help of their kin and friends within the bureaucracy to facilitate or expedite various benefits such as permits, waivers, subsidies, and even the processing of simple documents and applications. Yet, nowhere is the practice of *wāsṭa* so central as it is in the life of elected officials where it constitutes a daily preoccupation. As Karīm, the MP, once complained to me, dealing with requests for *wāsṭa* take up about sixty percent of his time. For parliamentarians who are less engaged in party politics, and less concerned with legislation, he estimated the figure to be much higher.

Wāsṭa and Patronage as Objects of Study

Political-economic and political science approaches to *wāsṭa* tend to pit relations of patronage against market relation of exchange and emplot them within the teleological paradigm of modernization.[2] Development experts often take the persistence of *wāsṭa* as a sign of trenchant tribalism, incomplete liberalization, and the lack of rule of law. For them, *wāsṭa* is an impediment to development and progress. By contrast, the large literature on neo-patrimonialism (Eisenstadt 1973; Bank and Richter 2010), while presupposing the same teleological understanding of history, takes *wāsṭa* to be a sign of failures of postcolonial states, and a regression away from a rational-legal political order and back to a patrimonial one. Similarly, the

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[2] This reflects a tendency in the literature on corruption in general. See (Pierce 2016, 9–20) for a historical review.

equally large literature on "rentier states" (Mahdavy 1970; Jenkins et al. 2011) sets the problem in political-economic terms to draw a connection between the production of economic value, its distribution and the ideals of liberal-democracy as an aspirational horizon. *Wāsṭa*, in this literature, emerges as an impediment to democratization and a means by which "authoritarian regimes" maintain their domination without recourse to direct repression. Focusing mostly on "resource rich" countries like the oil-rich Gulf states, scholars in this tradition speak of the "resource curse" (Auty 1994; Ross 1999) and how rentier economies produce a "rentier mentality" in their citizens—a mentality that "embodies a break in the work-reward causation. Reward - income or wealth - is not related to work and risk bearing, rather to chance or situation. For a rentier, reward becomes a windfall gain, an isolated fact, situational or accidental as against the conventional outlook where reward is integrated in a process as the end result of a long, systematic and organized production circuit" (Beblawi 1987, 385–86). Resource-poor countries like Jordan enter this framework, not as full-fledged rentier states, but as "semi-rentier sates" whereby foreign aid and investment is the source of rent (Bank and Schlumberger 2004; Peters and Moore 2009; Yom 2013). For scholars in these related fields, *wāsṭa* may signal anything from incomplete modernization, to a form of political domination, or an impediment to economic and political development. Closely oriented towards policy advising, and governance, their arguments often feed back into technocratic discourses on corruption, democratization and development.[3]

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[3] Omar al-Razzaz's paper "The Treacherous Path Towards a New Arab Social Contract" (2013), which won the best paper prize at the First Arab Annual Conference on the Social Sciences and Humanities in Doha, set the tone for post-Arab Spring social reform in the Arab World by calling for a transition from rentier states and societies to ones that are based on capitalist production.

From an anthropological perspective, one could justifiably criticize such accounts as Eurocentric for they set industrial capitalism and secular-liberal-democracy as the apex of history. One could also criticize them on empirical grounds. For instance, there seems to be no empirical foundation to the idea that liberalization and democratization reduce corruption and generate public trust (Soest 2013). In fact, it could be argued that democratization in Africa, Latin America, and post-socialist Europe since the 1990's has often unleashed rampant corruption well beyond what seems to have existed in these countries under the former dictatorships (Wedel 2001). Despite these misgivings, however, the anthropologist cannot deny the extent to which this modernist teleology, and the secular-liberal-democratic ideology that underpins it, informs the sensibilities, attitudes and desires of interlocutors in the field even those who are not explicitly committed to a secular or liberal ideology.

I have encountered such attitudes and desires time and again during my fieldwork among political activists, anti-corruption professionals, and ordinary Jordanians, particularly those with middle-class aspirations. Upon knowing that I was pursuing a PhD in the US, my interlocutors often took the chance to comment on how Jordan was plagued with corruption and lacked the economic welfare and justice that was, from their perspective, present in the West. A political activist, who was a pious man and a leading figure in the Muslim Brotherhood made the same argument to me but framed it in religious terms. He cited the 14th century theologian Ibn Taymiyyah to make his point that "God sustains the just state even if it was an unbelieving one, but God would not sustain an unjust state even if it was Muslim. And the world would endure with justice and unbelief, but it would not endure with injustice and Islam!" What was missing in Muslim Jordan, my interlocutor said, was the rule of law (*dawla-t al-qānūn*) and the justice (*ʿadālah*) one finds in the non-Muslim West. This characterization of the problem limited to

activists and citizens either. Even "the regime" seemed to concur. In a discussion paper dedicated to the rule of law—one in a series aimed at laying out a roadmap towards reform in Jordan—King Abdullah II singled out *wāsṭa* as a main obstacle to the rule of law, meritocracy, and thus, progress:

> […] there is one aspect that I would like to focus on today. To me it is the main underpinning of a properly functioning nation. It is the one factor that differentiates between a 'developed' and 'developing' nation. It is the very foundation upon which successful democracies, prosperous economies, and well-functioning societies are built. It is the guarantor of individual and public rights, provider of the framework for effective administration, the architecture for a safe and fair society and the accelerator for growth and prosperity. I am referring, of course, to the rule of law. Respecting rule of law is the one true expression of love for our country. Declarations of loyalty and devotion to Jordan remain abstract and theoretical in the absence of respect to laws.
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> The state is responsible for upholding the rule of law with justice, equality and integrity. On the other hand, citizens are responsible for observing laws in their daily lives. I say this because experience has taught me that individuals accept and embrace the rule of law in principle, while in practice, some believe they are the "exception" and excused from applying it.
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> […] We cannot address the issue of rule of law without recognising that wasta and nepotism jeopardise development efforts. Wasta does not only impede the country's progression, it erodes achievements by undermining the values of justice, equal opportunity and good citizenship, which are the enablers of development in any society.
>
> We cannot tolerate such practices that destroy the bases of public service. We cannot allow them to become a source of frustration for our qualified youth, by leaving our young generations victim to the conviction that their future, whether in college or in the job market, hinges on their ability to benefit from

wasta and nepotism. How can a generation brainwashed with sub-loyalties assume the responsibilities of protecting rule of law or running national institutions?

[…] We have, regrettably, seen in recent years some transgressions that burdened our institutions and citizens with unqualified officials. These practices have deprived institutions from qualified personnel and leadership that can advance these agencies and serve the country and the people. It should be emphasised here that meritocracy should be the only basis for appointment. (ibn al Hussein 2016)

An anthropologist does not need to embrace the modernist teleology of progress as an analytic in order to appreciate the normative claim this ideology has upon notions of justice in Jordan as in many "developing" countries. However, to take this dimension alone is to overlook another view, fundamentally at odds with it, which sees *wāsṭa* not as a vice and a cause of injustice, but as an ethical and just practice. This was also a view I have encountered often during my fieldwork. For example, an anti-corruption activist from Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh decided to boycott his maternal cousin—a university professor and a former minister—because he found him arrogant and uncaring. While the cousin was in office, the activist had reached out to him on several occasions seeking his *wāsṭa*. The minister, however, refused on grounds that he could not privilege his kin over other citizens. "Rules are rules," the cousin said. But the activist was unconvinced that his cousin was really trying to be just and fair (*ḥaqqānī*). He insisted that the latter had helped other relatives in the past—the cousin was simply refusing to help him in particular! While the facts of the situation are hard to establish, the disappointment was genuine. Part of what it means to be kin, friend, or neighbor in Jordan is to be willing to provide *wāsṭa* when called upon to do so. In this positive valence, *wāsṭa* rests on traditional virtues such as *nakhwa* (chivalry and magnanimity), *karam* (generosity), *ḥub al-musāʿada* (officiousness),

maḥabba (affection), and *takāful* (social solidarity). Failing to provide *wāsṭa* to kin and friends can count as a failure to live up to the obligations and expectations of social propinquity, and lead to feelings of rejection, hurt and betrayal.

This ambivalent attitude towards *wāsṭa*—as simultaneously a vice and a virtue—is confirmed by numerous surveys and polls. According to one survey conducted in 2000, 86 percent of Jordanians considered *wāsṭa* a form of corruption and 87 percent thought it should be eliminated. At the same time, 90 percent said they expected to use *wāsṭa* sometime in the future and 42 percent thought their need for it was likely to increase (Kilani and Sakijha 2002). A more recent study (National Council for Family Affairs 2015, 65–67) notes that 82.6 percent of Jordanians consider *wāsṭa* a form of corruption. At the same time, 64.9 percent believe that *wāsṭa* is necessary for finding a job, and 42.8 percent believe it is necessary to get their bureaucratic paperwork done. This ambivalence is quite significant given that when Jordanians talk about small, everyday corruption, they usually refer to *wāsṭa* rather than, say, bribery or embezzlement which remain relatively rare practices.[4] Moreover, it is commonly believed that big corruption is unlikely to be punished because the perpetrators often have influential connections who intercede on their behalf.

Similar ambivalent attitudes towards patronage and corruption have been documented in anthropological literature on the topic. Much of this literature centers on Africa, where corruption is perceived to be most rampant, but also in South Asia and Latin America.[5] Rather than taking the ambivalence towards patronage as a form of cynicism, this literature takes

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[4] In the NCFA study, only 2 percent reported having paid bribes during the previous year (National Council for Family Affairs 2015).

5 This literature is too vast to list or review, but a few excellent ethnographies stand out as particularly informative. See Daniel Jordan Smith (2008) on Nigeria, Akhil Gupta (2012) on India, and Aaron Ansell (2014) on Brazil.

seriously both the condemnation and the justification of seemingly corrupt practices. The sociologist Peter Ekeh (1975), for example, relates the ambivalence to the existence of two public realms in postcolonial Africa: a "primordial public realm," grounded in traditional morality, and a "civic public" created by the technocratic nature of colonial rule which is devoid of moral imperatives. Gerhard Anders, by contrast, rejects this claim arguing instead that in the modern world one cannot speak of a unified popular and primordial morality in contradistinction to the bureaucratic morality of colonialism. Rather, there are always multiple and conflicting moral norms which civil servants must navigate to pursue their own ends. For him, the ambivalence is an effect of conflicting moral demands between "the ideology of sharing," "the organizational norms that demand respect towards superiors" and "bureaucratic norms" (Anders 2008).

Similarly, long-term scholars of corruption have paid attention to the rich semantic fields invoked in discourses on corruption, and the various arguments used to justify or legitimize practices which otherwise may be deemed corrupt. Noting how generalized discourses on corruption often take as their object practices which are not, strictly speaking, "corrupt" Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan (1999) has coined the term "corruption complex" to refer to the wide array of practices to which the term corruption seems to be relevant, but not always applicable. These range from obvious cases of corruption, to others which bare some family resemblance to them. De Sardan and other scholars who follow his lead (e.g. Das 2015; Pierce 2016) have framed ambivalent attitudes towards corruption in Africa in terms of a "moral economy of corruption." By framing it in this way, they sought "a restitution of the value systems and cultural codes, which permit a justification of corruption by those who practice it (and who do

not necessarily consider it to be such - quite the contrary), and to anchor corruption in ordinary everyday practice" (Sardan 1999, 25–26).

This literature helps direct attention to the conceptual ambiguity of corruption and the complexity of the semantic and referential fields it marks. However, applying the label "moral economy" to talk about corruption risks undermining the analytic value of the concept as used by E. P. Thompson (1963, 1971).[6] Thompson's use of "the moral economy" was not simply an attempt to give a descriptive label for a set of moral norms. Rather, it was a critical intervention in scholarly discourses on economic relations dominated by the utilitarian reduction of every human desire and purpose to the acquisition of wealth. The concept of moral economy was both as a challenge to this political-economic conception of what it means to be human, and as an alternative analytic frame to look at the problems of poverty, social disintegration and degradation with which many writers at the time were also grappling. Here, moral economy referred to all the non-economic relations that informed economic transactions—narrowly understood. It highlighted forms of social solidarity and modes of collective action which political-economy could not account for.[7] Those who discuss the ambiguity and banality of corruption as a moral economy aim to absolve those who engage in the practice from cynicism. Yet, it is one thing to refuse to take this ambivalence, or inconsistency, as a sign of cynicism and

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[6] Throughout this section, I rely on Tim Rogan's (2017) excellent intellectual history of the 20th century tradition of moral economists.

[7] As a Marxist, Thompson was interested in bringing into view how 18th century food riots, as a mode of collective action, was fully rational and directed by a sense of purpose and justice unrelated to modern notions of equality. Thus, he writes: "It is possible to detect in almost every eighteenth-century crowd action some legitimizing notion. By the notion of legitimation I mean that the men and women in the crowd were informed by the belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs; and, in general, that they were supported by the wider consensus of the community. On occasion this popular consensus was endorsed by some measure of license afforded by the authorities. More commonly, the consensus was so strong that it overrode motives of fear or deference" (1971, 78).

quite another to call it a moral economy. Given Thompson's original use of the concept, the notion of a "moral economy of corruption" seems to bestow a false coherence of desires and purpose to a phenomenon which is precisely marked by the lack of a coherent way to talk about human purpose and desire. Over the next two chapters, I take this popular ambivalence towards *wāsṭa* as my starting point to reflect on corruption as the key grievance and central rallying point for the popular protests which are the focus of the last three chapters. Given the world-wide salience of corruption as a diagnostic of political evils, and a rallying point for protests, I take the Jordanian case to reflect on the political present writ-large.

In order to get a better analytic handle at the ambivalence towards *wāsṭa*, this chapter proceeds as follows. First, I situate contemporary *wāsṭa* in relation to pre-capitalist and pre-modern-state forms of socio-political and economic organization in Jordan with their embeddedness in patriarchal structures and ethical obligations. My aim is to show how modern-day *wāsṭa* bears some resemblance to traditional practices and notions of tribal virtue, but also how the practice was significantly transformed as it was appropriated by state-power and swept into capitalist logics of calculation and value. I then move on to focus more squarely on the practice of *wāsṭa* in electoral politics where it plays a central role, both as a broad political-economic field, and as an interactional order between parliamentarians and their constituencies. In the next chapter, I shall turn to *wāsṭa* as an object of legal regulation with a similarly ambiguous status as simultaneously licit and illicit practice. In sum, I argue that *wāsṭa* is not the opposite of the rule of law, as liberal scholars assume. Rather, it is a historically specific manifestation of a structural contradiction within it.

A Brief History of Wāsṭa

Historically, the practice of *wāsṭa* in its mediatory and intercessory varieties can be narrated in reference to the rise and waning of three social roles of local authority: the tribal sheikh, the *mukhtār*, and the different kinds of state-centered notables (*wujahāʾ*) of which the elected parliamentarian stands as a paradigmatic figure. The development and historical succession of these roles charts the expansion of modern governance into larger and more intimate domains of social life, and of the sweeping up of practices of patrimonial care into capitalist economies of wealth and political power. What I provide here is not a history in the conventional sense. Rather it is an attempt to think through changes in political organization through the progression of three social roles of political ascendancy at different times. All three roles continue to exist in the present albeit with varied significance. Moreover, since social roles do not refer to individual persons, a single person could inhabit one or more of them.[8]

Prior to the Ottoman Reforms (*Tanzimat*) of the mid-19th century, direct administration in the empire was limited to urban centers and their immediate environs. Beyond those, they ruled nominally through semi-autonomous local leaders who could often disregard them or rebel against them. The territory of what later became Jordan lacked any significant urban centers and hence was to a large extent outside of direct Ottoman control. Effective control there was in the hands of tribes, led by tribal sheikhs, or tribal confederations led by *ʾamīrs*.[9] Unlike political

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[8] Historically, there were often sheikhs who held the office of the *mukhtar*, or ran for elections and became parliamentarians. Today, the title of sheikh is mostly ceremonial and involves none of the activities of sheikhly authority of old, except occasionally in the field of tribal justice in its diminished and delimited current form. Similarly, the office of the *mukhtar* still exists today, but with little administrative or political significance.

[9] The difference between the sheikh and the *ʾamīr* was a matter of scale. The title of sheikh was given to the leader of a particular tribe or tribal subsection, while the *ʾamīr*, was usually the leader a confederation of tribes who could command a sizable number of warriors drawn from these tribes in times of war.

order in the modern state, tribal political organization lacked the claim to a monopoly over the means of violence. Instead, every male tribesman, and every tribal group of any scale, possessed the capacity for violence against others. In contrast to the Hobbesian model—where the distributed capacity for violence leads to a "war of all against all" or, alternatively, to a "social contract" with a sovereign—this lack of monopoly over the means of violence, meant that a tribal sheikh could only lead by example and rule by consensus. In situations of tribal war, the sheikh, in his capacity as a war leader (ʿagīd) lead his fellow tribesmen in raiding other tribes and fending off their raids. In this role, he materialized the virtues of chivalry and courage. By contrast, in situations of peace, the sheikh materialized the virtues of justice (ḥaqq), and hospitality or generosity (karam). It is in this latter, more peaceful dimension of sheikhly authority that the capacity to be a wāsṭa—i.e. to mediate and intercede—was central. If a certain sheikh failed to exemplify those virtues, there were often other contenders ready to take his place. Scholars accustomed to the language of modern politics, often discuss sheikhly authority as the capacity to acquire material goods through raiding and pasture, to re-distribute these goods among tribesmen and guests, and to skillfully maintain the peace through acts of balancing—cf. Gubser's (1973, 41–110). However, this functionalist perspective overlooks the ethical dimension of sheikhly authority, and the ways in which the tribal sheikh was not only successful in providing material resources for his kin, but more importantly, in materializing tribal virtues—cf. Lancaster (1997, 73–96), Sarayrah (2004). In tribal life, hospitality was part of a moral-political-economic order where the purpose of acquisition of wealth was precisely the extension of hospitality and generosity and the materialization of related virtues, not the accumulation of wealth or the consolidation of political power. As Richard Antoun (1979) notes of a village sheikh in northern Jordan:

The achievement of social status through the display of generosity is related to the fact that for men such as Wazir and his descendants consumption goods were not available, nor were they needed. Men built their own houses, made their own clothing, and grew their own food. A shaykh with an economic surplus invested it in sheep which were slaughtered and served in his guest house on every suitable occasion. Such slaughterings provided opportunities to gather the whole community, and the Shaykh's guest house was the region's political center. The leader of this district network utilized the economic tribute he received (frequently sheep) to win political adherents and to achieve social status rather than to increase his own or his family's standard of living. (Antoun 1979, 17)

In this patriarchal world organized into households and extended networks of kin, the performance of hospitality and generosity was central to moral and political ascendancy both for tribe and its sheikhs. Members of the tribal group contributed to a common purse the purpose of which was to enable the sheikh to extend hospitality for guests and generosity to other members of the tribe in times of need. A failure to materialize the virtues of generosity and hospitality, by contrast, brought shame, not only on the tribal leader, but onto the whole tribal group. In this configuration, it is hard to distinguish, or disaggregate an ethical domain from a political or economic one. A situation in which the accumulation of wealth served as a means for political ascendancy, and were political ascendancy was a means for acquiring more wealth, did not exist in this pre-capitalist tribal context.

This situation was starting to change with 19th century Ottoman reforms. The introduction of private property in the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 transformed the tribal sheikh from a figure of moral authority to a feudal lord (cf. Khoury 1982; Khoury and Kostiner 1990). Similarly, the Ottoman *Vilayet* law of regional administration of 1864 incorporated tribal leaders

into the state's bureaucratic structures. A main paradigm shift under this law was the creation of the office of the *mukhtar*, as a state-recognized and sanctioned, but locally elected leader. Unlike the tribal sheikh, who was independent of the state, the *mukhtar* was a middle-man, a Janus-faced figure caught between the patriarchal order of the tribal community and the legal and bureaucratic order of the state. His official duties included the collection of taxes, the communication of state regulations and orders to the tribal community, providing information to the authorities about local disputes and matters as well local knowledge of persons and customs. While he lacked any executive power, the state's reliance on him in matters of local administration gave him access to systems of administrative power which he could exploit, either for the community's benefit, or his own.

The creation of the modern state of Jordan under British mandate following WWI, and the expansion of modern governance and education following independence in 1945 accelerated the decline of sheikhly authority and the expansion of modern state power. The creation and consolidation of national boundaries brought restrictions to traditional forms of life. For nomadic tribes, raiding and tribal warfare was banned in the 1920's, and tribesmen were encouraged to settle and to turn to agriculture. Yet, even for peasants and settled tribes, agriculture alone could never be a reliable source of subsistence due to fluctuations in rainfall from one year to another. Up until 1948, Jordanian peasants performed seasonal labor in Palestinian towns. After the creation of the state of Israel, these avenues were no longer available for them. Instead, the most reliable occupation for many peasants and nomadic tribesmen henceforth was employment in the state bureaucracy and security apparatus, particularly the army. The expansion of modern schooling and education, the decline of traditional forms of subsistence (in their pastoralist and pastoral-nomadic varieties), and the incorporation of large parts of the population into

bureaucratic jobs, have all lead to urbanization and rural-to-urban migration with significant consequences to tribal social organization.

The transition of modes in subsistence from the pastoral and agricultural to bureaucratic employment ensured a relatively smooth transition from tribal structures and governance to those of the modern state and provided them with legitimacy. It also transformed the traditional role of the tribal leader. Rather than a sheikh whose ascendancy rested on chivalry, mediation and hospitality, tribal leaders were gradually relying on their formal recognition by the state as *mukhtārs* and on their personal relations to political elites within the state apparatus to achieve and maintain political ascendancy within their local communities. The kind of skills required for political ascendancy shifted from notions of tribal virtue to education, wealth and access to the state power. This was the environment in which the *mukhtār* gained some measure of significance despite his lack of executive power, as Antoun notes:

> By comparison [to the sheikh,] the mukhtar was a dwarfish figure. Although he represented his own clan and his own village, he was tied to the central government as its functionary. He was selected by his clan and village, not for the number of guns his kinsmen could command or the nobility of his pedigree, but for his knowledge of town ways and his ability to manipulate government officials" (Antoun 1979, 259).

Unlike the sheikh's mediatory role as an exemplar of tribal virtue, the *mukhtār*'s was premised on his ability to extract benefits from the state for his local community, and to use state power claim ascendancy in that community. It was in this configuration that modern *wāsṭa* emerged and expanded with the direct incorporation of Jordanians into state structures through employment, and the state's increased involvement in their life affairs through various development schemes. This expansion and involvement created possibilities for political

ascendancy beyond the office of the *mukhtār* to include various kinds of public servants who now served as local dignitaries because of their ability to capitalize on their access to state power. Unlike the sheikhly *wāsṭa* of old, modern *wāsṭa* rested on a structural ambiguity in the social role of the person preforming it, and in the "economy" of which the act of *wāsṭa* is a part. The act of *wāsṭa* now occupied an ambiguous position between relations of virtuous care resting on the ideals of generosity and hospitality, and a capitalist economy of profit and wealth. Within this configuration, relations of hospitality, generosity, and material care are dis-embedded from the moral-political-economic patriarchal world of which they were a part and re-inserted into one in which they can be capitalized on in a separate political-economic sphere. Far from being a virtuous form of care, then, *wāsṭa* could now be a modality by which people pursued their own interests within the market logic of calculation, and relations of material care can be organized as an economy, or what Alena Ledeneva in reference to *blat*, the Russian equivalent of *wāsṭa*, has called an "economy of favors" (1998). More recently, under the neoliberal marketization of social relations in recent years, *wāsṭa* is now also a skill or social capital that can be exchanged and extended to strangers for profit and not merely to claim political ascendancy within a local community. For example, retired state functionaries are now routinely hired by private companies that are eager to use their connections within the state apparatus to facilitate their business.

The social role of a member of parliament today is the end point of this history. It displays continuities with the *mukhtār*, but also some significant differences. Like the *mukhtār,* the MP is an elected official. Unlike the *mukhtār*, however, the MP must appeal to a large constituency that includes several tribal groups and locales, and whose members he is unlikely to know in person or have any relation of kinship with. Moreover, unlike the *mukhtār* and other

state functionaries, a parliamentarian has leverage over, and certain autonomy from the executive branch of government which allows for other forms of manipulation and exploitation. This unique role of the MP will be the focus of the next two sections.

The *Wāsṭa* Economy of Favors, and the Politics of Hospitality

Preparing for parliamentary elections requires that the candidate develops for himself a public profile of officiousness and beneficence through strategic acts of charity. Someone with a long career in public service can develop such a profile by providing *wāsṭa* to people in his district. Candidates from outside public service can draw on other resources to achieve similar ends. For example, a medical doctor can present himself as a beneficent person by providing free inspections and treatment to the poor and to those without medical insurance. A wealthy candidate can do the same through public acts of philanthropy such as donations to local organizations, individuals and families. What the candidate gains in this process is not only a reputation of power and beneficence, and hence the expectation and trust that the candidate will continue to help members of his constituency after he is elected. Equally significant is that in the process of developing this reputation the candidate can accrue a credit of favors to which the benefactors feel they should reciprocate through voting.

Even a candidate from a humble social background can accrue social capital through the strategic exchange of favors. Over a period of seven years since graduating from college, Zakī, a young and aspiring man of middle class background used several of his social positions to build a public profile for himself before running for elections. As the son of a long-time senior bureaucrat, he used his father's reputation to get things done within the bureaucracy. He also used his position as a public relations officer at a private company to cultivate relations with

bureaucrats, businessmen and politicians outside his father's initial network. Using the special discount he had at a restaurant owned by his boss, and a line of credit guaranteed by his professional credentials, he could provide hospitality to influential people whom he could occasionally use to get bureaucratic work done for the company he worked for. He could also capitalize on these connections to build new ones. The officials he befriended and extended his hospitality reciprocated in kind, and introduced him to other influential people. Socializing within these circles of influence required Zakī to adopt the demeanor of an influential person himself, what he referred to as charisma. Bureaucrats and police were often intimidated by his pretentious demeanor and his habit of name-dropping. "Everyone will immediately want to help you," he explained, "because they believe you're connected and may one day need your help themselves. What I care about is to establish a reputation for myself as a respectable person and the son of respectable people, whose father is well known and whose family is well known, so when I talk to an employee he would say: what do you want? I will do it for you!" For Zakī friendships were investments, potential means to get things done. "It's not fraud, you see, it is a kind of artfulness, as we would say, but it's also an art.. I feel I am creative in this regard, just like an artist, as if I was singing, so when I deal with people and make things happen and stuff.. I feel ecstatic, this is what I like.. you see!" Not only did Zakī's demeanor and hospitality allow him to make other friendships and to get things done, he could also cash in on his connections by charging money for getting other people's bureaucratic work done. While his salary was relatively modest, the extra income from his *wāsṭa* services allowed him to live a lavish life style which in turn allowed him to network with other influential people and expand his network of beneficial friendships—a valuable social capital he could, in turn, translate into votes when he ran for elections.

Once a candidate is elected into the parliament, the politics of patronage and the economy of favors which brought him into office take on a different guise. Election into office gives the MP access to the upper echelons of the state bureaucracy and ruling elites. For MPs parliament sessions are prime opportunities to meet ministers in person and to petition them on behalf of their supplicants. Beyond the sessions themselves, MPs cultivate personal relations with ministers, and other officials in the bureaucracy through further acts of strategic hospitality. This furthers their ability to provide benefits for their constituencies, and more importantly, for themselves. Through their connections to the state bureaucracy, MPs facilitate their existing businesses, secure the necessary licenses for new projects, and gain access to information that help them tap into new possibilities for profit. An investigative report by a news website notes that in 2015 parliamentarians owned businesses worth 1.5 billion Dinars ($2.1 billion), either personally or through their kin (Shawābkah and Ghabārī 2016). A survey by Transparency International's local chapter found that the parliament is perceived to be the most corrupt institution of the state (Rasheed Coalition for Integrity 2017).

Running for parliamentary elections is often an investment. Candidates spend excessive amounts of money on their campaigns to build their public image of beneficence, and may go into serious debt in the expectation that they will reap the rewards when they win. But the relations which the MPs cultivate with individuals in the bureaucracy are not always convivial. In fact, they can be quite contentious. MP's use their right of oversight over the executive to probe officials about real or bogus cases of misconduct and to extract benefits from them in exchange for dropping the probe and not causing future trouble. This kind of contentious politics compliments the economy of *wāsṭa* when more convivial exchanges cannot be secured. For instance, an MP from a lower-class background who is unable to cultivate friendships with high

ranking officials may resort to threats of political dissent, even personal harm against certain officials, to extract benefits he is unable to secure otherwise. Such a MP develops a tragic public profile. Like a mafia boss, he is perceived by his supporters as a deeply corrupt person and a strong man who opposes the state's unjust policies.

On an everyday level, life of an MP very much revolves around his role as a *wāsṭa* for his constituency and a go-between moving between the centers of power in Amman and the poor neighborhoods or provincial towns he represents. For a provincial MP, this is a highly demanding task that requires dedicating considerable time to meeting with members of the constituency both formally and informally. It requires spending considerable time socializing with influential officials and businessmen both in the provincial district and in the capital, as well as remaining involved in the social life of his constituency. If an MP spends too much time outside his provincial district he risks alienating members of his constituency who expect and demand his engagement in their social life as a dignitary and as a *wāsṭa*, or point of contact with the state bureaucracy. Every MP has a core group of supporters with whom he has a long-standing relation, and who will rely on his *wāsṭa*. He also receives many more *wāsṭa* requests from others whom he may have never met before and with whom he has no prior connection, but whom he hopes to win through acts of *wāsṭa* and generosity.

Face-work in the *Wasṭa* Economy

I have argued above that the modern practice of *wāsṭa* occupies a liminal position between patrimonial ethics and modern, capitalist forms of power. On the one hand, *wāsṭa* gestures towards images of tribal virtue and authority. On the other hand, it rests on a dis-embedding of the practices that materialized these virtues from the integrated moral-political-

economic world of which they were a part, and re-inserting them into a world in which political and economic ends are practically separable from moral ends and purposes. In this section, I will further pursue this line of argumentation by considering how this separation manifests in interactions between MP's and their supplicants. As I show, in this modern form of *wāsṭa*, there is usually a great deal of ambiguity as to what the different participants are up to, or what the interaction is a part of. Is it an ethical practice that bears on the exemplary images of sheikhly authority of old? Or is it an instrumental or strategic practice whereby the MP and his supplicants pursue their independent political and economic interests? This ambiguity, I shall suggest, is deliberate and is a necessary condition for the practice of modern *wāsṭa*.

On an interactional level, engaging *wāsṭa* involves a great deal of what the sociologist Erving Goffman called "face-work" (Goffman [1967] 1982). In Goffman's usage, face refers to a typified image through which one is regarded by himself and by others. People maintain their own self-image and that of others by deploying socially recognizable semiotic forms to take stances vis-à-vis themselves and others in social interaction, and to maintain a consistent and positive valuation—what he calls "face-work"—against possible threats to face, or negatively valued enactments and self-(re)cognitions. Goffman's theorization of face-work is particularly pertinent here because it also hinges on normalizing and universalizing the modern dis-embedding of practices from integrated life-worlds, just like *wāsṭa*. His account rests on hard distinction between the means of action (the how) and its ends (the why, or the what-for). As Goffman writes: "[to] study face-saving is to study the traffic rules of social interaction; one learns about the code the person adheres to in his movement across the paths and designs of others, but not where he is going, or why he wants to get there. One does not even learn why he is ready to follow the code" (12). Similarly, Goffman draws a hard distinction between a

symbolic order of communication (ideas), and a practical-material dimension of action (facts). In face-work, he writes, "what the person protects and defends and invests his feelings in is an idea about himself, and ideas are vulnerable not to facts and things but to communications" (43). Combined, the two distinctions lead Goffman to conclude: "Perhaps the main principle of the ritual order is not justice but face" (44).[10]

To the extent that Goffman's face work draws on semiotic forms to achieve evaluative stances towards oneself and others, it necessarily draws on a normative moral order which is an integral part of what is normally called ethical life. However, to the extent that actors engaging in face-work merely seek to signal ethical stances while pursuing ends that are practically separable from the sign-vehicles by which the stances are signaled, face-work is not part of what is normally called ethical life.[11] The ambiguity inherent in face work's status vis-à-vis ethical life helps explain one dimension of the ambivalence towards *wāsṭa* with which I started the chapter. In a world in which practices of patrimonial care are practically separable from their moral ends, face-work is about keeping an ethical face against the ever present possibility of *wāsṭa* appearing instrumental. In this fraught atmosphere, interactants have a tacit knowledge and agreement that

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[10] Goffman understood the motives of human action in terms of passions and interests and hence posited an ontological (rather than analytic) distinction between face and justice. Some scholars have traced this account of human action to the Enlightenment (cf. Asad [1993] 2009; Arendt 2006, 100–105). I shall come to back to a more detailed discussion of this view in chapter 3. For the moment, however, I set this discussion aside to focus more on the utility of this theory to render an accurate description of the practice of *wāsṭa*.

[11] This is a key distinction I draw on thorough out the dissertation, but whose significance will become clearer when I come back to discuss ethical self-transformation among political activists in Chapters 3 and 4. Here, it suffices to say that Goffman, like most modern scholars of ethics (most notably Immanuel Kant and Emile Durkheim), understands ethics in deontological terms; that is to say, as sets of norms that demand a compliance regardless of the practical ends one pursues. By contrast, critics of this tradition (most notably Elizabeth Anscombe and Alasdair MacIntyre drawing on Aristotle and Wittgenstein's later work) have pursued a teleological account of ethics that stresses aspirational ends over norms. Here, I follow Cora Diamond (1988) and Jonathan Lear (Lear 2009) in combining the two approaches.

they are all ultimately engaging in the *wāsṭa* exchange to pursue their own ends, but need to give face to each other in order to let the interaction move smoothly—a particular form of face-work which Goffman calls "tact."[12] In what follows, I turn to an ethnographic account of how tact and tactfulness play out in the seeking and receiving of *wāsṭa*. I then come back to explain what kind of commitment or obligation is inherent in face-work and how that bears on the relation between MP's and supplicants.

* * *

The everyday life of a member of parliament involves the expectation and obligation to be always "on"—that is to say, to be always available and reachable in person by whoever considers himself to be a member of the constituency and wishes to discuss some issue with him in that capacity. Every MP dedicates at least one cellphone line for their constituency's communication, and depending on his technical skill, he may also be reachable over email or social media. Whenever an MP is in a public setting, he must expect to be approached by anyone who wants to engage with him in his official capacity and make a request for *wāsṭa*. An MP also keeps at least two offices to conduct his business. One is an office dedicated to him in the parliament building, and which remains mostly unused, except for occasional private meetings with other MP's. The security requirements to enter the parliament building ensure that not everyone will have the privilege to such a private encounter. Most requests for intercession, by contrast, take place at another office, dedicated specifically for *wāsṭa* requests, and located at the center of the electoral district. Every MP designates certain times during the week, when members of the constituency can expect him to be available for such requests. My ethnographic

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[12] For a discussion of the importance of tactfulness in the practice of *guanxi* in China, see Smart and Hsu (2007).

account here focuses on the office of Karīm, the provincial MP with whom I started this chapter, and to whose office I had extended access during fieldwork.

Two flights of stairs lead up to Karīm's district office; an apartment he had rented in a commercial street in the district's center. The main door opened to a small foyer leading to a large anteroom, which in turn lead to the main room where the MP had his desk. All rooms were lined with seats along their periphery—the foyer and anteroom with grey, plastic chairs, and the main room with faux-leather couches. Karīm's executive desk occupied the end of the main room, while Rāshid, the assistant, had a smaller desk by his side. Apart from the kitchen and a small bathroom, the rest of the apartment-cum-office remained unused. The kitchen was mostly used to prepare fresh Arabic coffee in the morning, which was Rāshid's first task when he arrived at the office. He then kept it in a large vacuum flask until the guests arrived. As supplicants trickled in and took their seats starting from the main room out, Rāshid served them rounds of coffee and sweets, and greeted the newcomers as they walked in. Such displays of hospitality were a central feature of the MP's self-presentation. In spatial layout and rhythm, his office resembled that of a tribal guesthouse (*madhāfah*) more than a bureau or an executive meeting office. Over the three or four hour period designated for meeting the constituency, supplicants took turns in presenting their cases and listening to others present theirs, while the MP and his assistant listened and took notes.

Interactions in the office were done in personal, intimate registers of speech even though many guests did not know the MP in person, nor he them. For this reason, some prior work was often necessary establish a degree of familiarity that allowed for intimate conversations to proceed. Many visitors contacted the MP over the phone or social media prior to their arrival, and the first visit was usually succeeded by several others. Those prior communications helped

create prior speech contexts for which the face-to-face interaction at the office served as a continuation. When prior communication was not established, some contextualization ensued at the beginning of the encounter to establish a sense of familiarity and social propinquity between the supplicant and the MP. For example, supplicants may offer the name of common acquaintances whom they estimated the MP to know. Or, they may present themselves as members of the MP's village, district, tribe or even religious group to establish a context of propinquity. These are usually queues which the MP needed to pick up on by signaling his commitment to help and establish some degree of reliability. An MP's failure to pick up on these cues could be perceived as neglect, arrogance, or anti-social refusal. For example, in one conversation between Karīm and a supplicant, the latter introduced himself at the beginning of the conversation, but only after a few exchanges, could the MP finally relate the supplicant's last name to that of an old acquaintance. He then proceeded to establish the context of propinquity which he had failed to pick up on earlier:

MP: [Tell me] brother, Ali Ibrahim, do you know him?

Supplicant 1: My uncle!

MP: Ali!?

S1: Yes!

MP: Ahh, yes, yes, you are the one who came with him.. Ahh.. I forgot! How
        is he now?

S1: Thank God, he is better..

MP: He is getting better.. Between the last time I saw him and the previous one
        I thought he looked better..

S1: Indeed, he's getting better by the day.. So now, even smoking in a gathering, when we sit outside, no one is allowed to smoke.. Something as simple as smoking.. So when we sit outside, smoking is prohibited.

MP: Yes, yes, he should take care… (seems to be struggling to stay focused on the conversation) eh, but, eh, thank God, thank God! God willing I will visit him in the next two or three days..

S1: God willing!

MP: OK dear, pass my greetings, pass my greetings, and don't worry [about your case]!

This feigned intimacy and social propinquity infused all interactions between the MP and his supplicants. For example, instead of addressing the MP by way of the formal honorific "*saʿād-tak*" (your excellency), a supplicant would use an informal honorific "*ʾabū x*" (the father of x) or "*ʿammī*" (my paternal uncle). In return, the MP, who often did not know the name of the supplicant's eldest son to respond in kind, used forms of endearment that simultaneously signaled respect like "*ʿazīzī*" (my dear), "*x bāshā*" (pasha), or "*x bēk*" (master)—where *x* is the supplicant's first name. Despite all efforts, however, the display of intimacy was fragile and constantly susceptible to break-downs. It required some face work from both parties to maintain it. Often, supplicants often opted to ignore the breakdown and proceed with the conversation as if it did not happen. Or, they implicitly acknowledged it while offering an excuse for the MP's failings. For instance, upon realizing that Karīm did not in fact remember the details of his case, a supplicant would say "*ʾallah yʿīnak, shū biddak titẕakkar tā titẕakkar!*" ("May God help you. How many things can [a busy person like you] remember!"), and then proceed to recite the details of the case once more. In return, the MP kept his poise and proceeded with the

conversation as if he knew who the supplicant was and what the details of the case were, while at the same time asking questions to solicit more information. Consider this exchange:

Supplicant 2: How are you, Abu Thāʾir?

MP: Thank God! How are you? (*as if he knew who the supplicant was*)

S2: I am Qays Falāḥ.. I communicated with you over email..

MP: Ahh, yes, true! Welcome Qays Bek! (*addressing him as if he was an old, dear friend*)

S2: May God make you live long!

MP: Proceed and tell me..

S2: I was in the General Security..

MP: OK.. (*said in a confirming tone, as if he knew this factual detail already*)

S2: From 2000 to 2008

MP: Yes! (*confirming*)

S2: I guaranteed someone through the associations in [the town of] ʿAjlūn..

Supplicants could often infer from the flow of the conversation that the MP did not, in fact, remember who they were or what their case was, but they would usually not take offense. Instead, they would proceed with the interaction patiently. Only in cases where supplicants indeed considered themselves to be friends or relatives of the MP did they respond to his apparent forgetfulness or inaction with a display of frustration, disappointment, or hurt. On one occasion, a distant cousin of the MP scolded him when he learned that the latter had been in the vicinity the night before, but had not come by to discuss a matter he had told him about.

The commitment to face was not the responsibility of supplicants alone, nor was it limited to the exposure of feigned propinquity. The MP was also committed to keeping his supplicants' face. In cases where the supplicant was not there to request a *wāsṭa*, but rather some cash assistance, the supplicant would usually bring his or her child along, and the MP would slip in a 20-50 Dinar bill ($28-$70) in the child's hand at the end of the encounter. This giving of money would be framed as a gift to the child set in a domestic frame, not a charitable payment to a complete stranger:"*hāy ʿīdiyyeh minnī!*" ("this is a holidays' gift from me!"), or "*ʾishtarī fīhom ʾishī zākī!*" ("buy some candy with this!"). The father, in return, would ask the child to thank the MP, referring to him as "uncle." Unlike requests for *wāsṭa*, requests for money were always a delicate matter since they can be easily construed as begging and cause humiliation for the supplicant, or as bribes and hence an embarrassment for the MP. Therefore, they were often done in private away from the view of other visitors and supplicants. Those who wanted money came either at the beginning of the MP's office hours, or stayed until the very end—both times when there were few other visitors around—or asked to talk to the MP alone. Supplicants kept up the MP's image of hospitality, generosity and beneficence, while the MP kept up his supplicants' dignified image—that they were not beggars, nor selling their votes.

While keeping face was a central aspect of interactions between the MP and his supplicants, it played little role in compelling the MP to action. Unlike requests from real friends and kin,[13] MP's found requests from strangers to be a nuisance. These requests took up too much

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[13] In one incident, a friend of Karīm's called him to seek help for his son. The son was caught with a cellphone on him while doing his Secondary Education Exam and was suspended from continuing the rest of his exams. The son claimed that the phone had no battery and that he did not use it to cheat. Karīm thought the boy's claim was implausible, but sympathized with the father. According to regulations, the son would be barred from taking the exam for two consecutive years—a harsh punishment for the mistake of a young and reckless kid! After inquiring about the name of the head of the Examinations Department, Karīm and his assistant

time, and provided little motivation to fulfill them beyond the hope of winning few extra votes at election time—a prospect that was never guaranteed. Supplicants often recognized this lack of motivation. Therefore, when an MP seemed not to deliver on his promise for help, supplicants often tried to motivate him, or threaten him, by gesturing towards the relation between providing the *wāsṭa* and their voting. This too was usually done tactfully. On one occasion, a man came a second time to the office to see if the Karīm had interceded with the general manager of an industrial company to hire the man's nephew. When Karīm said he could not get hold of the manager, the man proceeded to explain how he had consulted with many friends and relatives who all recommended Karīm as generous man and a man of his words. He then concluded by reciting a short verse from the Qurʾān: "*hal jazāʾ ul-ʾiḥsān-i illa al-ʾiḥsan*" (is not the reward of a good deed but also a good deed?). Seemingly not understanding what the man was alluding to, Karīm responded by concurring: "of course, the reward of a good deed is a good deed!" as if the man had intended to say that Karīm would be rewarded by God for his good deeds. Here, the man clarified what he was insinuating: "No, no! *For us,* the reward of a good deed is a good

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spent a whole hour calling up everyone they knew with the same last name in the hope that they could get to one of his relatives. If only the kid could be allowed to continue taking his exams, another intervention at a later point and a higher level could cancel the suspension and let him at least fail and take the exam again in the next round. When all attempts to reach the man failed, Karīm called the minister himself, but did not broach the topic directly. Instead, he asked about how the exam process was going and whether cheaters were caught so far. When the minister mentioned that there were almost a hundred cases of cheating, Karīm realized he could not ask the minister for an exception for his friend's son. If the minister was to grant the kid an exception, he will have to grant the same to all the rest—a very unlikely possibility. For this to succeed, the exception must be made at a much lower and more local level, like the provincial district. Only after a whole day and many unsuccessful attempts to reach officials at various levels, Karīm realized that the names have already reached the ministry and eventually gave up.

deed!" This was not a favor for which the MP would be rewarded in the afterlife, but one that will be paid back with votes in this life.[14]

But if keeping face played little role in compelling ethical action, why is it central to the practice of *wāsṭa* in electoral politics? If all participants are aware of their engagement in some kind of masquerade, as I have been suggesting, then why did they feel compelled to keep it up? Why did they not simply acknowledge their engagement in an instrumental exchange? The answer to this question can perhaps be gleaned from Goffman's account of face-work. As he notes, interactants have emotional attachments to their face, or self-image as "good" vis-à-vis other interactants, and this attachment is what compels them to keep face. However, as I have argued above, despite this emotional attachment to notions of "the good," and its invocation through moral registers, face-work is not what we would normally call ethical life. It is perhaps better described as "etiquette" rather than ethics proper.

Rather than a quest for virtue, then, modern *wāsṭa* involves a commitment to social norms that have been dis-embedded from the moral-political-economic patriarchal life-world of which they were once a part and re-inserted in world in which the spheres of politics and economy have been carved out as separate and autonomous. In this world, patrons and clients continue to have emotional attachments to received images of "the good" as materialized in the figure of the tribal sheikh, but given that tribal morality is no longer an integral part of their practical reasoning in the political-economic sphere—and can no longer be so—theirs is a very

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[14] When motivation by mutual interest failed, however, violence and threat was another way of achieving the same end. When another MP in a poor district in Amman did not deliver on his promise to find employment for a supplicant, the supplicant eventually barged into the MP's house and started destroying the furniture. Terrified of the attack, the MP eventually obliged and found the man a job.

different notion of "the good."[15] Here, "the good" stands for whatever is normatively evaluated as so being, but whereby the relation between the norms and the acting self—in contradistinction to the enacted, or performed, self—is external rather than internal. Being good, in this sense, simply means passing as good, or keeping up the pretense of goodness.

The historical and ethnographic account of *wāsṭa* I have present thus far allows us to see how the modern practice of patrimonial care through *wāsṭa* is significantly different from what it was before the onset of capitalism and modern governance, when the spheres of morality, economy and politics became separated. The tribal sheikh's commitment or sense of ought was ethical, reflecting the exemplary role he played vis-à-vis his tribal community, and was grounded in religion and tribal customs. By contrast, the MP's commitment is partly instrumental and partly an emotional commitment to face that merely facilitates the instrumental logic of his practice. When I asked MP's why they were willing to spend so much time receiving requests and providing *wāsṭa* to supplicants whom they did not care about, they either gave an instrumental explanation (the expectation of votes), or an emotional one (feeling sorry for the supplicants). One could perhaps say that MP's engage in charitable work by providing *wāsṭa* to the precarious, but this statement needs to be qualified by pointing out that this is a concept of charity that is not premised on a sense of moral desert or moral obligation. There is nothing particular to Jordan about these kinds of charitable relations. In fact, liberal theorists of distributive justice have struggled to explain why anyone can be said to deserve anything in a social life organized as a market economy.[16] This question becomes particularly salient if one

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[15] Here is perhaps a historical account of the philosophical distinction between the meaning and the use of moral language.

[16] Most famously, in "A Theory of Justice" John Rawls (1971) had to invent a hypothetical position—which he called "the original position"—from which impartial reasoning about justice can ensue.

considers the fact that, from the perspective of supplicants, *wāsṭa* is merely a way to attain what any modern state promises to all its citizens, namely: welfare and social justice—however vaguely these notions are construed. The next chapter takes up this relation between *wāsṭa* and welfare.

Chapter 2:

Precarity, Welfare, and the Inscrutability of Bureaucratic Justice

Like the father and his daughter with whose story I started the previous chapter, many of Karīm's supplicants were seeking his *wāsṭa* to find employment. A man in his thirties had heard that a chemical plant in Aqaba had vacancies for fork-lift operators and thought he qualified for the job. In presenting his case, the man went at length to describe how he had agreed to be a co-signer on a friend's loan, and was held responsible for its repayment after the friend died from brain cancer. When the man could not pay, he was put in jail and lost his job. After his release from prison, he worked as day-wage laborer in different construction sites, but hoped Karīm could help him secure more stable employment by interceding with the general manager of the company in Aqaba. Another man came to seek employment for his nephew as a machine operator in the National Phosphate Company. The man's brother, the father of the nephew in question, had worked in the same position in that company until his death a year earlier in a work accident. The company's manager was reputed to help people with dire needs find work, so the man was hoping with Karīm's intercession the new manager might appoint the nephew as a replacement for his deceased father since the nephew had now replaced his father as a head of household.

Other requests were not about finding employment, but about getting a promotion, securing more favorable work conditions, or keeping a job. A woman who was due to retire from her job at a public university wanted to delay her retirement until she could finish constructing a new floor atop her house for her son to marry. If she retired, her retirement pension would hardly cover her monthly mortgage payments and she would have no income to live on. The woman

had applied for an extension through the normal administrative channels, but her request was rejected. She submitted another application, with new justifications, but she worried that the personnel officer was a difficult man, and could reject the application again. She wanted Karīm to intercede with the Minister of Higher Education to have him approve the application personally before it went to the personnel committee. Another woman who worked as a mid-level bureaucrat at one ministry came with her husband seeking Karīm's help in rectifying an injustice that had befallen her. Two years earlier, the ministry issued a monthly allowance to employees in the woman's department whose rank was supervisor or higher as per the provisions of the Civil Service Bureau. At the time, the woman's rank was too low for her to receive the allowance. By the time she was promoted a moratorium on all new allowances was in place as part of state-wide budgetary cuts. Those whose allowance was instated before the moratorium kept it as an acquired right, but the woman was denied any. Seeing that her treatment was not equal to that of her colleagues, the woman wanted the situation remedied. She had heard that unlike the permanent allowances her colleagues were getting, temporary allowances for travel costs were not affected by the moratorium, With Karīm's intercession with the minister, she hoped to get a long-term "temporary" allowance for the cost of her daily commute to work. Karīm thought it would be a long shot, since travel allowances are usually given to employees assigned to projects that required them to travel outside their regular place of work for a limited period, but promised to try with the minister nonetheless.

Second in frequency to job-related requests were health related ones. In Jordan, public servants receive free or low-cost treatment in public healthcare facilities. Outside the public service, citizens below the age of six, or above the age of sixty are similarly enrolled public health insurance. Those between the age of six and sixty who are not public servants, however,

must either pay out of their own pocket for healthcare, or pay for their own health insurance which are beyond the means of most Jordanians. Alternatively, they can petition the Ministry of Health or the Royal Court for temporary fee waivers for treatment in the public healthcare system. Obtaining these waivers is a bureaucratic procedure that requires a set of documents that prove both the health condition and the economic need. However, given the large volume of applicants and the need to review and verify each case, the approval could take several weeks, and often required a trip or two to the capital city for follow-up. Many believed that some intercession from an MP can help speed up the process.[1] More seriously, those who received treatment in the public healthcare system were usually assigned to specific hospitals depending on their place of residence, their health conditions, and the general policy at any given moment for distributing patients among the various facilities. Healthcare facilities, however, were not all equal. Depending on when a particular hospital was built, who financed its construction[2] and what equipment it had, people often classified these hospital into first, second and third tiers, and wanted to be treated in first-tier hospitals rather than worse ones. Moreover, patients often had personal preferences for particular hospitals and doctors. Hence, when assigned to a hospital they did not desire, they sought the help of parliamentarians, or some other officials to have their cases transferred to a different one. The consequences of being granted or denied a waiver for a particular hospital can sometimes be grave. A man whose sister's waiver for dialysis at a private hospital expired was told that the waiver will not be renewed for the same hospital when it expired two weeks later. The Ministry of Health now had a new policy, also as part of budgetary

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[1] The situation changed in 2012 when the Royal Court opened a public service unit to deal with these requests, and when in 2016 the granting of waivers was consolidated in that unit rather than being divided between the Royal Court, the Ministry of Health, and the Prime Ministry.

[2] Most healthcare facilities are financed through project-based, international development aid money.

cuts, not to transfer patients to private hospitals. The waiver could only be renewed at one of the hospitals run by the ministry, all of which were overcrowded, and underequipped. The man brought his renewal documents to Karīm to have the waiver renewed at another private hospital, since the accountant at the old hospital had insisted that she will not be allowed to do her dialysis there anymore unless she paid. Karīm took the application and asked the man to go to the provincial office of the Ministry of Health to follow up on it. Other requests not related to employment or healthcare, but to receiving some other material benefit from the state. For example, a man owned a piece of land which was to be serviced by a country-road that had been planned for ten years but not executed for lack of funds. The man had learned that the Ministry of Public Affairs had started constructing a highway that runs one kilometer away from his land, and that the minister was due to visit the area in the coming weeks. He wanted Karīm to intercede with the minister during the visit to have the country-road included in the highway project. The inclusion of that small country-road, he argued, should not come at a significant cost to the ministry.

What the different supplicants claim in all of these cases can perhaps be described as a "right to welfare" (Fleischacker 2015). In a modern state, citizens *qua* citizens have legitimate claims to employment, healthcare, education and various kinds of material benefits and goods whose distribution the state, as a corporate entity, manages. Part of the modern state's legitimacy rests on its promise to provide citizens with what the necessary conditions to lift them out of poverty, or prevent them from falling into it (Stedman Jones 2014). This is, as Fleischaker (2004) points out, at the heart of the modern concept of distributive justice which, he argues, confuses the Christian virtue of charity with commutative justice which governs contractual relations of exchange between individuals—i.e. justice understood as fairness. This chapter explores how

this confusion plays out in practice, and to what effect. I have suggested at the end of the previous chapter that despite the moral ambiguity of the practice of *wāsṭa* in relation to the tribal ethic it mimics, there is a sense in which it is also a legitimate practice as related to notions of state welfare which all citizens can ordinarily expect to receive. As the story of the man and daughter who sought Karīm's intercession reveals, however, there is a simultaneous sense in which *wāsṭa* is also an illegitimate practice and a form of corruption that undermines justice. In the next section, I look at the ambiguous legal status of *wāsṭa* in relation to notions of social justice, a both a legitimate practice and a form of corruption.

Is *Wāsṭa* Corruption?

Prior to the Law of the Anti-Corruption Commission of 2006, corruption (*fasād* in Arabic) was not a legal category. The various crimes and offenses that were incorporated in that law under the category of corruption were already criminalized in the Jordanian Penal Code No. 16 of 1960, and the Economic Crimes Law No. 11 of 1993, and were referred to there as "the misuse of public office." The only new crime introduced in 2006 under the category of corruption was *wāsṭa.* The inclusion, however, was met with some lively debates and controversies in the parliament, both when the first law was proposed in 2005, and in every subsequent revision of it. The debates focused on two aspects. First was the question of the legitimacy of the practice. Should *wāsṭa* be considered a form of corruption at all? If so, under what circumstances? Second was the question of culpability. In cases where *wāsṭa* was to be considered a form of corruption, who should be held responsible for it—the supplicant, the intercessor, or the public servant who accedes to the intercession?

The two dimensions of the debate were closely intertwined. Some MP's insisted that all forms of *wāsṭa* should be criminalized because *wāsṭa* as such undermines the principles of justice, equality and equal opportunity. Others, like Fakhrī al-Dāwūd, countered that *wāsṭa* is a longstanding tradition in Jordan and not a form of corruption. It had many benefits including repealing unjust decisions by the executive, and ensuring that public servants were compelled to buttress any decisions they make with the necessary legal and procedural justifications in order to mitigate any social pressure exerted on them. Ḥātim al-Ṣarāyrah, insisted that *wāsṭa* was not a cause for inequality, but a remedy for it since citizens' access to opportunities was already unequal. As he put it: "If I am evaluating two people [for a job] and subjected both to a proficiency test—a graduate of the American School and another of Sūl[3] School where the math or English teacher arrives two months after the school year had started. How can I treat them as equals when I have not equalized them from the start?"[4] A blanket criminalization of *wāsṭa*, he argued, would merely institutionalize and legitimize existing inequalities.

While a blanket criminalization of *wāsṭa* seemed farfetched, there was still a sense that at least certain forms of *wāsṭa* were illicit. The problem was then to determine when this was the case, and who would be picked out as a culprit in these situations. With respect to this debate, it was eventually agreed that seeking *wāsṭa* intercession was not a criminal act in itself. Everyone, many MP's argued, had a right to seek *wāsṭa* to pursue whatever interests they had. But if a request for intercession was never a crime in itself, neither was the act of interceding on someone's behalf. If anything deserved scrutiny as potentially corrupt, it was the response to the *wāsṭa* by granting or denying it. In such cases, the responsibility for the act would ultimately

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[3] A small village inhabited by the MP's own tribe.

[4] Minutes of the Jordanian Lower House of Parliament meeting 1 (day 11), Extraordinary Session no. 3, convened on Tuesday 19 September, 2006.

befall the public servant who acts upon the request and not the supplicant nor the intercessor. Whether a public servant's response to *wāsṭa* is licit or not must be determined by appeal to the laws and regulations that govern the conduct of public servants. Consequently, the new law criminalized *wāsṭa* as a form of corruption in cases where acceding to it "nullified a right or validated what is void" (*tubṭil-u ḥaqq-an ʾaw tuḥiqq-u bāṭil-an*).[5]

The definition, however, was vacuous and redundant as one legal scholar and a former employee of the Anti-Corruption Commission was quick to note (al-Raggad 2012). It stated that *wāsṭa* was illicit if it resulted in injustice (*bāṭil*), but left unclear what is meant by justice or right (*ḥaqq*). This was particularly puzzling given that it is normally presumed that the aim of any legislation is to achieve justice, and that the point of legislating is precisely to define what justice was and what it was not. Since the use of *wāsṭa* in the pursuit of one's interests was not corrupt in itself, it was up to other laws to determine when *wāsṭa* counted as corruption and when it did not. In the twelve years that elapsed since the passing of the law, however, not a single case of *wāsṭa* has resulted in the pressing of corruption charges. One reason why the criminalization of *wāsṭa* does not yield successful criminal cases is that in the vast majority of situations it involves no legal or procedural infringements.[6] In responding to *wāsṭa* requests, bureaucrats usually take good care to abide by the formal legal and procedural requirements of their positions in anticipation of possible future investigations, whether criminal or administrative—a gesture that infused the whole bureaucratic process with much caution. No bureaucrat wanted to risk taking the blame for an unlawful decision if an investigation is ever conducted. Every decision had to

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[5] Anti-Corruption Commission Law No. 62 for the year 2006. Published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. 4794, Page 4534 on 30 November, 2006.

[6] When I asked the Anti-Corruption Commission's chief detective about this discrepancy, he explained that illicit *wāsṭa* is difficult to prove as such, but it sometimes involves other transgressions like bribery and extortion on which a criminal case can be built.

be sufficiently supported by following due procedures, and by obtaining the necessary signatures (cf. Hull 2003, 66–101).

Similarly, MP's in their capacity as *wāsṭa* intercessors anticipated this bureaucratic caution and often enquired from their supplicants about their cases to ensure they met the formal criteria before getting involved in the process of intercession. At Karīm's office, this was the business of the assistant Rāshid, who had almost encyclopedic knowledge of bureaucratic procedures. As supplicants presented their cases, he meticulously recorded the relevant details to assess whether Karīm's intercession had any chances of success. In one case, a woman who worked as a janitor at a public school came to request Karīm's help in getting a promotion. At the time when she started working, she only had a Certificate of Secondary Education and hence she did not qualify for a clerical position at the school. However, during her three years of working as a janitor she had enrolled in a community college, and graduated with a diploma in nutrition and household economics. With a post-secondary degree, she now qualified for a clerical position which would be better paid and more comfortable. To get the new position, an application for a Change of Job Title (*taghyīr musammā waẓīfī*) needed to be submitted on her behalf and be approved by the Ministry of Education. When she presented the case to Karīm, however, Rāshid explained that such an application will be rejected. Due to the large number of similar applications and the *wāsṭas* involved in processing them, the ministry had instated a policy of rejecting all such applications if initiated by the employees themselves. The application had to be initiated by the school instead for it to be considered by the ministry at all. Karīm's task was then to intercede with the headmistress to have the application submitted from her side. Once the application is submitted, he can then follow up with the ministry to try to get it approved. Policies that aim to restrict the use of *wāsṭa* must be formulated in formal terms

precisely because they are bureaucratic policies. Yet the creation of new rules does not eliminate the practice. It can foreclose certain avenues, but it also creates others.

Hospitality in the House of the Sovereign

Created in 2012 during the wave of anti-corruption protests, the Public Service Bureau (PSB) at the Royal Court aimed, in part, to formalize the process of petitioning for welfare benefits from the Palace and to reduce recourse to wāṣṭa in processing applications. It was also charged with running various sustainable development programs on behalf of the Palace. The PSB is the Palace's most public face. Like the MP's office, it is organized around images of tribal hospitality and generosity. Most employees at the PSB presented themselves as working at "the house of our lord the King" (*bayt sayyidnā*) which is "the house of al Jordanians" (*bayt al-ʾurduniyyīn jamīʿ-an*). They often explained to me with much confidence and enthusiasm, how any ordinary Jordanian can petition the King about anything they desired by simply writing a letter and filing it with the relevant functionary there. But if the image of sheikhly virtue enters the MP's office as a feigned pretense, at the PSB, it survives as a mere metaphor. Feigned propinquity is substituted with bureaucratic indifference.

The PBS is a large, impressive building, a limestone cube topped with a copper-clad dome. At the main gate outside an army guard checks inspects people's documents. Only those with a valid application and a valid household register document showing the person's direct kin relation to the applicant can go in. Visitors without the proper documents are denied entry even regardless of the reason for their visit, or any personal connections they may have with

functionaries inside.[7] As you enter the building, a receptionist enquires about the reason for your visit, and then hands you out an automatically generated ticket with a queue number. You then enter the main hall, large double volume space lined with benches in the middle, where you wait for your numbers to be called to one of the service counters lined around the hall's periphery. The ground floor is dedicated to clients with standard requests of which the unit for civilian healthcare constitutes the largest part, and takes up most of the buildings' main hall. Smaller units, are tucked away in the corners of the building. Offices of senior officials are located on the second floor. These rarely deal with clients directly, except in non-standard cases that require more discretion and nuance. The interior walls of the building are clad with pictures of the King, often in iconic gestures of charity and hospitality. One picture shows him praying at a mosque with his palms opened towards the sky as if reciting an intercessory prayer (*duʿāʾ*). Others depict him smiling and waving to crowds of people, visiting a patient at a hospital, kissing a child on his cheek, having his forehead kissed by an old man, or by a woman dressed in traditional rural garb. Apart from these pictorial representations of royal hospitality, charity, and piety, however, the rhythm of the bureau is rather bureaucratic, and impersonal.

At the healthcare waiver unit, a medical doctor sits behind the public service counter and reviews healthcare waiver applications. He takes less than a minute to determine whether an application is to be approved or rejected, working his way through the long line of applicants as if following the precise sequence of an assembly line. "Emergency cases have to be less than ten days old," he explains to me as I follow his frantic movements. "I only deal with medical cases

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[7] On my first visit to the building I was denied entry for lack of such documents. To gain access I was told I needed to send a letter by mail to the head of royal services department at the Court and include a phone number to be contacted by his office once they had an answer. Only with much difficulty and with the help some contacts at the Court could I secure the fax number of someone at services department to submit the application and expedite the process.

that are less than three days old. Anything with an entry date earlier than three days needs approval from upstairs," he points up to where the office of the director lies. He then takes a medical report from the next client and scans it with a quick eye movement, first at the entry date, then at the referring doctor's report. If an application meets the formal requirements, he would sign "Accepted. Referred to hospital X" in red ink, stamp it "Approved," and pass it on to data-entry clerk at the next service counter. The clerk scans the application for the red signature and stamp of approval, then looks for the applicant's national number and types it into the computer system. and flicks frantically between the different tabs that show up. One tab pulls up data from the Ministry of Health database. If an applicant turns out to have any public health insurance benefits, the application is rejected. Other tabs pulls up data from the Land and Surveying Department, the Traffic Department, the National Assistance Fund, and the Zakāt Charity Fund. If an applicant or anyone in his household is found to have substantial assets, or is receiving some financial assistance from a state run fund, the application is rejected. Otherwise, it receives a second signature in green, and a stamp of approval from the data entry clerk. It is then sent to the director for a routine final signature. The process of reviewing and approving an application takes less than half an hour.

Employees of the PSB take pride in their efficiency and deep commitment to fairness and bureaucratic justice. "Everyone is equal here. There is no *wāsṭa*!" the director often explained to me, "We have clear procedures, and the process is almost automatic. No one should need *wāsṭa* to get what is rightfully theirs. If you meet the requirements, you get what you deserve, and you are treated with full courtesy!" Indeed, bureaucrats at the PSB are adept at looking only for the information relevant to the assessment criteria, running the necessary checks and making a decision in a semi-automatic way. Descriptions that did not fit the criteria and decision process

are rejected. As one medical doctor reviewed a woman's waiver application, he exclaimed: "Aha! The word infertility is not acceptable! Can't you get a report that says polycystic ovary syndrome? We do not accept infertility!" When I asked the doctor what difference it made if the application had said infertility or polycystic ovary syndrome, he explained: "Infertility is a condition, but we need the cause of the condition to know which hospital to refer her to."

Similarly, information that exceeds the bureaucratic decision-making process registered as mere noise and a distraction that must be ignored if a fair decision is to be made. This included anything delivered in the moral registers of supplication and patronage I often witnessed at the MP's office. The use of such registers was common, however, especially in applications submitted to the financial assistance unit where applicants were required to write short descriptions of themselves and their financial situation as part of their applications. Social workers at the unit, by contrast, had little patience for such narratives and language. "I don't care for all of this!" exclaimed one social worker when an applicant gave him an elaborate description of his dire situation—how he was divorced and had to pay alimony (*nafaqah*) to his ex-wife and support his kids who stayed with him, how he was kicked out of his home because he could no longer pay rent, and how he was now homeless and lived in a cave. After a moment of inspecting the documents, the social worker looked at me: "Look! He has written two pages for me to read, but I do not care for all of this. All I care about is the documents. I do not care about all this writing!" He then turned to the old man: "Your family register still shows that you are married. Get a new one and come back!" The old man broke into a fit of incessant pleading, explaining that he had travelled all the way from Irbid (a 2-2.5 hour trip to Amman each way by public transport) and did not have the money to keep making the trip back and forth, nor to issue a new family register. When the social worker seemed unmoved, the man held up his letter and pled to

have it sent to the King: "I want His Majesty to hear my voice!" At this point, the social worker exploded: "I have no authority to send this to His Majesty the King! If you like, you can take it and send it by mail to His Excellency the Secretary General of the Royal Court!" Unabated, the old man read aloud a paean to the King he had included in his letter nonetheless. He then took his papers and left.

Unlike the interactions at the MP's office, those at the PSB are impersonal by definition, for impersonality is the essence of the bureaucratic notion of justice. As bureaucrats, workers justified their decisions by appealing to laws, rules, bureaucratic requirements and criteria that applied to all applicants indiscriminately. This was a part of their bureaucratic work process, and the system of checks and balances built into it. Other bureaucrats further down in the process, and up in the hierarchy checked to see if the necessary signatures were obtained before they processed the applications they received. If a superior noticed that an application had been unduly approved without meeting the relevant criteria, the employee who authorized the approval with his signature would be scolded, fined, transferred, or even fired depending on the gravity of the case. Adherence to rules, formal criteria, and due process were the foundations of the workers' sense of integrity and excellence, and a source of professional pride. It also signified their exact sense of justice in treating all applicants as equals. Bureaucrats could, or had to, remain deaf to appeals made in personal registers that invoked images of sheikhly hospitality in order to maintain their self-image of bureaucratic rectitude.[8]

But the bureaucrat as a prototype (or ideal type) should not be confused with actual bureaucrats as biographical persons. Just as often, workers at the PSB applied moral judgement

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[8] The point here, of course, is not that bureaucrats as individual persons are inherently cruel or indifferent to inter-personal considerations outside of their own limited sense of justice and integrity. Rather, my point is merely that sensitivity to inter-personal considerations is not essential to the bureaucrat's sense of excellence *qua* bureaucrat.

and inter-personal consideration in evaluating applications.[9] As a medical doctor reviewed a woman's application for a medical waiver for her son, he underlined the keywords in the medical report: "language delay, developmental delay, abnormalities in motor functions." He then raised his eyes to look at the woman: "What do you want? You know we do not give out referrals to care centers!" The woman confirmed with a nod. "Do you want me to refer you to a hospital so that your son can receive some treatment?" She agreed. The doctor then signed his approval and turned to me to explain his decision: "This boy is autistic, which is a difficult situation for the parents.. These kids are restless and violent.. The parents try to deal with them, but after a while they go crazy and try to send the kid to a care center because they can't deal with him.. If this kid was now here, he would be jumping around and destroying things.. He would drive us crazy! The parents are justified, but we have no solution for it.." If the referral had said "autism," the doctor explained, he would have had to reject it because waivers only cover treatment at public hospitals, and no public hospital had facilities for dealing with autism. Perhaps for this reason, the referring doctor had avoided using this term in his report. By exercising a moral judgement in interpreting the referral to perform an act of charity, the reviewing doctor let the application "pass"—or, literally "walk" (*timshī*). This way, he explained, the boy would get some kind of medical care which is better than nothing at all. In a similar fashion, data-entry clerks took liberty in interpreting certain formal criteria to make moral judgements. Upon noticing that one applicant owned a car worth 11,000 Dinars, one clerk approved the application, but noted to me

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[9] I use the term moral judgement here deliberately to point out how bureaucratic charity and generosity are significantly different from the materialization the same virtues by the tribal sheikhs of old. The tribal sheikh was ethically committed to being hospitable for this was part and parcel of what it meant to be a sheikh in the first place. For this reason, a guest, supplicant or protégé had a moral claim upon the sheikh. A bureaucrat, by contrast, is only bound by the rules. Any display of charity, generosity or hospitality is, in a sense, left to his own judgement. An applicant has no moral claim upon the bureaucrat to be generous. A bureaucrat can be generous, or not, out of his own will.

that some of his colleagues would not have approved it. For him, he explained, anything below 15,000 Dinars did not count as a substantial asset. For others, the threshold could be as low as 10,000 Dinars.[10]

In his reflections on the margins of the state, Talal Asad (2004), echoing Schmitt ([1922] 2006), has usefully discussed the centrality of abstraction and impersonality to the practice of modern, governance. Secular-liberal justice, Asad notes, rests on the principle of legal equality which requires that citizens are treated by those who apply the law as essentially the same, and hence as abstract persons. Thus, to be treated equally, in this particular sense, is to be treated with equal indifference (Herzfeld 1992; Graeber 2012). But precisely because of the abstract nature of law, it involves a degree of indeterminacy, and hence requires an act of (re)contextualization, and a certain degree of interpretation for it to be effective at all. This is, of course, a feature of all acts of (re)contextualization (Briggs and Bauman 1992; Silverstein and Urban 1996), but in the bureaucratic realm this (re)contextualization takes on a particular significance. Scholars of bureaucracy refer to the interpretive labor involved in (re)contextualizing abstract laws as "discretion" (Lipsky 2010; Hoag and Hull 2017). It can take the form of personal interpretation as in the case of the data-entry clerk who evaluated whether an applicants' assets are "substantial" or not. It can also take the form of moral judgement based on empathy as in the case of the doctor who approved the autistic child's waiver application. Discretion is a necessary part of the bureaucratic practice, yet by definition it is not grounded in law or the formal bureaucratic rules to be applied, but rather in something else. Discretion, like sovereignty, is both inside and outside the legal order (Schmitt [1922] 2006; Agamben 1998).

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[10] To reiterate my point, these moral judgements are not essential to the role of the bureaucrat *qua* bureaucrat even if they are part of it. Normally, a bureaucrat is not recognized or rewarded by his institution for being kind or compassionate with his clients, but rather for being efficient. He is punished for not applying the rules incorrectly, but not for being aloof or uncaring.

Viewed from the perspective of those subject to the law, bureaucratic decisions always entail a degree of arbitrariness or illegibility (Das 2004; Hoag 2011). This illegibility is sometimes interpreted, or rendered legible, as an unintentional accident, or bureaucratic glitch. But because the law is supposed to be the only ground for bureaucratic justice, bureaucratic illegibility is more commonly interpreted an instance of social discrimination—i.e. the preferential treatment of a certain group over another[11]—or as a personal preference on the part of a bureaucrat to treat one citizen more favorably than others—i.e. as favoritism or *wāsṭa*.

At the same time, the citizen's appeal to *wāsṭa* is precisely a way to secure favorable bureaucratic decision in the face of this inherent illegibility of law, or a desire to be cared for in a bureaucratic domain structured by indifference. Let me illustrate this with the example of a Palestinian applicant whom I met once at the copy shop outside the PSB. The man had come to photocopy his documents and to have the shopkeeper write him a personal narrative as part of his application for cash assistance. He had a medical report that stated he had a psychological condition that made him 75% handicapped and unfit for work. He lived on the 135 Dinars ($195) pension he was receiving from the National Aid Fund—a sum hardly sufficient to cover his rent and living expenses, let alone university fees for his daughter. He was anxious about his prospects because of his Palestinian descent, and urged everyone at the shop to pray for his application to be accepted.[12] But the man was also hopeful. The manager of the National Fund's

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[11] Jordanians of Palestinian descent often explained their encounters with the bureaucracy as discriminatory in this sense. Whether such discrimination happens or not is an empirical question that must be verified or investigated on a case-by-case basis. My point here is simply that this is a salient framework by which bureaucratic illegibility is made legible.

[12] Knowing the amount of applications social workers received every day, I thought the man's concerns were valid. On average the social workers received around one hundred applications for cash assistance each day, but their budget allowed them to approve only twenty of those. In the end, it was up to the social worker to determine who more deserved to receive aid given that all applicants met the required criteria.

provincial office belonged to the same tribe as that of one of the social workers at the PBS. The manager had called his relative and asked him to take care of the man's application and sent along a business card with his signature on the back to indicate which person he was referring to.[13] An hour later, the man emerged from the PBS looking extremely happy. I asked him if his application was approved. He confirmed, and said that the social worker had also promised to help him secure more assistance in the future. When asked the social worker about this man's particular case, he cheerfully explained how he decided to help him out of pity. When I politely asked about the business card, the worker annoyedly showed me the door.[14]

In the previous chapter, I started my inquiry into *wāsṭa* by noting the ambivalent attitudes towards the practice, as both a form of virtuous care, and a form of corruption. I discussed how anthropologists of corruption, and political scientists—especially those working within the paradigm of neo-patrimonialism—explain this ambivalence in different ways, but how they all make similar Weberian assumptions about an inherent contradiction between bureaucratic norms of rational-legal authority, and the traditional norms of kinship. My ethnographic and historical discussion in the previous chapter suggested that this view was simplistic. I argued that modern *wāsṭa*, while drawing on traditional images of tribal virtue was significantly different from it, for it is practiced in a world in which morality is seen to be separate from the sphere of political-economy. Further, I explored how this separation manifests in interactions at the MP's office, where people draw on moral registers to achieve instrumental ends. I suggested that this

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[13] In popular culture, this practice of using the business card of an official to facilitate bureaucratic work is known as "kart Ghawwār" after a 1970's satire TV show by the Syrian actor Durayd Laḥḥām.

[14] Whether the man's application was approved because of wāsṭa or not is of course a legal matter and besides my point. In any case, as the Ant-Corruption Commission record on prosecuting *wāsṭa* demonstrates, it is quite difficult, if not impossible to determine what the motives of the social worker were.

separation of tribal morality from practical reasoning was partly the reason why people had ambivalent attitudes towards *wāsṭa*. Now we are in a position to add another layer of explanation. My discussion in this chapter pointed out that modern *wāsṭa* and patronage are not the opposite of the rule of law and rational-legal authority, but internal to it.[15] Attempts to expand the rule of law through more specific rules and regulations do not put an end to the space of indeterminacy and the need for discretion, but instead relegates the indeterminacy to a new level, and creates what Jane Guyer has called a "coral reef of formality," which merely creates further loopholes and opportunities (Guyer 2004, 1997:169). Formality and abstraction are central to bureaucratic justice and the idea of equality among citizens. Yet the formality and abstraction of law, willy-nilly, invite discretion, informality, and hence, inequality. This is not a remnant of a "traditional" past, as liberal theorists and technocrats believe, but a structural contradiction in modern, secular governance.

Rule of Law, Suspicion, Transparency

My discussion thus far has helped clarify the nature of *wāsṭa* and its relation to modern governance, but we are still left with a puzzle. If *wāsṭa* intercession often aimed at legitimate ends, and rarely involved any violation of law or formal procedures, whence derives the sense that it is a form of corruption? Part of the difficulty in answering this question lies in the current disagreement over what corruption is, both among scholars and anti-corruption practitioners. Practitioners tend to prefer to brush conceptual controversies aside and trust their ability to recognize corruption when they see it—see for example (Stephenson 2017). Scholars, by

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[15] This is a point that even the more sophisticated literature on neopatrimonialism misses. See for example Gero Erdmann and Ulf Engel's attempt (2006) to define neopatrimonialism as an opposite of Weberian rational-legal authority which nonetheless coexists with it.

contrast, usually start with the definition of corruption offered by the World Bank as "the abuse of office for private gain," and move on to problematize it as either too narrow, or too abstract and under-determined. For example, Mark Philp (2001) has identified three different kinds of definitions— subsequently centered on public interest, public office and market exchange—and argued that each of these draw on different views of what a healthy political system is. Some scholars have questioned the cultural and historical specificity in applying the concept, noting that certain practices are considered corrupt in certain times and cultures, but not in others—see for example the edited volumes by Dieter Haller and Cris Shore (2005) and by Emmanuel Kreike and William Jordan (2004). Others, by contrast, have attempted to resolve the disagreement by sketching conceptual, or intellectual histories of corruption (Buchan and Hill 2014; Buchan 2012; Bosman 2012; Pierce 2016) without any agreement emerging over the contours of this history. I do not wish to weigh in on these debates, nor do I think that weighing in on them would get us any closer to answering the question I had posed above. Rather than approaching corruption as an empirical phenomenon that requires theorization and specification, I would like to focus instead on the conditions under which corruption emerges as a problem. What are the conditions of this possibility?

To answer this question, it suffices to note that all contemporary definitions of corruption turn on some notion of "the conflict of interest," as a conflict between the private interest of a particular individual or social group, and the general interest of the corporate entity of which they are a part, such as a nation, a state, an organization, or a corporate community of some sort. And while it is not always clear what constitutes a conflict of interest empirically,[16] it is safe to say that the concern over corruption is intimately intertwined with a view of human beings and

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[16] Indeed, most conceptual disagreements around corruption are essentially disagreements about what constitutes a conflict of interest.

their actions as essentially directed towards the pursuit of interests.[17] This view of human action

has a determinate history. Genealogies of the concept of interest trace it back to the political

thought of 16th century Florentine humanists like Machiavelli (Pocock 2003; Hirschman 1986),

and in a generalized moral guise to 17th century French moralists (Heilbron 1998), and to the

political debates that ensued during the English Civil War (Gunn 1968; Hirschman [1977] 1996).

What these varied European thinkers were grappling with was a situation in which the view of

the ends of human life as understood in the Christian tradition no longer held sway over how

people actually lived and evaluated their lives. One of the main preoccupations of modern

European political thought ever since has been precisely to work out how social order could be

maintained under these circumstances. The word interest was a label under which the diversity of

the ends and purposes that motivated the actions of individual persons could be systematized and

commensurated. The concept of interest had roots in Roman law, but the way it was

operationalized was infused with the concerns of Christian theology and anthropology. By the

19th century, however, the concept had been thoroughly secularized—i.e. stripped of its religious

references—and posited as a universal norm for all human action. It constituted the foundation of

the practical arts of government, and the then emergent social sciences—two domains in which

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[17] The notion of self-interest which lies at the heart of such theories as "rational choice theory"
and "game theory" are but one peculiar manifestation of this view. Unlike many of their
colleagues in political science, economics and sociology, anthropologists tend to reject such
theories as reductionist and failing to understand the extent of human cultural diversity.
However, few anthropologists would question the idea that any human action is directed towards
an interest of one sort or another, even if the actor is not always aware of what that interest is.
Either way, this view of human action as motivated by interests is essentially liberal for it posits
a separation between the actor (person) and her ends (interests) in order to assert "freedom of
choice" as a possibility (Sandel 2010b, 15–24). Compare this to my earlier discussion of face-
work (pp. 25-27). In the next chapter, I shall come back to address this assumption in the social
sciences, and to consider the ethical dimension it obscures.

the original concern with the problem of social and political order continues to lurk.[18] In the arts of government, which is our direct focus here, it takes the form of protecting the "general" or "public" interest—i.e. the interest of everyone, or no one in particular—from of the contamination of "particular," "private," or "personal" interest (Bratsis 2003).

Organizational codes of conduct which set the standards of integrity among public servants are formulated around this ever-present danger of conflict of interest. The Jordanian Code of Professional Conduct and Public Service Ethics of 2014, stipulates that a public servant must "respect the rights and interests of others without exception, and treat the public with courtesy, tactfulness, diplomacy, neutrality, disinterest, and objectivity," and must "abstain from any activity that does not fit the objective and disinterested performance of his duties, or may result in the preferential treatment of natural or legal person in their dealings with the government." On the individual level such stipulations demands a certain kind of self-policing lest the bureaucrat's private interests—e.g. the possibility of benefitting from conducting his business in a certain way, or giving preferential treatment to certain people or kinds of people— undermine his indifference towards all citizens' interests, and hence to the public interest as residual category. For instance, the code of ethics stipulates that a bureaucrat "must report to his direct superior in writing and immediately if his own interests conflicted with those of any other person's in dealings with the government, or if there a conflict emerged between his personal interest and the public interest, or if he was subjected to pressures that conflicted with his official duties, or raised suspicions about the objectivity with which he ought to conduct himself. He must clarify the nature of the relationship and how the conflict takes place, and the superior must react with the necessary measures" (Government of Jordan 2014).

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[18] It also informs the modern distinction between "objective" or "disinterested" knowledge as grounded in "facts", from "subjective" opinion as grounded in persons (Dear 1992; Green 1999).

On an organizational level, this vigilance against possible conflicts of interest takes the form of constant scrutiny of personal relations, and hence a tighter surveillance, policing and regulation of the private lives of individual bureaucrats. Murād, an anti-corruption activist who worked for the Standards and Metrology Organization complained to me about administrative policies to curb *wāsṭa* at his organization. Murād was an electrical engineer whose job was to determine whether imported electrical goods met Jordanian standards and hence could be allowed into the Jordanian market or not. As a mid-level bureaucrat his salary was relatively low, but he had considerable power vis-à-vis his wealthy merchant clients. His approval or disapproval of a certain shipment could mean the difference between a large profit for the merchant or a considerable loss. Consequently, Murād's work required him to deal with considerable pressure from friends and kin who frequently interceded on behalf of merchants to have certain shipments cleared. In trying to live up to the ideals of bureaucratic integrity, he often broke up with kin and friends who put their friendship on the line if he did not accede to their requests. While he disapproved of his colleagues' propensity for corruption, he complained that excessive surveillance by his organization was making his life unbearable. Employees at his department were not allowed to receive phone-calls on their private cellphones while at work, or to use their clients' phones, or to meet with the clients except in the office and under the watchful eyes of their colleagues. When the director noticed that Murād sometimes left the building to smoke cigarettes, and occasionally socialized with clients during his cigarette breaks, he reprimanded him and threatened to fire him if he did not quit smoking. "I am a smoker, where should I smoke?" complained Murād, "It is a personal matter if I reduce smoking or stop smoking… So, when you get a clean person like [the director], he suspects you.. the default assumption is that you are a suspect and you need to prove that you are clean!"

Similarly, aware of their inability to build strong criminal cases against *wāsṭa*, detectives at the Anti-Corruption Commission sometimes resorted to surveillance and threat to curb the practice. Upon receiving information that a provincial mayor was about to appoint several of his relatives into the municipality, a detective called up the mayor to tell him that he was keeping an eye on him. This practice harkens back to the Anti-Corruption Commission's predecessor, the Anti-Corruption Unit in the General Intelligence Department whose founder, a retired intelligence officer, was also the Commission's first director. These surveillance and threat tactics, however, receive much criticism from civil rights activists who insist that curbing corruption should not infringe on the freedoms of individuals. This dynamic of suspicion, surveillance and intrusion confirms the findings of Agrama (2012) who argues that the rule of law, because it seeks to regulate competing interests among individuals, operates within an ethos of generalized suspicion that invites state intervention into private domains which, in principle, ought to be protected from such intervention. The suspicion is said to be generalized because, unlike a police investigation into a case, it never reaches a definitive point of conclusion.[19] It requires constant vigilance and sets in motion a hermeneutic of suspicion where the motives of bureaucrats are constantly questioned and scrutinized. Smoking a cigarette with a client may be done innocently, but it may also be an instance of scheming and collusion, so it is better to prevent it altogether.

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[19] As Asad puts it, "Suspicion (like doubt) occupies the space between the law and its application. In that sense, all judicial and policing systems of the modern state presuppose organized suspicion, incorporate margins of uncertainty. Suspicion is like an animal, "aroused" in the subject; it covers an object (a representation or person) that comes "under" it. Suspicion seeks to penetrate a mask to the unpleasant reality behind it: the unauthorized creation of an authorizing document, a hidden motive to commit a crime, a latent disease, a terrorist in disguise" (Asad 2004, 285).

This ever present possibility of conflict of interest sets in motion another hermeneutic of suspicion on the part of citizens. Because *wāsṭa* involves no legal violation, but rather operates within the legal logic of formal equality, there is always the possibility that an apparently innocent act of discretion turns out to be, in fact, an instance of preferential treatment and hence, of *wāsṭa* and nepotism. Applicants to state and other forms of corporate welfare anticipate that other applicants will mobilize their connections to secure their interests, and hence feel compelled to do the same to secure theirs. Like the story of the father and daughter at the beginning of the previous chapter, citizens suspect that any distribution of benefits and resources will be rigged from the outset by *wāsṭa* interventions—"It's all *wāsṭa*!" Yet for the very same reason, supplicants clamor at the doors of MP's, officials, and notables of various kinds seeking their intercession to secure their own welfare. This too, in a sense, is a quest for justice which taps into the discretionary dimension of the rule of law rather than its abstract dimension. The principle of justice as legal equality is always undercut by the possibility of discretionary justice in practice. Yet, in the gap between the law's promise of equality and the glaring fact of inequality, *wāsṭa* emerges as an interpretive framework for social injustice, its cause and yet the most viable remedy.

There are practical, ethical and political implications for this dynamic as it plays out in everyday life. Under the conditions of generalized suspicion of favoritism and nepotism, justice itself, as a prime virtue of modern institutions (Rawls 1971) and political life (Sen 2011; Sandel 2010a), becomes inscrutable. Citizens perceive corruption to be pervasive, but cannot easily point it out because they understand distributive justice in terms of commutative justice (Fleischacker 2004), or morality in terms of the legal regulation of conflicting interests. Within

this framework corruption emerges as a paramount ethical and political problem that appears, empirically, as halfway between paranoid suspicion and fact.

Chapter 3:

From Patronage to *Karāmeh*

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"Verily! God changeth not the condition of a people until they first change
what is in themselves!"
The Qurʾān (13:11)

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During the wave of Arab uprisings (2010-2013), Jordan witnessed an unprecedented number of demonstrations and other forms of popular protests against widespread corruption. For most Jordanians corruption was the symptom and the name of all the ills of society and state. It was the reason why public debt has risen from $8 billion to $23 billion (72% of GDP) within 10 years, without any palpable improvement in the quality of life. It was the reason why the promise of development never materialized; why the usual means of social mobility such as education, business and commerce no longer achieved that end; and why some people were able to accrue wealth and political power while others suffered poverty and neglect. In the popular imaginary, a class of kleptocratic elites (*al-fāsidīn*) was at the root of their collective misery. Therefore, when Jordanians took to the streets in protest, their paramount demand was to end corruption. This was their demand was regardless of their particular political, economic, ethnic or religious backgrounds, and despite their varied attitudes toward the political system, whether they were loyalists or oppositionals, reformists or revolutionaries.

The protest movement that emerged, however, varied in terms of organization and the nature of their demands. Some were the highly organized groups that grew out of active political parties. Those ranged from the Islamic Action Front and its affiliated Islamic Youth Movement to leftist and pan-Arabist parties such as the Democratic Popular Unity Party, and the Ba'ath Party. The second type, by contrast, was a network of loosely organized popular protest movements known collectively as *al-Ḥirāk al-Shaʿbī al-ʾUrdunī* (Jordanian Popular Movement), or simply referred to as *al-Ḥirāk* (the Movement). In contrast to political parties, which took the form of hierarchical organizational structures, *al-Ḥirāk* was mostly organized around relations of kinship, friendship and spatial proximity. It was also more egalitarian in its organizational structure compared to the other groups. While other movements had clear organizational structures and fixed hierarchies, *al-Ḥirāk* was less hierarchical. To be sure, each group had its own prominent figures and leaders, but these had little power over other activists, and their actions were subject to scrutiny in ways that made it impossible for them to act alone. Decisions were usually made neither by decree nor vote, but by consensus. What distinguished the leaders from other members was the extent to which they were actively and continuously engaged in *Ḥirāk* activities. As such, the term Ḥirāk did not refer to a particular group or movement, but to this particular form of organization and to the abstract collective of all movements thus organized. Some of these became members in larger coordinating bodies that aimed at synergizing the activities of several *Ḥirākāt* (pl.), such as *Tansīqiyyat al-Ḥirāk al-ʾUrdunī* (the Coordinating Committee for the Jordanian Movement) for the purpose of their eventual integration into a centrally organized body.

In terms of demands, the protest movement fell into two types. The first was referred to as *al-Ḥirāk al-Maṭlabī* (the Demands Movement) whose goal was to secure concrete welfare

benefits such as jobs, better salaries, subsidies and infrastructure. The second, known as *al-Ḥirāk al-Siyāsī* (the Political Movement), sought more structural and systematic changes in the operation of the state and its intersection with civil society. Its demands revolved around the abstract slogan of fighting corruption (*muḥārabat al-fasād*) and to a lesser degree around legal and constitutional reforms that would minimize the power of the security apparatus and the King while reforming the institutions of representative democracy. The abstract nature of these demands meant that the Political Movement required constant deliberation and adaptation to whatever was deemed of immediate political urgency, and longer-term strategizing over how their varied aimed could be achieved. Nonetheless, throughout the two and half years of activist, the Political Movement remained small in terms of numbers. Except for brief moments of eruption following price-hikes, its protests were limited to a core group of activists in every local *Ḥirāk*. Two groups had the leading role in the protests. These were Ḥirāk ʾAḥrār al-Ṭafīleh (The Free al-Ṭafīleh Movement) and Ḥirāk ʾAḥrār Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh (the Free Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh Movement). The first was based in the town of al-Ṭafīleh (183km, 114mi South of Amman). The second group and the one on which I focus closely here, was based in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, a poor neighborhood of an estimated 30 thousand inhabitants, located close to the historical center of Amman, known as al-Balad (Downtown). I followed Ḥirāk ʾAḥrār Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh since its beginning in January 2011, participated in most of its protests, and lived in the neighborhood in 2012.

The Ṭafāyleh and their Neighborhood

Partly a squatter settlement straddling the two hills of Jabal al-Ṭāj and Jabal al-Jōfeh in central Amman, Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh is not a neighborhood in the administrative sense. Rather, the label marks a fuzzy territory home to decedents of six tribal groups (al-Sʿūd, al-Rbēḥāt, al-

Ḥarāsis, al-Rʿūd, ʿIyāl ʿAwwād, and al-Khawāldeh)[1] that hail from the village of ʿĪmeh (12km, 7.5mi NW of al-Ṭafīlah) and its two satellite villages Dhbāʿa, and Rḥāb; hence the name of the neighborhood: Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh—i.e. the neighborhood of people from al-Ṭafīleh. Emigration from ʿImeh and the other villages to Amman started as early as the 1930's, prompted at the time by several years of drought and the limitations which the creation of the state imposed on other possibilities of sustenance, as well as the possibilities it created for commerce and settlement and construction in the capital city Amman. Much of the migration at the time was seasonal and temporary, but with time, several families moved and lived there permanently. By now, the depopulation of the village is almost complete with around 90% having already left it, mostly to ʿAmmān, but also to other cities, like ʿAqaba and Zarqā.

Since there were no schools in the village before 1952, early immigrants to the city were mostly illiterate peasants with little to no education. They worked mostly in manual labor jobs as porters or construction workers, and some worked in the trade of cattle and agricultural produce. Later immigrants who came to ʿAmmān during the larger migration waves that started in the 1960's, however, had a different outlook. Triggered by a declining agriculture due to many years of drought and the expansion of public schooling and employment, they moved to the city in search for white-collar jobs. They worked mostly in the lower ranks of the state bureaucracy or

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[1] Older people in the neighborhood would give a more detailed genealogy of their tribes, subdividing each tribe (*ʿashīrah*) into subsections (*ʾafkhādh*), but the younger generations may not be able to name more than the subsection to which they belong. Hence, al-Sʿūd is divided into 4 subsections: al-Funnāk, ʿIyāl Jmēyʿān, al-Shaʿānbeh, al-Latāymeh (who are subsequently comprised of: ʿIyāl Mḥmūd, ʿIyāl Naṣer, ʿIyāl Saʿīd, and ʿIyāl Ḥāmid). Al-Rbēḥāt is divided into three subsections: al-Eʿgalah, al-Bkūr, ʿIyāl Ṭāha. Al-Ḥarāsis are divided into ʿIyāl Yūsif, al-Dlēybiyyīn, al-Jinādī, ʿIyāl Khalīl, al-ʿAwāmreh. Al-Rʿūd are divided into ʿIyāl Msallam, ʿIyāl Salmān, ʿIyāl Rāshid. ʿIyāl ʿAwwād are divided into ʿIyāl Ghānim (subdivided into Shawāʿreh, Shiyyāb, and ʿIyāl Hwēymil), ʿIyāl Ḥamad (subdivided into ʿIyāl Ḥamad, ʿIyāl Maḥmūd, alʿAwadhāt, al-Shbēylāt), al-Ganāhreh, al-ʿAkāyleh. Al-Khawāldeh are divided into al-Shlūsh, al-Jaʿāwīn, and al-Eʿsāmāt.

in the security apparatus. This trend was not limited to the Ṭafāyleh, but included many from other provincial areas. It increased multiple folds with the economic boom of the 1970's, the expansion of state bureaucracy, and the privileging of Tranjordanians in public employment into public jobs. Subsequent generations of Ṭafāyleh relied on their elders for securing employment in the same institutions or fields in which the latter worked. Today, the vast majority of working men in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh work as public servants or laborers in various public and privatized public institutions such as the ministries, the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), electricity company, the national airline company (Royal Jordanian), in the police, army and the *mukhābarāt* (General Intelligence Directorate). Some also work as street vendors, and in the produce market in al-Balad (Downtown Amman), or otherwise as cab drivers mostly on the two routes that connect Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh with Downtown.

Three streets cross the neighborhood diagonally along the contours of the steep hill. They are connected vertically by long stairs to which the doors of apartments below grade open to both sides. Above street level, buildings extend up to 4 stories, while roofs serve as outdoor living and sleeping spaces in the hot nights of the summer. From these terraces one gets some of the most scenic views of Amman looking from south to north. To the east extends Jabal al-Quṣūr (The Royal Palaces) offering a rare glimpse of the buildings of the Royal Court with a tall mast holding a huge flag of Jordan in the background. Straight north lies Jabal al-Qalʿa (Citadel) with its Roman and Umayyad archaeological monuments. To the west lie the West Amman neighborhoods of Jabal al-Lwēybdeh and Jabal ʿAmmān where the city's most influential and affluent families lived up to the 1970's, and where some of its iconic historical buildings are located. Looking downhill, those living on the Jabal al-Jōfeh side can see the Roman Amphitheater, a touristic destination and a regular venue for musical performances in the

summer frequented by Amman's cosmopolitan elites. Those living on the Jabal al-Tāj side can see the Raghadān bus terminal, once the city's biggest transport hub and now an impressive, but largely empty building and a sign of the failed promises of urban development. From the rooftops and the upper ends of staircases the contrast between the scene of affluence that unfolds away from the neighborhood and the scene of poverty within it can hardly be missed. It provided a backdrop for many conversations I had in the neighborhood, and referent by which my interlocutors explained what it meant to live in poverty as they did. Once you descend from the rooftops to the streets, however, you quickly forget about the rest of the city and are immediately drawn into the neighborhood's insular life; its narrow, rundown streets busy with cars and pedestrians; its compact, stacked buildings flying staircases; and windows peppered with wet laundry and the shadowy faces of women and children peeking from behind the ironwork.

Those with middle class aspirations often opted to move out of the neighborhood, but preferred not to venture too far afield in order to remain connected to their kin and their life in the neighborhood. This outward movement has kept the neighborhood in a process of expansion over the years. It also had the effect of making the center of the neighborhood its poorest and yet most quintessential part signifying poverty. In a sense, one was "really" in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh only when one was at its center. But the center was also its liveliest part where the Jaʿfar al-Ṭayyār Mosque served as the main place of worship and a meeting point for the whole neighborhood. Next to the mosque were a Qurʾān learning center, and a community cooperative that offered a variety of programs and classes. The multi-purpose hall below the mosque building, as well as the parking lot outside it were the regular venue for neighborhood-wide events, whether political, cultural, or regular social events like weddings and funerals.

Activism as Self-transformation

One of the most remarkable aspects of activism in *Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh* was the fact that the neighborhood was both home to one of the most outspoken protest movements in the country, and to many anti-Ḥirāk activists and so-called *Balṭajiyyeh* (regime thugs). Like most men in the neighborhood, many of those who became Ḥirāk activists were staunch royalists at earlier times in their lives. Some of them, in fact, were anti-Ḥirāk activists who led attacks against protestors in the early months of the national protest movement. How do we account for such a transformation?

Not all such transformations were similar. Some of those who became active members of Ḥirāk Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh during its early beginnings months, passionately demonstrating for reform, changed their stance later and became diligent organizers and leaders of loyalist demonstrations and even attacked oppositional demonstrators in certain moments. For example, Sulṭān, a man in his mid-thirties, joined the Ḥirāk when his salary at the Jordan Securities Commission was reduced by 50% as part of administrative restructuring plan. During his time in the Ḥirāk, he was an active member, participating in protests with much zeal. This changed when a relative with connections to the state security apparatus offered to pay Sulṭān what he had lost in the restructuring process out of his own pocket in return for quitting his activism. Seeing how energetic Sulṭān's involvement with the Ḥirāk was, the relative offered him extra income by working with the *Mukhābarāt* (General Intelligence Department - GID) to organize loyalist demonstrations; an offer he accepted enthusiastically. I was told that Sulṭān's zeal as a loyalist anti-Ḥirāk activist was such that he led an anti-Ḥirāk demonstration in Downtown Amman, organized an arson attack on the Muslim Brothers' office in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, and participated and gave an impassioned speech in an another loyalist demonstration in the town of Mafraq, 80

km north of Amman, all in one day! While Sulṭān was an extreme case, his was by no means a unique one. Many others followed the same trajectory joining the Ḥirāk then leaving it in exchange for cash handouts or more lucrative jobs. In such cases, the shift in stance was strategic or instrumental, in the sense that it was aimed at an end whose relation to the stance itself was contingent. The voiced stance then turned out to be a mere vehicle to achieve a certain effect which was only contingently related to the stance itself. One can assume that Sulṭān would have used other means for achieving the restitution of his salary had such means been available to him and had he believed them to be effective. This kind of strategic signaling of a stance to achieve certain effects and secure certain benefits is not the kind of change in stance that I would like to discuss here. Rather, what I would like to discuss instead is the ethical, and hence, more dramatic transformation that many people in the neighborhood underwent in becoming Ḥirāk activists.

In this chapter, I focus on the personal and collective transformation many activists in the neighborhood underwent in and through their activism[2] as they came to understand their political existence through the concept of *karāmeh* (dignity) as citizens in relation to an entity called *al-niẓām* (the regime), a term that was rarely in circulation in local political discourse prior to the protests, and which, once it gained practical significance, largely supplanted other terms that were hitherto salient in referring to those who ruled, such as *al-dōleh* (the state) and *al-ḥukūmeh* (the government). Within this semiotic space, activism took the form of a wide range of affective and passionate stances ranging from *muwālāh* (loyalism) to *muʿāraḍa* (opposition). These stances, in turn, were crystalized through a set of stereotyped figures through which the Ṭafāyleh activists and non-activists could see themselves and others: the *ḥirākī* (activist) as opposed to the

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[2] Activism, in this sense, meant the staging of these stances as demonstrations, or putting them on public display. Such an understanding seems to be in line with the semantic meaning conveyed by the English word "demonstration" and the Arabic word "*muẓāhara*" (literally: making apparent or visible).

balṭajī (regime thug) and the *saḥḥīj* (sycophant). At stake in deploying these various concepts and stereotyped figures was the problematization of the figure of "the patriotic Jordanian" as a practical identity. How ought a "true," patriotic Jordanian feel, think and act? In many ways this was a key question that haunted my activist interlocutors as they engaged in their activism.

As I shall argue below, the process of ethical self-transformation which my activist interlocutors underwent cannot be understood without paying attention to the changing descriptions of actions and actors which discourses on the Arab uprisings brought about. Following Elizabeth Anscombe ([1957] 2000), I take such descriptions to be conditions of possibility for raising ethical questions and the media by which ethical relation of the self to itself takes place. Drawing on Webb Keane's (2016a) exposition of the dialogics (cf. Bakhtin 1981; Taylor 1994; Day and Tappan 1996) of ethical life and Christine Korsgaard's notion of practical identity (Korsgaard 1996), I shall argue that this self-reflexivity is an inherent feature of ethical life in general. Whenever someone takes up a certain role as their practical identity, they open themselves up for evaluation by others—as well as by themselves—who may variably grant or withdraw their evaluation of the performance as apt or inapt and regard it as praiseworthy or blameworthy relative to certain criteria internal to the role they are living out. What was special about the enactment of Jordanian patriotism by the activists was that, seeing themselves through the typified figures of the *balṭajī* and the *saḥḥīj*, as informed by the concept of *karāmeh*, they perceived a palpable gap between the existing norms of patriotism, on the one hand, and a patriotic ideal as the *teleological* end of their actions. Thus, activists' enactment of patriotism was not an ordinary performance that instantiated social norms, but a critical intervention that purposefully sought to redefine the norms of patriotism in light of its stated aims and ideals. I demonstrate this by discussing what I call "ironic addressivity" as the key

mode of address by which activists sought to motivate their kin in the neighborhood into activism, drawing on the latter's claims and sensibilities as patriotic Jordanians.

In the next chapter, I discuss how the salience of these concepts and typified figures in mediating ethical self-reflexivity created a problem of self-narration for those who turned from loyalism to activism—a problem that highlights the centrality of practical reason for ethical life, but also its inherent vulnerability to changing descriptions and frames of reference. The theme of change in frames of reference is central to my analysis in both chapters. My argument is that people understand what they do, and what ought to be done, not in relation to a fixed set of concepts and referents, but within constantly shifting axes of differentiation between co-constitutive stereotyped figurations (Gal 2016). What it means to be patriotic at any one moment can only be understood in relation to what it means to be not so, and part of the story of ethical self-transformation I am giving here is a story of how the meaning of patriotism has shifted historically, particularly during the protests. To argue that forms of patriotism are produced in and through differential figurations is to highlight the centrality of enregisterment (Silverstein 2003) to ethical life, and ethical self-transformations. As I have discussed earlier in chapter 1, semiotic registers can partake in various kinds of projects, some ethical, some not. When a register is taken on as a part of a distinctively ethical project, it is taken up not as a means to some external end, but rather as a means integral to the end of living out the practical identity and to embodying the virtues that are central to materializing that identity.[3] At the same time, to

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[3] The centrality of embodiment and the cultivation of virtues has been a constant theme in several ethnographies of religious life (Mahmood 2005; Hirschkind 2006; Robbins 2004), but the role of semiotic differentiation in this process has rarely been remarked upon. For example, Saba Mahmood (2001) has discussed the way in which the performance of the Muslim ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*) at the mosque, especially at dawn (*fajr*) is central to the cultivation of Islamic virtue among the Salafist mosque movement in Egypt. She argued that an important part of becoming a good Muslim was precisely through the repeated performance of the ritual prayer at the mosque.

argue that patriotism, as a practical identity, is always in a process of semiotic differentiation and enregisterment is to highlight the processual and aspirational dimension of ethical life. Within shifting axes of differentiation of what is patriotic and what is not, being a patriot is always a process of becoming a patriot—a transformation, but also a continuity.

There are two reasons why I focus on activism as a process of ethical self-transformation. First, most social scientific literature on social movements discusses them in terms of their political-economic goals—that is to say, in terms of their interests. As I have argued in the previous chapter, the concept of interest is at the center of much social scientific explanations of human action that to give an account of why someone or some group of people act or ought to act in a particular way is to give an account of their interests. Remarkably, the intertwinement of interest and purposeful action is taken to be so self-evident that no clear definition of interest is offered despite its use in often conflicting accounts of human action such as that of Marx, Weber and Freud (Swedberg 2005; Connolly 1983, 46–83).[4] When used in accounts of collective action such as that of social movements, this equation of interests with reasons for action often amounts to treating social movements *tout court* as interest groups.[5] We can see this thread in a wide range of approaches to social movements from those which stress "rational" actors, resource mobilization, social networks and political process, to some of the new social movement theories which address identity politics in the sense of status groups as right-bearing subjects (cf.

Yet, from a historical perspective, praying at the mosque and the cultivation of piety have not always been as central to being a good Muslim as they are now. In much of the rural Levant, for instance, mosques were so common up until the 19th century, while the practice of shrine visitations prevalent then is, by now, no longer common (Grehan 2014).

[4] What often gets overlooked by those who put interests at the center of action is how relatively recent and historically and culturally specific this depiction of human life is.

[5] Karl Marx, for example, had famously described class consciousness in terms of a group's awareness of its objective interests which are necessarily set against the interests of other classes (Marx 1955, 150).

Bernstein 2005). My hope, thus, is that an account of the ethical dimension of social movements would allow us to appreciate non-political-economic reasons for collective action even when such action aimed to respond to political and economic concerns. This, I suggest, is a politics that is neither interested, nor disinterested, and neither egoistic, nor altruistic, but rather virtuous.

My second reason for discussing the ethical dimension of activism in Ḥirāk Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh is a more immediate one. Activism in the neighborhood involved important personal transformations on the part of the activists, and the trajectory of this transformation was closely intertwined with the emergence of the Jordanian protest movement and the protest movement in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh in particular. My contention, thus, is that without understanding the ethical dimension of activism we would not be able to give any sufficiently coherent account of why activists acted in a particular way, or refrained from acting at any particular moment. If the Jordanian protest had grown out of the recontextualization of mediatized protests and uprisings in other Arab countries, the Ḥirāk in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh grew out of a tragedy that unfolded in relation to the emergence of that protest movement. This is a story to which I shall now turn.

The Birth of Ḥirāk Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh

Protests in Jordan well preceded the 2011 uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. Yet most commentators refer to March 24 (*24 Ādhār*), 2011 as the day on which a nation-wide protest movement emerged in the country. On that day, a group of long-time activists and young members of a wide range of political parties (Islamists, leftists and pan-Arabists) called for an open-ended sit-in at the Dākheliyya Circle inspired by the images of protestors gathered in Cairo's Taḥrīr Square. Hundreds of people flocked to the site equipped with banners, national flags, dozens of tents to spend their nights in. The sit in, however, lasted only until the next day

when a group of loyalists returning from a state sponsored loyalist event at al-Ḥussein Park attacked the demonstrators at the intersection. The police soon joined and dismantled the sit-in.

During the two days, several people from Ḥay al-Ṭafayleh came to watch and see what was going on at the intersection, mostly out of curiosity. They had been watching the news on the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt and wanted to see what similar things might be happening in Amman. However, four men from the neighborhood were among the demonstrators and participated in the sit-in throughout those two days. All four of them later became key leaders of the protests movement that emerged in the neighborhood. For those as well as for many of the others that became involved in various kinds of activism, the events of 25 March, 2011 were formative. Like the rest of the demonstrators, the four men were attacked by people from Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh. To be attacked by their own kin was shocking for them. More shocking was that the attackers were acting out of a sense of patriotism. In a compulsive repetition of the 1970 civil war, they mistook the protestors for Palestinians trying to take control of the state. The police too, who were presumably there to protect the demonstration joined in the attack. This is how an activist described her feelings in a blog entry three days after the attack:

> As much as I try to draw this picture for you, I'm unable to. I'm unable to
> explain to you the emotions that overwhelmed us, the tears that filled our eyes,
> not out of fear, no, I didn't fear for my life… I feared for my country, and was
> sick to my stomach from what I heard and saw. As I write this I shed a tear,
> because I had never expected my own countrymen, the forces that are there to
> protect me to call me a traitor, to label me as Palestinian just because I wasn't
> joining the anti-reformists, to threaten my security and safety, to protect those
> who beat up fellow Jordanian citizens, to bend the rules. (al-Ṭāher 2011)

Many of those who participated in the sit-in went into social isolation for the days and weeks that followed. A long-time activist, whose participation in protests against the invasion of

Iraq in 2003 had cost him his military rank, social status and almost his life, felt totally shattered. He vowed not to get involved in any political activism that "had anything to do with Jordan and Jordanians. That was it, I was finished!" he told me emphatically, "I felt discouraged and the discouragement was because as long as there was the idea of Jordanian vs. Palestinian in this country, we will never rise up as a Jordanian people, and that the regime will control us." For several months, he tried to distract himself from politics and to distance himself from the neighborhood. The fact that many of the assailants came from his own neighborhood alienated him from his kin and neighborhood. Only when a protest movement developed eventually, he felt encouraged and hopeful again and went to become one of its most prominent and active members.

For many others in the neighborhood who did not participate in the *24 Ādhār* sit-in, the issue was slightly different. It was not about the shock of being attacked, but about the attackers being from the neighborhood. When news started circulating that the sit-in was dismantled by loyalists from Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, different groups in the neighborhood started organizing meetings to discuss what to do about what had happened. Their concern was that the attack of their kin on the *24 Ādhār* activists has made them somehow complicit in the act. As Khaled, a Ḥirāk activist explained to me:

> "I was ashamed to say that I am a Ṭafīli because the word Ṭafīli now meant 'regime thug' (balṭajī) to the extent that you had people posting comments on Facebook warning activists that any demonstrations taking place from then on will be dealt with by the Ṭafāyleh. For us the issue was an issue of dignity (karāmeh). We have lost our dignity! We have become instruments; the striking fist of the regime."

For Khaled and many others, the turn to activism was a way to reclaim their lost *karāmeh* (dignity)—a concept I will come back to discuss in a moment. In the next section, however, I will say a few words about the *balṭajī* and the *saḥḥīj* as two key typified (im)moral figures that mediated the Ṭafāyleh's turn to activism..

Oneself as a "Regime Thug"

Nowhere can the recontextualization of media reports on the Arab uprisings into Jordanian politics be seen more clearly than in the case of the term "*balṭajī.*" Prior to the Arab uprisings, the term was hardly used in Jordanian Arabic. Originally a medieval Turkish military term: "*baltacı,*"[6] it was rendered into Egyptian Arabic as "*balṭagī*" and gained a pejorative sense in the 20th century to refer a bandit or someone who gets his way through the use of violence. *Balṭagī* was defined in contradistinction to "*fetuwwa,*" a man who used his strength and capacity for violence for just purposes. In the early days of the Egyptian uprising, media reports referred to civilians who attacked protestors in Taḥrīr Square as "*balṭagiyya*" (thugs) or "*balṭagiyye-t el-niẓām*" (the regime thugs). These were believed to have been mobilized by the security apparatus and the then-ruling National Democratic Party to terrorize the protestors and dismantle their protests.

Commenting on the ubiquity of the term in Egypt during and after the uprising, media scholar Adel Iskandar (2011) notes that the term and the figure of the *balṭagī* were well in circulation in Egyptian cinema, but became salient shortly before and after the uprising. Moreover, since 2011, an abstract noun *balṭagah* (thuggery) was coined to refer to a general kind of behavior or activity. The first Arabic language Wikipedia entry for *Balṭagah* created less than

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[6] Combining the noun *balta* (ax) with the agentive suffix –*cı* meaning "ax-wielding warrior."

six months after the uprising defined it as "a form of bullying whereby someone forces his opinion on others through force, terrorism and exemplary punishment […] In Egypt, it is related to the former regime and its various security apparatuses which employ criminals, drug dealers and addicts or mercenaries against protestors and the opposition in public squares and universities in return for payment" ("balṭajah" 2011). A later, 2017, edition decontextualized it even further defining it as "the criminal activity a *balṭagī* engages in and aims at controlling an individual or a group by terrorizing or scaring them through the use of force or by attacking, or even killing, them or others as a form of exemplary punishment for the purpose of theft or repression" ("balṭajah" 2017). In this explicitly entextualized and highly decontextualized form (Silverstein and Urban 1996), the term *balṭagī* and its derivative abstract noun came into such wide circulation that their semantic meaning and reference could be applied to a wide range of phenomena by activists and state agencies alike. For instance, a new Egyptian penal code passed one month after the uprising listed *balṭagah* as a punishable crime that includes any form of intimidation by the threat or actual use of violence against civilians.[7] In other Arab countries where protests were also taking place, the recontextualization of the Egyptian figure of the *balṭagī* as a regime thug allowed for commensurating different acts of protest in Arab countries as part of a larger narrative of the Arab Spring whereby "oppositional protestors" rebelled against "authoritarian regimes" who, in turn, repressed protests using regular police forces or, occasionally, by mobilizing para-legal militant loyalists. Within this narrative frame, Egyptian *balṭagiyyah* were comparable to Syrian *shabbiḥah*, Moroccan *shamākriyyah* (royalist youth), Tunisian *milīshiā al-niẓām* (regime militia), and Libyan *murtazaqah* (mercenaries). In Jordan, the

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[7] Ironically, while the term *balṭagah* was initially used to pathologize the para-legal enforcement of law and order, its adoption as a legal category came to embody the logic of the state of exception. Like terrorism, *balṭagah* in Egypt was so extensively stripped of any contextual links that it served to extend the state of emergency into the ordinary operations of government.

Egyptian *balṭagī* was re-contextualized into the Jordanian *balṭajī* by drawing on typified social figures already in local circulation.

As my activist interlocutors explained to me, the *balṭajī* shared some resemblance with two older typified figures: the *ʾazʿar* and the *dawawīn*, but was also significantly different from them. The *ʾazʿar* was simply a trouble maker, a young man who frequently engaged in fights with others, or harassed women on the street. Despite the menace the *ʾazʿar* could cause to the social order, the presence of *zuʿrān* (pl.) was considered normal in any community and is generally associated with recklessness in young age. Hence, an *ʾazʿar* can be expected to repent as he grew up, found regular employment or married and became the head of a household. The *dawawīn*, by contrast, was a kind of professional *ʾazʿar*, someone who turned his social menace into a way of life by getting involved in organized crime, and bragged about it as if it were a virtue. The term *dawawīn* itself (literally, salons) invoked a scene in which individual bandits came together in a *diwān* (salon) to brag and tell epic stories about their banditry. In contrast to these two figures, the *balṭajī* was a political menace not merely a social one. He was also an instrument of state repression, not someone who acted on his own.

Another significant (im)moral figure was the *saḥḥīj*. Unlike the term *balṭajī*, the term *saḥḥīj* originated in Jordanian Arabic, but its form and use are rather new. *Saḥjeh* is any of the various traditional dance forms that involve clapping the hands performed by men, mostly during weddings and other communal festivities. The term *saḥḥīj*, however, is a recent coinage which uses the Arabic hyperbolic participle form to depict someone who performs *saḥjeh* routinely, or whose role or character trait is to perform *saḥjeh*. The image conveyed here is that of a sycophant, or hypocrite who mindlessly claps and dances to appease those in power in order to gain some advantage. As a typified figure, the *saḥḥīj* also drew on the existing figure of the

maṣlaḥjī—someone who acts out of self-interest rather than out of principle or virtue. Like the relation between the *balṭajī* and its older stereotypes, the *saḥḥīj* was a *maṣlaḥjī* in the political sphere. The *saḥḥīj* was someone who appeased those in power by feigning loyalty in return for material benefits. The typified figures of the *balṭajī* and the *saḥḥīj*, provided people in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh what Webb Keane (2016a), echoing George Herbert Mead ([1934] 1967), calls a third-person perspective on the self, when certain ways of speaking, acting or being become interpretable as voicings or materializations of those typified figures along with the way these figures are socially evaluated.

As objects or referents, the figures of the *balṭajī* and the *saḥḥīj* drew on certain practices which prior to the Arab uprisings were considered the embodiment of patriotism (*waṭaniyyah*), or more accurately, nationalism. These figures belonged to a particular kind of state-sponsored nationalism that emerged in the aftermath of the 1970 civil war between the Jordanian Army and the PLO's *Fidāʾiyyīn*. A brainchild of then Prime Minister Waṣfī al-Tall, this post-1970 official nationalism sought to create an ethno-nationalist Jordanian identity rooted in pastoral life set against a Palestinian one. It involved a whole set of differentiations in linguistic registers, sartorial styles, and cuisine (Massad 2001; Doughan 2017); and the politicization of tribal identities in Jordan whereby genealogy came to constitute the key framework by which Jordanians imagined themselves as a nation with the King at its helm (Shryock 1997). In Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, the friction between Jordanian and Palestinian national identities was an everyday reality. Located atop Jabal al-Tāj, Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh lay between the Wiḥdāt Refugee Camp—a key base for the *Fidāʾiyyīn* between 1968 and 1970—and the historical city center. Wiḥdāt was home to the Wiḥdāt Sports Club which came to stand for Palestinian national identity in post-1970 Jordan. Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, by contrast, was the center of al-Fayṣalī Sports Club's fan base

which stood for Transjordanian identity. The two teams have dominated the football scene in Jordan since the 1970, and their matches were often re-enactments of the civil war, both in the stadium and outside it. As political scientist Laurie Brand notes, "For many fans, Palestinian and Transjordanian alike, each time a refugee camp team locked horns with an East Bank squad, it was, on a very basic and emotional level, as if the civil war were being fought again" (Brand 1988, 183).

Moreover, across the main street climbing up Jabal al-Tāj, to the East of Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, laid Ḥay al-Maḥāsreh, another Palestinian neighborhood whose inhabitants hail from the village of Bayt Mahsīr near Jerusalem. Violent fights between the Ṭafāyleh and the Maḥāsreh were a regular scene, and sometimes escalated into large-scale clashes that brought in the riot police. In one incident during my fieldwork, a man from Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh who worked as a stadium manager at the Football Federation was driving his car up the street when he saw a few men from Ḥay al-Maḥāsreh dressed in al-Wiḥdāt club jerseys to celebrate victory in a match against a Tranjordanian team. Incensed, the Ṭafīlī ran the fans over and triggered large-scale clashes between the two neighborhoods in which a few cars were burned and a few people suffered injuries from gun shots. For two nights following that incident, the gendarmes besieged Ḥay al-Maḥāsreh and fired tear-gas to prevent the angry Maḥāsreh from leaving their neighborhood.

In clashes like these between Palestinians and Transjordanians both sides could emplot their actions as a primordial clash between two ethno-national identities, and as a re-enactment the 1970 civil war. On a certain level they were acts of patriotism. Under the new description of *Balṭajeh*, they were something quite different. It is in this sense that we can develop a preliminary understanding of Khaled's feeling of shame when he says he "was ashamed to say that [he was] a Ṭafīli because the word Ṭafīli now meant 'regime thug' (*balṭajī*)." To the extent

that it was established that the Ṭafāyleh were the ones who attacked the *24 ʾĀdhār* protestors on March 25th, 2011, and that the narrative of *balṭajiyyeh*, or regime thugs attacking protestors was entextualized in media reportage of the Egyptian uprising and recontextualized in the Jordanian context, Khaled as a Ṭafīlī could now see himself in the eyes of others as potentially a *balṭajī* himself. The negative evaluation of the *balṭajī*, as a figure, stemmed not from his political loyalty to those in power, as such. Rather, the *balṭajī* represented an immoral figure because he accepted his status an instrument for political power. The *balṭajī* was someone without *karāmeh*.

Living with *Karāmeh*

What is *karāmeh* then? There is a striking resemblance, here, between how the Tafāyleh activists used the concept of "*karāmeh*" to describe their relation to the state and how the philosopher Immanuel Kant's discussed the concept of "dignity" as the centerpiece of moral human relations. The humanity of humans, Kant argued, rested on their having an inner worth as ends in themselves, as opposed to having a price as substitutable or fungible means. In the Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (1998, 42), he writes:

> In the kingdom of ends everything has either a price or a dignity. What has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; what on the other hand is above all price and therefore admits of no equivalent has a dignity. … [T]hat which constitutes the condition under which alone something can be an end in itself has not merely a relative worth, that is, a price, but an inner worth, that is, dignity.

> Now, morality is the condition under which a rational being can be an end in itself, since only through this is it possible to be a lawgiving member in the kingdom of ends. Hence morality, and humanity insofar as it is capable of morality, is that which alone has dignity. Skill and diligence in work have a

market price; wit, lively imagination and humor have a fancy price; on the other hand, fidelity in promises and benevolence from basic principles (not from instinct) have an inner worth.

I invoke Kant here, not to assert the universality of his conception of morality as autonomy, but to point out a similarity that may illuminate what the Ḥirāk activists were up to, for I think the parallels between Kant and the activists are not accidental. They are partly related to the history of the concept of *karāmeh*, and partly related to the conditions of modern politics.

A full conceptual history of *karāmah* is yet to be written, but there is enough material to attempt a schematic outline. Older uses of *karāmeh* (*karāmah* in Fuṣḥā Arabic) did not carry the same semantic meaning of contemporary ones. Generally speaking, *karāmah* referred to what one received in acts of generosity (*karam*). More specifically, various kinds of saints (Christian: *qiddīsīn*, Muslim: *ʾawliyāʾ*) were said to have *karāmah*: Divinely bestowed powers to perform marvelous deeds. *Karāmāt* (pl.) were given to saints in acts of Divine grace that were simultaneously acts of honoring (*takrīm*)—to be generous to someone is to honor that person as an indication of love and respect, and *vice versa*. This is why prophets and saints were also believed to be capable of *shafāʿah* (interceding with God on behalf of ordinary people) since God honored and loved them. In this sense, older uses of *karāmah* were closer to the Greek concept of charisma (χάρισμα) meaning a "gift of grace" (Gardet 1978). This meaning of the term has, by now, all but vanished along with the religious world of which it was a part under the influence of European-Christian missionary and Islamic *daʿwa* education, with their modernizing impetus since the 19th century (cf. Grehan 2014). Contemporary Muslims and Christians are likely to deride that saintly world as mythical, or at least as belonging to a wholly different time that is discontinuous with the present.

Rather than a gift of grace bestowed upon a righteous few, modern uses of *karāmah* refer to an innate human quality that all humans have and can exhibit by virtue of being human (*karāma-t al-ʾinsān*). This use of the concept seems to have become common only with the Arab Awakening (*Nahḍa*) during the second half of the 19th century. Among the earliest uses of *karāmah* in the modern sense were Arabic translations of the Bible and of liturgical manuals. The first full Arabic translation of the Bible prepared by the Lebanese polyglot ʾAḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq and published in 1857 uses the term *karāmah* to render the Biblical notion of "honor" or "priceless value" (τιμὴν) bestowed upon mankind by God—a notion that is central to Christian anthropology and Christology (cf. al-Shidyāq 1983, Psalm 8:5 and Hebrews 2:7).[8] Later in the 19th century, proto-Arab-nationalists like the French educated Egyptian Muṣṭafa Kāmil used the term in the sense of the respect or value given to a nation (*karāma-t al-ʾummah*) vis-à-vis other nations. This use seems to have been informed by the French notion of *dignité* which was central to the legitimation of French colonial administration. In this secularized valence of Biblical "honor", *dignité* referred to a human quality that French colonizers possessed and guarded as citizens in contradistinction to their colonized subjects (Saada 2002). This is perhaps why many anti-colonial movements in the 20th century were focused on asserting the dignity of the colonized as a claim to equal humanity *vis-à-vis* their European colonizers. The French-educated psychoanalyst and anti-colonial theorist Franz Fanon made dignity the cornerstone of his dialectic of emancipation from colonization and the justification of revolutionary violence against the colonizers. In Arab anti-colonial and anti-imperial discourse *Karāmah* played a similar role. It was one of the central themes of Egyptian president Jamāl ʿAbdulnasser's anti-imperial brand of pan-Arabism up until the 1970's. Since then, the term has been generalized and

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[8] Al-Shidyāq translates Greek charisma into Arabic sometimes as *mawhiba* and sometimes as *niʿma* (1 Peter 4:10, 1 Corinthians 7:7, 2 Corinthians 1:11, Romans 1:11).

used to describe not only a quality of groups, but also of individual persons. Thus, one can make a justified claim that the change in meaning of the Arabic term seems to have grown out of the translation and incorporation of a secular, humanist ethos into the Arabic language by way of colonial and anti-colonial discourse.

This semantic history only partly explains why contemporary Arabic uses of *karāmah* are close to the humanist understanding of dignity which Kant invokes. Equally important, however, is to note that Kant's definition seems to anticipate and respond to the possibility of humans having a "price" rather than "innate value" as humans. This possibility is the kind of challenge that capitalism as a system of exploitation, and the modern state as a system of governance introduce into human relations and ethical life. This challenge is equally present in the life of contemporary Jordanians and that of anyone living in the political world of modern states as it was for Kant. In contrast to the semantic history I have just sketched, this second point illustrates the practical significance of *karāmah* as something to be guarded and claimed against the possibility of one's being reduced to a mere means for someone else's interests or utility—particularly those in power—a possibility built into modern conceptions of politics resting on an image of humans as essentially motivated by interests. In this practical valence, the concept of *karāmah* does not merely designate an object out there in the world. Rather, it is an objectification that constitutes an intervention in a field of practice.

Yet, there are also important differences between the Kantian concept of dignity and *karāmeh* as it informed the self-perceptions and actions of my interlocutors in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh. Kant's invocation of human dignity was not meant as an empirical description of actual people living in the world, but as a philosophical point about what it means to be a human subject within a deontological conception of ethics. In contemporary legal discourse, dignity is a human quality

that needs to be guarded by securing legal rights against the possibility of humans being reduced to mere objects for someone's utility. By contrast, *karāmeh* is a quality that one has by virtue of how one is regarded by others within a certain community.[9] For this reason, it is usually contrasted to *ʾihāneh* (humiliation or insult). For example, when a man is beaten up or insulted by another in a fight he loses his *karāmeh*. This is why a man may opt out or avoid engaging in a fight which he expects to lose so as to save his *karāmeh* (*yiḥfaẓ karāmtoh*) by avoiding being humiliated. Someone who is publicly humiliated loses his *karāmeh* and hence his worth or value (*yegill gīmtoh*). For someone living with the concept of *karāmeh*, maintaining one's own *karāmeh* in the face of public humiliation is imperative—in a non-transcendental way—because it is bound up with one's sense of personhood.

For men in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh whose *karāmeh* is intertwined with their sense of masculinity, public humiliation can mean the loss of *karāmeh* in a way that requires the recipient of humiliation to reassert his *karāmeh*, and masculinity through violence. Even a seemingly trivial offence could escalate into large scale communal violence. In one such case, a quarrel over a delayed rent payment quickly escalated into a large conflict between two clans in which two people suffered injuries from gun shots. The episode started when a man from the Sʿūd tribe renting an apartment from another man from the Ḥarāsīs tribe failed to pay his rent on time. When the son of the landlord went to demand his rent, he was beaten up by the tenant's sons. For the landlords, the tenant's attack on their son was taken as an affront to the whole family and its reputation in the neighborhood. Here, the landlord's eldest son, Muʿīn, was incensed. He took two of his brothers and drove to the neighborhood to beat up the assailants. This is how Muʿīn later described the encounter to me:

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[9] I use the Arabic term "*karāmeh*" rather than "dignity" to avoid confusion over the nature of recognition involved.

I went and found three guys sitting on the stairs.. I said: "Hello!" They said: "Hello!" I said: "Who are the sons of Khalaf al-Sʿūd?" See how the question was? Because I do not know.. They said: "It is us!" I said: "Who beat up my brother Nidhāl?" So they stood up.. When they stood up, they had with them a guy so tall I later learned was the son and was known to be a trouble maker (ʾazʿar) and consumes [drug] pills and stuff.. He said: "We beat him up!" I said: "Why?".. When I saw the situation like that I started wanting to retreat to preserve my karāmeh (ʾaḥfaẓ karāmtī), to be honest.. So if he had said to me: "I am sorry!" and stuff, the situation would have been over, because I saw that.. that it was a lost battle.. and I was the largest among my brothers.. so I found him, compared to me, very large.. and he had two others with him who were also big.. and you know the size of [my brother] Maʾmūn.. So I saw the situation hopeless.. I said to him: "Why?" So he stretched his arm towards me and said to me like this, on my chest (*pointing index finger to chest*) and said: "because he is annoying," or "silly," or something like that.. So when he said this and started pushing me, my brother Muḥammad was next to him and said to him: "Put your hand away!" and I said to him: "Your sister's cunt, you brother of a whore!" and I started beating him up.. We beat them up, just so that you get the picture, and one of them pulled out a knife and stuff.. but we beat them up, we beat them up! I even hit this guy with a broomstick and it broke, and when it became pointed I stabbed him with it, and he fell on the ground.. We beat them up!.. Bottom line!.. So the whole thing exploded between the Ḥarāsīs and the Sʿud.. […] So, from then on, I became known by my name among the Ḥarāsīs,.. You get this? Among the Ḥarāsīs as a whole! Not just among my relatives from [the sub-section of] ʿIyāl Yūsef! And among al-Sʿud, I became known.. And they started telling epic stories about me.. the little kids.. so that you're in the picture, you know these things!

Muʿīn here dramatizes the moment of encounter between himself and the offender as one of clearly unequal might—a David and Goliath moment, as it were. What was at stake for him

was his and his brother's *karāmeh* which was lost when the brother was beaten up by the tenant's son. The issue was not that of an offence that needed to be avenged, or a score that needed to be settled, but the family's *karāmeh* which needed to be recovered. If the assailant had apologized, Muʿīn's *karāmeh* would have been acknowledged. But he did not. His refraining from apology, justification or accommodation, amounted to another humiliating offence to which Muʿīn's response as a man with *karāmeh* had to be violence. Even if Muʿīn had lost the battle, he would have still been someone who acted with extreme courage to defend his *karāmeh*. But the fact that he and his brothers prevailed against those stronger and violent tenants made him known in the whole neighborhood as a "real man" to be emulated by aspiring boys. The moral of the story is that when one's *karāmeh* is deliberately disregarded by others, regaining that regard is imperative, even, or perhaps particularly, through acts of violence.

But *karāmeh* is not necessarily limited to masculinity and masculine violence alone. Other forms of violence can also be used in situations where someone's *karāmeh* is emphatically denied by another. For example, when someone whose care for another is disregarded or routinely unreciprocated—as in the case of a one-sided romantic love, for example— that person may decide to hurt the other or sever the relation altogether to maintain her *karāmeh* or self-worth. This sense of *karāmeh* can be used equally by males and females, particularly among the educated middle class. In this sense, the discourse on *karāmeh* was not only related to the events of 25 March, and the other similar protests which people from the neighborhood helped dismantle. It was also related to the neighborhood's reputation as a place of fervent royalism as well as extreme poverty and a sense of marginalization and neglect by the state. Many in the neighborhood felt that the fervent, even militant, loyalty they exhibited towards the state was not

reciprocated with due respect and care in the form of social welfare provisions such as infrastructural services, jobs, scholarships and health insurance.

Like many Transjordanian tribes, the Ṭafāyleh considered themselves to be ʾabnāʾ el-dōleh (children of the state). This was related to the history of the state's incorporation of the disparate population of Jordan as citizens into its structures and functions through employment in the state apparatus. Since the early years of the modern state, but increasingly since the 1960's, with the expansion of school education and the deterioration of agrarian and nomadic lives, young Jordanians were increasingly leaving their villages to seek employment in the army, police and state bureaucracy. This triggered a process of mass rural-to-urban migration of which the village of ʿĪmeh, where the Ṭafāyleh hail from, is a stark example. By now, the village has been almost completely depopulated with most of its inhabitants having moved to Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh in Amman and to Zarqa and Aqaba. From a political perspective, the move from agrarian and pastoralist life to the city and the state bureaucracy and security apparatus involved the state's transformation and appropriation of familial social bonds. Naturally, life in the village was organized in patriarchal households whereby children aided their fathers in agriculture and pasture. With the move to bureaucratic life, certain moral and affective bonds that linked children with their fathers were transformed and transferred onto officials in the form of patrimonial relations, and more abstractly onto the state in the form of paternalism. Often, individual officials took up the role of father-like figures to whom their inferiors-as-sons could appeal for material care and welfare. More abstractly, the state could present itself to the population as an abstract father figure materialized through its individual officials as father-like

figures.[10] This was particularly the case after 1970 when public employment was directed more towards Tranjordanians and away from Palestinian-Jordanians. Poor Transjordnians, like the Ṭafāyleh, often solicited benefits from the state by drawing on personal relations to bureaucrats in the patrimonial register, and to the state in the paternalist register. Within this schema, home and homeland become less easily distinguishable as relations of kinship are troped upon in the political sphere of the state and whereby political relations bear upon relations of kinship (Layne 2001; Shryock and Howell 2001).

In recent years, however, access to state officials whom the Ṭafāyleh could reach out for help and oblige through patrimonial obligations has become very difficult. Those from the neighborhood who managed to move up the bureaucratic and social hierarchy often opted to move out of the neighborhood and to distance themselves from its inhabitants. This was partly a process of class distinction and partly a way to relieve themselves from social pressure to provide help to their kin in the form of *wāsṭa* when their own access to state resources has itself become limited. With the introduction of poverty as a site of state intervention through poverty alleviation programs in the late 1980's (Lenner 2015), the neighborhood became a designated recipient of welfare schemes, subsidies and charity. While this expanded the poor's access to state resources, it transformed the kind of resources they could seek from employment to subsidy, and subjected them to more elaborate bureaucratic procedures. Over the past thirty years, the neighborhood's poorest have become increasingly dependent on state subsidies from the Ministry of Social Welfare and occasional gifts from the Royal Court. Competition over

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[10] Sir John Bagot Glubb, commander of one the Desert Patrol (DP), a key institutional site for converting bedouin tribesmen into citizens, writes that the DP presented itself to tribesmen, not merely as a police force, but more significantly as an entity concerned with their prosperity and welfare. The way this welfare was delivered was mostly through forms of patrimonial care. Thus, he notes, "the Desert Patrol was not so much a police force as a patriarchy" (Glubb 1976, 166).

these resources increased the poor's recourse to *wāsṭa* and strained the patron-client relations it involved.

In my early months of fieldwork in the neighborhood, many of my interlocutors decried what they perceived as a loss of the personal channels into the bureaucracy through which could get their demands fulfilled and grievance redressed. They complained of a reluctance to appoint people from the neighborhood into high ranking positions as police chiefs, ministers or prime ministers. The claim was factually untrue. In fact, several ministers since the 1990's have indeed come from the neighborhood. The complaint, however, registered the sense of loss of state care induced by the introduction of poverty alleviation programs and the strain these put on relations of patronage and patrimonial care. This sense of neglect and disregard, of being "forgotten" by the state, was pervasive in many of my conversations in the neighborhood, but was distinctly crystalized in specific moments. One such moment was two weeks after the *24 Ādhār* demonstration when hundreds of young men from the neighborhood stood outside the Royal Court demanding a meeting with the King. When it turned out that the latter was on a visit to the Wiḥdāt Refugee Camp along with his court chief, the crowd was incensed that the King had "skipped over" their neighborhood—which is closer to the Royal Court than the refugee camp. One young man set fire to a parked police motorcycle in protest. The incident triggered the Court chief to cut his visit short and return to meet with the angry protestors to hear their demands. When some of the protestors were summoned a week later to the Court and given financial assistance checks, they tore the checks, threw them to the ground and stepped on them in protest, complaining that they "did not come to beg!" Muḥammad, a young man from the neighborhood described the incident and one encounter he had with the head of Amman Police Department afterwards:

We were there in front of the [Royal] Court. [The court chief] cancelled his trip with the King and came to receive us in the Court.. They used to give us importance.. […] so for example the head of Amman police used to come.. He came here and we said to him with all audacity (bi-kul ʿēn wiǧha).. I would stand and say to him "why are you doing injustice to the Ṭafāyleh?" He would be surprised and say "We used to say that the whole country would erupt except the Ṭafāyleh.." We would say to them "Who dismantled the sit-in at al-Dākhleliyyeh for you? We did! Who beat up the [Muslim] Brothers outside the Husseini Mosque?.. We did! Where have we fallen short in meeting our obligations to you (wēn gaṣṣarnā maʿkū)? What have we gotten from you?.. You go and give so and so, and give so and so, while we are marginalized.. Is it because we do not ask?"

Like Muʿīn's narration of his encounter with the disrespectful tenants, Muḥammad dramatizes the moment of encounter as one with a very powerful figure. He depicts a breakdown in the expected norms of interaction between a paternalist father-like state (and state official) and children-like subjects. In the last part of the narrative, Muḥammad stages a conversation in which he reprimands the police chief, as a representative of the state, for not meeting their obligations. The expression he uses to frame the nature of expectation *"wēn gaṣṣarnā maʿkū?"* (Where have we fallen short in meeting our obligations to you?) sets the relation within an intimate sphere of kinship or friendship. The point here, as I take it, was not about the state failing to reward these loyalists for their services—something it indeed has tried to do by way of cash handouts, albeit with little success—but that the lack of state care in the form of social welfare indexed a certain disregard for their status as loyal subjects—or more generally as humans—and the kind of obligations that the affective and moral bond of loyalty entailed. Rather than human-citizens who

deserved to be treated as ends (i.e. cared for), many in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh saw themselves being reduced to merely useful "things" that can be bought.

Yet Muhammad's framing of his stance as "audacious" registers his own momentary disregard for the expectable norms of address by an inferior to a superior in a hierarchical relation. This disregard is a kind of violence whose aim is to reinstate the norms of interaction—the relation of paternalist care—and with them the Ṭafāyleh's sense of inner value or *karāmeh*. The state's momentary accommodation of this violence (materialized in the Court chief's cancellation of his trip to meet with protesters from the neighborhood, and the Police chief's response) is recognized by Muḥammad as "giving importance" to the Ṭafāyleh and hence as a reinstatement of the norms of interaction, albeit a temporary one. Later, when the Court chief's promise of pensions and scholarships dedicated to the neighborhood was not fulfilled, offering the activists one-time checks instead, the state's acknowledgement of the Ṭafāyleh's *karāmeh* seemed to them insincere. The tearing of those checks and the burning of the police motorcycle were both similar acts of violence in the face of public insult and humiliation.

These examples of the use of *karāmeh* in evaluating and justifying action illustrate the ethical and interactive significance of the concept. *Karāmeh* is a quality that all humans are supposed to have, but any one person's possession of it is contingent upon his being regarded or treated as a dignified human being by himself and others. Moments of public humiliation, brute violence, denial of due care and compassion, or any such moments of loss of self-worth in the eyes of oneself and others, are all cases of breakdown—a breakdown in the normative order that sets the minimal expectations which people have of, and owe to, each other in their capacity as humans with *karāmeh*. In response to such moments, the person whose *karāmeh* is lost can reassert it by forcing a recognition from those who denied it through acts of violence. Here, the

violence is internal both to the concept of the human as endowed with *karāmeh* and to the normative order of interaction between humans that sustains it. Aptly executed, this violence is precisely what a human being with *karāmeh* does and feels he ought to do by virtue of being human.

For the Ṭafāyleh to be treated by the state as instruments, rather than loyal supporters of the King who deserve the state's care, was construed as a disregard of their *karāmeh*. But to accept such a treatment by not asserting their *karāmeh* in the eyes of fellow Jordanians was to be truly without *karāmeh*—i.e. to acknowledge themselves that they have no inner worth. This, then, is what the Ḥirak activists were concerned with. Perceiving themselves being perceived as instruments of state violence and bereft of state care, the Ṭafāyleh felt they were stripped of their *karāmeh*. Their response was to reassert it through their activism. For reasons I will come discuss in a moment, their activism was decidedly peaceful in the sense of eschewing physical violence and vandalism. In another sense, however, it did involve a different kind of violence: disregarding the patrimonial norms of interaction with state officials. This violence, I suggested, seemed restitutive in aim, but nonetheless effected a significant transformation in politics as a field of practice.

By bringing *karāmeh* to bear on their affective relation to the state (as materialized and mediated by relations to officials), the Ṭafāyleh activists were essentially transforming that relation and the kind of affective bonds that constituted it. Street protest, as a mode of communication, was the embodiment of this transformation. In one of my early conversation with some Ḥirāk activists I naively asked if by protesting, the activists hoped that some officials, perhaps the King himself, would eventually want to sit and talk with them. One activist took offense: "No, get your information straight! There shall be no direct communication with him.

We will only talk to him from the street!" For them, face-to-face communication invited relations of hospitality, patronage and charity and were antithetical to the image of autonomous agents which *karāmeh* invoked. Being on the street and talking to officials from the street can well be personal (addressing people by their name), but it rejects the kind of intimacy, deference and generosity which the politics of hospitality and patronage required.

When the state, in various ways, tried to reinstate a politics of hospitality and patronage, the activists refused to engage because their engagement would have stripped them of their *karāmeh*. When a cabinet change in 2011 brought a retired general from the neighborhood as a minister of interiors, his activist cousins refused to visit him as long as he was minister. They did not want to see themselves and be seen as engaging in relations of patronage with officials. Similarly, when in April 2012 a group of activists were taken into police custody, the activists tried to effect their release through protests and threats of escalation. In response, the security apparatus arranged for a group of elders from Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh and from the town of Ṭafīlah to visit the King and request his pardon in a highly choreographed, televised and widely broadcast event. The Ḥirāk activists, however, found the event humiliating and disavowed those who participated calling them "*shuyūkh al-dīwān*" (Court elders). To the activists , these elders, like the *balṭajī* and the *saḥḥīj* were without *karāmeh*. They were instruments of state power who "sold" their loyalty in return for benefits—which, in this case, was the release of political detainees. Protest, by contrast, involved a certain distancing and a rejection of intimacy in relation to those in power. By protesting, the activists refused to make a request and pay deference to the powerful. Instead they asserted their power and autonomy by making a demand.

To be a person of *karāmeh* is to be vigilant about the possibility of being disregarded, used as an instrument for someone else's advantage or subjected to arbitrary violence. The

possible sources of such dangers are varied, but in the context of political activism, the primary source was something the activists came to call "the regime." For this reason, the concept of "regime" came to displace other concepts that hitherto referred to political rulership, such as *al-dōleh* (the state) and *al-ḥukūmeh* (the government). Understanding "the regime" in this way, I think, helps us avoid the positivist understanding of the term found in political-scientific and journalistic accounts of activism and uprisings.[11] Thus, I suggest that the activists were not simply involved in a struggle with something distinct from them called "the regime" whatever that might mean. Rather, they were engaged in a whole process of self-transformation mediated by the concept of *karāmeh* whereby they would no longer be the instruments of political power, but rather its agents.

The discourse on *karāmeh* and the various meetings and conversations that ensued in the neighborhood following the attack on the *24 Ādhār* sit-in precipitated a neighborhood-wide meeting. The meeting resulted in a core group of activists issuing a statement condemning attacks on protestors and calling for reforms. For my interlocutors in the neighborhood, this statement marked the beginning of their activism and the birth of Ḥirāk Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh as a protest movement. The statement was written in the name of "the tribes of Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh" and addressed not to the state, nor to the King, but to the "Jordanian People," from whom they sought

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[11] The term "regime" is used in political science in two senses. One sense is an analytic one that classifies different forms of government (democracy, kleptocracy, oligarchy, etc.). Another sense is more referential and evaluative, whereby liberal democracies are not seen as regimes, while illiberal states are referred to as regimes, or sometimes more explicitly as authoritarian regimes. In a sense, liberal democracies have governments, while all others have regimes. The distinction rests on the liberal doctrine of the separation of powers, and the separation between persons (officials) and office (state apparatus). In this second sense, a regime is an amalgam between officials and state apparatus that violates the liberal norms of politics. Conceived as an entity that straddles the government and the state and hence perdures over time it becomes possible to speak of regime endurance, or regime survival and regime history. See for example the treatments by Pénélope Larzillière (2016), and André Bank and Oliver Schlumberger (2004).

recognition for their *karāmeh.* The purpose of the statement was to show that there is "a true patriotic voice in the neighborhood."

The Ṭafāyleh's turn to activism, then, was a way to cultivate a certain form of political existence in which one was a subject rather than an object of political power. For the activists, this was a process of learning how not be a *balṭajī* or a *saḥḥīj,* of learning how to be citizens with *karāmeh.* Cultivating this political subjectivity required transferring their affective attachments away from the persons of officials, now construed as "the regime," and onto an abstract idea: *al-waṭan* (the *Patrie*).[12] Hence, certain practices that were normal only a few months before the birth of the Ḥirāk became shameful acts. Being poor, many people in the neighborhood relied on networks of political patronage to secure some of their basic material needs. As I described in chapter 2, these were usually strategic acts of charity and intercessory mediation (*wasṭa*) that were provided within an economy of favors. Elected officials, such as members of parliament and city councilors, were often conduits for certain material benefits from the state in return for votes. Such acts of charity, now construed through the evaluative figure of the *saḥḥīj,* were increasingly felt to be shameful for they stripped those who accepted them from their autonomy and dignity. To accept certain favors in return for political allegiance and votes is to accept that one was without *karāmeh.* Hence, one activist refused help to find a job from a relative whom he admired because the latter had accepted the King's appointment to the Upper House of parliament and was thus "accepting favors from the Regime." Similarly, when a local MP opposed to the Hirāk organized an event in the neighborhood that included the distribution of donations and care packages to poor families, he had hard time convincing people to attend. A

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[12] My point is not that prior to their activism the Ṭafāyleh could not draw a distinction between persons in power and the idea of the *Patrie*. Rather, my claim is that these two things were not seen as antithetical to each other in the way they came to be framed by the discourse on *karāmeh.*

few months earlier, however, such public acts of strategic charity were a fairly regular and ordinary scene. Such events used to be routinely documented in photos and videos and published on social media websites without any sense of shame on the part of the recipients. How did a fairly ordinary practice become a source of a powerful emotion like shame? How did the concept of *karāmeh* and the typified figures of the *saḥḥīj* and the *balṭajī* come to make a personal claim on so many people in Ḥay Ṭafāyleh and to prompt them to change themselves in certain systematic ways? Where does the power and authority of moral concepts and typified (im)moral figures come from?

In his discussion of ethical life, Webb Keane (2016a) argues that while humans have the capacity for ethics built into their bodily and cognitive apparatus, a fully developed ethical life can only take place through linguistic and semiotic mediation. Echoing Emile Benveniste's (1971) account of subjectivity in language, Mikhail Bakhtin's (1986b) dialogic model of the utterance, and Adam Smith's (2009) understanding of moral progress as an expansion of ethical concern, Keane stresses how the linguistic capacity for objectification through explicit reference allows for the articulation of a collective first person plural "we" evaluated from the perspective of a third person. This is because "third-party norm enforcement marks one's orientation to a community at large," marking a "commitment to the collective "we" whose shared intentions the norm represents. Shared intentionality ultimately requires the cognitive ability to grasp not just the expanded first person (we) but also the third-person perspective" (Keane 2016a, 64).

Objectification and explicitness can take different forms. One is through moral concepts like *karāmeh*. As I have argued above, any person or group can become evaluable in terms of having or lacking *karāmeh,* because the concept picks out certain aspects of a situation for

explicit reference and thus makes them available for reflexive awareness and evaluation.[13] For a person living with the concept of *karāmeh* the loss of *karāmeh* compels an ethical response that aims to restitute it. This ethical response, however, could simply be a momentary act of violence that seeks another person's recognition of one's *karāmeh*, as was the case with Muʿīn who beat up his disregarding tenants, or Muḥammad who forwent the norms of deference towards the police chief. The Ḥirāk activists, however, underwent broader and more enduring transformations that exceeded a momentary response. To explore these transformations, I would like to turn to a different way in which language facilitates a reflexivity that informs ethical evaluations, not of singular moments, but of a whole life.

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[13] Hence, he writes: "The process of making things explicit and therefore readily available to reflective awareness, which I will call objectification, draws on people's cognitive capacity to take a third-person perspective. But objectification is not confined to the privacy of individual minds. It depends on the existence of semiotics forms that mediate interactions between people" (67).

Chapter 4:

Being a Patriot, Becoming an Activist

As Keane points out, ethical life unfolds in the dynamic relation between first and third personal stances on the world, not in privileging one over the other. He writes: "if we eliminate the first person altogether in favor of the external perspective I'm calling the third person, then it becomes hard to understand why anyone should care or feel committed to one ethical position or another—we would find ourselves in the position of someone watching a sporting event between teams we've never heard of, about whose loss or win we remain indifferent. Conversely, if we eliminate the third person in favor of a purely subjective ethics, we also have trouble understanding things like one's ability to respond to an ethical argument on principled grounds" (2016b, 489). However, one could respond to an ethical argument on principled ground without this response having any bearing on how one lives one's own life. What then makes a response ethical? In the next section, I would like to turn to how language mediated the activists' self-transformation as inhabitants of certain social roles and ultimately as Jordanian subjects. Here objectification took place not through evaluative ethical concepts, but through subjective concepts—concepts that designate a life lived in a certain capacity. It is through such subjective concepts that ethical concepts like *karāmeh*, and (im)moral figures like the *balṭajī* and the *saḥḥīj* could have a normative claim on actual biographical persons.

Being and Failing to Be a Patriot

Layth, a young activist in his mid-twenties, had stopped going to his job at the airport for fear of being arrested. A few weeks later, a colleague called him up to tell him that he was fired. Living in fear and without a job, his life became confined to the neighborhood and its vicinity. There was little to do during the day when most people went to work. I offered to take him with me to Downtown and spend some time there. He accepted. It was also a chance to look for those history books he had been searching for. We agreed to meet at my apartment and go by car since he could risk arrest in public transportation. I waited for him to come. An hour passed by. I decided to give him a call. Did something happen? It turned out he was having a conversation with some cousins at the corner of the street. The anti-Ḥirāk cousins had a small coffee and tea shop which Layth had been avoiding. I arrived at the street corner to find him engaged in a heated debate over the merits of activism. Layth was trying to convince the cousins to join the protests. The cousins, while agreeing that corruption was widespread, refused to do so. Layth was incensed. The conversation followed a trajectory I had seen many times over.

> Layth: I've discovered something.. I've discovered something.. It is either that you do not have the ability, and [are] simply all talk.. or that, perhaps, the people who are with you are unclean! Brother, he who thinks himself clean should join us on the street.. Logically, when the clean ones increase, the lowly ones will decrease.. a few kicks and they're out.. But if you keep saying perhaps, and we can't.. we can't.. and you keep watching.. Put your hand in my hand--
>
> Cousin 1: No, no! Listen Layth, listen.. What you're saying is correct.. What the Ḥirāk is saying is correct.. You are the one who is correct..
>
> Cousin 2: Brother, the Ḥrāk is correct! The Ḥirā:k is correct.. but there are peo:ple within the Ḥirā:k.. key figures in the Ḥirā:k.. let us not say

[their names].. our neighborhood is small and we are all Thawābiyyeh.. we know each other.. in the middle of the Ḥirāk.. just ask eh— so the King is corrupt, and X is corrupt, and Y is corrupt.. But tell them lets apply the law of "Where did you get that from?"[1].. who in the Ḥirāk will pass the test?

Cousin 3: Aḥmad Obeidāt[2] was head of the General Intelligence Department.. He woke up in the end!

Cousin 1: Woke up? After what? (Claps hands) You can't teach old dogs new tricks! And his son as well.. His son, two millions.. he gobbled up! So why doesn't he talk about his son? Why does Ḥamzeh Manṣūr[3] not talk about his son? Here you have proof, but you do not talk! Now he's gonna say where is the evidence against Aḥmad Obeidāt!

Cousin 4: Find evidence against the rest! All the thieves who are stealing.. They only talk about Yeḥyā[4].. Yeḥyā says I am a thief! But no one can prove anything against him!

Cousin 1: Even I would tell you that he's a swindler. But the man is legalized.. he does everything by the law.

Cousin 3: That man is legalized, and Aḥmad Obeidāt is legalized!

Layth: Let me tell you.. In the middle of the Intelligence Department when they interrogated me.. they kept taking me from one office to another.. you know how— in the last office they said there are rumors that X—! He named a couple of people from the Ḥirāk.. He said these people have a criminal case of some hundred thousand [dinars]! May God

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[1] Informal name for Illicit Enrichment or Public Disclosure Law

[2] The leader of an oppositional coalition at the time by the name of The National Coalition for Reform which included the Muslim Brothers and some independent figures.

[3] Secretary General of the Islamic Action Front.

[4] The local notable whom the cousins support.

bring shame on you! What legalized? A hundred thousand? May God shame your sisters! A hundred thousand? I said yes, so? He said Abū--! Abū who? Abū eh--! Yes, Abū eh--! They said this man stole from the electricity company huge sums.. So I said why do you tell me these things? Put them both in Jail, man! Put them both in jail with Bāsem ʿAwaḍallah![5] Put them all in jail.. put Aḥmad Obeidāt in jail, and Ḥamzeh Manṣūr!

The argument continued for another fifteen minutes. The cousins continued to agree with Layth's premise about widespread corruption, but offered several reasons why their agreement with the premise did not entail that they too should join the protests. Everyone was corrupt and unclean, they argued. The Ḥirāk activists pretended to be clean, but were ultimately trying to secure their own interests, even use their fellow activists to do that. Layth countered that none of these arguments justified refraining from protesting. "Are you the son of this country?" he asked his cousin. "I am!" the cousin replied. Layth ended the conversation by saying: "Go and protest for the sake of your country! Fuck him! What is he to you? Your country was ripped, that's it! Why do you care about the Muslim Brothers, or Muḥammad or Layth, man? It is your country, so go out and protest for it, that's it!" Layth then stood up and left despite his cousins pleas to sit down and continue the conversation.

We got into the car and drove off. A few moments later, Layth looked at me: "What a deprived people! A stupid people that does not understand a thing! This man, of course, is a corrupt man, but on a small scale. He swindled orphans. He says he is corrupt. But I tell him, what did you steal man? A few thousands, and then they took them back and put you in jail!" Layth continued to tell me about his cousin who used to be a low-ranking employee in the

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[5] A former chief of the Royal Court and minister of planning who was accused of corruption by the activists.

General Intelligence Department who one day rebelled against his boss and beat him up. The cousin was fired and put in jail. Half way through our conversation Layth seemed to be worried that his engagement with his cousin might make me look down upon him. A justification was in order. "You know," he interjected "There is one thing the Intelligence Department find puzzling about me. I separate tribal issues from Ḥirāk issues. So I disagree with Yeḥyā.. And I hate him! And he hates me! But if someone in his household dies, I would be the first one to go and pay my condolences. This is one thing, and that is another." He then shifted to tell two stories from the Islamic tradition. The first was a Ḥadīth about a man who remained loyal and kind to his kin despite their abandoning him. When the man died, the prophet said he will be rewarded in the afterlife. The second was about a drunkard who was abandoned by his kin and kept disturbing his neighbors with his loud singing at night. When one neighbor complained and the man was put in jail, his other neighbor who happened to be Abū Ḥanīfa, the preeminent theologian and judge, came searching for him and pleaded with the police to get him out. Since then, so the story goes, the drunkard repented and became one of Abū Ḥanīfa's most faithful disciples. I was puzzled. "Do you want to make your cousin repent?" I asked. "Only when I repent!" he replied. The drunkard in the story represented Layth himself. Like many other activists, he had a checkered past. He suffered from a drinking problem and dropped in and out of college several times before graduating a few months after I had met him. During his college years, he tried to immigrate illegally to Europe through Turkey and Greece but his boat was intercepted in the Aegean. He was imprisoned in Turkey for a few weeks and then deported back to Jordan, penniless. His involvement in the Ḥirāk transformed him significantly. His alcoholism seemed under control, and he even managed to graduate from college. Despite all the risks his activism

involved, it gave him a sense of purpose. It made him "find his soul again," he told me. It also alienated him from some of his kin.

For activists, communal life in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh was a tense terrain that needed to be carefully navigated. It involved constant encounters with detractors, sometimes spontaneous and sometimes planned. This was particularly the case given how much communal life happened in the context of family and kin, and how these intimate encounters were occasions for political tensions, no matter how much people tried to avoid them. An ordinary phone call between an activist nephew and an uncle inquiring why the nephew was late for a lunch invitation could easily become an occasion for a debate over the merits of activism. On the street, activists and loyalists shared the same space, but navigated their movement within it differently. It mattered, for example, from which coffee stall one bought his coffee, or from which shop he bought his cigarettes. Some places were owned by Ḥirāk sympathizers, others by people opposed to it. Being at the wrong place and with the wrong people could invite disparaging remarks and could develop into argument.

Yet one did not want to avoid such encounters entirely because a certain dimension of activism and counter-activism was precisely about being visible, there on the street, not letting the other side claim the space as exclusively theirs. For example, after one demonstration, an activist passed by some loyalists standing at a street corner. A heavily built loyalist leaned sideways towards the activist to give him a "fair shoulder charge"—as if making a tackle in a soccer game—coupled with a wink and a smile. The activist responded with a friendly greeting gesture, a wink and a smile back. On another occasion, as an activist drove his cab out of the neighborhood, he stuck his head out of the window to cheerfully greet a man walking on the street by the name of ʿAwwād and chanted: "*hādhī ʾarzak yā ʿAwwād! Saragūha el-*

ḥarāmiyyeh!" (This is your land O ʿAwwād! It was stolen by thieves!) to which ʿAwwād responded by smiling and cheerfully greeting back. As we drove off, the cab-driver turned to me to explain: "This guy, of course, was formerly a *ḥirākī*. Now he is a *saḥḥīj*!" Like the joking relationships long discussed by Radcliff-Brown (1952), these interactions between activists and loyalists in the neighborhood involved the use of innuendo to achieve pragmatic effects indirectly. Happening as they were against a tense horizon of possible offense and violence, double voiced utterances (Bakhtin 1984) like the "fair shoulder charge" sought to reproach while denying hostility. Through them each party could assert their presence on the street, and their disproval of the other, while pre-empting an interpretation of that assertion as an act of aggression.

There was, however, a different kind of indirect interactions between activists and loyalists in the neighborhood. The cab-driver's "greeting" of ʿAwwād on the street, while partaking in a hostility-denying humor, involved another form of addressivity. The activist was not only asserting his presence on the street, but more importantly, shaming ʿAwwād for leaving the Ḥirāk in exchange for material benefits. The chanting of a slogan of which ʿAwwād must have been quite familiar, addressing him by his name, meant to remind ʿAwwād of his past self as a *ḥirākī*, and invoke his present self as a *saḥḥīj*. This kind of address constituted a significant part of the Ḥirāk's activism. As Muḥammad ʿAwadh, a leading member of the Ḥirāk, put it succinctly in one of our conversations:

> The corruption of Jordanians was part of the reshaping of the Jordanian
> mentality, and we are trying to reshape it again through shock.. So the Ḥirāk is
> saying: "wake up Jordanians, wake up people! Where are the grandchildren of
> the early Jordanians, those who were truly patriotic?" They did not have the
> universities we have today, nor the knowledge or the satellite channels or the

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Internet and cellular, but they were [real] men who tirelessly fought and fought for the purpose of this country's independence and for protecting it.. They even disagreed with the Hashemites and fought wars with them.. So there was ʿAbdullah al-Kleib in al-Kūra, and al-Shahwān and Mājed al-ʿAdwān in the Jordan Valley.. These people fought the Hashemites because they wanted a real Jordan because they considered the Hashemites to be non-Jordanian, so they even were about to take the rule away from the Hashemites.. so regardless of everything [they did], they had a patriotism we must respect.. Patriotism that reflected the Jordanians' purity before the corruption (takhrīb) of their minds.. We want this purity to be back.. That patriotism would not be based on corrupting minds and on interests that are so narrow and silly.. "You saḥḥīj! You let them buy you for a few Dinars and then corrupt your mind and your country, so that they can take billions and give you scruples?" this is the process..

Here, Muḥammad gives a meta-pragmatic commentary on existing norms and forms of Jordanian patriotism, evaluating them as corrupt. Much of his discourse is a retelling of national history that pits the "true" patriotic Jordanians of old against the current generation which is better educated and informed, but lacks the patriotic spirit. He describes this historical process of moral change as a corruption (*takhrīb*) of the Jordanian mind. The climax of his discourse comes at the end when he shifts from past to present tense, and from the voice of a commentator and narrator of history to that of a moralist reprimanding an imagined Jordanian in the present, addressing him as a living instance of the immoral figure of the *saḥḥīj*: "*You saḥḥīj! You let them buy you for a few Dinars and then corrupt your mind and your country, so that they can take billions and give you scruples?*" This enactment of a moral address mirrors an earlier moment in Muḥammad's discourse in which he glosses the Ḥiāk's project as a collective reprimanding of Jordanians: "*wake up Jordanians, wake up people! Where are the grandchildren of the early*

Jordanians, those who were truly patriotic?" The lack of locutionary verbs in the climactic segment towards the end enacts an identity between Muḥammad (a first-person singular speaker; an "I") and the Ḥirāk (a first person collective speaker; a "we"). It also condenses the actions of the Ḥirāk over a period of more than two years into a single act of moral address, an ever-present act that is embedded in every moment of activism by the Ḥirāk and its members. While this was not all the activists did and sought to achieve through their activism, the description articulates one important way by which Muḥammad and other activists understood what they were doing.

Moreover, Muḥammad's use of the term "Jordanian" provides important insights into the nature of the project he and other Ḥirāk activists were engaged in. This is particularly clear in his invocation of an older generation of Jordanians who were in a sense better, or more real in their Jordanianness in comparison to the current generation whose "mind" has been corrupted—the implicit agent of corruption being "the regime" or "the Hashemites." Yet despite his invocation of an insider-outsider distinction between the earlier generation of Jordanians and their Hashemite rulers, he is not using the term Jordanian in the ethno-nationalist sense. He is not merely referring to a category or class of objects whose membership is determined by a set of criteria. He is not merely talking about being Jordanian in the juridical sense of citizenship, a status conferred by the state and authenticated by an official identity document. Nor is he talking about being Jordanian in the ethno-nationalist sense of displaying certain emblems of identity (e.g. sartorial styles or linguistic registers) which under certain semiotic regimes come to be invested with a certain quality of authentic Jordanianness as grounded in Jordanian "culture." Rather, Muḥammad uses the term "Jordanian" to designate a certain way of being and acting that characterizes someone as patriotic, and hence "true," Jordanian: "*they were men who tirelessly fought and fought for the purpose of this country's independence and for protecting it.*" Like

"Jordanian," the term "men" here refers not simply to the fact of being male as opposed to female, but to a certain virtue taken to be the mark of true masculinity; namely courage. On his account, courage is for a man what patriotism is for a Jordanian national: a virtue that is integrally intertwined with that identity.[6] Thus, Muḥammad, as a synecdoche of the Ḥirāk, is claiming that a certain way of living one's life as a Jordanian has been lost and with it the virtue of patriotism integral to it. He describes this loss as a process of deliberate corruption, and presents the aim of the Ḥirāk as bringing back that original state of "purity" and virtue.[7]

The means of achieving this return to virtue is through what I shall call *ironic addressivity* as a mode of moral criticism, building on Jonathan Lear's work on irony (2011), and Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of addressivity (1986a, 95–100). Drawing both on social scientific literature on performance and the philosophical tradition of virtue ethics, Lear (2011, 2008) notes that human performance potentially involves two kinds of claim to status. On the one hand, there is a ritual dimension of human performance that draws on social norms and conventions. This is another way of saying that action and actor (on a pragmatic level) always imply or point to a certain context that metapragmatically frames what kind of actor one is and what kind of action one is involved in (Silverstein 1993). As a cognitive claim, an action involves a set of

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[6] See for example the discussion of patriotism as a virtue in MacIntyre (1984).

[7] This positing of an age of purity which serves as an object of affective attachment and the datum for moral evaluation is central to patriotism as a political ideology since the 19th century. Yaseen Noorani (2016) notes how the classical Arabic concept of *waṭan* (*patrie* or homeland) changed as it came to signify the national homeland in the 19th century and was incorporated into nationalist temporality. Classical *waṭan* referred to place of nativity as the locus of one's primordial desire, which nonetheless needed to be transcended to achieve virtue and glory in adult life. To be virtuous in this sense required leaving one's homeland and overcoming the primordial desire that bound one to that place of nativity. In the 19th century nationalist sense, however, *waṭan* marked the nation's golden age, and the age of purity to which one must return to be virtuous as a national and a citizen. Here, *waṭan* serves as a Schillerian "naïve" state of nature which serves simultaneously as a representation of one's lost childhood, and one's highest ideal fulfillment.

materialized, publicly perceptible and evaluable signs which are interpretable relative to institutionalized, conventional schematizations. This semiotic process is usually studied under the rubric of registers and social indexicality, a field that studies how identity is (re)cognitively and categorially established. On the other hand, human action or performance partakes in another context in relation to a goal or an intention (Anscombe [1957] 2000). What is at stake here is not how practices become identifiable relative to (re)cognitive schemata, but how they practically relate to other practices as means-to-ends within a certain *teleological* understanding of what one is doing—with certain ends ultimately taken to be integral to the activity at hand and hence valuable and worth achieving in themselves, while others are contingent. This is an embodied dimension of action whereby the actor knows what s/he is doing "without observation"—i.e. non-semiotically (cf. Anscombe [1957] 2000; Moran 2004).[8] Social values, to the extent that they bear on the ethical, only make sense in relation to this *teleological* dimension of action. This is a fundamental aspect of ethical life that recent anthropological literature on ethics seems to overlook (e.g. Keane 2016a; Laidlaw 2014; Lambek 2011) and which a consideration of the social roles actors take up as their own help us bring back into focus .[9]

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[8] To put it in simplified terms, while an external observer may infer the intentions of others by "taking up" their actions as indexical signs that point to certain expectable aims (e.g. "he got into the car, so he's about to leave"), the actor herself does not relate to herself in this way. She knows her aims or intentions not by observing or interpreting her actions, but simply by performing them. Or, as Richard Moran puts it "Anscombe's 'practical knowledge' does not involve some phenomenological vehicle, something containing a certain description, a "seeing eye in the middle of acting" (Anscombe, p. 57) which filters what it sees through the veil of some description. The knowledge thus attributed is non-observational, not because the agent is thought to have some non-observational awareness of these descriptions, but because these descriptions pick out an *aim* of his, and it is not by observation that one knows one's aims or knows what will count as the realization of one's aims" (Moran 2004, 60).

[9] Let me illustrate this by way of a familiar example. Doctors, in their everyday activities as doctors, exhibit signs that make them identifiable as such. A doctor may be recognizable from her white coat, the stethoscope around her neck, or the beeper in her pocket; from the way she listens attentively, or the medical jargon she uses. As sign vehicles, all of these perceptible

phenomena serve to establish someone's identity as a doctor when interpreted by a spectator versed in recognizing the social role these signs conventionally index. As part of the activity of doctoring, however, all of these things partake in another context that is practical rather than (re)cognitive. These various things are part of being a doctor, or the practice of medicine, directed as it is towards promoting the wellbeing of patients, however defined. Presumably, the white coat ensures cleanliness, the stethoscope allows her to hear her patients' heartbeats; the beeper makes her available to patients in cases of emergency; and the capacity to listen attentively and to translate what the patient says in medical jargon allows her to accurately diagnose the medical condition and devise the relevant remedies. For the doctor, these things are not only signs of identity—although they may well be part of their intended purpose and/or function—but also practices that are, more or less, integral to the practice of medicine. Yet, any of these institutionalized practices may come up for re-evaluation at some point relative to the ends and purposes of medicine as a field of activity. Doctors might realize, as they did in the early 2000's, that the iconic white coats contribute to the spread of infections rather than hygiene, and hence are detrimental to their patients' wellbeing.

The white coat had been introduced into the medical profession from science labs in the early 20th century. At the turn of the century, it helped give the profession a more scientific aura and to distinguish doctors from mere healers and quacks (Blumhagen 1979). Its white color signaled both cleanliness and the hope for life—in contradistinction to black which many doctors wore in the 19th century and which associated them with death and mourning. By the late 1980's the white coat had become an integral part of the medical profession. In 1989, the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine introduced what came to be known as the white-coat-ceremony when a professor complained to the Dean of Students that medical students were "showing up in shorts and baseball caps" for sessions "where the patients are pouring their hearts out" (Warren 1999). Since then, incoming students were required to undertake the Hippocratic Oath at the beginning of their studies—rather than upon graduation—and received a white coat to wear throughout their college education. The ceremony was subsequently institutionalized by Columbia University and adopted as an initiation rite into the medical profession by schools around the world. According to a Columbia professor, the new rite was "designed to arm students for the complexities of 21st-century practice, focusing would-be physicians on caring and ethics from their first day of training" (Warren 1999). Wearing a white coat was not only a sign of being a doctor, but an essential means of embodying the medical virtue of care for the wellbeing of patients, and hence an integral aspect of the medical profession. By the end of the century, however, studies were linking the wearing of white coats to the transfer of serious pathogens from one patient to another (Varghese and Patel 1999). By 2007, the UK was ready to ban the use of long-sleeved white coats, and the American Medical Association followed suit in 2009. Many doctors pushed back, citing other studies that showed that patients trusted doctors who wore white coats more than those who did not, and trust between patient and doctors was essential for good medicine. If the coat threatened to undermine the ends of medicine in certain ways, it also helped promote them in others. Some doctors tried to balance the two requirements of patient trust and hygiene by arguing that the problem was not with the white coats *per se*, but with the fact that medical institutions often lacked laundry facilities that would ensure a constant supply of clean, sterilized coats (Murphy 2007).

Despite the different evaluations of the white coat, the disagreement among medical professionals was structured. It took place within a space of practical reasoning and

Lear's point, however, is that one always acts (or inter-acts) in some capacity and never as a disembodied actor materializing and reevaluating some social conventions. One's actions are always embedded in some practical self and knowledge that places any instance of the action within a larger *telos* as its end and goal. Hence, human action involves two kinds of identity work. By acting in a certain capacity that draws on certain social norms, registers and (re)cognitive schemata, the actor puts herself forward as inhabiting a certain social role: a friend, an engineer, a lawyer, an intellectual, a Muslim, a citizen, etc. In this sense, the actor establishes her identity categorically relative to certain classificatory schemata of the different sorts of things a human being can be (Silverstein 1987). However, to the extent that the action also involves a practical, intentional dimension—i.e. it is done intentionally and seeks to actualize an intention—it also involves a different kind of identity which Christine Korsgaard calls practical identity—a "description under which you value yourself, a description under which you find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking" (Korsgaard 1996, 101). As Lear makes clear, there is always a potential discrepancy between what identity an actor puts herself as inhabiting (re)cognitively, on the one hand, and the *telos* of that identity as an embodied practical identity, on the other. He calls this discrepancy irony, and defines it as "a gap [that] opens between pretense as it is made available in a social practice and an aspiration or ideal which, on the one hand, is embedded in the pretense—indeed, which expresses what the pretense is all about—but which, on the other hand, seems to transcend the life and the social practice in which that pretense is made" (Lear 2011, 11). The point is that in the very act of

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argumentation guided by the *teleological* ends of the activity of medicine. Commitment to those ends was precisely what constituted someone as a true medical professional in practical terms as opposed to (re)cognitive ones. Here, we have a certain sense what Bourdieu (1977) called "doxa," but where the doxastic belief is not in a set of facts (believing *that* something), but rather in a way of life as a valuable one (believing *in* something).

putting oneself forward as a pretender to a certain social role, the actor may be evaluated as failing to live up to the ideals, aims or *teleological* ends of that same role. What I am calling ironic addressivity is a mode of address whereby a speaker addresses someone in their capacity as a pretender to a certain identity in order to point out a discrepancy between the pretense and the ends aspired to in the identity as a practical identity, for the purpose of—and this is a key point—moral instruction and critique. To the extent that this address—like all forms of address—partakes in eliciting a process of reflexive awareness, ironic address is a mode of criticism that seeks to elicit an experience of irony and a feeling of shame in the addressee; to bring about an evaluative awareness of failure in order to elicit an apt ethical response. This is the kind of address that Muḥammad ʿAwadh described in his gloss of the activism as an ethico-political project, and which many of the activists, in their everyday life in the neighborhood engaged in. Let me now turn to how ironic addressivity was practiced activists in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh through ordinary conversations and street protests.

Protest as Moral Critique

Activists in the neighborhood put themselves forward as models of patriotism for others to emulate. Their presence on the street and their protests in themselves were an implicit mode of criticism and call for others to act in the same way. But they also delivered their criticism verbally and more explicitly. Particularly at the beginning of protests, and when they marched into neighborhood, the activists often shifted from threatening chants that addressed the King and other officials to ones that addressed their kin in the neighborhood as ratified and unratified addressees. This shift marked a move from a threatening stance towards the regime, to a shaming one towards fellow Ṭafāyleh and other Jordanians. When marches started inside the

neighborhood, at the entrance to its main mosque, they usually started with chants addressing those leaving the mosque after finishing their prayers:

1. *yallī ṭāliʿ min ṣalātak! gūm dāfiʿ ʿan blādak/wlādak!*
   Hey you who has just finished prayers! stand up and defend your country/children!

2. *Yallī b-titfarraj ʿalēinā ḥuṭṭ ʾīdak bi-ʾidēina!*
   Hey you who is watching us, put your hand in our hands!

3. *ṣuff b-janbī yā bin ʿammī! nahabū blādak shū mistannī?*
   Stand beside me, O cousin! They've robbed your country, what are you waiting for?

Similarly, in protests that started outside Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, at the moment when activists marched into the neighborhood their chants grew more energetic and loud making them audible even to those who were not present on the street:

4. *ʾallahu ʾakbar ʿal-mukhbir! ʾallahu ʾakbar ʿal-saḥḥīj!*
   God is greater than the informant! God is greater than the *saḥḥīj*!

5. *yallī gāʿid juwwā el-bēit! Ghallū el-sukkar, w-ghallū el-zēit!*
   You who sits inside his home! They've hiked the price of sugar and oil!

Chants like these appealed to bystanders' and overhearers' social roles and sensibilities as pious Muslims who desired justice (1,2,4), as fathers and kin who desired the wellbeing of their children and relatives (1,3,5), and ultimately as patriotic Jordanians who desired the wellbeing of their country and felt obliged to defend it (1,2,3,4). This kind of address was ironic in the sense that it simultaneously addressed people as inhabitants of certain social roles while at the same time invoking a course of action the addressees were not following, but which true inhabitants of

the respective role would. Pragmatically, this mode of address sought to shame since failing to follow one's morally obligatory course of action—i.e. by joining the protest—would amount to failing to live up to the demands of these claimed roles, ultimately that of the patriot. When successful or felicitous, pointing the discrepancy out made it visible for bystanders and addressees—seeing oneself being seen as failing to live up to one's ideal self—and shamed them to live up to certain requirements of the claimed practical identity. Through ironic addressivity, activists brought typifications of immoral social figures—like the *saḥḥīj* and the *balṭajī*—to bear on addressees who took patriotic life to be a life worth living on the long term. Referentially, these labels pointed to existing practices of patriotism (loyalty to the monarchy, the politics of patronage, anti-Palestinian nationalist sentiments, etc.) and recast them as false patriotisms.

However, pointing out a possible gap between someone's actual life and his ideal self can serve other purposes than moral critique and instruction. Construed as a gap between appearance and fact, rather than between being and aspiration, it can be used as a weapon to undermine someone's moral authority and foster distrust towards him. It is a critique that seeks to unmask, rather than motivate action. Precisely because they presented themselves as true patriots, the Ḥirāk activists were common targets of such polemical critique. The conversation I presented earlier between Layth and his cousins reflects both kinds of critique. Layth sought to compel his cousins into protest by pointing out a discrepancy between their claims of patriotism and their actions: "Are you the son of this country? […] Go and protest for the sake of your country!" The cousins, by contrast, pointed out a discrepancy between the activists' claims of patriotism and their alleged corruption in order to reject Layth's injunction to protest.[10]

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[10] In her ethnographic account of sustainable development in Central Uganda, China Schertz (2014) has drawn a similar distinction between "audit culture" and "virtue ethics".

News websites, possibly linked to the GID, often portrayed the activists as corrupt crooks who incited public dissent for private benefits such as receiving cash payments from the Muslim Brothers. Public police reports often portrayed the activists as hypocrites by presenting and exaggerating their criminal records when they had any. In a press conference following large-scale riots in November 2012, Police chief Hussein al-Majālī looked at the audience in front of him, shaking his head and speaking slowly:

> I have spoken about certain persons (2s.) unbelievable police records (*shakes head, looks at audience waving hand in disbelief, then looks at a paper in front of him*) (2.5s.) The main chant leader (*makes gesture with hand as if holding a mic, then puts glasses on*) (1s.) o:n to:p o:f (1s.) (*makes gesture with hands depicting something on top of another*) the bu:s (1s.) (*looks at audience as if surveying their reactions, still making hand gesture*) that was at al-Ḥussēinī Mosque.. chanting [points index finger to a projection screen to his right] (2s.) Mashallah, wearing a beard! [*makes a gesture on face indicating a beard, then looks at report in hand*] and, and behind him repeat many.. his name is.. Ibrahīm Muḥammad ʿAbdul-Razzāg al-Najjār al-Jamzāwī.. (*frowns and points to screen again, while still looking at audience*) The one who.. yells through the speakers and says "God is great!" (*points finger to his left as if pointing to the crowd of protestors*) and behind him repeat four thousand people by saying "God is great!".. The aforementioned's criminal record (*looks back at paper*): theft and causing harm to others' property and carrying a weapon on 9/4/2008.. Five counts of ordinary theft [video of demonstration starts playing and one could hear the man chanting in the background] in the year [points to his left and looks at someone as if requesting the audio to be muted, the volume is turned down] in the year 2010.. violating the Crime Prevention Law on 8/9/2010.. Theft and purchase of stolen property on 10/1/2011.. (*looks up at the audience, lifts paper up and frowns*) Mashallah! Mashallah, bless God! (*shakes head*) There are four more people, but perhaps I should stop here.

Like Layth's cousins, al-Majālī points out a discrepancy between the activist's pretense as a patriotic and pious person (his beard, assumption of leadership and the invocation of God's name) and the facts of his criminal record which depict him as a thief. Rather than an ironic address that seeks to compel a moral response, al-Majālī's is a critique that aims to unmask and discredit. Denied their claim to authentic patriotism, and their authority for moral critique, the activist's ironic addressivity sometimes produced unintended pragmatic effects, most notably offense. "I hear their voice echoing inside my home: you who sits inside the house!" one man complained to me indignantly. Like many others in the neighborhood, he felt personally insulted by the scolding of protestors.

Ethical Self-transformation

For those in the neighborhood who joined the Ḥirāk, the turn to activism was a long-term process of ethical self-transformation. That becoming an activist involves a commitment to transform how one lives his life is hardly a remarkable observation. What interests me, however, is the various enactments of patriotism this transformation involved. Some of these were quite particular and related to the specific biographical trajectories and character traits of certain individuals. For example, one drug dealer in the neighborhood decided to give up his business and "clean himself up" because "it was harmful to others." Another broke up with his girlfriend who complained that the Ḥirāk was taking him away from her, a complaint which indicated to him that "she had no patriotic feelings." In his break up letter to her, he wrote: "I do not know how I have allowed you to bargain with me over a cause I am willing to die for! Who are you, and who am I, and twenty more people like us when weighed against the *Patrie*?"

But there were also more systematic and collective manifestations of patriotism which the activists discussed and closely guarded in their collective political endeavors. One key concern was how a true patriot ought to express his anger and dissatisfaction with others, including the state. Over the years, Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh has earned a reputation as a dangerous place whose people were violent, unruly and hostile towards outsiders. Several incidents of rioting, clashes with the police and the ongoing violence against other social groups in their vicinity has helped stereotype Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh as a neighborhood of trouble makers (*zuʿrān*). With the propensity to violence being swept up into the figure of the *balṭajī*, cultivating civility was one crucial aspect of the turn to activism and the embodiment of true patriotism. In what follows, I would like to discuss how the cultivation of a new patriotic habitus created a narrative problem for activists who now construed their past deeds as forms of thuggery. I will do so by exploring the case of Haitham ʿAwwād.

The Story of Haitham ʿAwwād

Haitham was a young man in his early twenties from the ʿIyāl ʿAwwād tribe. He was the eldest of 7 siblings born to a father who worked as a guard at a nearby public school. Although Haitham was a university student, one could hardly guess that from his shabby looks. On most days he wore the same gray cotton track-suit with a brown pair of plastic slippers. In the summer, he replaced the jacket with a black T-shirt. Apart from studying business administration at the Islamic Sciences and Education University, Haitham worked as a street vendor at the produce market in Downtown Amman. His job financed his studies and managed to provide a modicum of support to his father whose salary was hardly enough for the basic needs of the family let alone to pay the fees for 3 other siblings who were also university students. This,

however, meant that Haitham had to take leaves from his studies for months on end in order to save enough money to pay a semester's fees which amounted to about 1000 dinars ($1400) plus his daily expenses which included 2 packs of cigarettes (3 dinars), coffee and tea (2 dinars), food, transportation and other university related expenses. His monthly costs during semester times well exceeded the average salary of a mid-range public servant let alone a public school guard who is responsible for a large household.

A month before I had met him, an acquaintance of his father's at the Ministry of Agriculture got him a job in the ministry as a day-wage laborer. This was not a permanent position and involved no commitment on the part of the ministry as to what kind of work he would be doing on any given day. He was just a pair of hands hired to do whatever kind of work his boss, the foreman, required him to do, and he was only paid for the days he worked. On days when he did not work, he was not paid. Yet, like many who work in such precarious jobs, Haitham hoped that he will one day be able to change his status at the ministry from a day-wage laborer to a contracted laborer, again through some *wāsṭa* mediation. Later, when he would have his university degree he would be able to make an appeal to be transferred to another job within the ministry that would suit his university credentials, or even be transferred to some other place within the civil service. For the time being, however, Haitham had to manage to finance his studies and set aside some money as his share in covering family expenses. To do that, he often participated in social lending schemes (*jamʿiyyāt taʿāwuniyya*) whereby a group of people agree to pay a fixed sum every month to shared fund which would then be handed out to a member of the group. By the end of the lending cycle, Haitham would have his university fees for one semester after which he would have to go back to working at the market.

Haitham was among those who attacked the activists of *24 Ādhār*, but a few weeks after the attack he turned to activism. He became an active member of al-Ḥirāk and a leading figure in the Social Demands Committee. At that point, a member of parliament from the neighborhood with connections to the GID made Haitham an offer whereby he would quit working with al-Ḥirāk in return for a scholarship that would cover his university tuition and a job in the municipality that would be more stable and better paid than his current one at the ministry. Haitham, however, refused the offer. When I asked him why he would refuse such an offer when it seemed to solve all his problems, he said that for him al-Ḥirāk was "something from inside" (*min juwwāy*), not a paid job. Therefore, the MP had no business telling him to leave it. Haitham's description of his activism as emanating "from inside" could be read as if his activism was an expression of a "true" self that resided within, but this self-expression is not simply set against externally imposed norms. Rather, it is set against another kind of self, that of the *saḥḥīj*, who takes his political activities to be a paid service. Had Haitham accepted the MP's offer, he would have acknowledged his status as a *saḥḥīj*. That is to say, he would have accepted his characterization as someone without *karāmeh*, who can be bought—recall Kant's distinction between someone having a price vs. having an inner value.

Haitham was grateful that the MP had found jobs for his two brothers and sister all of whom were university students as well. In return, and in compliance with his father's request, Haitham decided to vote for the man in the upcoming parliamentary elections. When I asked Haitham how he could square his voting for a corrupt MP with his activism, he explained that there is a difference between passionately supporting a candidate in the elections and paying back a favor by voting. "You must understand, Doctor!" he elaborated "Here in the neighborhood if you love someone you would do everything for him, you do this and that and

move the world, you would kill yourself for him!" The vote, in contrast, was a mere transaction justified by his love to his siblings and father.

I first met Haitham after one demonstration in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh. Osama, another activist whom I knew well was describing to me the early days of al-Ḥirāk and how many of those who attacked the *24 Ādhār* movement later became Ḥirāk activists. When I asked him if any of the people I knew were among them, he immediately called Haitham whom I asked about what happened that day. In response, Haitham offered a lengthy account a transcription of which is provided below.[11]

I. THE GENERAL SETTING

1.	**H:** yōm ʾrbaʿa wa-ʿishrīn ʾādhār, ʾanā kunt gāʾid fi-l-ḥāra,	H: On the day of 24 Ādhār, I was sitting in the neighborhood,
2.	lā warāy walā guddāmī, bi-ḥālī, walā–	free and doing nothing, by myself, without–
3.	kunt ʾakraḥ ḥirāk,	I used to hate (the) Ḥirāk,
4.	w-kānū mbalshīn "hadhōl falasṭīniyye,	and they were starting "These are Palestinians!
5.	bid-hom ykharbū el-balad w-ʾiḥnā kulnā.. iḥnā wlād	They want to ruin the country! and we are all.. we are the children of
6.	balad, bid-hom ykharbūha".. min ha-s-sawālīf..	(this) country! They want to ruin it!".. from such stories..
7.	mā– min shabbēn	mā– from two guys
8.	**O:** ʿibāra ʿan tiʿbāyeh [yaʿnī]	O: Were instigators [in other words]
9.	**H:** [aywā:] zay hēk.. kānū yilʿabū	H: [Corre:ct] like this.. they used to play
10.	ʿa watar ʾurdunī/falasṭīnī w-"hadhōl	on the Jordanian/Palestinian chord and "These are
11.	falasṭīniyyeh, hadhōla bid-hom y-kharbū el-balad ʿalēku	Palestinians! These want to ruin the country on you
12.	ʿashān waṭan badīl," min hassawālīf,	for the purpose of alternative homeland" and such stories,
13.	w-lissa mā kān nashʾit ḥirāk ʾinnā	and a Ḥirāk had not yet started emerging among us here
14.	fi-l-ḥay, y-waʿʿīnā w-ʾishī..	in the neighborhood to make us aware and stuff..
15.	**O:** lissa mā kān el-ḥirāk m[awjūd ʾaṣlan!]	O: The Ḥirāk had not e[xisted yet basically!]
16.	**H:** [aaaaaaaaaaaa]ah lissa mā kan	H: [Yeaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa]ah there had not yet been

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[11] In the transcript I refer to the participants using their initial (H=Haitham, Y=Yazan, O=Osama and B=Barāʾ who joins the conversation at line 85).

II. IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

17. **H (*cont.*):** yaʿnī.. ehh yōm el-jumʿah baʿid ṣalāt el-ḍuhur

    H (*cont.*): in other words.. ehh the day of Friday after the noon prayer

18. fi-shway, shabāb ṣ-ḥābī rannū ʿalay

    by little, (some) youth friends of mine rang me

19. "shū bitsawwī?" gultilhom: "wallah bi-l-bēt",

    "what are you doing?" I said to them "by God I am at home",

20. w-inno bigūlū: "hay fī bāṣāt bid-ha tiṭlaʿ

    suddenly they were saying "here are buses about to go up

21. ʿa ḥadāʾiq el-ḥussein --ʿa ḥadāʾiq el-ḥussein" kān fī

    to al-Ḥussein Parks -- to al-Ḥussein Parks" there was

22. ʾeḥtifāl fi-nafs elyōm el-jumʿa ellī kā– +kān

    a celebration on the same day the Friday when there wa– +was

23. -- ellī faraṭū fīh ʾarbaʿa wa-ʿishrīn ʾadhār.. kan fī ʿishī..

    -- when they dismantled 24 Ādhār.. there was something..

24. -- eh ʾiḥtifāl fi ḥadāʾiq el-ḥussein..

    -- eh a celebration at al-Ḥussein Parks..

25. ʾiḥnā wallah-i hēk shabāb, ṭabʿan

    we (are) by God like this young guys, of course

26. bidnā n-ṭish, w-ḥatta jābū bāṣāt

    (and) want to hang out, and they even brought buses

27. min hān.. kān fī bāṣāt hōnā fi-l-ḥayy..

    from here.. there were busses here in the neighborhood..

28. b-waṣṣlan la-ghād..

    which take (people) there..

III. AT THE PARK

29. **H (*cont.*):** ṭalaʿnā wallah ʿalā, ehh.. el-bōtā– +el-bōtās

    H (*cont.*): we went by God to the Pota– +Potash

30. – ʿalā el-ehh ḥusse– --ʿa ḥadāʾiq el-ḥussein..

    -- to the ehh Ḥusse– to al-Ḥussein Park..

31. w-shūf h-al-ʾaghānī el-waṭaniyyeh,

    and look at those patriotic songs,

32. wa-ʿUmar el-ʿAbdallāt, w-Mitʿib el-Ṣaggār,

    and ʿUmar el-ʿAbdallāt, and Mitʿib el-Ṣaggār,

33. w-il-Lōziyyīn, w-ʾabṣar shū..

    and il-Lōziyyīn, and dunno what..

34. yaʿnī ellī mū waṭanī, sāʿitta

    in other words he who is not patriotic, at that hour

35. min chuthur el-ʿālam, w-haddabik,

    due to the many people, and all the dancing,

36. w-hal waṭaniyyāt, w-hādha..

    and the patriotisms, and that..

37. yaʿnī ṣār el-waṭaniyye fōg rāso..

    in other words patriotism reached above one's head..

38. min hān!.. (RAISES RIGHT PALM ABOVE HEAD)

    up to here!.. (RAISES RIGHT PALM ABOVE HEAD)

39. al-muhumm, ehhh w-iḥnā mrawwḥīn

    anyway, while we were going back

40. **Y:** ghannēt w-dabaktu maʿ el-eh[hh, maʿ el-nās?]

    Y: You sang and danced with the eh[hh with the people?]

41. **H:** [aaaaahhh kullo],

    H: [yeaaaah everything],

42. kullo aahh, w-rāfiʿʿalam el-ʾurdun

    everything yeah, and I was carrying the flag of Jordan

43. w-"yaʿīsh jalālet el-malek!" w– hutāfāt

    and "Long live His Majesty the King!" and chants

44. w-kullo, kullo yaʿni..

    and everything, everything in other words..

45. bagullak yaʿ[ni el-waṭaniyyeh wāṣleh lahān]	I am telling you s[o patriotism was reaching here]
46. **O:** [hū mala]kiyyeh	**O:** [It was roya]lism
47. wāṣleh la-hōn mish waṭaniyyeh!	was reaching up to here, not patriotism!
48. **Y:** aahhh @ ahh	**Y:** Yeah @ yeah
49. **H:** aywah! [zay hēk]	**H:** Yes! [like this]
50. **O:** [aghāniha] malakiyyeh mish waṭaniyyeh..	**O:** [It's songs] were royalist, not patriotic..
51. **H:** wa wāṣleh la-hāna!..	**H:** And reached up to here!..

IV. ON THE WAY BACK

52. **H (*cont*.):** rajaʿna.. w-iḥna fi-ṭṭarīg, gālū ehh.. ʿind ehh,	H(*cont*.): we came back.. While we were on the way, at ehh,
53. ʿind el-bāṣāt.. bidhom yrajjʿūna la-wēn?	at the busses.. they wanted to take us back where to?
54. la-l-mujammaʿ el-gadīm..	To the old terminal..
55. winno bigūlū "duwwār el-dākheliyyeh msakkir!"..	suddenly they were saying "the Dākheliyyeh Circle is closed!"..
56. w-ʾabṣar shū.. gālu "wallah khan ninzal hān ngazdir"	and dunno what.. They said "By God let's get off here take a walk"
57. -- "m-ninzal hān ngazdir", gulnā "yallah khan-ninzal!"	-- "We get off here take a walk", we said "Let's get off!"
58. wallah ʾiḥnā nazilnā, kunnā ḥawālī ʾabū eh sittīn, khamsīn shab!	By God we got off, we were about eh sixty, fifty young guys!
59. **Y:** min el-ḥay?	**Y:** From the neighborhood?
60. **H:** min el-ḥay haẓōla,	**H:** From the neighborhood these (were),
61. ʾiḥna maʿ baʿadh yaʿnī...	we (were) together in other words..
62. futnā, wa waggafna ʿind tāʿūn duwwār el-dākheliyyeh hēk..	we went in and stood by the people of Dākheliyyeh Circle like this..
63. **O:** bas b– +bikam -- eh dagī– +dagīga -- eh fī bikam..	**O:** But p– +pickup -- eh one minu– +miute -- there was a pickup..
64. el-bikam saba– +sabagku -- guddāmku walla baʿdīku?..	the pickup pre– +preceeded -- it before you or after?..
65. fī bikam fāt juwwa te– d– el-muʿtaṣimīn...	There was a pickup went in te– d– the demonstrators...
66. **H:** baʿed mā futnā iḥn– +iḥnā...	**H:** After went in w– +we...
67. **O:** tāʿ el-walāʾ...	**O:** The one which belonged to the loyalists...
68. **H: --** baʿed ma futnā iḥnā, hay khallīnī ʾakammil..	**H: --** After we went in, now let me finish..
69. lissa kān el-darak m-ḥawiṭ, eh, el-muʿtaṣmīn,	still then the Gendarmes were encircling, eh, the demonstrators,
70. elli huwwa ʾarbaʿa wa-ʿishrīn ʾādhār, fī-ʾadēih..	which were 24 Ādhār, with their hands..
71. yaʿnī m-sawwī dāʿirah..	In other words making a circle.

72. **Y:** Aah!   **Y:** Yeah!

V. THE ATTACK

73. **H:** ʾiḥnā jīnā t-farrajnā... eh.. yaʿnī mā baʿrif   **H:** We came and watched.. eh.. so I don't know

74. min el-nās ellī kānū maʿāna,   (if) it was from the people who were with us,

75. jamāʿit Yeḥyā as-Sʿūd,   the group of Yeḥyā al-Sʿūd,

76. hū el-khabar ʾijāhom inno, min Yeḥyā,   was it that the news came to them that, from Yeḥyā,

77. y-fūtū wa ma ʿalēkū, ʾaw innoh?   that they go in and don't worry, or was it that?

78. bas ʾiḥna kunnā gaʿdīn khamsīn shab   but we were sitting there fifty young guys

79. "yallah n-fūt ʿalēhom, bidhom y-kharrbū el-balad,   "Let's go in against them!" "They want to destroy the country!"

80. ʾiḥnā min ʾabṣar shū"   "We are from dunno what!"

81. wa bagollak el-malakiyyeh wāṣleh lahāna min w-iḥnā jayyīn   and I tell you royalism had reached up to here since we were coming

82. wa "bidhom y-kharrbū el-balad!".. TSK..   and "they want to destroy the country!".. TSK..

83. e:llī i:staghrabtoh ʾana yaʿnī l– eh–   w:hat I f:ound strange was in other words th– eh–

84. lamma hassa ʾagʿod afakkir fīha..   when I now sit down and think about it..

85. ʾawwal ma futnā.. w-gabil mā n-fūt ʿalēihom juwwa,   when we first went in.. and before we went inside for them

86. *n-kallish +n-ballish – w-n-kassir eh– -- n-kassir khiyam   *staroyin +starting -- and destroying eh– -- destroying tents

(B greets everyone and joins the group)   [...]

87. **H:** n-kassir khiyam, w-ʾabṣar shū, yaʿnī kunnā hēik,   **H:** Destroying tents and dunno what, so we were like this,

88. ʿind barra.. humme yiḥtifū w-iḥnā n-rod fi masabbeh,   at outside.. they would chant and we would respond with an insult,

89. iḥnā katha, zay hēik   we (would do) such and such, like this

(People make room for B to sit)   [...]

90. **H:** "yallah?" "yallah!" "m-wallah, yallah!".. "yallah n-fūt?"   **H:** "Let's go?" "let's go!" "By God, let's go!".. "let's go in?"

91. winno b-gūlū "yallah!".. iḥnā futnā!..   Suddenly they were saying "let's go!".. we went in!..

92. el-gharīb fī-l-mawḍūʿ inno   what was strange about the situation was that

93. el-d@arak bas t-golloh ṭafīlī..   the G@endarme when you say to him "Ṭafīlī"..

94. binazzil ʾīdoh wa biftaḥlak ṭarīg..   he would lower his arm and open a way for you..

95. **B:** hāẓa wēin?   **B:** This (was) where?

96. **H:** hāẓa bi ʾarbaʿa wa ʾishrīn ʾādhār, yōm eh–   **H:** This (was) on 24 March, the day when eh–

97. ḍarabnāhom ʿa duwwār el-dākhiliyyeh   we beat them up at the Dakhiliyyeh Circle

98. **B:** ʾinta kunt maʿ el-balṭajiyyeh?   **B:** You were with the thugs?

99. **H:** aaahhhh!	**H:** Yeaaaahh!
100. **Y:** @@@@@	**Y:** @@@@@
101. **B:** aaahh?	**B:** Yeaahh?
102. **O:** ʾuskut yā zalameh.. kha[llīh y-kammil]	**O:** Keep silent man.. le[t him finish]
103. **H:** [zay hēik ḥāṭ] ʾīdoh el-eh–	**H:** [Like this he put] his arm the eh–
104. darakī fi ʾīd eh– illi janboh.. ʾiḥnā jāyyīn	Gendarme in the arm of eh– the one next to him.. we are coming
105. "ṭafīlī!" binazzil ʾīdoh wa bitfūt..	(and screaming) "Ṭafīlī!" he lowers his arm and you come in..
106. futnā.. "ṭanṭāt!".. "manayik!".. "ʾikhwāt sharmūṭah!"..	we came in.. "Fagots!".. "Fuckers!".. "Brothers of a whore!"..
107. "ʾabṣar shū!".. shallūt min hān, shallūt ʿa-l-kheimeh hāy,	"Dunno what!".. a kick from here, a kick to this tent,
108. ṣārat el-lajjeh juwwa.. al-muhum,	the chaos started inside.. anyway,
109. ellī kān maʿāh mara biddoh yakhudh-ha..	he who had a woman with him wanted to take her (away)..
110. elli kān iloh ʾakhū biddo y-shūf wēin ʾakhūh..	he who had a brother wanted to see where his brother was..
111. yaʿnī ṣārat el-darbakeh juwwah.. ʾiḥna ḥawālī khamsīn waḥad	so the chaos started inside.. we were about fifty people
112. illi futnā... al-muhum, shway eehh–	who went in.. anyway, a bit later eehh–
113. ʾijāna kaman nās, min barrah fātu.	more people came (and joined) us, (they) entered from outside.
114. illi kānu eh– ʿa-l-jisir min fōg, illi kānu	Those who were eh– on top of the bridge, those who were
115. fi-l-ʿamāra illi g-bāl, lamma shāfu el-darbakeh,	in the building opposite, when they saw the chaos
116. wa abṣar shū.. -- eh– illi khalla el-ʿālam t-fūt ʾinno	and dunno what.. eh– -- what made people go in was
117. "ʾanā fāyet ʾakharrib..	" I am going in to destroy..
118. wu– -- wi-l-eh– -- el-eh– ʾiʿtiṣām fī ḥimāyet	an– -- and the -- eh– demonstration is under the protection
119. el-darak, bas e-l-eh– darak mish mitdakhkhil!	of the Gendarmes, but the eh– Gendarmes are not interfering!
120. (CLAPS TWICE).. yaʿnī "fūt! ʿādi!"	(CLAPS TWICE).. Meaning, "Go in! normal!"
121. yaʿnī ma ḥada saʾlān! yaʿnī biyububsūk bēin	Meaning, "No one cares!" Meaning, they kiss you between
122. ʿuyūnak!".. al-muhum yaʿnī	your eyes!".. Anyway, in other words,
123. ʾinta, hay el-darak.. ʾinta bturkuẓ min hāna la-ghād..	you are, this is the Gendarmes.. you run from here to there..
124. wintā rākiẓ bitgūl "ṭafīlī!", biftaḥū adēihom wa bifawtūk...	while running you say "Ṭafīlī!", they open their arms and he lets you in..
125. yaʿnī bagullak hī el-sōlāfeh b-jūz ʾinno.. nās min zulum Yiḥyā	so I am telling you the story maybe be that.. people from Yiḥyā's men
126. ####ʾaw ʾinno hummu el-darak bidhom ʾay nās y-fūtū	#### or maybe it was the Gendarmes who wanted anybody to go in
127. min el ʾawwal? hāy mā baʿrif fīhā..	from the start? This I do not know..
128. al-muhum ʾinno kān el-fōt wi-l-ṭalʿa.. b-rāḥtak..	what matters is that going in and out.. was with ease for you..
129. yaʿnī ballashnā fi-hal-khiyam,	in other words we started with the tents,
130. ballashna fi-ha-l-haẓā.. ṭalaʿnā ʿa-l-bikam tāʿhom..	we started with this and that.. we went up their pickup..
131. ʿa-l-sammāʿāt, ʿa-l-dinyā.. ballashnā..	the speakers, the stuff.. we started..

132. el-ʿālam hajjat, ṣar.. ʾiḥnā futnā min el-duwwār ### ### ##..	people ran off, so.. we came in through the roundabout ### ### ##..
133. ʾiḥnā futnā min el-jiha hāy.. min el-jihā hay futnā..	we came in through this side.. through this side we came in..
134. ṣārat el-ʿālam tiṭlaʿ min wēin?.. min el-jiha el-thānyeh..	people started going out from where?.. from the other side..
135. el-jiha el-thānyeh hōn shū kān fīh?..	what was here on the other side?
136. kān ballash el-darak wi-l-ʾamn el-ʿām yiḍrob	The Gendarmes and General Security were starting to beat up
137. fi-l-li b-iṭlaʿ min ghād.. hassa law itfūt b-itlāgīhom	those who came out from there.. now if you go in you'll find them
138. ʿazzāwyeh, we-y-ballshu yuḍurbū b-il-ʿālam..	at the corner, and are starting to beat up people..
139. ʾillī kān yu– yush:rud min jihit wuzāret el-dākheliyyeh,	he who was ru– r:unning from the side of the Ministry of Interiors,
140. yitlaggāh min? elli ʿa-l-jisir fi-l-ḥ-jār..	was being received by whom? Those on the bridge with stones..
141. fa ʾayya wāḥad shārid, ʾana..ʾillā yijīḥ naṣīboh min illī juwwā..	so anyone running, I.. he must get his share from those inside..
142. al-muhum illī juwwā kethirnā ʾiḥnā.. ṣar fī ḥawālī	Anyway, we, those inside, we increased.. there was about
143. mītēin wa khamsīn, thalathmiyyeh, ʿAbābīd, Salṭiyyeh, Ṭafāyleh,	two hundred fifty, three hundred, ʿAbābīd, Salṭiyyeh, Ṭafāyleh,
144. kadhā, ʾabṣar shū.. min ha-l– eh– yaʿnī..	so on, dunno what.. from the– eh– in other words..
145. wa kethirnā juww[ā wa ballahsat..]	and we increased insi[de and it started]
146. **O:** [wa ḥatta falasṭiniy]yeh kānū mawjūdīn!	**O:**[and even Palestinia]ns were present!
147. **H:** bagullak, kethirnā,	**H:** I am telling you, we increased,
148. ma btiʿrif mīn fāt, wa mīn mā hāẓa..	you don't know who went in, and who didn't that..
149. ʾanā bas bagullak ʿan bidāyet el-dukhūl..	I am just telling you about the beginning of the entry..
150. ballashnā fi-l-khiyam, ballashnā ʾabṣar shū..	we started with the tents, we started dunno what..

VI. THE BOOTY

151. al-muhum, ghanāʾim al-ḥarb.. sabʿ krōzāt Malbōro...	anyway, the booty of war.. seven cartons of Marlboro.
152. **O:** @@[@]	**O:** @@[@]
153. **Y:** [uf]ff, min wēin?	**Y:** [uf]ff, where from?
154. **H:** min el-khiyam! ehh– s– ʾarbaʿ kyās kāshew..	**H:** From the tents! Ehh– s– four bags of cashew..
155. bijūz thalātheh fuzdug ḥalabī..	maybe three (of) pistachio..
156. **B:** mawjūdāt juwwa kanū?	**B:** They were inside?
157. **H:** aaahhh, fi-l-khiyam ʾakhaẓnāhin w-iḥnā ṭālʿīn,	**H:** Yeaaahh, in the tents, we took them while we were leaving, we went
158. ṭalaʿnā n:ōkil fuzdu[g ḥalabī, wi-l-kā:shu]	out eating pistach[ios and the cashews]
159. **B:** [haẓōl laʿād ḥasbīn ḥ-sābhom ya ḥarām yist]amirrū	**B:** [These then were planning, poor thing, to cont]inue
160. **H:** aaahh! ehhh– el-mātōr ʾakhaẓnāh.. ʾakhaẓōh el-thnēin bāʿūh bi-	**H:** Yeaaahh! Ehhh– the motor we took it.. the two took it

161. thalathmiyyeh, shu bidnā fīh?.. aahh..	and sold it for three hundred, what use is it for us?.. yeah..
162. wi-l-thnēin illī ʾakhaẓuh biṭlaʿū maʿ el-ḥirāk!	and the two who sold it now go out with us in the Ḥirāk!
163. [@@ illi @akhaẓū el-mātōr!]	[@@ those who@ took the motor!]
164. **B:** [mīn biṭlaʿū maʿ el-ḥirāk?]	**B:** [who comes out with the Ḥirāk?]
165. **H:** aahhh!	H: Yeaahh!
166. **B:** baʿdēin bitʿallimnī ʿanhom!	**B:** Later you tell me about them!
167. **H:** ʾakhaẓu el-mātōr wa bāʿūh@ bi-thalathmīt lēira.	H: They took the motor and so@ld it for three hundred liras.[12]
168. haẓa el-mātōr elli kānū y-shaghlū ʿalēih	This was the motor by which they used to operate
169. el-sam[māʿā]t wa hāẓa.. krōzāt dukhkhān.. eh–	the speakers and stuff.. cigarette cartons.. eh–
170. fuzdog ḥalabī, kashew.. eh– ʾayya ʾishī bitlāgīh fi-l-khēimeh,	pistachios, cashews.. eh–anything you find in the tent,
171. inta b-tiẓrob el-khēimeh shallūt.. bigaʿ minhā ʾay ʾishī..	you hit the tent with a kick.. falls from it something..
172. ʾakhaẓū ḥawālī eh– sitt khiyam... wa zay hēik!..	they took almost eh– six tents... and so on!..

VII. VICTORY

173. wa ballashu hōn elli juwwa "yaʿīsh jalālat el-malik"	and here started those inside "Long live His Majesty the King"
174. w-iḥnā binrod "yaʿīsh!"	and we would respond "Long live!"
175. "hāy el-ʾUrdun ʾUrdunnā, w-Baljīkiyyeh mā bidnā!"	"This Jordan is our Jordan, and Belgians we do not want!"
176. "hāy el-ʾUrdun ʾUrdunnā wa ʾAbū Ḥussein mā bidnā!"	"This Jordan is our Jordan, and ʾAbu Hussein we do not want
177. ... [al-]muhum bagul[lak yaʿnī]	... [any]way I am tel[ling you I mean]
178. **B:** ʾAbū Ḥussein gāyi[dnā!] .... [ʾAbū Ḥussein mā bidnā?]	**B:** ʾAbū Ḥussein is our lea[der!] ... [ʾAbū Ḥussein we don't want?]
179. **H:** "wa ʾAbū Ḥussein gāyidnā!"	H: "And ʾAbū Ḥussein is our leader!"
180. wa gālū "hāy el-ʾUrdun ʾUrdunnā, w-Baljīkiyyeh mā bidnā"	And they said "This Jordan is our Jordan, and Belgians we don't want"
181. wa ʾabṣar shū.. wa ṣārat el-masabbāt,	and dunno what.. and the insults started,
182. wa "rajjʿū Falasṭīn!", "rūḥū ʿā Falasṭīn!",	and "Bring back Palestine!", "Go back to Palestine!",
183. "ʿadkū t-kharbū el-balad!", "ʿadkū t-khar–" +tkharbū	"You want to destroy the country!", "You want to dest–" +destroy
184. bas.. yaʿnī ʾanā mathalan kunt eh– maʿāhom, yaʿnī ʾazāʿig.	but.. so I for example was eh– with them, in other words screeching.
185. yaʿnī thānī yōm min fakk il-ʾiʿtiṣām..	So, the second day after the dismantling of the sit-in..
186. ʾanā kunt ṭāliʿ ʿa-J-bēiha ʿind thāʾir tuʿmallah...	I was going up to Jubeiha to visit Thāʾir Tuʿmallah...

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[12] Jordanians sometimes refer to their local currency as "Lēra" instead of the official name, "Dinār." The usage is a residue from Ottoman times when the local currency was the Ottoman Lira.

187. lagīt nās ʿa-duwwār eh– el-dākheliyyeh m-wagfīn siyyārāt-hom	I found people at Circle.. eh– the Dākheliyyeh parking their cars
188. wa-waṭānī.. ʾanā kunt maʿ rāmī fi-s-sayyāra,	and (playing) patriotic (music).. I was with Rāmī in the car,
189. fataḥnā waṭānī wa nazilnā... baʿdīhā fī yōmēin,	we opened patriotic (music) and got out.. after that by two days,
190. ʾijō el-eh– eh– el-mʿāniyyeh.. jamāʿit tawfīg krēishān.	came the eh– eh– the Maʿānīs.. the group of Tawfīg Krēishān.
191. lamma ṣārū y-ṭukhkhū ʿa-duwwār el-dākheliyyeh: "labbayka	When they started shooting at the Dākheliyyeh Circle "At your service
192. ʾaba-l-ḥussein!" wa ma labbayk!. ʾijū baʿdīnā fi-yōmēin humme..	ʾAba-l-Ḥussein!" and such things.. they came two days after us, them..
193. hādhā baʿid mā faḍḍū ʾiʿtiṣam el-dākheliyyeh	this was after they dismantled the Dākheliyyeh sit-in
194. fi yōmēin ʾaw thalātheh.. ʾijū..	by two days or three.. they came..

VIII. CODA

195. al-muhum bagullak yaʿnī eh– hāẓā ellī ṣār	anyway, I am telling you in other words eh– this is what happened
196. yaʿnī, m-rawwḥīn kunnā, Mitʿib el-Ṣaggār,	in other words, going back home we were, Mitʿib el-Ṣaggār,
197. el-Lōziyyeh, Ḥ-sēin el-Salmān, ʾabṣar shū..	el-Lōziyyeh, Ḥ-sēin el-Salmān, dunno what..
198. **B:** ʾaghānī ʿa-l-eh– sayyārāt!	**B:** Songs from the eh– cars!
199. **H:** hāẓā eh– gab[il ma n:īj]ī ʿa-Duwwār el-Dākhli–	**H:** This was befo[re we cam]e to the Circle el-Dākhli–
200. **B:** [fi-l-iḥtifāl!]	**B:** [at the celebration!]
201. **H:** kunnā fī eh– Ḥadāʾiq el-Ḥussēin	**H:** we were at eh– al-Ḥussēin Park
202. **B:** aah, aah, aah, ṣaḥ!	**B:** Yes, yes, true!
203. **H:** kunnā fi-l-iḥtifāl fī Ḥadāʾiq el-Ḥussēin.	**H:** we were at the celebration at al-Ḥussēin Park
204. **Y:** hmm, hmm!	**Y:** hmm, hmm!
205. **H:** bas hassā b-tījī bitfakkir bitgūl shū ellī sawwēitoh? shū ellī– ?	**H:** But now you come and think and say what had I done? what– ?

206. ʾayyām yaʿnī mā kān fī ghishāʾ..	the days when there used to be a veil..
207. **Y:** hmm	Y: hmm
208. **H:** hāẓā ellī ṣār yaʿnī...	H: This is what happened in other words..
209. **Y:** ṭab eh– shū khallāk t-ghayyir raʾyak?	Y: Ok eh– what made you change your mind?
210. **H:** (1.1) el-ʾawḍāʿ ellī shayif-ha.. maʿnā wa– +wāḥad	H: (1.1) The situations that I see.. with us was someo– +someone
211. -- wāḥad kan (0.6) ma[ghshī ʿalēih!]	-- someone who was (0.6) bli[nded by a veil!][13]

Giving an Account of Oneself

In an interesting discussion of Jane Hill's "The Voices of Don Gabrielle" (1995), Webb Keane (2011, 2016a) notes that the ethical work of self on itself is inherent in ordinary everyday discourse. In particular, it is inherent in the way speakers take up ethical stances towards themselves and others vis-à-vis their interlocutors by way of voicing and (dis)aligning with recognizable (im)moral types as they narrate the events of their own lives. In this dynamic between self, interlocutor and imagined onlookers, the active, narrating self actively crafts itself by setting up a moral field and situating itself in relation to the different possible positionalities. Most importantly, Keane suggests that the process of self-narration can also be a process of self-discovery whereby one "works out [one's] ethical commitments and which contradictions [one]

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[13] The Arabic expressions *ghishāʾ* (cover) and *maghshī ʿalēih* (covered) have Qurʾānic connotations. The reference here is to several verses in the Qurʾān which describe how disbelievers reject divine truth because they are blinded by a veil that blocks their sight—e.g. "God has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil. And for them is a great punishment" (Qurʾān 2:7). By using the metaphor of being blinded by a veil, Haitham depicts his turn to activism as a form of conversion. The metaphor of conversion as a passage from blindness to sight is also found in the Biblical story of the Apostle Paul whose turn from a persecutor of Christians to an apostle coincides with the fall of scales that hitherto hindered his vision.

cannot master" (2016a, 147).[14] I find this formulation to be quite suggestive and would like to pursue it further. Rather than focusing on narration as a process of self-positioning within a certain field, however, I would like to consider Haitham's self-narration as a process of practical reasoning—that is to say, as a process of working out how the different actions he committed during the day fit together as means to ends, and ultimately as an episode of his living out his own life. Here, practical reasoning as an act of explicit metapragmatics (whether future or past oriented) takes as its object practical reason; the different kinds of motivations that orient the actions of an active agent engaged in her act, such as desires, intentions, sensibilities, and embodied dispositions.

Following Elizabeth Anscombe ([1957] 2000, 1969), moral philosophers often place intentions at the center of ethical inquiry. Hence, they distinguish between causes of actions, and reasons for them. [15] In ethics, intentions matter more than say the unintended consequences of actions, compulsions, mere behavioral patterns, or accidental happenings. On this account, intentions are not the product of some psychological faculty of intending. Rather, they are a function of the implicit or explicit descriptions which the actor takes her actions to be, and which

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[14] There is a lack of clarity in Kean's account over the nature of dysfluencies in Don Gabriel's narrative, and it seems to me that his reading of the narrative differs from than of Jane Hill's. For Hill, Don Gabriel "unable" to control his speech because he has an emotional commitment that is bound up with a certain ethical sensibility that rejects business of profit as a way of life. She says that the Spanish lexicon of business for profit remains for him alien. One way to read this is to say that Don Gabriel finds himself compelled to distance himself from that lexicon *because of and despite of* himself. This would make it an instance of moral obligation. Keane, by contrast, reads this as an "internal clash of voices" and a kind of "struggle" that plays out in Don Gabriel's psychic life as he narrates his story to a judging audience from whom he seeks recognition as a "good person." On my reading, the difference between Hill and Keane rests on the nature of agency with which Don Gabriel is endowed. Keane takes it to be a (re)cognitive process of self-presentation and anticipation of response, and possibly a matter of linguistic (in)competence. Hill, by contrast, seems to allow for certain embodied, emotional sensibilities to be part of the actively choosing self without succumbing to an image of a deep self with unconscious drives.

[15] Following Schutz (1967) we can further distinguish reasons for action into two kinds: "in-order-to" reasons which are future oriented, and "because-of" reasons which are past oriented.

specify the practical contexts of these actions. As Anscombe points out, actions are intentional under some descriptions but not others. What gives intentional actions their specifically moral character is that they can give rise to an inquiry into the reasons for performing them. Intentional actions are action to which a certain sense of the question "Why?" is applicable. Reasons give practical coherence to actions and provide the purposefulness and intentionality which are at the heart of any conception of human action. To act purposefully is to have a rationale for one's actions and a sense of how what one is doing at any moment relates to past events and other future actions and purposes. As objects of practical and moral inquiry, intentional actions must be placed within *teleological* structures that relate one act to another as means-to-ends within an extended action.[16] The duration of an intentional action can range from a few moments to a whole life.

The structure of an intentional action is, therefore, itself an explanatory structure. In asking why someone is X-ing, the first answer will refer to what that person aims at in X-ing; an end that gives a set explanatory reasons internal to the action. The point is not that the actor needs to be consciously calculating the ends of her actions else they would be unintelligible. Rather her claim is that human action is intelligible as intentional action if it assumes a calculative order to which the relevant sense of the question "Why?" has application. The inability to answer this question raises the possibility of the action being unintentional. When an answer is provided, the process of giving reasons is taken to make explicit the narrative structure, or means-ends relations that were implicit in the act itself. However, the relation between the two narrative orders is not merely that one is implicit while the other is explicit. They are

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[16] When one A's in order to B and B's in order to C and C's in order to D, what we have is four descriptions each dependent on wider circumstances and each is related to the next as means to end.

epistemologically different. An agent in the midst of action knows her intentions without observation (i.e. non-inferentially). By contrast, an observer disengaged from the action infers intentions from observable phenomena. In the latter, the knowledge of intentions is speculative and allows for degrees of uncertainty. In the former, by contrast, the knowledge is grounded in embodied practical sense and endowed with certainty (cf. Moran 2004; Velleman 1989).

Anscombe was concerned with agents engaged in action, actively deciding what to do when with an eye for ends and the relation between means and ends. While she talks about reasons for action in general, she is mostly interested in how reasons feature in practical reason, as a human capacity. This is why most of Anscombe's examples of reasons for action are in the first person present progressive. The image here is of an agent actively engaged in some activity aimed at some future end, and who would readily be able to give an answer when as asked about what she is doing or why she is doing it. When agents deliberate over what they should do in the future, reasons for action serve a motivating function—in the sense of giving reasons why one course of action is to be preferred over another. Retrospective reflection on reasons for action, by contrast, can serve other functions such as explaining an action, or evaluating it. In ideal situations, the reasons given in practical reasoning would match those embodied in practical reason, and would later serve to explain and evaluate actions retrospectively as either succeeding or failing to enact the intentions with which they were performed. This, however, is not necessarily the case. In this section I discuss Haitham's account of himself to explore how a change of descriptions available for his own anti-*Ḥirāk* actions and embodied dispositions undermined his sense of intentionality, and hence his own sense of rationality and agency. His later turn to activism, I will suggest, must be understood in relation to his inability to give reasons to his past actions.

Losing One's Reason(s)

In narrating the events of March 25th, 2011 to me, Haitham had to give an account of himself and his actions as a participant in the events of the day, and to provide reasons for his actions and to evaluate them from the stand-point of his present-day activism. His answer to my question went beyond the telling of a sequence of events that took place that day to address a more important question with which he himself is grappling: how did he end up beating up the pro-reform activists and why? The structure of the narrative he offers bares the characteristic features of a tragedy. His whole narrative, its structure, as well as his explicit remark at the end: "*But now you come and think and say what have I done? what have– ? the days when there used to be a veil..*" (lines 205-206) were an attempt to answer that question. As such, his narrative is both an instance of narrating himself, and an attempt to give reasons, justify, or find excuses for why he had acted in the way he did. Such a quest is built into tragedy as a narrative structure precisely because tragic narratives illustrate how the consequences of one's actions can escape one's intentions. As the literary scholar Adrian Poole notes, tragic narratives raise the question of what it means to say that "we know what we are doing," or who "we" are who are doing it (2005, 48).[17] It was precisely this question that Haitham grappled with in responding to my request to narrate the events of that day, and which he articulated to me towards the end of that narration. The puzzle rests on a tension between the acting self and the account-giving, or addressing, self and is highlighted by the fact that Haitham is the protagonist and the narrator of his own story.

Haitham's existential puzzlement came up in relation to a narrative which had become dominant among the Ḥirāk activists both within the neighborhood and outside it. According to that narrative, the state, and the GID in particular, had organized the Loyalty and Belonging

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[17] The paradigmatic case here being *Oedipus Rex* who despite striving to live a virtuous life ends up living out a prophesized fate that has him commit patricide and incest.

Festival at al-Ḥussein Park on March 25th in order to gather a large group of *balṭajiyyeh* and have them attack the *24 ʾĀdhār* activists and dismantle their protest. Barāʾ makes references to this framing of events at line 98 where he asks Haitham if he was "with the *balṭajiyyeh*." Osāma makes similar references in lines 63-65 and 67 where he tries to corroborate Haitham's account with an account he had heard from other activists in which thugs were brought by the GID to the intersection by the truck-load. Osāma tries to extricate Haitham, his fellow activist, from the charge that he was a *balṭajī* by suggesting that a truck full of "loyalists" working for the GID may have arrived at the intersection before Haitham and his friends did. If that was the case, Haitham would be an accidental *balṭaji* who merely happened to be there at the wrong time. Haitham, however, does not take Osama's redemptive offer to extricate himself. Instead, he continues his narration by telling events as he had remembered them in order to answer his own question: "what have I done?" He accepts the label of *balṭajī* for himself (Barāʾ's comment in line 98), but the claim that his action was part of a premeditated and organized effort by the security apparatus does not match up with the facts as he knew them. In later parts of our conversation (not transcribed here), Osama and Barāʾ keep bringing up other instances in which *balṭajiyyeh* from the neighborhood had attacked activists. Their probing sought confirmation for the belief that the *balṭajiyyeh* were paid or pushed by GID. Haitham knew all of these incidents firsthand and insisted that the attackers, many of whom eventually turned to activism, were in fact acting on their own and for different circumstantial reasons. Haitham knew perfectly well the facts of his deeds. What he did not understand was his reasons for doing them. What was at stake for him was not whether he was responsible for the attack—he clearly was. What he could not understand anymore was why he participated in the attack, or what moved him to do it. Haitham's narration, then, is not simply a report on events that happened in the past, but

ultimately an attempt to make himself intelligible to himself and to others; to give an account of himself. The difficulty lied in relating what he was doing earlier in the day to what he did later.

In the transcript, I divide Haitham's narrative into 6 different episodes. In the first episode, Haitham sets up the events of the day. Some of his first sentences (lines 1, 18, 22-25) establish the date (March 24) of the narrated events, the day of the week (Friday), and the occasions (the *24 Ādhār* protest, the celebration at al-Ḥussein Park) in relation to which the events of the day unfolded. Other sentences establish his initial state earlier that day (lines 1-2): "*I was sitting in the neighborhood, free and doing nothing, by myself*", as well as his general political attitude up to that point in time (line 3): "*I used to hate (the) Ḥirāk*", and the general political mood in the neighborhood as also hostile to the national Ḥirāk movement (lines 4-7) and the lack of a Ḥirāk movement in the neighborhood itself (lines 13-18). These lines establish a past present which has ceased to exist in the here-and-now of narration. This temporal break between the narrated time in the past and the time of narration in the present is signaled by his use of the past form of the verb to be (*kāna*) with an agent noun (*ʾism fāʿil*), a present tense verb, or an action noun (*maṣdar*) as sentence predicates to signal a past tense with progressive aspect (e.g. *kunt gāʿid* = I was sitting, *kunt ʾakrah* = I used to hate, *kānū m-ballshīn* = they were starting, *kānū yilʿabū* = they were playing, *lissa mā kān nashʾit* = there was yet no emergence). Haitham's verbal constructions suggest an ongoing action or state of affairs that would be interrupted in the course of the narrative.

Haitham has little trouble relating episode II in the neighborhood with episode III at the park and episode IV on the way back. He presents the events of the three episodes as a logical sequence of actins for certain purposes. In Jordanian Arabic, expressions of intention and desire take the same form as the verbal construction of future tense: bid-Pron.+ Vpresent-Pron. (e.g.

"*bidnā n-ṭish*" = we want to hang out; "*bid-hom ykharbū el-balad*" = they want to destroy he country; "*bid-ha tiṭlaʿ*" = they want to/will go up, etc.). Haitham gives his reasons for going to the festival Ḥussein Park by saying: "*we [are] by God like this young guys, of course [and] want to hang out*" (lines 25-26). Here, the act of going out to the Loyalty and Belonging Festival is set within the everyday life of young men who occasionally felt bored and looked for entertainment. Similarly, Haitham has no trouble relating the reasons for his taking the bus in episode IV: "*they wanted to take us back where to? To the old terminal..*" (lines 53-54), nor the reasons for getting off the bus at the Dākheliyyeh Circle: "*suddenly they were saying 'the Dākheliyyeh Circle is closed!'.. and dunno what.. They said 'By God let's get off here take a walk'—'We get off here take a walk', we said 'Let's get off!'*" (lines 55-57), nor the reasons for staying at the intersection: " *We came and watched..*" (line 73). All of these actions (going to the park, taking the bus back, taking a walk, standing and watching) are episodes that are perfectly intelligible within the everyday life of an ordinary young man (*shabb*) from the neighborhood.

What Haitham has trouble fitting into this narrative is what happened after, when he and his friends went in to attack the activists. Precisely at this moment in the narrative, he switches from the voice of an active participant to that of a speculative analyst: "*so I don't know (if) it was from the people who were with us, the group of Yeḥyā al-Sʿūd, was it that the news came to them that, from Yeḥyā, that they go in and don't worry, or was it that?*" (lines 73-77), and again "*w:hat I f:ound strange was in other words th– eh– when I now sit down and think about it..*" (lines 83-84). While he admits to attacking the activists and doing everything that other attackers did, he speculates over whose intention it was to attack. Was it that of the MP from the neighborhood known to be affiliated with the GID? Or was it that of the gendarmes? "*so I am telling you the story maybe be that.. people from Yeḥyā's men #### or maybe it was the*

Gendarmes who wanted anybody to go in from the start? This I do not know.." (lines 125-127).

Some of the people in his group were "Yehya's men." Was it their intention to attack? The

gendarmes should have protected the activists, but instead they facilitate the attack. Was it their

intention to dismantle the protest? In weighing in on these possibilities, Haitham turns to

observable signs from which he tries to infer other people's intentions precisely because the

actions do not seem to fit the expectable norms.

Haitham's real puzzlement is not over other people's intentions, however. He is at loss

figuring out his own intentions in participating in the attack. Why did *he* join the attack? What he

ultimately gives, is not a set of reasons—justifications for the action that relate means and

ends—but rather causes and effects. In lines 195-197 he explains his participation as an effect of

the nationalist music he heard on the way: "*I am telling you in other words eh– this is what*

happened in other words, going back home we were, Mitʿib el-Ṣaggār, el-Lōziyyeh, Ḥ-sēin el-

Salmān, dunno what.." At the Hussein Park where the Loyalty and Belonging Festival was

taking place, he says, patriotic music was being played and large crowds of people danced and

carried banners and flags (lines 29-45). The effect of these patriotic songs and dancing, he says,

was that "*patriotism reached above one's head!*" (line 37). His use of the expression "reach

above one's head" accompanied with the gesture of raising the palm of his hand over his head is

significant. Normally, this expression is used to refer to situations of extreme anger whereby a

someone loses control over his actions. The gesture rests on a metaphor of the body as a

container of emotions. It suggests being overwhelmed and moved by emotions which exceed the

body's and mind's capacity to control. Normally, the metaphor is used for the emotion of anger

exclusively. Unlike other emotions, anger can overwhelm a person and compel him to act

irrationally. Yet in such situations, anger is taken to be episodic rather than a character trait. The

actions it triggers are reprehensible, but they are somehow understandable and forgivable. Moments like these are described as "*sāʿet ghaḍab*" or "*laḥẓet zaʿal*" (a moment of anger) and "*fōret dam*" (an eruption of blood); descriptions that register both the momentary nature of the emotion and the excusability of one's acting out of character. Haitham's use of this metaphor in relation to patriotic emotions is particularly interesting as it reduces his being moved by patriotic sentiments to an irrational affect. In using it, he admits responsibility for the act, but disavows the intentions and reasons embedded in the action. In other words, he had committed the act, but the act was not his own. Something external to him—possibly someone else—was acting through him, as it were. Was it the patriotic music that moved him to commit an irrational act? The instigators in the neighborhood? The gendarmes' complicity?

I take Haitham's apparent loss of reasons for his own actions at face value and do not read it as an attempt to extricate himself from an untoward action—pace J. L. Austin (1956). Taken within the larger context of his turn to activism, his disavowal of loyalist reason can be understood as part of the same process of ethical transformation precipitated by the salience of (im)moral figures like the *balṭajī* and the *saḥḥīj* as descriptions of loyalist patriotism. A certain way of putting oneself forward as a patriotic Jordanian has broken down.

To explain what I mean by breakdown, I would like to compare his narrative with the narrative he would have given—if ethnographic speculation be allowed—had I met him a few days after March 25th, 2011. Based on conversations I had with other attackers at the time, I expect that his narrative would have been entirely different. It would have likely been something along the following lines: "I went with some friends to festival at the Ḥussein Park to show our loyalty to the King. On our way back we saw Palestinians protesting at Duwwār al-Dākheliyyah. They wanted to destroy our country and so we went in and beat them up. The gendarme went

against the confines of their job and helped us dismantle their protest. We liberated the intersection from Palestinians and celebrated our victory over the next few days." My point here is not suggest that these are the exact words Haitham would have used had I met him then, but to give a plausible account that illustrates how his actions would have been narrated as a description of an episode in the life of a Jordanian patriot in a way that is no longer possible. In this narrative, the actions follow a certain trajectory that is perfectly intelligible as a course of action. If I had asked him then why he had beaten up the *24 ʾĀdhār* activists, he would have said something like: "because they wanted to destroy our country". The implied reason being to stop Palestinians from destroying the country, which is precisely the kind of thing a patriotic Jordanian ought to do. Only in reference to this framing can we understand episode VII of Haitham's narrative where he celebrates with his friends at the intersection. In fact, Haitham does give this narrative frame as part of his own narration, but puts it on the mouths of others: instigators from the neighborhood (lines 4-12), Yeḥyā's men (lines 79-82). When the practical reason of this form of patriotism comes close to his own biographical figure, he distances himself from it: "*'Bring back Palestine!' 'Go back to Palestine!', 'You want to destroy the country!', 'You want to dest– +destroy'.. but.. so I for example was eh– with them, in other words screeching.*" (lines 182-184). Here, Haitham reframes his verbal insults against the activists as "screeching" to signal both his disapproval of his older self, and his incomprehension of what that self was up to. Moreover, Haitham's inability to understand his utterances in practical terms (why anyone in his right mind would want to say such things) is reflected in his indifference towards their exact content. Whenever he quotes other people voicing royalist patriotism, he ends his quote with the expression "*abṣar shū*" (dunno what) or "*min ha-s-sawālīf*" (and such stories) as if the content of those utterances is too nonsensical to be elaborated (lines 6, 12, 33,

80, 87, 107, 144, 150, 181, 197). This indifference takes a more direct form in lines 176-179 where he misquotes the royalist chant in way that negates its intended meaning, effectively reducing it to meaningless rhyme. What Haitham disavows in his previous self is not the violence per se, but rather his former reasons for it, embedded as they are in royalist-patriotic practical reason. In episode V he describes in vivid detail how he and his friends attacked the peaceful protestors. In episode VI, he frames the attack comically as a war for spoils. He list a few expensive items as the attackers' gains (cartons of Marlboro, pistachios, cashews, and an electric generator). He does not seem to find it necessary to disavow those gains as reasons for the attack.

Chapter 5:

Speaking to Authority, Speaking with Authority

Fieldnote: *"With several of their regular chant-leaders in police custody, more activists from Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh could now try their hand at leading the chants of protestors as they marched down the streets of the neighborhood and the adjacent areas in Jabal al-Tāj and Jabal al-Jōfeh. Omar, a boy of 12 years, rides on the shoulders of a large, well-built man followed by a crowd of several hundred protesters. He holds the microphone in one hand and projects his chants enthusiastically through a loudspeaker held by the man below. With the other hand, he gestures to the marching crowd to raise its voice. The crowd obliges by repeating after him in unison. The sight of the little boy leading the chanting crowd causes a little anxiety among some older members. The man next to me leans his head towards my ear and says "Couldn't they find a different chant-leader?" But when the boy's chants grow more daring, anxiety turns into anger. As Omar's voice echoes through the street "Abdullah is chief of the thieves!" in reference to the King, several activists rush to the boy, grab the microphone from his hand and knock him over to the ground. The assailants engage in an exchange of blows with other activists among whom I recognize some of the boy's immediate relatives: his maternal uncle and two cousins. A group of older activists intervene to break up the fight before it escalates further. Eventually, the demonstration breaks up too."*

For almost two years, during the wave of Arab uprisings, Ḥirāk Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh assumed the leading role in protests against wide-spread corruption in the country. By the end of 2012, however, the movement was in disarray. It disintegrated shortly after, crippled by disagreements among its members and within the neighborhood writ-large. The fist-fight scene with which I started took place in late October 2012, but it was only one moment out of many when the

movement's disagreements became clearly visible, both to me as a researcher and to the activists themselves. The movement's rise to fame, its dissolution and demise all revolved around a single controversial practice by some of its members: the practice known as *ʾikhtirāq al-saqf*, which was what the little boy Omar had engaged in.

In the context of street protests, *ʾikhtirāq al-saqf* (literally, "breaching the ceiling") referred to the extent to which protestors chanted slogans that pointed to Jordan's King Abdullah II as the source of corruption, and the extent to which these references were made explicit. The practice continued to be a stir discussion, debate, polemics, political struggles and even violence within the movement throughout its relatively short life. "Breaching the ceiling" was the topic of many of the movements' general meetings which were open to the whole neighborhood as well as many of its more exclusive administrative meetings. It was also a key theme around which the movement was discussed, characterized and evaluated within the neighborhood and in the public sphere. Jordanian media reports followed the movement's frequent protests (numbering as many as four or five per week) and focused specifically on the extent to which "ceilings were breached" at any moment. A question that perplexed me throughout my fieldwork among the movement's activists was this: Why was the practice of breaching the ceiling so central and yet so controversial for the movement? Why, I asked, did a movement whose activities revolved around publicly accusing state officials of corruption and did so with ease, violently disagreed when the target of their accusations was the King, a figure whom they considered corrupt; even the source of all corruption?

This chapter seeks to answer this question by considering the controversy around "breaching the ceiling" as a problem of political action. It attends to the modes of moral and practical reasoning that developed around this practice at a moment when a certain narrative

genre I shall call The Uprising, provided the conditions of intelligibility for the activists' utterances and the set of possibilities for their present actions, remembered pasts and expectable futures. Within this narrative space, the pressing questions for the activists were whether they should topple or reform the regime, for what purpose, to what effect and how. By focusing on the space of narration and narrative action opened up by the genre, I suggest that we reconsider some widespread views about how public speech is regulated by state power, and consequently the presuppositions underpinning the liberal concepts of free speech and public criticism. By considering breaching the ceiling as a problem of political action—rather than, say, factual truth or the citizens' ability to "speak their mind"—I invite a consideration of critique as a practical, embodied activity and an engagement with time, narrated and lived by the critiquing subject.

The Ṭafāyleh's polarized stances around breaching the ceiling, I shall argue, were not simply critical stances towards the person of the King. Rather, they were critical stances towards their own subjectivity as Jordanians. The practical problem the activists faced was how to speak authoritatively *qua* Jordanians when the monarchy and its history provided the ontological grounds for their being Jordanian and hence acting as Jordanian. What was at stake was not only the activists' relation to the current monarch, but their relation to their own self and their own past as narrated in relation to the modern state, and hence, to the monarchy. During the wave of protests, my interlocutors in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh were deeply engaged in discussing historical events, written in official historiography and handed down through oral narration. Many believed that the official narrative of history which depicted the Hashemites as the makers of Jordan was false, but struggled to find an alternative narrative of their Jordanianness that did not rely on that dynasty and which could guide their actions in the present. This was precisely because it was difficult—if not impossible—to narrate the history of Jordan, and hence of Jordanians, without

reference to the Hashemites. In other words, the activists could doubt and question the official history, but could not abolish it altogether. What are the implications of this predicament to their practice of critique? This is what I will attempt to describe below.

I will start this chapter by discussing the emergence of The Uprising as a spatio-temporal envelope for Jordanians engaged in political activism in relation to mass-media reportage of events in other Arab countries. Then, I will move on to discuss the modes of reasoning around the forms of protest made possible by The Uprising and the specific arguments that congealed around them. Finally, I will discuss how these modes of reasoning pertain to the way the Ṭafāyleh understand themselves as historical beings in a way that would allow me to come back to the original question with which I started.

Mediatized Historical Chronotopes and the Genres of Political Action

The significance of the Free Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh Movement laid in its tendency to violate the norms of public speech, or what is locally known as *ʾIkhtirāq al-saqf* (saying the impermissible, or literally "breaching the ceiling"). Local media constantly reported the transgressive chants and slogans produced by the movement, allowing them to circulate and be echoed by protest movements in other parts of the country. Much of the activity of the movement was focused on naming specific state officials as corrupt, and hence responsible for Jordanians' personal and collective misfortunes. Yet, it mattered which officials were accused of corruption. Here, "breaching the ceiling" meant the extent to which chants and slogans pointed to Jordan's King Abdullah II as the source of all corruption, the extent to which references to him were made explicit, and the extent to which activists called for toppling the regime (*ʾisqāṭ al-nidhām*) rather than merely reforming it (*ʾiṣlāḥ al-nidhām*).

Notions of toppling and reforming, here, ought not to be understood as abstract concepts. Rather their meaning and significance rested in the way they were emplotted in media reportage on protests and uprisings in the region, particularly in Egypt. Here, I suggest we consider the Egyptian Uprising not so much as a happening within a causal chain of events called History, but rather as a "media event," a term I borrow from Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz without committing myself to their specific focus theoretical underpinnings. Dayan and Katz (1994) use the term to denote orchestrated ceremonial events intricately choreographed through cooperation between state officials and media professionals to produce events with a temporality that interrupts the ordinary happenings reported in other news genre and the routine flow of everyday life. Essential to this temporality is that the events are broadcast live, allowing viewers to follow their unfolding in historical time with a sense of unpredictability.

Dayan and Katz's argument focuses on the capacity of ceremonial ritual performance to enact hegemonic power through the deployment of recognizable cultural symbols and poiesis. Here, instead, I would like to focus on how the live broadcasting of history through mass media reportage can provide reflexive models for political action in history: new past experiences, forms of action in the present and future horizons opened up *here* through the narration of happenings unfolding *elsewhere*. This happened by weaving together what, following Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), I shall call the chronotope of The Uprising. Yet, while Bakhtin was mostly concerned with the chronotope as an organizing principles of literary narration, my concern here is with the chronotope as a principle that organizes how people live their life and which gives their acts a coherent set of possible trajectories that define the expectable consequences of their acts. In this, I follow Alasdaire MacIntyre ([1981] 2007, 204–25) who takes intelligibility to be

the primary criterion of action and argues that the intellegibility of an action rests on its narrative coherence.[1]

The activists in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh—indeed, all of the activists of the Arab Spring, and contemporary social movements—understood their activism in terms of media events in which they were not mere observers of the unfolding events, but active participants in them. The unfolding chronotopic narration of the Egyptian uprising in live media reportage, I shall suggest, provided Jordanian activists with a new vocabulary—indeed, a new syntax—of protest that was not available to them before. Jordan had its own long history of street protests that went back to the 1930's, if not longer. Moreover, the latest wave started a whole year before the Tunisian Uprising. However, live media reportage of uprisings in neighboring countries provided Jordanian protests (and protesters) with a new narrative sequence by which they could understand and reflect on their actions. This could be clearly seen, for instance, in the way the new vocabulary of protest was taken up from the heavily reported streets of Cairo and not, from earlier protests in Jordan or the protests in Tunisia which, presumably, sparked the Arab Spring. While the Tunisian Uprising was also reported in the news, that reportage did not include an elaborate moment-by-moment narration of the unfolding of an uprising in the way that it was in the Egyptian case. Reportage from Tunisia focused on the act of self-immolation carried out by Muhammad Bouazizi which was framed as the spark that started the Tunisian Uprising. Yet beyond this singular act, it did not provide an elaborate narrative or language of protest. Egyptian protests, by contrast, provided a whole set of practices including various slogans, forms of organization, forms of inhabiting public and certain labels for different kind of typified figures as

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[1] Thus, MacIntyre writes "It is because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives that we live out that the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others. Stories are lived before they are told—except in the case of fiction." (212)

actors.[2] But most importantly, what the narrative of the Egyptian Uprising provided for Jordanian activists was a new future possibility for the practices of protest. Previously, Jordanian protests were primarily understood within a narrative of *ʾiḥtijāj* (protesting) against unjust power or acts. Now, however, they could be emplotted as an event that could lead to *thawra* (an uprising, revolt or revolution) that overthrows that unjust power or ruler. The concept of protest acquired a new practical meaning.

For Jordanian activists, images of the masses gathered in Cairo's Taḥrīr Square chanting, "*al-shaʿb yurīd ʾisqāṭ al-nidhām!*" (The people want to topple the regime) became iconic of The Uprising—not only of that uprising which took place in Egypt in January 2011, but of an uprising that could take place *here* in Jordan. For the Jordanian activists, to have an uprising simply meant to replicate that iconic Taḥrīr Square moment in the streets of Amman. Those who wanted to effect or threatened to effect an uprising in Jordan directed their mobilization efforts towards such a replication. They sensed that an uprising could unfold and "the regime" could crumble the moment a sufficient number of people would amass at a major intersection in Amman and chant in unison, "The people want to topple the regime!" Given that Jordanians diagnosed the ills of their state and society in terms of corruption, to explicitly and directly accuse the King of corruption amounted to calling for the toppling of the regime.

Even if this climactic moment was not actualized, it remained at the horizon of possibilities for acts of protest and the horizon of expectation for those engaged with protests in whatever capacity and role. This included both protesters as well as state actors responding to them. Protesters often sought or threatened to have a large protest and encampment at some

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[2] Such as *al-thuwwār* (the revolutionaries), *al-nidhām* (the regime) and *balṭajiyyeh* (regime thugs), whose ethical significance I have discussed in the chapters 3 and 4.

other major intersection. The police, on the other hand, focused much of its efforts on preventing such an iconic moment from taking place. First, it made major intersections in the city practically inhospitable for such mass gatherings. When, on March 21st 2011, a large protest and encampment was organized at al-Dākhiliyya Circle the police broke it up with the help of loyalist bands organized by the General Intelligence Department. A few days later, the intersection was hastily re-designed to install plants and a large image of the King at the spot where the protestors had gathered. The many attempts to recreate the protest at that intersection subsequently failed. Similarly, the roundabout in front of the Prime Ministry, known as 4th Circle was fenced off two weeks later following a sit-in. No protest has taken place there since.

Second, the Ministry of Interiors insisted that any demonstration or sit-in has to be time-bound rather than open-ended. The ever-present possibility that an act of ʾiḥtijāj (protest) could turn into an act of *thawra* (revolt) necessitated that the latter possibility be foreclosed by limiting the time that protesters could occupy the space. Third, special police units were usually deployed in protest sites and were ready to clamp down on protestors whenever they deemed the "ceiling" to have been "breached." This was because breaching the ceiling—and the possibility that a large mass of protesters would engage in the act—marked precisely the moment at which a simple protest could turn into an uprising. Hence, at any demonstration, there were always two lines of police encircling the protestors, or otherwise stationed at access points to the site of demonstration. The first line was usually the regular police who were unarmed and conversed normally with the protestors. The second line was the riot police unit of the Gendarmerie, who stood behind the regular police carrying their batons and shields, ready to intervene at any moment and hardly ever engaging in verbal communication with them. A third and a much more fearsome layer of police, the Gendarmerie Security Unit 14, was often called in whenever the

"ceiling was breached." Unlike the other two layers, these were armed, covered their faces with balaclavas, and were brought in in large armored vehicles blowing their loud horns and flashing their lights to instill fear in the crowd. Presumably, this was intended to prevent a mass breach of ceiling.

On one occasion I have attended, activists from different movements including Ḥirāk Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh were protesting outside the Prime Ministry at the 4th Circle to demand the release of activists arrested in al-Ṭafīlah a few day earlier. The atmosphere was generally calm until some protesters started breaching the ceiling. At that point, the police officer in charge approached the crowd and started talking through the loud speaker.

Officer: O brothers, please listen.. Please!.. Please!

Crowd (*interrupting*): Let the Mukhabarāt hear this..(2sec) Enough with arrests!

Officer: Please, please!

Crowd [*interrupts again*]: Enough with arrests! No god but Allah.. We shall not kneel except to God! We shall not kneel except to God! O ʿAbdullah, son of Ḥussein, to whom did the Phosphate [Company] go?

The police stare patiently at the chanting crowd for a while, waiting for a moment of calm to speak, but none comes.

Officer: O brothers, o brothers, o brothers! [raising his hand up in the air to request some silence and a chance to speak] Please! ʿOmar, ʿOmar, ʿOmar.. One minute guys, one minute.. Please listen to what I will say.. My brothers, if you please.. please, o brothers.. please! Your rally is permitted.. All the laws and the constitution sanction your rally. However, there were some chants that have crossed the red lines. So, if eh..

The grumbling crowd interrupts again. A man in the crowd starts yelling defiantly "there are no red lines! no red lines!" while the officer struggles to remain audible. His voice drowns in the raging chants.

Officer: the law.. the law..

An activist (*interrupts again*): There are no red lines in this country! Only the detainees are the red line!

Officer: We call upon you to stick to the limits of the law! What is between you and us is the law!

The crowd rages again and one can hardly discern any words.. Imad, a Ḥirāk leader walks through the mass and approaches the police officer and starts speaking to him.. he puts his hand on his chest as a gesture of requesting trust, while another officer pats on the back of some protesters to calm them down, while others raise their voices in chants mentioning the name of the King and accusing him of lacking the desire to reform. Imad starts speaking to one officer.

ʿImād: "Please do not provoke people!"

Officer: No, no, you stop provoking us! Shame on you, shame one you, for this audacity!

ʿImād: Listen, this is our country and we want to preserve it!

Officer: This is the country of us all!

An activist comes between the officer and ʿImād to stop him from talking to the police.. The activists go back to the roundabout and resume their chants. At this point, the officer turns to the police and calls them to withdraw. The regular police withdraw, and the gendarmes rush in with their batons. An activist with a loudspeaker calls upon the other activists to hold their grounds, but they flee, dispersing in all directions. A few are caught and arrested.

Breaching the ceiling was of course not the only legal infringement the activists engaged in, but it was a limit case, after which the state's police apparatus turned from the politics of persuasion and appeals to reason and morality to brute, non-communicative repression. Thus, it required a great deal of courage—or recklessness, as the case may be—to engage in it, knowing that what lies ahead could be a beating, or arrest.

A Space outside the Law and a Fearless Crowd

To a large extent, the ability of the Free Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh Movement to lead the crowds in "breaching the ceiling" rested on their conviction that their neighborhood was largely beyond the reach of the police. As my interlocutors often explained to me, the police could not enter their neighborhood because any police intervention would quickly escalate into an all-out confrontation with the entire tribal group. Indeed, in all of the protests I have attended in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, the police was visibly absent. To understand why this was the case, I will now turn to a discussion of what, for the sake of convenience and brevity, we may call "tribal selfhood" and "tribal masculinity." My point here is not to posit a certain universal subjectivity called "tribal subjectivity," let alone essentialize the activists and their neighborhood as a deviation from the "non-tribal" norm. Rather, my aim is to describe a certain mode of being that is often obscured by common theories of subjectivity premised on liberal notions of the individual self, presupposed and effected, as they are, by the juridical, territorial state. It is because this mode of being escapes the hegemony of the state, it provides a critical vantage point to understand what is particular about state power, and how the activists could act outside it.

In her exploration of patriarchy and selfhood in Lebanon, and Arab societies in general, Suad Joseph (1999) argues that approaches to the self in modern psychology presuppose the atomist, autonomous, individual self as a universal norm and thus misconstrue and misrepresent other forms of selving as anomalous or deviant. Thus, she suggests the notion of "relational selves" to capture forms of selfhood and selving in situations "in which persons are expected to remain in close proximity to their families and to be responsible for and to each other much of their lives. in societies in which the family or community is as or more valued than the person, in which persons achieve meaning in the context of family or community and in which survival depends on upon integration into family or community" (9). Coupled with patriarchal kinship structures, such forms of selving tend to produce hierarchically ordered, gendered and aged selves whose boundaries are fluid. Thus, men and elders are "raised with diffuse boundaries, responding to and requiring the involvement of others" (13). This involvement is a form of care which must be provided to and received from others, albeit in a non-equal way. Given how idioms of kinship in such situations suffuse social life in general, kinship relations and the hierarchical forms of care that come with them can provide a model and a measure for various other relations which are not, strictly speaking, kin-based, such as political relations.

Joseph is concerned with the psychological dimension of selves forged in relations between genders (men and women) and generations (elders and youngsters) within family structures. By contrast, in her ethnographic among the urban poor in Cairo, Farha Ghannam (2013) considers masculinity as a kind of selving. Rather than looking at masculinity as a set of norms or transitions within a life-cycle, she draws on the Aristotelian concept of *habitus* as revived by Marcel Mauss (1973) and elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1980), she considers masculinity as a project achieved or materialized in the course of one's life, what she calls

"masculine trajectory." She uses this term "to depict a continuous quest for a sense of (illusive) coherence that has to be cultivated and sustained in different spatial and temporal contexts to garner the social recognition central to the verification of one's standing as a real man [and] show the centrality of the deeds of individuals and their daily conduct while, at the same time, accounting for the collective expectations, power structures, and social norms that configure their lives and deaths." (7) This focus entails a shift away from the self as a psychic reality towards an understanding of masculinity as an embodied, practical achievement that requires the cultivation of certain capacities for acting and for evaluating the quality of actions in specific situations. This is a capacity to correctly apprehend the situation, to feel, act and respond to other people's actions *qua* man which also makes one's performance of masculinity subject to the evaluations, feelings, actions and various responses of others who are part of the web of relations in which one learns to be a man.

In Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, this materialization of masculinity had, in many ways, a spatial dimension that drew boundaries between zones of intimacy and estrangement. Central to this zoning were relations of hospitality between hosts (ʾahl al-dār) and guests (ḍuyūf) or strangers (ʾaghrāb) structured around a particular understanding of the space of dwelling and how it intersects with the patriarchal structure of the household and kinship relations. In tribal custom, the place of residence has a certain sanctity known as ḥurmat al-dār (literally, the sanctity or inviolability of the house) the violation of which is considered a great offense. While *dār* can be translated as "house," its meaning in this specific register is closer to "household" as a unity of a family as a group, the head (kbīr) or heads (kbār) of that family and its place of residence. A person is always from a certain *dār* in the sense of residing somewhere, being part of a family with a certain person as its head. A parent is usually referred to by the name the eldest son or, if

he has none, the eldest daughter. If he has no children, he may be referred to by the name of his would be first son. A man is usually called ʾAbū (x); a woman is ʾUmm (x)—respectively, the father/mother of (x). One is always the son or daughter of someone—ʾibn or bint of ʾAbū (x) or ʾUmm (x)—and the children live with the rest of the family at least until they are married and ready to be heads of families themselves. To be ready to be a man, to marry and move out of one's father's house, one needs to be able to "open a house" (yiftaḥ dār) which means to be able to earn enough money to cover the expenses of a household, receive guests and perform the duties that are expected from the head of a household. Yet, even when they move out of their parents' residence, they are likely to stay in the vicinity, either in the same neighborhood, or often, in the same building. It is quite common to find three or four generations from the same family living in one building, or in two or three adjacent buildings.

Beyond the immediate family, one is also always a member of a certain tribe (ʿashīra) and a certain khamsa (a kin-group that share patrilineage up to five generations) as well as his mother's patrilineage. When married, one is also connected to other kin-groups in relations of intermarriage (muṣāhara or nasab). Thus, one's dār (house) can include the residences of any of his kin to the extent that he is responsible for their protection and maintaining the honor and reputation—i.e. to the extent that he may be considered their kbīr or one of their kbār. Ḥurma, in turn, can be translated as "sanctity" or "inviolability," but could also mean "wife" or "woman." Someone's wife is his ḥurma. What the term is intended to signify is a domain that needs to be protected from strangers and whatever that may bring disrepute.

In current linguistic usage, ḥurma is sometimes confused with privacy (khuṣūṣiyya), but the two concepts are quite distinct in practice. This is in part because the tribal sense of selfhood is relationally defined and genealogically expansive, but also because the concern with ḥurma is

not a concern for privacy at all. For example, insulting or attacking someone's guest is a violation of the *ḥurma* of the hosts' house, but not their privacy. Neither is *ḥurma*, in this particular sense, a matter of religious prohibition or sanction. In the mid-1980's a man who was officially married to a woman under the Sharīʿa, but who has not yet paid her full dowry had sex with his wife at his in-laws' house. When the father-in-law knew about it, he reported the matter to the *sharʿī* judge claiming that the husband had committed a serious violation. The *sharʿī* judge however insisted that the man had not committed any violations (*ḥarām*) since couple had already signed their marriage contract (*al-kitāb*) and were thus officially married. Unconvinced by the decision, the father sought justice from a tribal judge. The tribal judge confirmed that the husband had indeed committed a violation since he had not yet paid his wife's full dowry (*mahr*) and was thus not yet fully married to her as far as tribal custom was concerned. What mattered most to the judge and his judgment, however, was the fact that the incident took place at the in-law's house and thus counted as a breach of the sanctity of his house. The husband was condemned to pay a large fine in recompense over and above the small sum he was yet to pay to complete his promised dowry.

In concrete territorial terms, *ḥurmat al-dār* can refer to the parts of the house which strangers must not normally enter, the whole house, or even an extended area around it. In urban dwellings, the area may be demarcated by physical boundaries, such as walls, but it would be a mistake to confuse it with private property. Even where private property does not exist, the spatial claim of *ḥurma-t al-dār* still holds. This is how the tribal judge (*qāḍi ʿashāʾiri*), Shēykh Bajis Abu Ṭaḥūn al-Ḥwēyṭāt, explained *ḥurmat al-dār* for nomads living in tents erected in open fields:

Ḥurmat al-dār is determined by a radius of 40 steps from the edge of the house. Tribal custom ensures protection for the house and what is in it (both people and belongings). Thus, one cannot follow one's enemy inside the sanctity of someone's house to attack him. Also one cannot beat up one of his children or his wife in the house of another; otherwise, he has to pay a fine for violating the sanctity of that house. In cases when someone enters a house to commit adultery with a woman, the violator is fined for violating the house's sanctity even if he had entered the house with the woman's permission. The owner of the house (head of household) can demand justice for the house, while the family of the woman bears the responsibility for her shameful act.

If two men quarreled and insulted each other inside a house, the owner of that house has a right to fine them. This is why many people abstain from responding to an insult with another insult and would instead demand that the house (household or head of household) brings them justice by obliging the violator to pay what is due. *Ṣāḥib al-dār* (he whose house it is, or head of household) is obliged to satisfy a man that was insulted in his house and has the right to oblige the violator to pay a fine for insulting the guest and for violating the sanctity of the house.

In a *diwān* (guest-house belonging to a whole tribe), he whose diwān it is (head of tribe) is considered the head of a household and is responsible for violations committed in his house. Yet people may often overlook injurious speech uttered in a diwān especially in cases when it is uttered in the course of discussing a [collective] matter. This is because they say that the matter [under discussion] belongs to everyone rather than to a specific person. Similarly, we find that a certain tribe or group of people is [collectively] responsible for bringing justice to a man that was insulted in their diwān.

The pronouncements of various judges concerning ḥurmat al-dār vary according to the seriousness of the case and the gravity of the resulting injury. If someone is attacked inside his own house, he may seek justice from al-munshid who is the kind of judge specialized in such offences. Here, the fine

might be as high as a goat or camel for every step the violator had stepped on his way to the house plus the price of entering and exiting the house. In all cases, the violator of a house's sanctity is required to cover the house [he had violated] in white cloth over and above the many other obligations he would incur for terrifying the children and disturbing the neighbors. Thus, it is not surprising to see someone abstain from going after someone who had attacked him or killed his brother once the violator had entered someone's house due to the magnitude of the fine [for such a violation] which may exceed the blood-price (*diyyah*) for the man killed. The sanctity of the house must be respected even if the head of household is absent.

Many of these stipulations do not hold anymore for urban dwellers who are unlikely to pursue tribal justice for many of these violations any more. But while its specific referents may vary depending on context, and the contemporary legal import of the concept is weakened, *ḥurmat al-dār* still plays an important role in materializing the virtues of masculinity even for urban dwellers. As a moral concept designates the space of what must be protected if a man is to keep his honor and reputation as a man. A violation of someone's *ḥurmat al-dār* is a serious affront and a serious breach of the codes of hospitality.

During the 6 months I have lived in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, I was very careful not to disturb or offend my neighbors, interlocutors, and, in a sense, my collective hosts. Thus, much as I had liked to take photos of the neighborhood, I felt this was something that could upset them. Towards the end of my stay, I mentioned this to a friend in the neighborhood who insisted that I was being over careful. After all, streets are public spaces and no one has the right to prevent me from photographing them. As a precaution, I asked my friend to accompany me on a photo tour, to which he agreed, but could never commit to a date. When several attempts to oblige him to come with me failed and my stay was coming to an end without having taken a single photo, I

decided, on my last day, to do it alone. My presence on the street with a camera in hand attracted some attention, but I went ahead with my plan nonetheless comforting myself with the friend's assurances. A hundred meters later, I was surrounded by a group of men who started interrogating me about what I was doing and why I was taking the photos. My credentials as a researcher, my intimate knowledge of the neighborhood, and the friendships I have developed there all did not help convince them that I meant no harm. They demanded that I delete the photos I had already taken. Indignant, I challenged them to call the police and insisted that I had done nothing illegal. They, however, countered that I have violated the sanctity of their homes. "We do not care for the police here!" they countered. "Any one of us can stop you, me or him or even him.." Despite their claim that what disturbed them was that I may have photographed women on the street, it later turned out that they were more concerned about the rundown and "shameful" condition of their neighborhood. My photographs could bring disrepute upon the neighborhood and its people. In the heat of our quarrel, a friend who had come to beat up the man taking photos in the neighborhood recognized me and intervened on my behalf to be released. When I explained to him what had happened, he said "May God forgive you! Are you crazy to take photos in the middle of the neighborhood? If you want some photos, just go to the outskirts, but not here at the center!" His comment registered (1) the sense of disregard implied in my act (doing it there right in front of the men's eyes), (2) the spatially expansive dimension of the concept (there is a difference between taking a photo in the middle of the neighborhood and at the outskirts), and (3) the collective obligation and right to protect it (anyone could stop me from doing what I was doing). When I told this story to the friend who had assured me that I was being over cautious, he said the people in the neighborhood were backward and did not understand that the street is a public space and not their private home. Perhaps it was my urbanite

and educated friend in the neighborhood who could no longer understand what his kin were up to.

A man's concern for preserving the sanctity of his house is a concern for and a moral obligation to protect what is most valuable and beloved, which can include persons (members of household, guests and people seeking refuge) as well as non-human objects of masculine pride. However, the stress here is not on the objects of affection and protection as possessions, but whose protection is a central element to one's sense of masculine pride. For example, ordinary cases of theft are not considered a violation of *ḥurmat al-dār*. Someone who enters a home to steal is a thief, but not a violator of the house's sanctity because theft is done in secret and hence does not disgrace the household and its head. In a sense, shameful as it may be, there is some respectfulness in theft. Like the concept of *karāmeh*, discussed in chapter 3, *ḥurmat al-dār* is an interactive concept the violation of which is a form of disregard to one's masculinity. Like the loss of *karāmeh*, someone whose sanctity is violated not only has the right to avenge it to restore his honor, but has an obligation to do so. Failing to do so establishes him as someone without honor. Even an accidental breach of the house's sanctity can elicit a violent rebuke and harsh punishment. The offense is even more serious when the violation is intentional for it counts as a serious affront.

However, what is at stake in preserving *ḥurmat al-dār* is not a masculinity of individual males, but that of males embedded in a patriarchal order organized in households.[3] As such, the whole household is obliged to avenge its honor by punishing the aggressor. Applied to the neighborhood as a whole, this moral obligation to protect the sanctity of one's household often

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[3] Contemporary usage often confuses different forms of masculine pre-eminence (or dominance) and lumps them together under the label of patriarchy. Here, I use the term in its literal sense, *patri-archy* meaning the preeminence of fathers in a society organized in households.

undermined the legitimacy and power of law enforcement. Thus, we can understand the reluctance of the police to interfere in the neighborhood as a recognition of the dangers such an interference might cause to the legitimacy of the law. If it did, the state's "claim to the monopoly over the legitimate use of violence" would be seriously undermined.

Let me illustrate this by way of an incident that took place in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh a few years before I did my fieldwork there. A man from the neighborhood was involved in a criminal offense and was arrested by the police. During the arrest, the man suffered, or claimed to have suffered, some injuries and was subsequently sent to a nearby hospital for treatment. While under arrest in the hospital, the man managed to escape with the help of a female visitor. The visitor wore a long dress that covered her whole body, a headscarf, and a *niqāb* that covered her face. Once inside the hospital room, she gave her clothes to the man to flee disguised as a *niqābī* female. Convinced that the woman who helped the detainee flee was the man's sister, the police issued an arrest warrant for her and went searching for her at the family's residence in the nearby town of Fuḥēis. The father refused to hand his daughter over, but the police barged in and arrested her nonetheless. By the time the woman was in custody, the father had called his brothers and kin in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh and convened a meeting to discuss the affront. Within a few hours, an armed convoy from the neighborhood stormed the police station where the woman was held, stripped the officers present from their weapons and freed her. In the neighborhood, the story was told as an example of the Ṭafāyleh's sense of honor and willingness to protect it.

To understand how the sense of honor, the moral right and obligation to protect the sanctity of the house are extended to the whole neighborhood, we need to consider other related moral concepts. In the tribal register, one word that can be used to mean "honor" is *nakhwa*. *Nakhwa* is a particular kind of honor that accrues from the propensity to rush to succor someone.

The act of rushing to succor is called *fazʿa.* This rush to succor one's kin and friends is an obligation, particularly in the face of a threat posed by a stranger or outsider, and is an important part of what it means to be kin and friend. I have witnessed several occasions in which tens of people from the neighborhood emerged to aid one of their kin against an outsider perceived as an aggressor. On one occasion, a cab driver from the neighborhood had a spat with a school bus driver as the two were driving up the main street that leads to the neighborhood. When they were close to the neighborhood, several people on the street noticed the spat. Suddenly, several cars blocked the bus driver's way and some by-standers came to their aid. They forced the bus driver out of his vehicle and threatened to assault him. They only let him go when they noticed that he had female teachers on board, but threatened to beat him up if he ever drove through that street again. No one seemed to be concerned with the details or the reasons of the spat until after the bus driver had left. This kind of solidarity and willingness to engage in acts of violence against outsiders gave the Ṭafāyleh a formidable reputation in the area around their neighborhood.

To go back to protests, what this moral obligation and right to protect one's honor did was to render police intervention inside the neighborhood illegitimate. Indeed, in all of the protests I have attended in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh, the police was visibly absent. Activists from the neighborhood were never arrested inside it. The few that were eventually arrested were tracked by secret police when they left the neighborhood, or were drawn outside and ambushed. Those who happened to live outside the neighborhood could always find refuge in the neighborhood whenever arrest warrants were issued against them. Outside their neighborhood, those who sympathized with the activists saw the Ṭafāyleh as "fearless," because they could say what everyone else wanted to say but could not. Indeed, despite the novelty accorded to them in the media, accusations of corruption directed at the King and the royal family were commonplace in

intimate settings. The significance of the Ṭafāyleh, it seemed, laid in their ability to say in public and explicitly what everyone else said in private or implicitly.

Moral Disagreements over "breaching the ceiling"

Despite all the attention the movement received in the media, its street protests remained relatively small in size numbering a few hundred protesters on average. The small turnout was a common topic for discussion in the movement's general meetings as well as many of the conversations I had with my friends there. The reasons were felt to be directly related to the practice of breaching the ceiling which was quite unpopular in the neighborhood. Eventually, two stances crystallized within the movement with respect to the practice. One stance, I shall call revolutionary, saw the practice as necessary and morally justified. The second, a reformist one, was against it.

From the perspective of revolutionaries, everyone—particularly their kin in the neighborhood—knew that the King was complicit in corruption, but were too weak-willed to acknowledge it or act upon it. They were either cowards or corrupt themselves. Presumably, the corrupt were held back by their material needs, which they could only satisfy through their clientelistic relation to the regime. Cowards, by contrast, were held back by their fear of punishment if the dissented. Persecution, imprisonment and physical harm, all lied at the horizon of such dissent. For the revolutionaries, two conditions were needed to get the masses to overcome their fear and dependency on the regime. First, they needed leadership—people who could exemplify the courage necessary to say what ought to be said, but was not permitted. Revolutionary activists saw themselves as providing such a model. However, the model was insufficient in itself. To succeed, the revolutionaries thought, it needed to be coupled with

sufficient amounts of suffering inflicted on the masses by the regime, usually through subsidy cuts. Presumably, suffering would push the masses out of their acquiescence, while the activists' courage would give them the exemplary model for how to act. If this line of reasoning sounds familiar to us, it is because it speaks to a dominant, modernist understanding of the nature and purpose of political action in so-called "authoritarian" or "non-democratic" states. It also underlies much theorization of populist politics from the crowd psychology of Gustave Le Bon (1896) to the populist reason of Ernesto Laclau (2005).

In my conversations with non-activists in the neighborhood, however, a different picture emerged. They all agreed that corrupt officials were the cause of their misfortunes. They also generally agreed with the activists' economic goals such as curbing subsidy-cuts and the provision of employment and educational opportunities. However, such agreeable ends did not justify protesting and insulting the King (*al-ʾisaʾa ila al-malik*) as a means. They reasoned that it was immoral and shameful (*ʿeyb*) to insult the King because one ought to respect one's elders and notables (*kebar*). Ḥaj ʿAbdulwahhab al-Ḥarāsis, a neighborhood elder disapproved of the whole practice of "blabbering loudly" on the streets. When I asked him how the activists ought to speak, he suggested they ought to talk to him in person and address him as "our lord" (*ya sayyidna*). Instead of protesting, he suggested, the activists should explain their grievances and seek redress respectfully (*bi-ʾadab*), asking only for what is reasonably possible. Like many fathers in the neighborhood, he would mournfully say "Our kids are no good" (*mish nafʿin*). Like these other fathers, he would never let his own kids join such a movement. Many young Ṭafāyleh shared this opinion too, but in addition to morality they explained their opposition to "breaching the ceiling" in practical terms. As one put it to me, "If there was anyone in this country that could do something about corruption, it is the King, so why do we insult him?"

This kind of reasoning was not limited to those outside the movement, but was present within it too. In contrast to the revolutionaries, most of the Free Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh activists described themselves as reformists. They insisted that they sought not to topple the regime (ʾisqāṭ), but to reform it (ʾiṣlāḥ). Their goal was to get the King to engage in dialog with them. If the movement immediately declared him illegitimate, then who is left to have a dialog with? They acknowledged that the King was most likely complicit in the widespread corruption, but insisted that this did not justify disrespect. For them, those who spoke disrespectfully were not any different from the regime thugs who occasionally attacked peaceful demonstrators. After all, many people in their own neighborhood felt personally insulted by such accusations, as if the King was their own father. They also thought that toppling the regime may subject them and the whole country to unknown dangers for it was difficult to imagine what a Jordan without a King may look like other than chaos. As Abu Musʿab, the leading figure in the reformist faction of the movement put it to me: "What if the King just packed his bags and left the country? What if he said 'I am done with you people!' and left without appointing a successor? What would we do?" These were legitimate questions, he insisted.

Instead of insulting the King, Abu Musʿab had a different rhetorical strategy. He was firm in his criticism of corruption, but preferred to remain deferential towards the monarch himself, addressing him in his ideal self-image as a caring paternal figure. Instead of accusing him of corruption, he directed his accusations at a vague target: "the regime" (al-niḍham), or the corrupt lining around the king (al-biṭānah al-fāsidah). While the revolutionaries accused Abu Musʿab of cowardice, he understood himself to be courageous. His aim, he explained, was to scold the King, respectfully, into shedding corrupt practices. This way, not only was he living up to his

own ideal self-image as a refined and responsible person, but he was also avoiding injuring the feelings of his kin in the neighborhood.

My interest in sketching out these two stances among the Free Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh Movement does not stem from their efficacy. As a matter of fact, neither stance was efficacious. The revolutionaries failed in summoning up their revolutionary moment and so did the reformists in shaming the King into fighting corruption. Yet, I find the polarity around the practice of "breaching the ceiling" and the modes of reasoning around which each stance was articulated to be compelling. In a most basic sense, the disagreement was about what it means to be a patriotic Jordanian, and both parties were putting themselves forward as exemplars of what true patriotism looks like.[4] Yet a question remains: Why this issue, these contentions and these reasons? Answering this question, I suggest, can help shed some light on the nature of state power and the temporalities of political action in contemporary Jordan.

To understand the nature of this moral and practical disagreement, we need to move beyond the different possible positionalities, stances and genre of action afforded by the concept of the chronotope and the chronotope of The Uprising in particular. Here, it is useful to draw on Paul Ricoeur's (1992) distinction between *idem* and *ipse* aspects of the self. For Ricoeur, *Idem* is the simple identity of a person as a thing in time and space. *Ipse*, on the other hand, is the *being* of self. That is to say, the being of someone who can relate to himself and has a life-narrative or history upon which he or she can consciously reflect. *Idem* provides us with answer to the question "What am I?" *Ipse*, by contrast, provides an answer to the question "Who am I?" It is this latter aspect of the self that allows the evaluation of the self in terms of the narrative unity of a life. In my earlier discussion, I have argued that the chronotope of The Uprising provided the

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[4] See the discussion in chapter 3, particularly footnote 57 pp. 107-108

activists with a set of normative stances and sets of expectations towards which they could align or dis-align in varying degrees and ways. In light of Ricoeur's distinction, we can now characterize these normative positionalities as constituting a field of *idem* identities. However, to understand why the activists chose this stance rather than another, why they acted in this particular way rather than another, why they oriented themselves to this or that position in this way rather than another—in short, to understand the substance of their moral and practical reasoning, I suggest we need to consider the activists' *ipse*, or how they self-reflexively understood their own history and evaluated their being in relation to that history.

Failing to Make the Past Present, or How to speak authoritatively as a Jordanian

The Ṭafāyleh's discourse on corruption and their sense of entitlement to protest against it rested on their understanding of themselves as ʾahl al-balad, or "the indigenous Jordanians" which, in turn, rested on their ability to claim a continued presence as a group within the boundaries of Jordan before and after the establishment of the modern state in 1921. This set them in contradistinction to ʾaghrāb (strangers or non-natives): Palestinians and urban elites who became citizens after, or shortly before, the establishment of the state. This particular grammar of Jordanian indigeneity congealed around two historical moments. The first was in the early years after the founding of the state when educated natives demanded employment in the state bureaucracy populated at the time by Hijazi, Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese functionaries. The second moment was after the 1970 clashes, known as Black September, between the Jordanian Army and militias organized under the umbrella of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). At the time, the Jordanian Army and the PLO militias were mixed in composition, comprising of both Jordanian and Palestinian fighters. However, the narrative that emerged from

the clashes, which had the PLO attempting to overthrow the Jordanian monarchy, resulted in a reconfiguration of ethnic identities in relation to two competing state projects: Jordanian and Palestinian. From then onward, ʾahl al-balad looked at the PLO project in Jordan as a threat to their own identity which was now closely bound to the Hashemite monarchy.

In the context of post-1970 Jordan, the state itself was invested in formulating and cultivating a nativist Jordanian identity as a guarantee against a Palestinian threat. *Ahl al-balad* now had the right to a privileged access to state resources through employment into the security apparatus and the state bureaucracy, a status they gradually lost with the economic crisis of the mid-1980's and the structural adjustment plans that ensued. By the late 1990's and early 2000's, the state apparatus was increasingly dominated by new bureaucratic and business elites whose world was not that of tribal politics, but of finance, investment and international development. The Ṭafāyleh often complained that they now themselves felt like strangers (ʾaghrāb) in their own country. They blamed the new class of elites around the King both for corruption and for their sense of estrangement.

From the perspective of ʾahl al-balad like the Ṭafāyleh, the new elites were strangers, not necessarily in the sense that they were genealogically foreign, but in the sense that they did not recognize the language of indigeneity. This was because the transformation was not merely about replacing a certain social group with another, but a whole change in the way the business of the state was now to be conducted and a whole new way of organizing bureaucratic time and space. For example, the Greater Amman Municipality, whose mayor Omar Maʿānī was dismissed in 2011 following accusations of corruption, has changed its main purpose from the provision of infrastructural services to that of attracting investments and creation of touristic markets. For this

purpose, Maʿānī changed the administrative structure of the municipality whereby different departments organized their work in terms of projects, strategic planning and a whole system of monitoring and evaluating the productivity of employees. With this came a whole new regime of organizing bureaucratic office space, the way employees were expected to spend their time and what counted as work, and consequently how they dealt with other bureaucrats and citizens. Older modes of socialization that involved hospitality and mixed the personal register of tribal recognition with the impersonal register of bureaucratic governance were no longer considered valuable work. It was this gradual erosion of the older language of bureaucracy and statehood against which the Ṭafāyleh and others responded by claiming indigeneity in recent years.

In my early research in the neighborhood, I was interested to see how the Ṭafāyleh narrated themselves as an indigenous population. I expected to find an active movement of tribal historiography similar to the one described by Andrew Shryock (1997) among the Balga tribes in the late 80's and early 90's. After all, that historiographical movement emerged precisely at the time when the country was in the middle of an economic crisis and when that generation of elders who lived part of their life prior to the establishment of the modern state was slowly disappearing. The Balga tribal historians sought to document traditional tribal life, to write down the words and deeds of their tribal elders, as a claim to rootedness in the face of the modernizing nation-state. Twenty years later, however, that historiographical movement was dead. It was nowhere to be found among the Ṭafāyleh or any other tribal group in Jordan.

One reason for its disappearance was perhaps already anticipated by Shryock's ethnographic account. For what the tribal historians attempted to do was to translate the oral traditions of various tribes and clans into the history of a nation. But whatever those narratives were and whatever purpose they served in pre-modern life, they were not history—in the

disciplinary sense of giving an objective account of the past. Instead of a coherent, objective history, the tribal historians found competing narratives and claims that circulated within certain tribal groups as true accounts, but were challenged once the boundary was crossed to another group. In a sense, that historiographical project failed because it aimed to fit the content of tribal narrative traditions into the form of modern history with its claims to factual truth and objectivity.

There is, however, another reason why that project was destined to fail. It had less to do with the form of narration (traditional narratives vs. objective history), and more with the content of traditional narratives themselves in relation to the present. It had to do with how time before the modern state was now marked in relation to time before it. If Shryock's tribal historians divided time into the heroic time of "the lance and the sword" before the state and "the time of government" after, the Ṭafāyleh marked that juncture as the passage from the time of ʿaṣabiyya (the blind allegiance to kin) and of *jāhiliyyah* (ignorance of divine guidance) prior to the state, to the time of *al-ḥalāl wa al- ḥarām* (of distinguishing the licit from the illicit) and of education after. Unlike Shryock's Belga elders, the Ṭafāyleh's elders had no heroic stories to tell of their past, nor did their youth have any heroic stories to tell of their ancestors. In the youth's narratives, their ancestors often featured, if at all, not as exemplary heroes to be emulated, but as thieves and country bumpkins driven by petty interests, unable to understand the larger historical significance of the events they lived.

One of the first characterizations of the Ṭafāyleh I heard when I started my fieldwork was "*al-Ṭafāyleh ma ilhom kbīr!*" (The Ṭafāyleh have no elders!). I initially understood this to mean that they were unruly and tending towards anarchy and violence. This interpretation was correct enough, especially given that this was precisely how the Ṭafāyleh were often perceived

by others. With time, however, I came to appreciate a more literal meaning of the expression. In my effort to write down a history of the neighborhood and its narrative of indegeneity, I tried to meet with elders who could give an account of its tribal history and the migration to Amman. This was particularly important since no written history of the neighborhood or that part of the city existed. Yet, my efforts to meet with such elders were often frustrated. My friends, who were mostly young activists, often promised to introduce me to elders, but were always reluctant to act upon their promises. Whenever someone suggested a specific name, the others would dismiss it as "senile," "lunatic," or an "imbecile". They often blanked out on suitable names to suggest asked for more time to look for candidates. My activist friends struggled to find an elder whose memory of the past could be intelligible in the present.

After much search, I was referred to Ali Jrayyed al-Ḥarāsis, an elder who lived in the neighborhood since its beginning in the 1930's. Ali's brother Mhannā (d. 1995) was the last know shaykh of al-Ḥarāsis tribe, a status he had inherited from his father Jrayyed (d. 1956). Ali Jrayyed was presented to me as "an intelligent and articulate man" despite his illiteracy. Like narratives I heard from the younger generation, Ali Jrayyed's did not stress life prior to the state, but was rather folded into the official historiography of the Hashemite dynasty. In this narrative, the Ṭafāyleh were a tribal confederation of six clans all hailing from the village of ʿImeh in the south of Jordan. To establish their presence prior to the state, he noted their mention by the Swiss orientalist Johann Ludwig Burckhardt who visited their village in 1812. From there, the narrative moved forward to 1918 when their ancestors fought a decisive battle alongside the Hashemites during the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans. The narrative then moved to describe their waves of migration to Amman during the 20th century, how they built their houses on the hill facing the Royal Palace, and how during the civil war of 1970, they protected that palace

from attacks by Palestinian militias. Within this narrative, it was hard to distinguish the identity of the Ṭafāyleh as Jordanians from that of the Hashemite dynasty as the makers of Jordan. Their narrative of indigeneity now depended on this coupling.

Yet, even this narrative seems to have become increasingly incredible in recent years, for parallel to it one could detect another historiographical current in the neighborhood. It came in the form of gossip, snippets of oral history and anecdotal evidence that falsified the standard narrative binding the Ṭafāyleh to the ruling dynasty. For example, one may hear that their ancestors were in fact duped or coerced to join the Arab Revolt; that they did not intend to protect the Palace in 1970, but rather to protect themselves; that someone had seen documents in the British archives that proved that the current King's maternal grandfather was in fact Jewish and thus refuted the King's claim to be a rightful descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. In Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh today, it is common to hear men in their 20's, 30's or 40's lament their inability to narrate themselves as Jordanians from outside the discursive space authorized by official state historiography. "We have forgotten who we were.. Our history is all lies!" was a refrain I heard often.

At the end of one protest, I sat next Ahmad, a school teacher in his late 30's. Unhappy with the turnout, Ahmad solicited my opinion as to what the movement should do to attract more people. I suggested that the activists should perhaps focus less on public protests and engage in face-to-face conversations with their kin in the neighborhood. The suggestion sounded impracticable to him and he went on to explain why this was the case:

> "In the neighborhood? By God, the neighborhood is hard! Now, this is what
> we suggested: "O brothers, we are all revolutionaries, but we have no
> alternative to the Hashemites!" Even Jordan, the state, honestly, had no
> revolutions before the Hashemites.. So it was in 1916.. The Arab Revolt is

when the state was founded.. So there was no [thing].. We came and there were the Hashemites.. They were the ones who drove the Ottomans out.. They were the ones who drove them out.. They were the ones who ended the Caliphate and brought Hussein [bin Ali].. With help from the British, the Caliphate was abolished.. OK, now, we have not lived revolts like Egypt, we do not have a [revolutionary] heritage.. Am I not right?"

I was surprised to hear Ahmad say that Jordan had no revolts before the Hashemites. Some of my interlocutors among the activists were engaged in discussing the history of Jordan and actively searched for books to read on the topic. During the many conversations I had with them, I have heard some mention the Karak rebellion against the expansion of Ottoman administration into the town in 1910. Activists on social media networks frequently mentioned the rebellions of Majed al-Adwan, Kleib al-Shrayydeh and Rashed al-Khuza'i al-Freihat in the early years of the colonial state in Jordan. The conversations were never precise and often mixed up the historical details. Nonetheless, there was always a sense that another history, one that constructed a Jordanian nationalist movement independent of the Hashemite dynasty, was waiting to be systematically researched and uncovered. I turn to Ahmad with an objection:

Yazan: There have been revolts!

Ahmad: The Majedi revolt?

Yazan: Yes, there is the revolt of Majed al-Adwan.

Ahmad: Majed al-Adwan, yes, but ask anyone.. most people do not know it.. there is a total obliteration of Jordan's national features.. There are men.. what's his name?.. May God's blessings be upon the Prophet.. There must have been others.. ehhh..

Yazan: Which one? What did he do?

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Ahmad: He had a.. he was rebellious..

Yazan: Kleib al-Shraydeh?

Ahmad: Other, other than Shraydeh.. There is another one.. Other than Kleib.. His tribe's name was a little strange..

Yazan: There is al-Freihat..

Ahmad: Other than al-Freihat.. ehh.. See, I forgot.. I can't recall him.. I don't know.. we do not know because we did not study this at school.. we studied other [things].. So there may have been revolutions mentioned when we were in school that do not exist now.. The revolution of Sanussi, of Orabi, [the revolution] in Algeria.. the Arab revolts against colonialism, we studied them in school.. I am talking about myself, but these [young] kids don't know.. Have you seen what the [school] curricula are like? Take General Education for example.. this class is about philosophy: what is a human being?.. Is it true or not? [addressing Ali, a 12th grade student] What does the General Education [class] teach?

Ali: There is a whole chapter on the Hashemites..

Ahmad: A whole chapter on the Hashemites! It's disgusting, you know.. The achievements of Abdullah the 1st, the 2nd, and Faisal and Ghazi..

Ali: Let me make it easier for you... The General Education exam is out of 50, correct? 35 points are for questions on the Hashemites chapter.. there are three chapters in the book.. Ahmad: A whole chapter on the Hashemites, and the rest of the books is about the human being: the soul, the body and the self.. Philosophy!

There is a striking ambivalence I find in Ahmad's account, one that in fact permeated the discourse of many of my interlocutors in Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh. It can be summed up in the following

way: they could doubt and question the official narrative of the state and the Hashemite dynasty, but they could not do without it altogether because it is the only narrative available for them to understand themselves as historical beings. Without it, they could not know how to go on being Jordanian.

I have started this chapter by describing the space of narration/action opened up for Jordanian activists by media reportage of uprisings in other Arab countries and the kind of moral and practical dilemmas that space posed for the activists of the Free Ḥay al-Ṭafāyleh Movement. I asked: why did the movement disintegrate when its corruption accusations were targeted at the King, a figure it considered the source of all corruption? Perhaps we are now in a better position to formulate an answer to this question by noting the divergent temporalities expressed by the revolutionary and reformist stances described above. The reformist critique conjured an ideal image of the Jordanian past as narrated in official historiography as a form of moral instruction of which shaming is a species. The revolutionary critique, by contrast, moved in the direction of severing all ties with that past and the bonds of authority it implied. In doing so, it opened up the future to various kinds of hazards. These hazards did not stem from the fear of punishment for violating the law or the norms of public speech. Rather, they were existential, practical and moral. For if the ethico-political claim of the activists rested on their Jordanianness, corruption accusations leveled at the King seemed to undermine the very historical grounds on which they could live and speak authoritatively *qua* Jordanians. As such, it also undermined their ability to imagine a meaningful or desirable future.

A New Jordanian Historiography?

The Jordanian "Spring" of 2011-2013 occasioned an increased historical awareness and a desire to uncover alternative historical narratives untold by the official accounts taught in schools. This desire for the "true" history of Jordan in contradistinction from the "official" history must be read as part and parcel of the process of ethical self-transformation and critique I have described in the previous chapters (see chapters 3 and 4), and the process of historical self-fashioning and its limits described in this chapter. In concluding this chapter, and the dissertation, I would like to outline briefly the contours of what I see as a new, emergent Jordanian historiography triggered by the protests and the historical reflection and awareness it engendered. This new historiography sought to re-narrate the history of Jordan not as the story of the Hashemite dynasty, but as the story of the Jordanian people. In many ways, the desire for this historiography and its impetus was not new. Indeed, scholarly interest in writing history "from below" has been on the rise since the early 90's—whether in the form of "social history" or "non-official history." Yet, the protests brought a new significance for these studies, and allowed them to conjure a wider public by entering into wider life-projects than those of academics. An illustrative example of this process is the work of ʿIṣām al-Saʿdī, a historian whose book on the Jordanian National Movement (al-Saʿdī 2011) in the early years of the modern state was eagerly read by many of the activists I have worked with. It took al-Saʿdī almost 20 years to publish his book, which was a translation of the PhD. dissertation he had written at the American University in Beirut in 1992. In the introduction to the book, al-Saʿdī outlines his reasons for writing it in the following way:

> Since the history of the nation—any nation—is made by its people, with their
> struggles and sacrifices, the popular-patriotic role in building and shaping the
> historical experience/the state has been deliberately obliterated […] The

national masses are most in need for highlighting their history made by their heroism and struggles and to rewrite it from their perspective. Getting to know the programs of civil society institutions during the Emirate period would inform the national masses of their nation's past so as to give form to its present and outline its future. (12)

Leaving aside al-Saʿdī's invocation of the masses, which reflects his Marxist background, the idea of an obliterated past that needs to be uncovered for the nation to be able to be able to imagine its future is one that runs across many historical works published since. This includes al-Saʿdī's sequel to his first book (2014) which covers the period from 1946 to 1953, and ʿAbdullāh al-ʿAssāf's (2015) book which covers the rebellion of Mājid al-ʿAdwān of 1923. al-ʿAssāf's book seeks to present the contemporary readers with a historical possibility that was aborted, or rather pre-empted due to colonial intervention, namely a Jordanian state lead by a native Jordanian: Mājed al-ʿAdwān.

It would be a mistake to assume that this new historiography is limited to historians opposed to Hashemite rule. In fact the new historians, professional and amateur, reflect a wide political spectrum. They include those whose relation to the Hashemite is ambivalent, like Aḥmad ʾAbū Khalīl, and Muḥammad Rafīʿ, as well as those who receive direct support from them like Jordan Heritage, an NGO that employs various researchers to document "all that is valuable in Jordan's past." Among what is valuable are the lives of Jordanian tribal leaders prior to the modern state, particularly those who led rebellions against Ottoman rule in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Like the oppositional historians, the researchers of Jordan Heritage have little interest in tribal politics. Rather, their research on the lives of tribal leaders emplots them within a narrative of Jordanians anti-colonial struggle against what is now construed as Ottoman occupation and British colonialism. Their individual narratives weave into the founding myth of

the modern state and the Hashemite revolt against the Ottomans. Regardless of their historical

accuracy, this new Jordanian historiography and the new narratives have a particular function. In

the language of Cheryl Mattingly (2010), they serve as a narrative re-envisioning of the self as a

form of moral willing.

Conclusion

How we came to refer to the protests and uprisings that took place in Arab countries during 2011 and 2012 by the general label "The Arab Spring" is, by now, a matter of speculation. Some have claimed that the term was first used by Foreign Policy Magazine in reference to the successive uprisings in Tunisia and soon after in Egypt (Haschke 2011). Joshua Keating, a former editor and writer at the same magazine, however, pointed out that the label has been in circulation for some time, well before 2011(Keating 2011). The term, it turns out, was first used by American conservatives in reference to the 2005 protests in Lebanon against Syrian military occupation. This was a time when the Bush Administration in the US was justifying its military occupation of Iraq by framing it within a narrative of democratization and liberalization in the Middle East. Protests in Lebanon, it was suggested, were merely a continuation of a march towards liberal-democracy in Arab countries initiated by the American invasion of Iraq.

However, the idea of a march towards liberal-democracy as a narrative framework was even older. This was a power narrative that dominated political imaginaries since the end of the Cold War in which capitalism and liberal-democracy were deemed not merely the end of history, but ultimately the ends of History (Fukuyama 1992). Successive historical events gained their significance primarily within this framework. As such, countries which were not liberal democracies seemed to be lurking outside History waiting for something to happen by way of Western-induced political development, popular uprisings, or even war. Within this framework, various political systems (fascist, communist, patrimonial, theocratic, etc.) could now be lumped up as simply "authoritarian" or otherwise transitioning from "authoritarianism" towards "liberal-democracy"—a view that ultimately confuses the democtatic ethos with liberal values (Wedeen 2008). Alas, from the perspective of the post-colonial, post-socialist present, the various

modernist projects that animated the politics in the last two centuries could now be plotted against a single trajectory and measured against it.

But a narrative that plots events in relation to a historical progression can also plot them as a regression. The military attack on Libya in 2012 by NATO and the bloody ouster of Mouammar al-Qaddafi; the violent suppression of protests in Manama by the Bahrain's National Guards and GCC troops; the breakout of regional proxy wars in Syria and Yemen; and the ouster of elected Egyptian president Muḥammad Mursī by a popularly-supported military coup, all marked a "turning point" in the narrative of liberal-democratization in the Middle East. Even now, when the label "Arab Spring" has lost much of its currency in the media, the liberal-democratic narrative from which it emerged still provides the framework for registering and characterizing successive events, articulating them as a coherent sequence to which one could refer. It has thus become common to hear other seasonal characterizations of events in the region befitting an image of regression or decline such as "the Arab Autumn" or "the Arab Winter of Discontent".

In this dissertation, by contrast, I have attempted a more nuanced story by looking at the career of the concept of corruption in the Jordanian protests, as synechdoche of the Arab uprisings, and of the many anti-corruption protest movements worldwide. I suggested that rather than marching from authoritarianism to liberal-democracy, or failing to do so, these protests and movements indicate the increasing global salience of a particular way of understanding human action. Stemming from capitalism and modern, secular governance, this view takes human action to be directed towards the purusuit of interests, and whereby the purpose of government is to protect the "public interest" from the encroachment of "private interests" by upholding the rule of law. Yet, as I have tried to show, the increasing salience of corruption as a diagnostic of

political evils is in fact both intimately intertwined with the salience of the rule of law as a standard of justice, and a manifestation of a structural contradiction within it. Rather than the opposite of corruption, the rule of law is simultaneously the condition of possibility for corruption, the framework by which it is diagnosed, and the solution put forward to combat it. While this configuration suggests that, contrary to common belief, no amount of upholding the rule of law can eradicate corruption, or even perceptions of it, the concern over corruption sets certain dynamics into action that continue to have large scale social and political effects. I have shown some of these effects by looking at how the concern over corruption calls for generalized suspicion within political life, and how it transforms the idea of patriotism. As such, it generates new genres of political action, and transforms the way citizens live out and apprehend their personal and collective lives.

Moreover, I have argued that there are conceptual implications to recognizing the historical specificity of a theory of action centered on interests given that much social science is complicit in naturalizing this view, and hence, remains blind to its particularity and historical specificity. To move beyond this impasse, my analysis of the politics of patriotism in the Jordanian protest movement focused on the ethical dimension of political action which, despite taking place within the structures of the modern state remained indifferent to the idea of interest. Rather, it was a form of action that was neither interested nor disinterested, and neither egoistic nor altruistic. My analysis drew on various themes in the emerging field of the anthropology of morality by focusing on social roles as a productive site for investigating ethical life and commitments. I suggested that the anthropological study of ethical life needs to pay attention both to the semiotics of role inhabitance—i.e. the various observable signs by which role inhabitance is materialized—as well as the practical *teloi* within which the inhabitance of the role

is embedded. In ethical life, registers, as complexes of signs, are a necessary element in recognizing someone as inhabiting a role and the manner in which the role is inhabited. Yet these very signs are always subject to re-evaluation and re-enregisterment relative to the aims and ends internal to the role. These ends serve as focal points in relation to which someone's inhabitance of a role can be evaluated as apt or inept, as praise worthy or blame worthy, and around which moral (dis)agreements are structured within communities of practice. The upshot of this argument is that ethical life itself is lived within shifting frames of reference, and axes of differentiation within which actors aspiring to virtue must constantly figure out what constitutes virtue in the first place.

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