The Past Is Not A Foreign Country

How Algeria Avoided the Arab Spring

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Conflict, Power and Politics

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Abstract

In this research I investigate why Algeria was the only constitutional republic in the Middle East and Northern Africa to avoid an escalation of violence during the Arab Spring. Using social movement studies, I conclude that the unique political history of Algeria was the decisive factor in slowing down the momentum of the social movement. The Algerian Civil War led to a threefold of political changes that influence Algerian state and society to this day: a distrust between different groups within the social movement; a priority for protesters on a stable and secure society above all else; and highly sophisticated and balanced state security forces. In this study, I show not only that the interaction between state and society is more prominent than is considered in classical social movement theories, but also that this interaction is the directly influenced by the culture and political history of a society.

Contents

Abstract 2
1. Introduction 5
Alternative explanations 6
Defining Key Concepts 9
Social movement 9
Political violence 10
(De-)Escalation of Violence 10
Political opportunities 10
Methodology 11
Process-tracing 11
Case Selection 12
Data collection 12
Outline 13
2. Social Movement Studies and the Arab Spring 14
Classical social movement theories 14
Contentious Politics Theory 15
Applying the case of Algeria 17
3. Hypotheses and Operationalization 20
Process-tracing and the Algerian case 20
Political opportunities 21
Distrust within the movement 21
Ideological differences 22
Indiscriminate repression 23
4. Algeria: a unique political history 24
Descent into civil war 24
Growing frustration 26
The Arab Spring 27
5. The role of social movements 30
Political opportunities 30
Evaluating the hypothesis 34
Social movement structures 35
Evaluating the hypotheses 39
State violence 41

Evaluating the hypothesis 42
6. Conclusion 44
Research question 44
Discussion 45
Theoretical contribution and future research 45
Reflection 46
References 47

1. Introduction

On December 18th 2010, protests erupted in the Tunisian city of Sidi Bouzid, following the self-immolation of street vender Mohamed Bouazizi. Originating from dissatisfaction with the authoritarian government, police corruption, and high unemployment figures, thousands of Tunisians went to the streets to protest against the political status quo. In the early months of 2011, protests spread as a wildfire throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA). Ultimately, many authoritarian states (Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria among others) faced severe challenges to their existing power structures, eventually resulting in civil wars or the abdication of the head of state (Bank, Richter and Sunik, 2014, p. 169). However, other states in the MENA region, such as Morocco and Algeria only had to deal with minor protests and small changes in the government. Hence, my research question:

Why are some authoritarian regimes more capable of de-escalating violence during a social uprising than other authoritarian regimes?

Research shows that the type of government is a defining factor for the violence committed by a social movement. An authoritarian monarch can co-opt political rivals and share political power in a more lucrative way than his republican counterparts, because in his actions, he is not tied to a constitution and electoral results. As a result, political rivals are more complacent with the political status quo and are therefore less likely to use violent actions in protests (Magaloni, 2008, p. 738). This relation was also apparent during the Arab Spring, in which monarchies such as Bahrain and Morocco avoided an escalation of violence, whereas mass protests arose in the republics of Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt (Bank, Richter and Sunik, 2014, p. 164).

Such an escalation of violence did however not occur in Algeria, which, despite being a constitutional republic, saw neither the abdication of its head of state nor the decay towards a civil war. The instable political system, a direct result of a bloody civil war (1991-2002) did, however, not succumb under the pressure of political unrest across the other constitutional republics in Northern Africa (Werenfels, 2009, p. 179). Protests broke out on two separate occasions in early 2011, and in both cases, minor political concessions by the Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika quickly led to the discontinuation of the threatening situation (Layachi, 2013, p. 138).

My aim is to use social movement studies to research why the Algerian government was the only non-monarchical government able to avoid severe political violence during the

Arab Spring and to examine what differentiates the Algerian political system from other Northern African authoritarian republics. My argument is that the differences in the scope and severity of political violence between different authoritarian regimes can be explained by the degree of cooperation between multiple actors within a social movement. This degree is only partially and indirectly a product of the type of government, i.e. whether the state is a constitutional republic or a monarchy. A combination of state repression, a specific political history, and effective political concessions made by the state resulted in an unwillingness by protesters in Algeria to work together to the same extent as protesters did in other constitutional republics, where these same factors were not fully present.

Alternative explanations

Though the republic/monarchy dichotomy has been relatively underexplored, two types of arguments as to why monarchies have been able to withstand escalation of violence better than republics can be distinguished in the existing literature. The first set of arguments is concerned with the inherent nature of monarchies - the most notable being that monarchies do not face the same *power-sharing* issues as republics. The legislature in a constitutional republic is less centralized around a single individual or a family, therefore the head of state has to cooperate with other elites to a much higher extent than the head of states in a monarchy. This either leads to a direct decrease in power of the autocrat, as a significant part of its legislative capabilities are transferred to other elites (Lucas, 2014), or to a credible commitment problem, in which the leader is at risk of being overthrown if it fails to gather support from its closest allies (Magaloni, 2008, p. 721). Though this same problem occurs in monarchies in which families rather than individuals hold the majority of the political power, this does not happen to the same destabilizing degree (Gause, 2013, p. 23).

Some scholars argue that the way in which a monarchical rule is legitimized makes for a more stable regime. Menaldo (2012) shows that areas that historically had fewer possibilities for agriculture were more likely to become tribal, nomad, stateless, societies. Instead, people in these areas were primarily occupied with long-distance trade. In these stateless structures, monarchies were able to emerge shortly after the fall of the Ottoman empire (p. 716), with the most successful tribes taking the role of monarchs. Only in recent times did these societies transform from tribal, nomadic societies into urban societies centred around the international trade of national resources. The reason as to why these monarchical

structures are more stable is cultural: the people support those in power, because power is centralized around an elite that is considered as 'regime insiders' (ibid., p. 710).

Another argument as to why monarchies are more stable is given by Gause (2013), who argues that so called cultural legitimacy in the Gulf states, Morocco, and Jordan lead to a higher satisfaction with the political status quo. This cultural legitimacy has grown over time due to the close connection between the elites and the society they govern and the long time span elite groups have been in power (p. 8). The Arab republics, on the other hand, are a newer phenomenon, originating from bloody wars of independence after the Second World War. In the tumultuous political landscape following independence, republican leaders had to resort to brutal oppression to stay in power. In contrast, the Arab monarchies do not have "histories of bloody repression and jails filled with political prisoners" (ibid., p. 8)

Though these arguments are convincing explanations as to why monarchies would be more stable than republics, they can not explain why Algeria remained a stable regime during the Arab Spring. The contemporary political structure in Algeria emerged, as in other constitutional republics, from a war of independence (1954-1962) in which the victors did not have a close connection to their respective society. The need for political repression in monarchies was never as high as it was in the Arab republics after their independence, so, as a result, the monarchies are much closer to the society they govern than republics are. Elite groups in Algeria trace their legitimacy directly or indirectly to the war of independence (Werenfels, 2009, p. 179) – Yet, because this legitimacy is not as long standing as in monarchies, this claim to legitimacy did not actually lead to a stable government validated by the people. Furthermore, growing political fragmentation due to issues such as privatization and radical Islamism only further decreased the support the government had (ibid., p. 183). Political institutions in Algeria therefore holds a closer resemblance to republics – which similarly have struggled with stabilizing their regime due to of a lack of cultural legitimacy – than to monarchies in the MENA region.

Another explanation for state stability is that it is correlated to economic stability. The most widespread explanation of this kind is rentier state theory. Scholars have argued that regimes that have a high share of their revenues coming from the selling of their resources to external clients are more stable. However, the application of rentier state theory to authoritarian regimes has also been challenged. Abulof (2017, p. 56) states:

"If rents increase regime stability, especially authoritarian durability, why, then, are rentier regimes, particularly in authoritarian petro-states, more prone to civil wars? (...) why have certain rentier states remained so remarkably stable, while others have become – either before or during the Arab Spring – scenes of violent unrest?''

While the distinction between rentier states and non-rentier states in the MENA region does not sufficiently explain regime stability either, an association between economic arguments and regime stability is valid. Lucas (2014) uses what he calls the *theory of distribution of resources* to explain the correlation between the availability of natural resources and regime stability. Rich states are able to 'buy' legitimacy via policies such as lowering healthcare costs and increasing spending on social security. However, according to Abulof (2017), this process only works insofar there are appropriate actors to grant legitimacy to. Any elite group with access to national resources can attempt to buy legitimacy. To get a high degree of democratic support, the process should be intertwined with democratic reforms (p. 62). The process of buying legitimacy therefore does not only come at the cost of political power indirectly, as the elite group faces a decrease in the available national resources, but also at the cost of power directly, as the elite group in question is forced to undergo a democratic process. Algeria's elite faced a challenge to its legitimacy in the run up to the Algerian Civil War, but a similar challenge to the status quo, with new possible claims to divine right and popular sovereignty, remained surprisingly absent during the Arab Spring (ibid., p. 70).

Buying legitimacy should not be seen as merely a domestic process however. Rentier states can support other regimes by giving diplomatic, financial, and military aid. Monarchies which faced challenges to their power structures during the Arab Spring, such as Morocco and Bahrain, received support from rentier states like Jordan as well as from some Western powers (Bank, Richter and Sunik, 2014, p. 168). The behaviour of monarchies during the Arab Spring has two important characteristics: first, similar to Algeria and Libya, monarchies reallocated their national resources directly to the population; second, unlike Algeria and Libya, monarchies both gave and received aid from foreign actors during uprisings (p. 165). As shown by the argument of Abulof (2017), the reallocation of national resources does not necessarily translate into an increase in regime stability. The receiving of international aid explains why Bahrain and Morocco were able to restrict violent escalation during the Arab Spring, but it does not explain the contrast between the stable Algerian regime and the war-struck regime of Libya.

Defining Key Concepts

Social movement

I define a social movement as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities" (Tarrow, 1994, p. 9). A social movement should not be seen as a homogeneous entity, but is rather a collection of different challengers to the political status quo, initially sharing the same tactics and political goals. Challengers can be directly connected to the state, such as opposition parties, or to the private sector, such as representatives of major businesses. In other cases, civil society organizations, distinct from both the state and the private sector, can be the main instigators of political protests. Examples of civil society organizations are religious organizations, labour unions, and non-governmental organizations (Jezard, 2018).

As a social movement is not a homogeneous entity, the goals and tactics between different actors within a social movement can vary. An intra-movement split occurs when different groups in a social movement decide to stop working together, for example by not participating in the same rallies or by not sharing available resources. This split can be a deliberate attempt by protesters in order to target and attract different segments of the population, or can be an unintentional result of factionalized leadership (Asal et al., 2011, p. 95).

Social movement theory is the study of the origins and consequences of social mobilization. Researchers in this field examine social movements in three different ways. First, factors that lead to the spontaneous emergence of a social movement are explored. This includes the socioeconomic background, material conditions, and political opportunities in a society. Social movement scholars seek to explain in what way these factors can influence the development of a social movement. Second, scholars research the structure of a social movement, how the structure changes over time, and in what way the structure affects the success of a social movement. Important factors in this regard are political leadership, violence committed by protesters, and the aforementioned deliberate segmentation of a movement. Third, social movement scholars investigate under what circumstances protesters were able to realize their goals or what factors lead to the dissolution of the social movement.

Political violence

I adopt Bosi et al. (2019)'s definition of political violence as "the repertoire of actions oriented at inflicting physical, physiological, and symbolic damage on individuals and/or property with the intention of influencing various audiences for affecting or resisting political, social, and/or cultural change'' (p. 133). I use political violence over terrorism—a type of political violence aimed at random, innocent people in order to spread fear and to demoralize a nation or class (Walzer, 1977, p. 197)—because most political violence exerted by social movements is directed at a specific, non-random, target. Furthermore, using the term terrorism can be seen as a normative statement, as it is often used to condemn a social movement.

(De-)Escalation of Violence

I use the term escalation of violence as an increase in the scale, type, and scope of violence used by a social movement (Bosi et al., 2019, p. 133), i.e. when there is a change in the targets of violence, the severity of violence used, or the number of people and/or properties targeted by violence. Similarly, a de-escalation of violence is defined as the decrease of violence overall. An important factor for (de-)escalation is the context of the society the social movement operates in. As Tilly (1978) argues, political violence should be placed in the context of the repertoire of actions: a limited set of forms of protests that are commonly used in a particular time and place. The repertoire of actions forms a boundary for the scale, type, and scope of violence. For example, a spontaneous, unorganized social movement is more likely to use political violence, and will use more extreme forms of violence, than an organized political organizations. Under certain circumstances, a further escalation or de-escalation of violence might be nearly impossible considering the political context.

Political opportunities

I define political opportunities as "the exogenous factors that enhance or inhibit a social movement's prospects for mobilizing, advancing particular claims rather than others, cultivating some alliances rather than others, employing particular political strategies and tactics rather than others, and affecting mainstream institutional politics and policy" (Meyer, 2004, p. 126). In the context of this research, the most important elements are the prospects for mobilizing and the employment of particular political strategies and tactics. These elements show under what circumstances a social movement is able to grow in size and

influence (a) and whether they adopt violent or non-violent repertoires of action if mobilization is not successful (b).

Political opportunities can grow and shrink based on a number of exogenous factors. First, political factors are the result of changes in the political landscape. These can be deliberately imposed by the state in order to hinder the mobilization of a social movement, such as constraints on political actions and limitations on political organizations, or can be the result of internal political conflict, such as division within elites or the health of important political figures. Furthermore, societal factors, such as the momentum of the movement and the age demographic have an influence on the strength of the movement. Protesters can react on such changes in society and the political landscape, because they consider success or failure of the social movement more likely, while other factors only indirectly and subconsciously affect the social movement.

Methodology

Process-tracing

In this research, I use process-tracing as a method to investigate the correlation between Algeria's response to political violence and the de-escalation of violence by protesters. My goal is to sketch a historical path of the Algerian protests during the Arab Spring, explaining what factors contributed to the quick de-escalation of violence. Process-tracing is a method of within-case analysis that tests a number of hypotheses to explain a particular outcome (Beach and Pedersen, 2013; Gerring, 2017). It allows for strong causal inferences to be made within a single case, making it possible to research which parts of a causal mechanism were present and which parts were not. Using process-tracing, it is assumed each hypothesis is a necessary part of the entire causal mechanism. This means that, effectively, the analysis of the causal mechanism consists of single-case studies for each part of the mechanism, and that the failure of any of the hypotheses has a negative impact on the validity of the entire causal mechanism (Beach and Pedersen, 2013, p. 105). This also means that if I find evidence for each separate part of the causal mechanism, I can conclude the entire causal mechanism is present (ibid., p. 88). A downside of a within-case process-tracing method is that it is an unreliable method when generalizing beyond the selected case. Instead, it allows for an in-depth analysis of a puzzling case or a causal mechanism.

The empirical test of a causal mechanism consists of three parts (Beach and Pedersen, 2013, p. 101). First, I elaborate on what evidence I expect to find for each part of the causal

mechanism, i.e. each hypothesis. Second, I explain what information counts as evidence for my predicted causal mechanism. Last, I explain what can be concluded based on the presence or absence of this evidence. The most important empirical test in this regard is what Van Evera refers to as the 'hoop test' (1997, p. 32), a prediction on a part of the causal mechanism that is certain, but not unique. This means that certain evidence is expected to be found, but that this evidence alone is not sufficient in explaining a causal mechanism. Not finding the expected evidence reduces the confidence in the hypothesis, but finding the evidence does not necessarily allow for further inferences to be made.

Case Selection

To answer my research question, I selected the case of Algeria. In my research, I apply social movement studies to a case with a unique political history, in order to evaluate the importance of historical and cultural arguments. The Algerian case fits the requirements of this research, as its political history differs significantly from other countries in the Middle East and Northern Africa. The Algerian path to independence was more vicious than other countries in the region. Whereas countries such as Libya and Tunisia gained independence without much bloodshed, Algeria faced a eight-year long war of independence (1954-1962). In the decades after independence, the Northern African states were shaped in a similar way: as constitutional republics that were seriously lacking individual and economic freedoms.

Despite this similarity, Algeria was the only country to experience a second civil war (1991-2002). This puzzling series of events is the basis for my arguments on history and culture. Process-tracing is a good fit for the research question and the Algerian case. Algerian political history can be clearly split up in different phases, including a period of economic growth, a civil war, a decade of rebuilding, and the Arab Spring protests. As a result, tracing path dependency, i.e. in what way the contemporary social movement is shaped by the history of Algeria, is a is a viable method to answer the research question.

Data collection

For my thesis, I did not have access to high-level decision makers in Algeria, nor was I able to perform field work because of time and travel limits. For this reason, I was limited to desk research for my thesis. The goal of this thesis is to test and to expand on Contentious Politics Theory by combining the ideological and materialist elements of the theory with a bigger emphasis on the historical and cultural context of social movements. Desk research is a useful

tool for this goal, because it enables me to trace the ideological, materialist, and cultural elements of the case and combine them in a coherent whole.

Furthermore, I use news articles, opinion pieces, and reports to get more information on important events and specific details of social movements that have not sufficiently described in the academic literature. I examined official speeches by Algerian politicians, but they did not provide the necessary information to help me build my case. During the research on these secondary sources, I primarily focussed on the specific details regarding the socioeconomic context of Algeria in the follow up of the Arab Spring, the different groups that were part of the broader social movement and the ideologies they adhered to, the severity of violence used both by the social movement and by state security forces, and the promises made by officials during moments of de-escalation, as the available academic literature did not sufficiently touch on these issues.

Outline

This research continues in five sections. In the first section, I discuss classical social movement studies and the critiques on this approach. I then work out Contentious Politics Theory as the basis of my theoretical argument. I apply this theory to the Algerian case, formulating my hypotheses. Second, I explain in what way I use process-tracing to give an answer to these hypotheses. The third section consists of the historical background of Algeria. I discuss the period in the run-up to the civil war until the start of the Arab Spring protests in December 2010. In the fourth section, I analyze the Arab Spring protests and formulate an answer to my hypotheses. Finally, I discuss and reflect on my findings and I give recommendations for future research.

2. Social Movement Studies and the Arab Spring

In this chapter, I work out the theory I use as the basis for my argument. I start by explaining the historical context of social movement studies. Then, I explain the main components of Contentious Politics Theory and how these components work in broad social movements, as seen during the Arab Spring. My goal is to use this theoretical approach to understand how the social movement in Algeria originated and what factors influenced the actions of protesters. Finally, I identify and address the theoretical limitations of Contentious Politics Theory and how the case of Algeria can help fill this gap.

Classical social movement theories

Social movement scholars view opportunities and resources given to social movements as crucial factors for the likeliness of a movement to successfully realize their demands. The goal of social movement studies is to analyze the crucial factors that explain why social movements have varying degrees of success, even though these movements emerged during the same time period – as was the case during the Arab Spring uprisings – or within the same society during a different time period. Historically, the dominant approaches to social movement studies have been static: social movements are seen as passive actors reacting to changes in state violence, available resources, and existing political opportunities, among other factors (White 1989; Tarrow 1996; Hafez 2004; Pappas 2008).

The most dominant of these classical social movement theories in the literature are Political Opportunity Structures Theory and Resource Mobilization Theory. The core of Political Opportunity Structures Theory is that political mobilization is contingent on the opportunities given by the state to organize and to engage in political actions, such as protests. Political Opportunity Structures scholars argue that the incentives to organize differ between social movements and are generally dependent on the existing political structures (Tarrow, 1996, p. 43). Some interpretations of Political Opportunity Structures Theory consider activists to be rational actors, responding to political changes within the state or within broader society (Tarrow, 1996). Others view activists as overly optimistic actors trying to achieve social change every time a change in political opportunities occurs (Gamson and Meyer, 1996, p. 281).

According to Resource Mobilization Theory, mobilization is inseparable from the economic and infrastructural resources available to a social movement. Mobilization, it is argued, is "the process by which a group secures collective control over the resources needed

for collective action'' (Jenkins, 1983, p. 532). The major obstacle to mobilization is therefore the unavailability of resources or the inability to transform resources into meaningful political mobilization.

Classical social movement theories are useful when explaining the conditions in which social movements emerge and the conditions necessary for these movements to be successful. What makes the case of Algeria during the Arab Spring interesting is however not the lack of success of social movements, but the absence of an escalation of violence. Classical social movement theories do not sufficiently account for this element of political mobilization and are therefore not useful for explaining puzzling cases such as that of Algeria.

Contentious Politics Theory

Contentious Politics Theory emerged at the start of the century as a response to the limitations of classical social movement studies. Contentious Politics does not only account for the way in which the state changes the shape of social movements via opportunities and resources, but also for the way in which social movements are able to transform the political and societal landscape (Bosi et al., 2019, p. 136). Here, political violence can be seen as a tactic used by a movement to pressure the state or society as a whole into taking a certain type of action.

The lack of political opportunities can have a lasting impact on the strategies used by a social movement when pursuing their goals. The state can alter the strategic position and political leverage of a social movement by changing its political opportunities. A lack of political opportunities can turn a social movement violent when there is a direct interaction between the state and protesters, such as Bloody Sunday during The Troubles in Northern Ireland (White, 1989, p. 1291) and Islamist terrorism in Northern Africa in the 1990s (Hafez, 2004). Contentious Politics scholars argue that there does not need to be a direct interaction between the state and the social movement, and that instead the indirect threat of a confrontation creates internal competition within a social movement, which allows radicals to take over (Bosi et al., 2019, p. 137). The shrinking of political opportunities for a social movement, often deliberately imposed by the state, can generate the impression that there is no alternative other than violent, revolutionary action (ibid., p. 138).

When applied to a broad, cross-national social uprising, the effects of a violent threat by the state become clearer. Activists become more suspicious about state violence when such violence has already occurred in similar political protests in other countries. As a result, they are more likely to prepare for violent conflict when a violent confrontation between a social

movement and the state takes place elsewhere. Political violence in broad social uprisings like the Arab Spring therefore follows a certain path: the more political violence occurs in similar political landscapes, the more likely it is that individuals will turn to violent means in their own society.

Social movements are reliant on the resources available in order to achieve political success. Within a social movement, the need for resources can drastically differ between moderate and radical flanks. Even in liberal democracies, radicals are in constant need of resources to maintain armed struggle (Pappas, 2008, p. 1122). These resources do not only include material goods such as weaponry, money, and a location for people to meet, but also immaterial goods such as the network a social movement can provide and the knowledge and skills of key figures of a movement. As broader social movements often have more resources available to them, radicals will often act within an overarching social movement to make use of the infrastructural advantages, rather than act individually. Bosi et al. (2019) make the argument that the radicals existing in a broader social movement can turn members of the social movement towards the extreme in situations in which the social movement is unlikely to meet its demands. Radicals will often pass themselves off as the (violent) group in charge, using the initial legitimacy and the hierarchical structure of the movement to radicalize moderate groups within the movement (ibid., p. 139). The idea that radicals can act within a social movement and turn the movement toward the extremes is dependent on the idea that the broader social movement is willing to incorporate radicals into their organization. Large ideological differences and antagonisms from the past can however be a reason for a social movement to reject certain groups.

An aspect of social movements that is absent in most writings on classical social movement theories is intra-movement interactions. Within a social movement, a large variety of ideological backgrounds can co-exist. Two hurdles towards the escalation of violence originate from these ideological differences. An initial hurdle arises when protesters ‘decide’ what the target of violence should be, whether it is private property, state security forces, or innocent civilians. This hurdle is referred to as *action militarization* (Bosi et al., 2019, p. 142). A shrinkage in political opportunities and the organizational isolation of a social movement, often caused by targeted state repression, can create a situation in which radicals are more likely to fall back on last-resort efforts, such as attacks on the civilian population (ibid., p. 137). Even when the target of political violence is agreed upon, a second hurdle towards the escalation of violence still needs to be overcome. Different flanks within a social movement might still be unwilling to work together based on a disagreement on the eventual goals of the

social uprising. This *ideological encapsulation* becomes more likely the broader the social movement is, as a larger swath of political opinions are represented in the social movement (ibid., p. 143).

The final mechanism discussed by Contentious Politics scholars is a critique on deterrence theory. Deterrence Theory postulates that members of a social movement constantly make cost-benefit analyses as whether to continue with violent struggle (Mason 1984; Lichbach 1987; Muller and Weede 1991). In the context of state violence, a de-escalation of violence will happen, insofar as non-violent protests are tolerated, as the rational response for individuals is to turn to non-violent expressions of dissatisfaction (Lichbach, 1987, p. 285). This notion is harshly criticized by other social movement scholars, and in particular within Contentious Politics Theory. Instead of considering social movements as passive actors, merely responding to the violent threats formulated by the state, Contentious Politics scholars also consider the way in which social movements influence state security forces. Radical flanks of social movements aim to provoke the state into taking disproportional measures as a strategy to prove to the more moderate flanks that their initial violence was justified (Bosi et al., 2019, p. 138). State repression does not disincentivize moderates, but instead backfires into the radicalization of moderates and, ultimately, an escalation of violence. De-escalation of violence will take place when the state adopts an approach of selective repression, in which only the radical flank is targeted using counterintelligence, surveillance, and infiltration (ibid., p. 138).

Applying the case of Algeria

The set of mechanisms part of Contentious Politics Theory allows for a more dynamic, relational approach to social movements. However, the combination of multiple mechanisms also has a downside. From the current understanding of Contentious Politics Theory, we can make claims about the impact state violence, intra-group breakup, and counterintelligence have on the likeliness of a social movement to become more violent. What is lacking within Contentious Politics Theory is a clear analysis on which mechanisms are necessary and/or sufficient in the lead-up to an escalation of violence.

I have selected the Algerian case to fill this theoretical gap. The emergence of social unrest in Algeria in 2011 did not lead to a civil war or a regime change, as was the case in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. Instead, following a series of symbolic reforms and the quick beating down of remaining political protests, the Arab Spring in Algeria was, with the

exception of a few smaller sized protests, largely finished in February 2011 (Hill, 2015, p. 131).

Important elements of Contentious Politics Theory were present during the Arab Spring social uprising. First, there was a clear transformation of the political opportunities of activists throughout the Arab Spring. The window of opportunity for activists in Algeria was historic after the removal of Tunisian president Ben Ali, as it became apparent that political change was possible without the need of severe political violence. However, police forces responded quickly, making it difficult for activists to create a well coordinated protest (Volpi, 2013, p. 108). Following the logic of Contentious Politics theory, the size, scope, and type of violence used by protesters changes, as the (de-)escalation of violence is contingent on the political opportunities. The Algerian case also poses a challenge to Contentious Politics in this regard. Contentious Politics scholars reject Deterrence Theory, arguing instead that indiscriminate political violence committed by the state only increases political violence from the social movement. Yet, this was not the case in Algeria. The police forces' quick, violent response instead led to a fast decrease in political mobilization (Volpi, 2013; Hill, 2015).

The second important element of Contentious Politics Theory that influences whether a social movement becomes more or less violent, is the absence of a clear, common political goal. The Algerian Civil War of the 1990s shifted the political landscape in a multitude of ways. The civil war was a political struggle between the Algerian state and the Islamist, right-wing Islamic Salvation Front (Bucaille, 2014, p. 86). The major political party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), was able to hold on to its power, but the aftermath of the political struggle was still noticeable a decade after the war ended. The distrust between Islamists on the one hand, and liberals, nationalists, and secularists on the other was still present during the Arab Spring (Volpi, 2013, p. 106). This distrust might have led to an unwillingness from the broader social movement, mainly consisting of workers' unions, student associations, and traditional religious leaders (Mekouar, 2014, p. 212), to work together with radical Islamists and socialists.

More importantly, because the government of Algeria was on the same side as the protesting liberals, nationalists, and secularists in the civil war against Islamist forces, none of the most important groups protesting was in favour of regime change (Mekouar, 2014, p. 212). Instead, the protesters' demands were much more modest when compared to that of their Libyan, Egyptian, and Tunisian counterparts. Two major elements that, according to Contentious Politics Theory, lead to an escalation of violence were absent: there was no

agreement on the political demands and there was no agreement on the target of (potential) political violence.

In conclusion, Contentious Politics Theory is a viable alternative to the static classical social movement theories. The theory depicts the interrelation between state and social movement more accurately. Four defining factors for the (de-)escalation of violence can be distinguished: political opportunities, political distrust, ideological differences, and state violence. In the next chapter, I use the application of these factors on the Algerian case to formulate my hypotheses.

3. Hypotheses and Operationalization

Contentious Politics Theory helps understanding the complex set of mechanisms leading to the quick de-escalation of violence in Algeria during the Arab Spring. However, to get a complete understanding of the relationship between social movements and the (de-)escalation of violence, it is important to analyze which elements of Contentious Politics Theory were necessary for the de-escalation of violence and which elements were merely of secondary importance. Based on aforementioned mechanisms part of Contentious Politics Theory, I propose three hypotheses:

H1: The absence of violence escalation in Algeria during the Arab Spring can be explained by the state's ability to effectively increase political opportunities for protesters.

H2: The absence of violence escalation in Algeria during the Arab Spring can be explained by the distrust between different political groups during the mobilization process, originating from previous conflicts.

H3: The absence of violence escalation in Algeria during the Arab Spring can be explained by the impact ideological differences had on the structure of the social movement.

As stated before, the violent breaking up of recurring, smaller-sized political protests is also a challenge for Contentious Politics Theory. The successful dismantling of remaining protests did not lead to a further escalation of violence. Over time, the remaining protests were condemned by a larger part of the population. I propose a fourth hypothesis to counter the *policing escalation* mechanism of Contentious Politics Theory.

H4: The absence of violence escalation in Algeria during the Arab Spring can be explained by the quick dismantling of political protests by police forces.

Process-tracing and the Algerian case

Using Contentious Politics Theory, I theorized three distinguishable factors that lead to the de-escalation of violence in Algeria during the Arab Spring. The state's ability to increase political opportunities for protesters, the distrust that existed between different political groups during the mobilization process, and the impact of ideological differences on the

structure of the social movement were all factors that, following the Contentious Politics theoretical framework, lead to the absence of violence escalation in Algeria. Using process-tracing, we can infer that each of these were necessary factors to the de-escalation of violence in Algeria. Each part of the causal mechanism is analyzed using hoop tests.

Political opportunities

Given the first hypothesis, I expect to find a direct correlation between the political opportunities of the protest movement and the violence enacted by the movement. The state is not a passive actor in this regard. Instead it deliberately shapes the political opportunities of the protest movement in order to appeal to protesters. In the context of the Arab Spring, two distinct phases can be distinguished. First, there was an initial increase in political protests, often violent in nature, as a response to the protests in Tunisia. Second, political protests declined after a few weeks with only a few minor, mostly peaceful, protests occurring in February 2011.

These two phases are expected to be directly correlated to the measures taken by the state in order to shape the political opportunities for protesters. Such measures include political concessions, the initiation of new political allies in existing political institutions, and changes in the political status quo, which can go as far as a regime change (Bosi et al., 2019, p. 137). In the first phase, when political violence was on the rise, it is expected the Algerian government took a reserved response, in which it initially did not respond to the political demands of the social movement. Later on, when the Algerian government responded by taking at least one of the aforementioned political measures, it is expected the violence by the social movement decreases, as fewer people remain unsatisfied with the political status quo.

This empirical test is an example of a hoop test. When Contentious Politics Theory is applied to the Algerian case, I expect to see a direct correlation between the growth in political opportunities, deliberately imposed by the Algerian government, and the violence committed by the social movement. If this correlation can not be empirically proven, the hoop test fails, resulting in the rejection of the first hypothesis.

Distrust within the movement

The significant differences within the social movement also had an influence on the way the movement acted. Inner-movement antagonisms, both caused by past frictions and new disagreements, can lead to different parts of a social movement becoming unwilling to work together. In a polarized landscape, it is more likely that the social movement rejects the ideas

of radicals, thereby preventing the escalation of violence (Bosi et al., 2019, p. 142). This rejection happens on the basis of two variables: an existing polarized political landscape and an increase in polarization when political mobilization declines, as organizations within the social movement have to compete for a shrinking pool of resources. Polarization is measured as an increase of internal competition. This internal competition, however, does not necessarily take placing along ideological differences. Bosi et al. (2019, p. 140) argue that competition is the strongest between groups that share similar goals and target the same constituent groups, as these groups compete for the same scarce resources.

Testing the political distrust within the social movement is done using a two-level hoop test. I expect to see both initial polarization at the start of the Algerian protests, as well as an increase in polarization when political mobilization shrinks and different groups within the social movement have to compete for scarce resources. However, it is also important to note that the more radical groups, most inclined to use violence, do not have full access to the available resources. The second hypothesis will be rejected if there is no evidence found either for an increase in polarization after the decline in mobilization or for the lack of access of available resources for radical groups.

Ideological differences

Inner-movement antagonisms can also be manifested in a more obvious way. Ideological differences produce tensions within a social movement. In a similar fashion to distrust within the movement based on past and present antagonisms, ideological differences prevent the adoption of radical ideas and, eventually, the rejection of the use of violent means. I define political ideology as “a set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved” (Erikson and Tedin, 2003, p. 64).

The most important ideological divides in Algeria are based on the application of Islamic thought and the economic structure of the society. Islamists on the one hand belief in increasing the importance of Islam in a society through state power, whereas secularists are in favour of a divide between state and religion. On the economic axis, Arab socialists are in favour of using state resources to increase social spending and to distance society from the imperialist core. Liberals on the other hand are in favour of economic liberalization and an increase in individual freedom (Volpi, 2013, p. 106).

Based on ideological differences, two kinds of conflict can be present in social movements: disagreements on the type of violence to use and disagreements on the eventual

goals of the movement (Bosi et al., 2019, p. 142). When further polarization occurs within the social movement, it is therefore not expected to be based on past antagonisms or an internal competition for resources, but based on either differences in the goals of the social uprising or differences in the means used to reach these goals. For the third hypothesis to be accepted, I expect to see evidence for the existence of ideological differences in either the goals or the means of the social movement. If neither of these are found, the hypothesis will be rejected.

Indiscriminate repression

To further test the strength of Contentious Politics theory, I will also test whether indiscriminate police violence led to the escalation of violence. Prior research has shown that state violence against protesters was effective in reducing political mobilization in Algeria (Volpi, 2013; Hill, 2015). However, Contentious Politics scholars argue indiscriminate repression only furthers the divide between the state and the populace, further increasing tensions and thereby increasing political violence (Bosi et al., 2019, p. 138).

Based on prior research, I expect to see a direct correlation between state violence and the number of, the size of, and the amount of violence used by political protests. Again, this is an example of a hoop test. I expect to find evidence for the correlation between political violence and mobilization, so the absence of evidence will lead to a rejection of the fourth hypothesis. However, if the fourth hypothesis is accepted, this means Contentious Politics Theory, in which it is instead assumed state violence increases mobilization, is flawed.

4. Algeria: a unique political history

In this section, I summarize the political history of Algeria. First, I look at the political background of Algeria during the 1980s, which eventually led to the Algerian Civil War (1991-2002). Second, I describe the period between the end of the civil war and the Arab Spring protests. Finally, I elaborate on the Arab Spring protests in Algeria in further detail.

Descent into civil war

In October 1988, thousands of young Algerian protesters took control of the streets in Algiers after the government announced a further increase in prices and a new set of austerity measures. Riots spread to other major cities in Algeria, resulting in the demolition of shops and offices, the destruction of government buildings, and, ultimately, the deaths of about 500 civilians (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1989). Expressions of dissatisfaction with the government were common in post-colonial Algeria. Labour strikes, public demonstrations, and small-sized protests first occurred in the 1970s, when inadequate housing programs, food shortages, and an outdated infrastructural network caused problems for young Algerians in the country's overpopulated cities. Initially, the government was able to overcome these issues by using its oil reserves to promptly industrialize the economy and decrease food shortages (Entelis, 2011, p. 655).

The approach taken by the government, characterized by the high dependency on oil revenue and an ever increasing high external debt, meant that the 1980s oil glut, in which oil prices plummeted from $27 per barrel to $10 per barrel, had catastrophic effects. With the government no longer able to finance ongoing projects regarding healthcare, employment, and infrastructure, the economy changed from a highly planned state capitalist economy to a shock therapy economy: price controls faded out and large-scale privatization led to the replacement of state-subsidized industries (Escribano, 2016, p. 10).

The economic collapse hit hardest in the Arab-speaking community. While religious fragmentation was nearly non-existent, with the vast majority of the population being Sunni Muslim, Muslim communities were divided by sizeable cultural differences. Berbers had a preferential treatment both in the marketplace and in the government due to their ability to speak French (Lowi, 2004, p. 223). Disenfranchised youths consisted mainly of unemployed, arabophone Algerians. The small-sized protests of the 1970s were deemed ineffective, as political expression was legally limited to the mosque only and state security forces were able to suppress demonstrations with ease (Lowi, 2004, p. 226). It is therefore not surprising that the most prominent source of political dissent, the *Islamic Armed Movement* (MIA),

originated in the mosque. The MIA operated outside the framework of public protests and demonstrations, instead opting for a long-term goal of overthrowing the Algerian regime by building training camps and other infrastructural networks for insurgents (Schulhofer-Wohl, 2007, p. 107). MIA insurgents were key figures in the opposition that led to the popular uprising of 1988, known as the 1988 October riots (Lowi, 2004, p. 226).

The Algerian government's reaction was reminiscent of many other authoritarian governments in times of crisis. The revolts that spread to over 20 cities in the country were brutally repressed by state security forces, leading to an estimated 500 civilian deaths (Bustos, 2003, p. 4). The government did not restore the status quo after beating down the riots. Instead, soft-liners within the regime, including President Chadli Bendjedid, saw the public unrest as an opportunity for political change. A liberal constitution was passed, creating a multi-party electoral system and allowing for more economic liberalization (Cavatorta, 2009, p. 1).

The creation of a multi-party system gave suppressed groups the opportunity to challenge the regime via electoral means. The previously fragmented Islamist movement was able to solidify in three major political parties: the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the Movement of the Islamic Renaissance (MNI), and the Movement for an Islamic Society (HAMAS). The FIS was the most radically opposed to the Algerian regime, with many former Islamic guerrilla fighters, active in minor struggles in the early 1980s, becoming key members in the party (Roberts, 2003, p. 130). Prior to the first elections in 1990, the party was presented as a clear alternative to the FLN, most notable by rejecting liberal and socialist cultural values and prioritizing the establishment of an Islamic state ruled by sharia law. The party was a compelling choice for angry, neglected young Algerians. Rather surprisingly still, the FIS won the local and regional elections (ibid., p. 85).

The strategy to introduce the FIS as a broad, catch-all Islamist party also had its drawbacks. The FIS faced internal tensions between radical and moderate members and lacked a clear political program (Daxecer, 2009, p. 243). Algeria's most powerful political party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), feared radical elements would take over after the party suffered yet another electoral loss in 1991. After all, major figures within the FIS did not show full commitment to the democratic process and failed to establish the FIS as a non-authoritarian alternative to the FLN (ibid., p. 243). Fearful of an anti-democratic Islamist takeover, the government cancelled the election results of 1991 and banned the FIS. This final effort to hold on to power was met with a violent response by Islamists all over the country, eventually resulting in a civil war.

Within months, multiple armed movements emerged as a response to the coup, using the forested and mountainous regions in the North as the battleground of guerrilla warfare. Over time, more radical groups split off from the FIS and changed their tactics from guerrilla warfare to terrorist attacks. In total, it is estimated that between 100,000 and 173,000 people died as a result of the guerrilla war and terrorist attacks (Mourad and Avery, 2019, p. 3) It was not until 1998 that the FIS attempted to solve the conflict through peaceful means, as attacks on civilians committed by the most radical split-off from the FIS, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), terrorized the country. The presidential elections a year later were won by Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who promised to grant amnesty and reconciliation to all militant forces. As a result, the amount and severity of terrorist attacks drastically decreased. However, most members of the GIA refused the amnesty and continued fighting. As state security forces were able to focus solely on combating the last remaining insurgents, the GIA was overthrown shortly after in 2002 (ibid., p. 8).

Growing frustration

After the civil war, the conditions that led to tensions in the late 1980s were still ever so present. The post-civil war peace process was primarily geared towards reconciliation and stopping violent attacks against civilians, but corruption, unemployment, and issues regarding the unpredictable, mostly state-run economy were not touched upon sufficiently. The liberalization of the economy started by president Bendjedid and continued by Bouteflika led to some diversification of the economy, but exports and government expenditures were still heavily influenced by fluctuating oil prices (Popa et al., 2014, p. 7).

The population suffered when oil prices dropped, as was the case during the 1980s oil glut, but did not prosper when prices rose. The steady increase of oil prices between 2002 and 2008 did not coincide with much needed reforms in the healthcare and industrial sectors. Hospitals lacked adequate equipment and good hygienic conditions and, especially in the South, there was not enough specialized personnel (Jeune Afrique, 2010). Unemployment rates were estimated between 13 and 30 percent, with some sources claiming that the unemployment rate among the youth was as high as 75 percent (Evans and Phillips, 2008, p. 293; Boubekeur, 2009).

Anti-government sentiments were also fuelled by blatant corruption and a number of anti-democratic reforms. The liberalization of the economy under president Bouteflika allowed investors to bribe officials and run their businesses without any democratic control.

The laxity of authorities and the highly corrupt judicial system gave these investors the opportunity to evade labour laws and governmental regulations without any serious repercussions (Hadjadj, 2007, p. 272). The state of emergency, which was initially implemented to prevent protests by FIS supporters, served as an obstacle to labour strikes and protests demanding democratic reforms. Similarly, calls for referendums and amendments to the Constitution were frustrated by the ongoing security situation (Tahi, 1995, p. 202). Even after the end of the civil war in 2002, the state of emergency was maintained.

Despite the formal ban on protests, there were several instances in which the frustrated youth took out their anger against the state. Under the guise of unification, the Algerian government took 'Arabization' measures as early as the 1960s, including the suppression of Berber language and culture. In 2001, a reaction to these Arabization attempts erupted in the North of Algeria, as thousands of Algerian Berbers violently demonstrated the government in a series of events known as the Black Spring. Bouteflika's government, which portrayed itself as a victim of human rights abuses by Islamists, became the perpetrator of numerous human rights abuses itself, when an estimated two hundred protesters were killed by police brutality (Evans and Phillips, 2008, p. 277).

In the late 2000s, dissatisfaction with the government was larger than ever before. Police brutality, the lack of personal freedoms, and the absence of democratic reforms angered the vast majority of the Algerian population. Unsurprisingly, electoral turnout was historically low. Bouteflika, able to run for president for the third time after the removal of the term limit only months before the 2009 general election, was re-elected with 90% of the vote. However, the official turnout of 75 percent was disputed by both the opposition and the US embassy - claiming that the turnout was lower than 25 percent (Boubekeur, 2009).

The Arab Spring

The Algerian government did not capitalize on the increase in oil revenue in the period after the civil war. Corruption, a new political elite inexperienced with economic planning, and a lack of government responsiveness to social issues meant that the Algerian youth was ready to protest the regime once again. While civil disobedience has been the order of the day for the disconnected youth ever since the end of the civil war, the tensions were never as high as when a large-scale social rebellion began in the neighbouring country of Tunisia (Layachi, 2019, p. 320). Within a few weeks, the social upheaval of Tunisia spread to the rest of the Maghreb, starting with Algeria. Despite the plethora of social issues plaguing the Algerian

youth, the primary focus of the riots was on the lack of available jobs and the high prices of essential services. However, the 'uprising' in Algeria never extended beyond these riots. Many government buildings were victim of arson and demolition, yet, still, the riots never took a clear political character: ''there were no marches, no shared slogans, and no coherent demands'' (Brown, 2011).

The absence of coherent demands was not a surprise, as many political organizations were in favour of Bouteflika's regime. The large-scale corruption of the post-civil war era also impacted labour unions. The majority of workers considered unions to be financially corrupt and on the government and management side, rather than on the workers' side (Chelgoum et al., 2016, p. 362). This was in stark contrast to the Arab Spring revolutions in northern Africa, including Egypt and particularly Tunisia, where trade unions were the most influential actors during the revolution (Schmidinger 2013; Yousfi, 2017).

The political demands that were made by other liberal and socialist organizations were mostly aimed at treating the symptoms of the large systemic issues at hand, rather than the issues themselves. Instead of challenging economic liberalization, which led to a notable increase in Algeria's external debt, the primary goal was to put a halt to the increasing unemployment figures and food prices that resulted from this economic mismanagement (Entelis, 2011, p. 655). Protesters did not demand a change of government nor a democratization process, but responded to local socio-economic issues. As such, the vast majority of liberal and socialist organizations were not threats to – or never intended to be threats to – the status quo. Prominent social figures saw Bouteflika's lackluster regime as a necessary evil, an alternative to the highly authoritarian Islamism that was haunting Algeria's political scene since the 1980s (ibid., p. 661).

The protests that did happen were mainly small-scale protests spread out across the entire country. Again, this is different from both the Tunisian and Libyan protest movements that were happening at the same time, as well as previous Algerian protests in 1988 and 2001, which were all larger in scale and mostly confined to major cities (McAllister, 2013, p. 3). The protests were not only smaller than those in neighbouring countries, they were also less violent. This is not only because the demands by protesters were more modest, and thus there was less need for violence to reach these goals, but also because the Algerian youth prioritized stability and security. The horrors of the Algerian civil war still influenced Algerian society in 2011 and, for many, preventing such an escalation of violence was more important than reaching their goals above all else (Khan and Mezran, 2014, p. 1). As a result of this unique political history, the protests were, with the exception of the targeting of

government buildings, relatively peaceful, mostly consisting of traffic blockades, hunger strikes, and organizational sit-ins (Layachi, 2019, p. 321). The relatively non-violent and small-scale character of many protests meant that the riot police was able to outnumber rioters and break up protests with minimal bloodshed (Al Jazeera, 2011).

The first major riots broke out on January 5th 2011 and only lasted four days. After Bouteflika announced a price ceiling on basic necessities, a cut in import duties on sugar, and a cut in value-added taxes, the situation calmed within a matter of hours (Layachi, 2019, p. 321). The underlying problems that had plagued Algerian youth for years were still not resolved, but with the initial tax and price cuts being effective, Bouteflika did not see the necessity to drastically change the country's economic structure. Major changes were happening in the rest of northern Africa, so, with the fall of the Mubarak regime only a month after the first protests in Egypt, the Algerian youth once again sensed a more radical change was possible in their own country (Entelis, 2011, p. 674). With Algeria on the cusp of a revolution akin to Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, political elites promised to take more severe measures.

The second wave of protests occurred in February 2011 and resulted in the end of the state of emergency in place since 1992. Bouteflika's further promise to generate more jobs and expand political freedom was never carried out. The remaining opposition to the Bouteflika regime, demanding the fulfilment of Bouteflika's promises, failed to mobilize more protesters and was ultimately too small to stand up against the police forces in Algiers (Layachi, 2019, p. 322).

In conclusion, at the time of the Arab Spring, Algeria's recent political history had been more turbulent than any other country in the Maghreb. The Arab Spring protests were the first time that Algerian society saw a relatively peaceful period, when compared to other republics in Northern Africa.

5. The role of social movements

In this chapter, I analyze the Arab Spring in further detail. I research the structure of the social movement and the actions committed by protesters. The goal is to analyze what factors caused the Arab Spring protests in Algeria to initially be unstructured and violent and how it later turned into a structured and peaceful movement. I go into further detail how the Algerian Civil War and the small-sized protests of the 2000s shaped the 2011 social movement and the behaviour of Algerian state security forces. In the first section, I discuss the political opportunities of protesters and how the Algerian government shaped these opportunities in the past. Second, I take a look at the structure of the social movement and in what way this structure influenced violence committed by the movement. Last, I explore whether state violence led to an increase or decrease in subsequent violence committed by protesters.

Political opportunities

The weakening of historically anti-establishment organizations has been a strategy imposed by the Algerian government ever since the independence from France in 1962. The most prominent example of the innocuousness of political organizations was the major labour union, the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA). The organization has been under state control since the end of 1960s and worked as a path for government officials to societal privileges, rather than as the representative of the worker's and their rights (Chelghoum et al., 2016, p. 354). Autonomous trade union leaders and union members have described the UGTA as "an entity of the government" and as an organization "controlled by members who belong to the government" (ibid., p. 360).

The Algerian government attempted to shrink the political opportunities for non-government affiliated labour unions by prioritizing cooperation with the UGTA. With the most influential union in favour of Bouteflika's regime, autonomous unions were put between a rock and a hard place: either follow the same trajectory as the UGTA, by supporting the sometimes controversial economic reforms, and keep preferential treatment, or stay independent, but run the risk of being side lined by the government and seeing their actions reduced to protests and small-scale strikes (Branine et al., 2008, p. 416). Labour unions that chose to stay independent lacked the resources to properly challenge the regime and the UGTA. As a result of the uneven playing field, these labour unions resorted to public demonstrations, which often violently clashed with state security forces. However, these

protests were frowned upon by the majority of Algerian workers, who remained aligned with the UGTA (ibid., p. 418).

The alliance between the government and the UGTA also influenced the protest movement once riots broke out in January 2011. The UGTA's position within the Algerian political landscape meant that, as opposed to the Tunisian and Libyan cases, the protest movement was reliant on independent unions to organize the working class. Similarly, the vast majority of non-profit organizations stuck behind the regime, limiting the remaining movement to less impactful political actors such as the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights and the newly created National Coordination Committee for Change and Democracy (Mekouar, 2014, p. 212).

To understand the alignment of non-profit organizations with the Algerian government, it is important to analyze the significance of religion in Algerian society, and how the Algerian government deliberately instrumentalized it. Despite the dominance of Islam in Algerian society, there exists a strong separation between the different types of Islamic thoughts. The majority of Muslims view their religion, predominantly Sunni Islam, as a part of their culture and identity, rather than as a dogmatic approach how state and society should be structured (Entelis, 2001, p. 418).

Contrary to Sunni Muslims, the influential group of Salafi Muslims have, since the independence of Algeria, attempted to increase their political power further. It were these Islamic actors that successfully challenged the Algerian regime in the late 20th century, first via parliamentary means – running in elections as the FIS – later via extra-parliamentary means – in a guerrilla warfare against the Algerian army. This led the Algerian government to drastically shrink the political opportunities of fundamentalist Salafi Muslims. Initially, this was done simply by banning or beating down demonstrations organized by the FIS in major cities, but, later, when the FIS gained momentum and threatened to win the local elections, the political party was banned (Muedini, 2012, p. 209).

The third Islamic school of thought prevalent in Algerian society is Sufism, which has been a challenge to the regime since the War of Independence. However, with a bigger threat, Salafi Islam, on the horizon, several presidents, starting with Bendjedid, began giving Sufi Muslims preferential treatment. The spread of Sufism was regarded as a necessary strategy to counter Salafi Islam. This preferential treatment included the construction of mosques, the promotion of Sufi activities, and the creation of a radio and television station to promote Sufism (Muedini, 2012, p. 210). Paradoxically, while the promotion of Sufism has largely been successful, especially in the Kabylie region, which saw 24% of the population adhering

to Sufism (Khemissi et al., 2012, p. 556), there has not been any meaningful political mobilization orchestrated by Sufi organizations. Sufism is viewed as a peaceful and tolerant conception of Islam. Yet, simultaneously, the promotion of Sufism by the government was seen as an effort to increase the chances of electoral success and political stability, while serious critiques made by Salafists, Sunni Muslims, and non-practising Muslims on economic policies are ignored (ibid., p. 557).

With labour unions either in favour of Bouteflika's regime or lacking the political leverage to organize impactful political protests, and with religious organizations either obstructed by the regime's oppressive laws or preferential treatment to Sufism, anti-governmental political mobilization was limited to a handful of organizations in early 2011. The Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) was the most influential secular political party in the National Assembly, but, even with anger amongst the youth against the disastrous post-war economic policies, the party never gained serious electoral support (Bouandel, 2016, p. 7). The plummeting of political efficacy hindered parties such as the RCD, because many Algerian voters did not consider them viable challengers to the FLN. The majority of disenfranchised youth either were not encouraged to vote or preferred the FLN to their biggest competitors, the even more right-wing National Rally for Democracy and Movement of Society for Peace.

In a similar fashion, other civil society organizations have largely been a powerless force in Algerian society. Due to the lack of trust in politics overall, organizations such as the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH) never gathered enough political support to challenge the regime. Smaller organizations fell victim to the looming corruption, the integration of corporatist arrangements, or bankruptcy due to the lack of financial resources (Lorch and Bunk, 2017, p. 989). In the follow-up to the Arab Spring, Algerian society was filled with civil society organizations, but none were able to accomplish political change. Unsurprisingly, the Algerian government used the high number of civil society organizations as yet another facade: "as an alibi for this pluralism which is not really pluralism" (ibid., p. 992).

In order to cause political change, leading figures within the RCD and the LADDH created the National Coordination for Change and Democracy (NCCD). The NCCD called for the immediate ending of the state of emergency, a decrease of the suppression of free media, and the release of political prisoners (Bouandel, 2016, p. 7). Yet, even with the possibility of political change at the highest point in over a decade, the movement did not achieve any success early on. The protesters' emphasis on stability and security and low political efficacy

meant that only a few hundred protesters showed up to the first marches. This low number ensured that state security forces were able to block access to the main streets and squares of Algiers without any difficulties (ibid., p. 8).

The well-organized political marches of February 2011 posed less of a challenge to the police than the spontaneous, more violent riots that terrorized the streets of Algiers a few weeks earlier. However, the marches orchestrated by the NCCD required a different government response than the indiscriminate police repression during the January riots. With the peaceful marches slowly gaining more support over the weeks, the need for political concessions was apparent. To add on-to this, rumours of President Bouteflika's dwindling health signified a possible end to Bouteflika's regime, and the possibility of a new, more liberal, president (Boubekeur, 2011, p. 2). Bouteflika responded by lifting the 19-year old state of emergency. Protests and marches were nearly brought to a standstill and leading figures within the NCCD were depicted as enemies of the state for trying to create political unrest (Bouandel, 2016, p. 8).

The political opportunities of anti-governmental civil society and political organizations had already been minimized in the years leading up to the Arab Spring. Leading figures within the well organized NCCD emphasized the need for peaceful protests, because, as was shown during the January protests a month earlier, a violent approach to the political unrest in Northern Africa did not prove successful.

Based on my theoretical framework, it was expected that the organizations whose political opportunities were diminished, would turn out to be the most violent. Instead, the spontaneous, loosely organized political protests in January turned out to be the most violent, whereas the well-organized protests that took place a month later remained mostly peaceful. This correlation is surprising, but can be explained by the aforementioned importance of stability and security in Algerian society. Individuals within the NCCD understood the importance of stability and security, and therefore deliberately opted for a peaceful approach to attract as many people as possible. This consideration was not taken by protesters in January 2011, as these expressions of political dissidence were spontaneous.

A second potential explanation of why political violence was prevalent during the first wave of political unrest, but nearly non-existing during the second one, was that the Algerian government had already responded to the political unrest by introducing a price ceiling on basic necessities and a cut on import taxes on sugar. Interestingly enough, the decrease in violence was not preceded by an increase in political opportunities, as would be expected, but by a minor change in economic policies.

When compared to the Algerian Civil War, the importance on stability and security becomes even clearer. During the Civil War, the most important demand was political liberation: an increase in political freedoms for all, but especially for the growing number of political Islamists (Khan and Mezran, 2014, p. 1). The cultural aspect of 'stability and security' that prevented violent escalation in 2011 as not as prominent in Algerian society in the 1990s. So, when President Bendjedid shrank the political opportunities for Algerians by banning the FIS and by introducing the state of emergency, the theorized causality between a shrinkage in political opportunities and an increase in political violence committed by civilians is clearer.

Evaluating the hypothesis

In this section, I shortly conclude my findings on political opportunities and use these findings to formulate an answer to my first hypothesis:

H1: The absence of violence escalation in Algeria during the Arab Spring can be explained by the state's ability to effectively increase political opportunities for protesters.

Based on Contentious Politics Theory, I expected to see a direct correlation between the political opportunities of the social movement on the one hand and the violence committed by protesters on the other. During the first phase of protests, there was a relatively high amount of violent actions by protesters. It is expected that this was the result of a shrinkage in political opportunities for protesters, deliberately shaped by the Algerian government. The subsequent decrease of violent actions during the second phase of the protests should be preceded by an opening up of political opportunities.

The analysis on political opportunities provide mixed results. The Bouteflika administration strongly shrank political opportunities for protesters in the lead up to the Arab Spring by prioritizing Sufi Islam over Salafi Islam and corrupt civil society organizations over independent, more critical ones. This correlated with high initial violence during the January 2011 riots. However, this did not occur because radical protesters – more inclined to use violence – 'took over' the movement as a result of scarce resources, but, rather, because the spontaneity of the protests made the cultural aspect of stability and security less of a concern. In fact, the majority of protesters during the early protests did not have radical political views,

were only moderately interested in politics, and only opposed President Bouteflika's economic policies.

The second wave of protests, a month later, did not have a violent character, yet still occurred within the same political environment characterized by minimal political opportunities. Protests in the capital were still banned, the state of emergency was not yet lifted, and police presence in major cities was as high as ever. Despite political opportunities (or the lack thereof) staying constant, there was a clear transformation in the (non-)violent character of the social movement. This suggests that political opportunities were not a critical factor in the shape of and the means used by the social movement.

My conclusion is that the first hypothesis should be rejected. The correlation between political opportunities and violence committed by the social movement only holds up when analyzing the downfall of the movement in late February 2011. However, two important elements that might explain the cause of violence escalation in January 2011 and the transformation from violent riots to peaceful demonstration in February 2011 are missing: the absence or complete rejection of radical fragmentations in a social movement and the importance of political history and culture on the structure of a social movement.

Social movement structures

The clashes between Algerian protesters and the state during the early months of 2011 were not a unique occurrence in the region. With similar uprisings happening in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt during the same time period, the Algerian case might not seem distinctive at first glance. However, even more than being a reflection of the economic struggles that were seen in the entirety of Northern Africa, the protests in Algeria were mostly reminiscent of protests that have occurred in the country since the end of the Civil War in 2002. While other Arab governments were facing threats of regime change and civil war, the biggest threats to the Algerian regime were unorganized riots, in which protesters demanded minor economic reforms.

Similar spontaneous actions against political violence and cultural repression were plaguing the Algerian government as early as 2002. Cultural repression in the Berber dominated Kabylie region in Northern Algeria led to direct clashes with the government, leading to an estimated 200 casualties (Evans and Phillips, 2008, p. 277). A few years later, protests against police violence broke out following the death of a young man in custody (Al

Jazeera, 2006) and in 2007 thousands of Algerian citizens protested against ongoing Jihadist terrorism, that led to more than 50 deaths in Algeria in 2007 alone (Chikhi, 2007).

These protests mostly followed the same pattern. The protests were unorganized and happened spontaneously after a direct violent confrontation: the killing of a Kabyle student by police forces, the death of a young man in custody, and a series of terrorist attacks in Algiers.

When the Bouteflika administration attempted to calm down the situation, clashes between protesters and state security forces broke out. However, despite the fact that the protests were fuelled by anti-regime sentiments, there were no calls for regime change, and, similar to the Arab Spring protests a few years later, there was a lack of clear and coherent political demands. The cultural aspect of 'stability and security' was once again at the forefront of the demonstrations: despite economic issues tormenting the Algerian youth for years, protests only broke out as a direct response to violence perpetrated by either the state or Islamist rebels.

This cultural aspect is also apparent when looking at the type of violence committed by protesters. As was the case during the Arab Spring, in order to prevent further state violence, the targets of political violence were not state security forces, but public buildings like banks and city halls (Al Jazeera 2006; Evans and Phillips 2008). As the protests never escalated into a serious violent conflict, the situation could quickly be de-escalated through minor concessions by the government, such as the establishment of the Berber language as a national language, and an increase in government spending to fight ongoing Jihadist terrorism (Evans and Phillips, 2008, p. 293).

With economic considerations pushed to the background during these protests, it is not surprising that these movement consisted of both liberals and socialists. Socialists opposed Bouteflika's regime on the basis of the failing economic liberalization. Similarly, both socialists and liberals spoke out against the lack of political freedoms. When riots erupted as a response to cultural or institutional issues, there was no reason for liberals and socialists to oppose each other in their struggle against the regime (Evans and Phillips, 2008). Yet, even though the same anti-regime sentiments were shared by Islamists, they never cooperated with socialists and liberals in their early post-war protests. An obvious explanation is the antagonism between these groups originating from the Algerian Civil War, but, likely as important, the cultural goals of Islamists were vastly different from the cultural goals of socialists and liberals (Catalano, 2010, p. 547).

During the first wave of Arab Spring protests in Algeria in January 2011, the social movement, reminiscent of the plethora of movements years before, consisted primarily of

angered youth loosely organized in a handful of civil society organizations. However, during the Arab Spring, the distrust between socialists and liberals was of a bigger concern. Whereas civil disobedience in the decade prior was characterized by cultural issues, the first wave of Arab Spring protests were primarily of economic nature. During the Arab Spring, there was not just the divide between the Islamist conservative ideology on one side and the liberal ideas of socialists, nationalists, and secularists on the other. A further divide between those in favour of economic liberalisation – arguing that the fruits of the liberalisation had not sufficiently reached the Algerian youth due to corruption – and those opposed to economic liberalisation in the first place (Volpi, 2013, p. 106).

The social movement's internal structure was even more disorganized than the movements seen during the Black Spring. Not only did socialist and liberal protesters not reach an agreement on the goals of the protests, the presence of former FIS members in the protest area created further infighting (Belayachi, 2011). Both ideological differences and distrust based on past antagonisms played a crucial role in the solidity of the social movement. The lack of a strong political vanguard against Bouteflika's regime, and the absence of common goals and tactics paralyzed the social movement from the start.

This begs the question of why the riots spread over the entire country within a matter of days, as opposed to the previous protests which stayed confined to a single region within the country. First, the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011 emphasized existing political grievances. The socioeconomic situation, emerging from high prices, corruption, and high numbers of youth unemployment, was so tense, that only a final push from the Tunisian and Egyptian situation was needed to escalate the situation into a violent uprising (Jeune Afrique, 2010; Entelis, 2011). More important, however, was the fact that these protests exemplified the first time in decades that disenfranchised Algerian workers saw the opportunity to show objection against the unsuccessful economic policies that started after the 1980s oil glut.

The second wave of protests was characterized by peaceful demonstrations and demands for increasing political freedoms, rather than violent riots and calls for socioeconomic concessions. However, ideological differences between liberals and socialists did not become less important. Mobilization had decreased drastically compared to a month earlier, and with the different groups within the movement competing for scarce resources, internal competition increased and polarization became an even bigger issue than before. This decrease in mobilization can be understood by looking at the internal structure of the NCCD. The socio-economic concessions made by the Bouteflika administration in January did

successfully lead to a decrease in protests, but, more importantly, the planned out nature of the NCCD proved more a of hindrance to political unity than an advantage. Whereas the spontaneity of the January riots was a key factor in helping to partly overcome political grievances, these grievances proved to be much more detrimental when the goals of the demonstrations were carefully carved out by the NCCD.

The most notable example of political grievances becoming a dominant factor for the structure of the movement was the exclusion of Islamist voices within the NCCD. During one of the first peaceful protests on February 12th, Islamists were rejected by members of the NCCD, fearing they would start dominating the protests as was the case during the 1988 protests (Del Panta, 2017, p. 1098). Requests to hold the weekly protests on Fridays rather than Saturdays were ignored by the NCCD, further expressing the divide between Islamists and secularists (Volpi, 2013, p. 109). During the January riots, ideological differences and past grievances had led to an infighting, divided social movement, resulting in the lack of a common political goal. This time around Islamists abandoned the social movement altogether, avoiding infighting, but simultaneously leaving the NCCD with limited political leverage.

Another group of angered citizens missing from the second wave of protests was the abandoned working class. Political mobilization was, surprisingly, insignificant in the declining economic sectors and industrial workers within the oil and gas industry in the South were physically separated from the northern urban areas. The only part of the labour movement included in the NCCD were small, non-legalized unions (Volpi, 2013, p. 108; Del Panta, 2017, p. 1092). The ‘forgotten’ industrial workers could not be reached. However, with the NCCD being centred around clear political demands, demonstrations still managed to grow in size over time. Urged to make concessions once again before the NCCD managed to gather more support under secularist Muslims, Bouteflika gave in to one of the NCCD’s main demands and ended the 19-year old state of emergency only weeks after the NCCD was created (Bouandel, 2016, p. 8).

Evaluating the hypotheses

In this section, I formulate an answer to both my second and third hypothesis.

H2: The absence of violence escalation in Algeria during the Arab Spring can be explained by the distrust between different political groups during the mobilization process, originating from previous conflicts.

The effects of the Algerian Civil War remained an important factor in political mobilization in Algeria for decades. These effects can be traced in two different divides that existed during the Arab Spring protests. First, liberals and socialists opposed fundamentalist Salafi organizations; and, second, secularist organizations such as the NCCD chose to not incorporate Islamic protesters and ideas in the movement altogether. As expected, there was both initial polarization at the start of the protests and a subsequent rise in the level of polarization after the movement shrunk in size in February. Former FIS members were excluded from protest areas, even back when the social movement merely consisted of unorganized young protesters in January 2011. Echoes of the horrific civil war remained in the collective memory of everyone living in Algeria. Even in the build-up to yet another major political event, a coalition between socialists, liberals, and Salafi Muslims against an underperforming government was unlikely.

During the second phase of protests in February 2011, political polarization became even more apparent. As the movement shrank in size and started to lose momentum, the divide between extremist Islamist organizations and socialist and liberal organizations transformed into a divide between secularist organizations and all practising Muslims. Not only were radical FIS members excluded from the ongoing protests, but modest demands by Muslim organizations, such as the demand that protest should be held on Fridays, were ignored.

My conclusion is that the second hypothesis should be accepted. The rejection of resources to violent fractions of the social movement signifies an intra-movement divide deeper than the divide between the social movement and the state. As stability and security were preferred over political change, and with a gap between secularist and Salafi Muslims too large to overcome, the social movement never transformed into an anti-governmental Muslim coalition.

H3: The absence of violence escalation in Algeria during the Arab Spring can be explained by the impact ideological differences had on the structure of the social movement.

The gap between secularist and Salafi Muslims did not only originate from past grievances, but was also based on sizeable ideological differences. Whereas past grievances proved to be a hindrance for the mobilization process because a willingness to work together was seriously lacking, ideological differences hampered the social movement in a different way. The unorganized riots in January 2011 left little to no room for an ideological discussion on the goals of the social movement or the means to which these goals should be reached. As a result, the initial demands of protesters were vague, unrealistic considering the political context of Algeria, or contradicted the demands of other protesters.

Following a decrease in mobilization after state security forces violently tore down the riots, political ideology became a more prominent factor. After the NCCD became the most important actor in the social movement following this demobilization process, ideological differences also became a point of contention for socialists and liberals. As resources became scarcer, the social movement split up into smaller and smaller fractions in order to take hold of these resources. This battle for scarce resources came at the cost of a strong, unified social movement, and, unsurprisingly, the NCCD-led movement was limited to peaceful expressions of civil disobedience.

As expected, political ideology played a pivotal role in the de-escalation of violence during the Arab Spring. Ideology was the final straw that led to the dissolution of a social movement already severely hampered by internal past grievances and effective use of state violence. Overly sectarian members of the NCCD put a greater importance on fighting for individual and economic freedom, but hereby disregarded the historical conditions that have influenced Algerian civil society organizations since the Algerian Civil War. The disenfranchised youth, prioritizing economic reforms over these cultural issues, were never attracted by the NCCD protests. My conclusion is that the third hypothesis should be accepted.

State violence

Over the years, Algerian state security forces have shown that they are willing to use excessive force if deemed necessary. Post-civil war protests were often relentlessly beaten down by police forces, in some cases backfiring into direct clashes between protesters and police, as was the case during the Black Spring, for example. The January 2011 riots were not different from this. Demonstrations in the major cities could, due to their loose organization, easily be suppressed by the police (Volpi, 2013, p. 111). Indiscriminate violence against all protesters was a successful tool: protesters settled with minor political reforms, and peace quickly returned in urban areas. However, this time dissatisfaction with the government was felt all around the country. With protests popping up in smaller cities in the entire country, against local security forces incapable of handling the situation, president Bouteflika realized the necessity of economic concessions. The protests organized by the NCCD a month later were also suppressed, albeit in a less violent manner. Traffic entering Algiers was closely monitored and access to main squares and streets, as well as Facebook, was restricted (Layachi, 2013, p. 138). All things considered, the state security forces' reaction against political mobilization was much less severe than the violent repression of October 1988 and April 2001.

Two reasons why the violence committed by state security forces was not as extreme as in the past can be distinguished. First, the means and goals of the social movement during the Arab Spring were much less extreme. Protests in October 1988 spread to over more than 20 cities, resulting in the destruction of countless shops, official buildings, offices, and private property. In a few rare instances, individuals were targeted by angry mobs, leading to a number of deaths within the police forces (Bustos, 2003, p. 4). In January 2011, protesters also targeted official buildings, but individuals and 'innocent' shops and offices never became a victim of political violence. Whereas these protesters only shared vague demands regarding housing and food prices and political freedom, in 1988, the angered Algerian population wanted more: a completely revised economic system, regime change, and, in the case of more extreme protesters, the establishment of an Islamist state (ibid., p. 4). In 2011, there was no need for the brutal political violence of 1988. Innocent individuals and their property were not harmed during the Arab Spring protests and the vague, the movement's moderate goals were never a serious threat to Bouteflika's regime. A repeat of the 1988 October riots was unlikely, so there was no need for the same type of bloody repression that had led to hundreds of causalities.

Second, and more important, state security forces learned from mistakes that were made in the past. Both the 1988 October riots and the 2001 Black Spring had shown that indiscriminate repression could easily backfire and lead to major clashes between protesters and the state. Arab countries familiar with major political insurgencies have shown that they learn from their mistakes (Heydemann and Leenders, 2011, p. 652). Algeria is no exception. From the state's perspective, police violence is a delicate balancing act. The total absence of state presence leads to an increase in political mobilization that becomes more difficult to halt over time.

On the flip side, severe police violence can easily backfire, as it only proves the opposition's argument that the government is "tyrannical". Presidents Bendjedid and Bouteflika both failed in this balancing act, respectively in 1988 and 2001. In early 2011, however, police presence proved to be just the right size to prevent further political mobilization while not provoking anti-government sentiments further (Volpi, 2013, p. 105). The main reason police violence during the 2011 Algerian protests did not provoke further violence is that it coincided with short-term political concessions. The Algerian government learned from its mistakes, not only by reducing the severity of political repression of the past, but also by directly promising short-term economic policies that benefit the working class.

Evaluating the hypothesis

In this section, I shortly summarize by findings on state violence and I formulate an answer to my fourth hypothesis.

H4: The absence of violence escalation in Algeria during the Arab Spring can be explained by the quick dismantling of political protests by police forces.

State violence played a crucial role during the Arab Spring demonstrations, as it had during the October 1988 riots and the 2001 Black Spring. Both during the initial riots in January 2011, and the less severe demonstrations in February 2011, excessive police violence was used to strangle the social movement. Contentious Politics scholars argue that such a disproportionate use of violence only proves that the state is "the enemy of the common man" - and further increases violence committed by protesters. However, during both phases of social unrest in Algeria, police violence was directly correlated with a decrease in political mobilization.

Three arguments as to why police violence did not lead to an escalation of violence can be distinguished.

First, state security forces learned from the mistakes in the past, in which too little or too much police violence led to an escalation of social movement violence. As a result of these mistakes, police had a better grip on how to fine-tune their level of violence. The experience with countless acts of civil disobedience taught police forces how to effectively decrease social mobilization via the use of force. Second, as almost every group in Algeria had had skirmishes with the state in the past, the Contentious Politics argument that the state will be seen as an enemy does not hold up. In fact, most Algerian citizens did already oppose the Algerian government, but still preferred this regime over the fundamentalist Islamist alternative. Third, as the majority of protesters emphasized stability and security, most of the Algerian youth tried to actively prevent the escalation of violence. More important than economic reforms was the prevention of another destructive civil war.

I conclude that the fourth hypothesis should be accepted. Contrary to the arguments of Contentious Politics scholars, state violence did not provoke more violence by protesters. Rather, state violence was one of the most important factors in the quick demobilization of the social movement and the de-escalation of violence.

In conclusion, the most important factor for why protesters did not resort to more violent acts is the structure of the social movement. Ideological differences and past grievances led to a divided movement. As the movement became more structured in February 2011, potentially violent groups were rejected access to protest areas and material resources by the NCCD. Furthermore, police violence was a fruitful tool in slowing down the mobilization process.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I first discuss the results of the analytical chapter in order to give an answer to the research question. I will evaluate my findings' implications for Contentious Politics Theory. Finally, I give recommendations on further research on social movement studies using the Contentious Politics framework.

Research question

In this section, I formulate an answer to my research question:

Why are some authoritarian regimes more capable of de-escalating violence during a social uprising than other authoritarian regimes?

The success of the Algerian regime to de-escalate violence during the Arab Spring depended on three factors: political ideology, past grievances within the social movement, and state violence. The Bouteflika administration's response was unique: state violence was used in a controlled manner, whilst shrinking political opportunities for the social movement, in order to exacerbate ideological and historical differences. The success of this response was dependent on the unique political history of Algeria. As most protesters were not willing to use state violence as a weapon against the government – prioritizing stability and security over all else – state violence did not backfire into a further escalation of violence.

To understand why some authoritarian regimes are more capable of controlling a social movement, we need to look further than just the political opportunities available to the social movement and the violence used by state security forces. The historical and cultural context of a society is an overarching factor in the possible escalation or de-escalation of violence. What the case of Algeria teaches us is that this context has an influence on both the social movement and the state. For the social movement, the ability of protesters to successfully mobilize is dependent on past grievances and ideological differences. On the other hand, the state's experience with previous major conflicts make it more likely for the government to effectively shrink political opportunities and to fine-tune the level of police violence.

Algeria's political landscape is unique compared to other constitutional republics in the MENA region, because it is the only country to have previously faced a major social

uprising: they already had their own 'Arab Spring', decades before any other country in the region.

Discussion

Theoretical contribution and future research

Contentious Politics Theory provides a useful framework for investigating social uprising by looking at the interaction between the state and the social movement. The state and the social movement are both seen as rational actors: the state as trying to hold onto its power, and the social movement as trying to influence the political sphere, while reacting rationally to state actions.

Contentious Politics Theory consists of a wide variety of elements, including political opportunities, state violence, and ideology. These elements can help explain why protesters are unwilling to work with other protesters and why protesters may resort to violence. However, where the theory lacks behind is how these different elements interact with each other. My work shows that political ideology and material conditions are important factors for the structure of a social movement, and, as a consequence, for the violence committed by protesters. The importance of these factors is ultimately dependent on the state's reaction and, more precisely, how the state uses police violence and shapes political opportunities for the social movement.

Social movements have their weaknesses, originating from disagreements between different factions within the movement and the lack of material resources, but the success of the social movement, in the end, depends on whether the state is able to successfully and deliberately target these weaknesses. The different elements of Contentious Politics Theory can be separated into two different categories: those signifying the weaknesses of the social movement, such as the cultural context and political ideology, and those signifying the state's response, such as police violence and the shaping of political opportunities.

Further research is necessary to examine whether the theorized interactions of Contentious Politics theory are applicable to other cases. My research shows that there exists a causality between past major social uprisings and the ability of the state to shrink political opportunities and to effectively use police violence. More research is needed to examine whether this causality is also present in other cases. Most obvious would be to analyze the historical and cultural contexts of other countries and their experiences during the Arab Spring. No Northern African country has had a political history as volatile as Algeria, so it

would be interesting to examine the use of state violence and the limitations on political opportunities by a state not experienced with major social uprisings. Furthermore, countries that have seen little political unrest in an otherwise volatile region, such as Bhutan in the Sino-Indian border dispute, can be examined to test whether their unique historical and cultural context did also influence the structure of their respective social movements.

Reflection

In my analysis of social movements during the Arab Spring, I used a wide array of sources to research the correlation between the structure of a social movement and political violence committed by protesters. By combining academic research in the field of political science, sociology, and economics, I was able to form a more in-depth analysis. My approach's first shortcoming is that I was restricted to desk research. Academic research focused mainly on key individuals and decisions made by the government, such as making political concessions and introducing oppressive laws, rather than the experiences of the social movement or the state as a whole. To get a better understanding of the role of political ideology and past grievances on the mobilization process, I examined opinion pieces and news articles.

Following the inability to perform field research and arrange interviews with local experts, the experiences of national actors are largely absent in this research. Furthermore, as most Algerian academic research is written in French, this was also not a viable source of information. I instead focused on the available academic research by experts in the field. An advantage of this approach was that potential biases, which were often notable in national news articles and opinion pieces, were less of a hindrance to objective research.

A last shortcoming of this research is that I only analyzed a single case. Therefore, the results are difficult to generalize further to be used for other cases. However, the Algerian case is a good fit for both process-tracing methods and theory-testing. As I was able to dig deep into the case, I could investigate the within-theory interactions of Contentious Politics Theory in further detail than I would have if I were to look at multiple cases. The single case study approach produced a more coherent personal contribution to Contentious Politics Theory, but future research is warranted to test this contribution in more detail.

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