Landman, Todd. "Agents and advocates." *Human Rights and Democracy: The Precarious Triumph of Ideals*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. 83–96. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472544643.ch-006>>.

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CHAPTER SIX

Agents and advocates

Introduction

The ‘transformational’ approach to understanding the development of democracy and human rights advanced in the previous chapter is seen as a series of phases that are not necessarily automatic or inevitable and that certainly contain a high probability of regression or reversal. These phases include the coming together of necessary and sufficient conditions for at least the **decision** to embrace democracy, but that decision is subject to a wide range of strategic calculations from elites who in turn are conditioned by popular mobilization and demand making from groups in civil society. Historical developments in the latter half of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century, however, suggest that the notion of popular ‘agency’ and the proliferation of ‘advocates’ for democracy and human rights have changed in ways that are important to consider here. Domestic struggles for rights and regime change have particular modalities and pathways that are of significant importance for us to understand political change. But these domestic struggles do not take place in isolation. Rather, they are joined by advocates at the international or ‘transnational’ level in ways that place additional pressure on states to **at least** make concessions to opposition movements and **at most** contribute to all out regime change and democratization. The connections between and among these actors have become enhanced and in many ways made more complex through the recent ‘democratisation of technology’ and the direct forms of voice that the democratization of technology encourages (see Crook 2011). This chapter considers the domestic and international agents and advocates responsible for bringing about democracy and the promotion of human rights. It examines the domestic dynamics of social movements and their relationship with regime concession and change. It then looks at how such

efforts of domestic change can be ‘transnationalized’, which is to say, how domestic groups seek assistance from international non-governmental and international governmental organizations to put pressure on regimes to bring about reforms. It concludes with a consideration of how the democratization of technology has contributed to these processes of change, particularly with the advent of the Arab Spring.

Domestic mobilization

Any analysis of the mobilization of domestic agents for change is predicated on a number of assumptions about why and how individuals either form or join protest movements. Early theories of social protest concentrated on the idea of ‘grievance’ that is shared among a large group of individuals who engage in collective action against the incumbent regime. In this view, grievance has been seen as a sociopsychological phenomenon that was related to perceptions of ‘relative deprivation’ (e.g. see Ted Robert Gurr’s seminal book, *Why Men Rebel*) or mass action based on the psychology of the crowd (e.g. see Elias Canetti’s classic book, *Crowds and Power*). Subsequent theories questioned the grievance models, which failed to explain how equally aggrieved people come together to form groups and manage to coordinate collective action in ways that could challenge the power of existing regimes. These critiques argued that ‘grievance is everywhere’, but it is not clear how such grievance can be converted into sustained collective action in ways that can overturn unpopular regimes (see Foweraker 1995).

Theories based on the ‘rationality’ assumption from economics questioned how it was possible to keep individuals motivated to remain in a protest group and to sustain collective action over time. The ‘problem of collective action’, as it became known, pointed out that as group size got large, the benefits for any one person to remain committed to the movement decreased dramatically (see Olson 1965). The problem is also known as the ‘free rider’ problem, since in areas of mobilization involving so-called public goods, it is irrational for someone to participate in a movement if the benefits would accrue to that person even if they did not participate. Interestingly, at the time the *Logic of Collective Action* (Olson 1965) was published, many countries experienced widespread social protests in the forms of anti-war movements, student movements and women’s movements among others. There is thus a paradox between the theory of the free rider and the actual outbreak of social unrest. The struggles for democracy and human rights are struggles for the extension of public goods and thus fall within the paradox. Freedom is indivisible even if our understanding of human rights is based on protection of the individual person. If a group is successful in toppling a regime and bringing about democratic change, benefits of life under the new regime would be

extended to the whole society not simply to those who were involved in the struggle. By this reasoning, it would be **irrational** for any one person to join the protest movement, particularly if it means a risk to life as we have seen in President Bashar al-Assad's repressive response to political dissidents in Syria since 2011.

The classic solution to the free-rider problem has been for analysts and commentators to identify what kinds of 'private' or 'selective' incentives there are for those individuals who participate in social protest and popular mobilization against incumbent regimes. Such selective incentives can include **material gains** and the **promise to hold power** once the regime has been removed. Throughout history, individuals that have participated in collective action and protest across many different groups in society have received income for their participation, such as money or goods (landowners' livestock, silverware, etc.) that result from successful mobilization (see, e.g. Mark Lichbach's *The Rebel's Dilemma*). But this history also includes multiple examples of social struggles for democracy and human rights. For example, the struggle for citizenship rights in Europe and North America across the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been characterized by groups that have mobilized for reasons other than for strict material gain (see, Marshall 1963; Barbalet 1988; Foweraker and Landman 1997). Thus, the less 'economic' explanations tend to focus on different kinds of incentives that may include factors such as pride, moral victory, being involved in something that is 'right' and being motivated by values that underpin a commitment to democracy and human rights (Risse et al. 1999).

Many struggles against authoritarianism have a strong economic component, but this is much different than social mobilization being motivated by strict individual material gain. Rather, economic critique forms part of an overall critique of regime ineffectiveness or corruption, which helps galvanize an opposition movement to seek overthrow of the regime. Economic failure or predatory forms of economic development in which the proceeds of economic expansion are not distributed fairly or when government elites are perceived to have misused funds, hoarded national income and exhibited opulent lifestyles can motivate popular mobilization through an appeal to an economic argument. Indeed, the Mubarak regime in Egypt, Gaddafi regime in Libya and Ben Ali regime in Tunisia (not to mention regimes such as those of Baby 'Doc' Duvalier in Haiti, Charles Taylor in Liberia, Idi Amin in Uganda and Saddam Hussein in Iraq) were all guilty of hoarding a significant proportion of national income and engaging in extremely opulent lifestyles. In the case of Tunisia, dissident groups used websites that track airplanes by enthusiasts to show that Ben Ali's presidential airplane was being used for leisure activity; a fact that contributed to the mobilization against him.¹ In Egypt, the discourse of the protestors who occupied Tahrir Square had significant elements of economic critique about the regime. In these cases and many others, however, it is important to stress

that initial economic critiques become joined by larger political critiques that, depending on regime responses, can lead to the call for an overthrow of the incumbent regime and the installation of democracy.

Within the broader economic theories of social protest is an attention to the resources that movements have and the constraints under which they operate. Resources include money, membership, skills, communication networks, organizational coherence and strategic alliances between different groups with a common interest in regime change. The nature and extent of such alliances and the degree of organizational coherence are quite dynamic and subject to change, but across a 'cycle of protest' (Tarrow 1994), groups come together and can produce quite large public manifestations. Both the **timing** and **shape** of such cycles of protest are contingent further on the opportunities available for mobilization. Within democratic societies, such opportunities can include significant shifts in political alignments among elites and or political parties, 'critical elections' (Key 1955), government inquiries, economic crisis, declaration of war, among other major events. Political opportunities also include the relative **openness** and **responsiveness** of government to the demands of social movements, where countries vary from closed and unresponsive systems to open and responsive systems (see Kitschelt 1986). In non-democratic societies, political opportunities include key decisions from leaders, (e.g. F. W. De Klerk releasing Nelson Mandela from prison in South Africa or the Generals in Burma/Myanmar releasing Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest), death of a leader (e.g. the death of Kim Jong Il in North Korea), defeat in war (e.g. the British defeat of Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas War) and severe economic crises or economic critique. They may also include events that attract widespread international attention, such as the April 2012 Grand Prix in Bahrain, in which opposition groups stepped up their activities in the run up to the event, called for the event to be cancelled and increased their protests on the streets of the capital.

Beyond these considerations of motivation and the formation of successful challenging groups, theories of domestic mobilization also assume the existence of some form of 'civil society' in which independent groups are able to become established and mobilize for change. Civil society has been variously describes as the 'private realm' (Foley and Edwards 1996) of voluntary associations, clubs, guilds, interest groups and other non-profit organizations that are distinctly different from private households on the one hand and the state on the other (see also Rueschemeyer et al. 1992; Cohen and Arato 1992).² While they are part of a private realm, civil society groups occupy the 'public sphere' and are seen to be a crucial component or 'arena' for democracy (see Linz and Stepan 1996). Within civil society, like-minded groups come together and form larger social movements and challenge the state in ways that seek change within particular issue areas (e.g. women's rights legislation, nuclear power station construction, or student fees) or seek fundamental change of the political system. It has been argued that

civil society is a necessary precondition for social protest movements, and the work on transitions from authoritarian rule suggests that civil society must at least be 'resurrected' before challenges to rule can begin in earnest (O'Donnell et al. 1986).

Such a precondition, however, is problematic if one is to explain how collective action leads to democracy and a greater protection of human rights. Indeed, comparative research has shown that social mobilization is entirely possible under authoritarian conditions with virtually no presence of civil society as it is popularly understood. This research shows further that networks for mobilization exist in latent form that are then the basis upon which social movement activity develops. For example, comparisons of social mobilization in authoritarian Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Spain showed that protest from labour movements and other social movements was not only possible but actually contributed to regime transformation (see Foweraker and Landman 1997). Other studies have shown similar patterns of social mobilization for human rights have been possible across a wide range of country cases in Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe (see Risse et al. 1999; Hawkins 2002).

Whether civil society is present or not, however, the key to any successful pattern of mobilization is the formation and aggregation of groups. Some groups can be unrelated to political questions initially but can become politicized over time as they engage with the state for prolonged periods. The classic example from the United States is the fundamental role played by Baptist Churches and religious networks in the civil rights movement (see Chong 1991). In Latin America, particular kinds of self-help groups such as women's organizations, soup kitchens, neighbourhood associations and religious 'base communities,' most notably associated with the Catholic Church, became politicized during prolonged periods of authoritarian rule and served as the foundation for challenges to incumbent rulers (see Foweraker 1995; Foweraker et al. 2003; Cleary 2007; Philip and Panizza 2011). Other groups, however, are intentionally political in their advocacy for particular causes, such as women's liberation groups, gay rights groups, anti-war groups, green groups, among many others. Such advocacy groups have been crucial for the kinds of large-scale patterns of domestic mobilization that have led to significant political transformation of the kind relevant to our discussion here. Their day-to-day activities include fund raising, awareness raising, education, research and report writing and documentation of problems within their own issue area. But in times of crisis, networks of advocacy groups form an important social movement 'infrastructure' that can help mobilize large numbers of people.

Differences between these groups tend to be minimized during the build-up to large protests, but continued tensions can have an impact on the longevity of protest and coherence of a mass movement itself. Indeed, a cycle of protest typically peaks at the time of a major event (regime change or massive repression) and during the decline of the wave after such an event

old divisions reappear, movement cohesiveness disappears and numbers of people mobilized decrease significantly. Moreover, groups that obtain power after regime change may not be in line with the expectations of those who took part in the cycle of protest. For example, the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood as a significant contender for political power in Egypt after the fall of Mubarak has not sat comfortably with many who were involved in the protests against him.

Any optimism about the potential for civil society actors to become mobilized under authoritarian conditions needs to be tempered, since it is very important to understand that there are no guarantees that such mobilization will lead to positive change. The comparative study of protest movements under conditions of authoritarian rule has shown a great variety of outcomes around the world. Cycles of protest and regime response unfold over long, contested and inconclusive periods, which may or may not result in regime transformation towards democracy and a greater protection of human rights. Rather, protest can be met with increased repression and further consolidation of authoritarian rule. Key factors for change that are outside the process of social mobilization include new external factors that provide different signals and opportunities for regime opponents, and/or a change in the calculus of authoritarian leaders themselves as they seek to maintain their power. The interaction between these different factors means that regime transformation may well be partial, halting and regressive even though there is widespread popular support for change.

For example, analysis has shown that attempts by the Solidarity movement led by Lech Walesa in Poland in the early 1980s failed to bring about regime change, as the Jaruzelski regime was able to rely on external backing from the Soviet Union. Martial law was imposed between 1981 and 1983, where political opponents of the regime were interned or killed, and those in prison not released under an amnesty until 1986. Real regime change did not occur until the Gorbachev administration in the Soviet Union initiated the glasnost and perestroika reforms (see Colomer and Pascual 1994). In similar fashion, increased social mobilization in the early 1980s during the Pinochet regime in Chile was met by a harsh state of siege that lasted for nearly 2 years in which political opponents were routinely detained and tortured (Hawkins 2002). It was only when Pinochet made a bid to prolong his stay in power in an calculated decision to hold a popular referendum (or plebiscite) did a new possibility for regime change become possible. The 'No Campaign' mobilized supporters to vote against Pinochet, whose ultimate defeat led to a relatively rapid period of regime change that ushered in democracy.

In both the Polish and Chilean cases, it was not inevitable that social mobilization, though possible under conditions of authoritarian rule, would lead to regime change. Rather, initial mobilization was met with a harsh repressive response and prolonged period of continued authoritarianism. Changes in external signals and internal decision-making provided new

opportunities for mobilization, which in both cases ultimately saw the ousting of dictators and regime transformation. These cases are not unique, as across the world, there are numerous instances in which mobilization is shut down, authoritarianism prevails and supporters of democracy and defenders of human rights struggle on until conditions open up for new rounds of mobilization. The period of regime transformation in Burma/Myanmar, for example, has been very long indeed, with many fits and starts; however, it has now emerged as a 'least likely case' of democratization (see Landman 2008; also Howarth 1998: 182). The military has been in power since 1962 and pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi has been repeatedly placed under house arrest, while successive anti-government protests (e.g. in 1988 and 2007) have been met with harsh repression. Beginning with the 2008 referendum, however, Burma has seen a gradual and halting liberalization, with the release and 2012 electoral victory of Aung San Suu Kyi, who gained a parliamentary seat. In 2001, an article published in *The Journal of Democracy* argued that at best, Burma had been engaging in **liberalization** but not democratization, since many of its small reforms were rescinded in the face of increased social mobilization (Reynolds et al. 2001). The election of Aung San Suu Kyi, however, signals that the regime accepts the legitimacy of the opposition (a key criteria for democracy) and now reforms will need to continue with respect to constitutional issues (federalism, agreements with minority communities and systems of representation), dismantling a predatory state (particularly the military complicity in the drug trade) and the professionalization of the armed forces subject to civilian rule (Reynolds et al. 2001).

International mobilization

There are a number of agents and advocates at the international level that also form part of my understanding of democratic transformation. The communities of practitioners for democracy and those for human rights are markedly different in many ways; however, they share a number of similar goals: (1) provide assistance to those seeking to bring about political change at the domestic level, (2) establish and work with international legal standards and standards of best practice and (3) provide a normative 'transmission belt' that helps diffuse the ideas, values and practices associated with democracy and human rights. These individuals work for inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). The different status of these organizations often means that they have different mandates (and therefore work across different terrains of engagement) and different styles of carrying out their work, but there are many areas of complementarity and in my view, they represent an important set of actors for the advance of democracy and human rights. Typical inter-governmental organizations include the United Nations, European Union,

the Organization of American States, the African Union, the Community of Democracies, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Typical international non-governmental organizations include Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH), Minority Rights Group International, Article 19, the International Service for Human Rights and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT).

Human rights and transnational advocacy

In many of the country examples described in the last section on domestic mobilization, there have been moments during a cycle of protest and campaigns for political reform during which an appeal is made to international groups for assistance. This may come in the form of such groups already having a presence in the country or domestic groups appealing to groups outside the country. Across a number of studies (e.g. Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse et al. 1999; Bob 2005; Tarrow 2005; Sikkink 2011), it has become clear that networks form between domestic groups struggling for human rights and international advocacy organizations of the kind listed above. Since the network forms between groups on the ground and these international organizations, analysts have described this kind of phenomenon as a 'transnational advocacy network'. The network transcends the traditional boundary of the state and makes possible coordinated forms of mobilization that join together domestic and international activists.

The basic cycle of events within this understanding of advocacy proceeds in a number of phases. First, the domestic-based groups mobilize for particular human rights issues in their own country. Second, the government of that country denies there is a problem and may well repress the group. Third, the group makes an appeal to international advocacy groups who in turn raise awareness through their networks of like-minded organizations and engage in advocacy work with inter-governmental organizations. Fourth, the transnational network puts pressure on the government in question to initiate reforms and redress the claims by the domestic-based group. This cycle of events has become known as the 'boomerang model' since as the name implies, the appeal outwards to the transnational network comes back to the original country from which a human rights challenge has been made (see Risse et al. 1999). The resulting process of reform is not necessarily a linear progression that sees dramatic improvement in the protection of human rights, but a halting process of reform that may well include periods of regression and stagnation. Nevertheless, the domestic struggle for rights is buttressed by the efforts of the transnational advocacy network, where the country in question may be raised as an issue for consideration by such bodies as the United Nations General Assembly, Security Council, Human Rights Council or Office of the High Commissioner for Human

Rights. These bodies, however, would not consider such issues without the coordinated efforts of the non-governmental organizations who raise awareness, campaign for change and advocate for new standards and responses from the inter-governmental organizations.

Other research has shown that how domestic groups frame their struggle can have an impact on the degree to which their issue is taken up by international organizations. For example, in a systematic comparison of social mobilization in Nigeria and Mexico, Clifford Bob (2005) finds that how a group 'markets' its 'rebellion' affects its ability to garner international support. The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in Nigeria mobilized around the oil exploration activities of Shell in the Niger Delta, but until the movement changed its frame from one of 'environmental damage' to a struggle for 'human rights', it did not receive significant international attention. The charisma, leadership and subsequent assassination of its leader Ken Saro-Wiwa certainly raised global awareness of the issue, but international advocacy on behalf of the Ogoni was enhanced significantly with the human rights reframing. Analyses such as this suggest that there may well be 'surplus demand' in groups seeking international attention combined with 'limited supply' of support from the international community. Transnational advocacy is thus not a simple process of mobilization, but one that is subject to politics, contingent combinations of factors and skilled framing of human rights struggles to win over groups that comprise the transnational network. Indeed, Bob's (2005) analysis shows that international human rights NGOs can act as 'gatekeepers' for those issues and causes that receive attention and support.

Exporting, importing and supporting democracy

The advance of democracy and human rights is not always a 'bottom-up' process initiated by domestically based groups who then capture the attention of international organizations. There are official policies of governments and inter-governmental organizations that seek to promote democracy and human rights through a variety of tools and instruments. The motivations and goals of the policies, the combination of emphasis on democracy and human rights and the instruments at their disposal for pursuing the policies vary greatly across different governmental and inter-governmental organizations. The motivations range from idealistic and value-based concerns over human well-being to the material national interests of the 'promoting' state. Emphases on democracy and human rights vary and are often elided in formal policy documents that pronounce support for democracy, good governance and human rights across a range of different instruments. The tools and instruments include coercion and the use of force (Whitehead 1996), financial inducements through aid conditionality, budget support for democratic reform projects, electoral observation and

monitoring, financial support for civil society groups or political party organizations, among many others.

From Wilsonian interventionism in the early years of the twentieth century to the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, coercion has often been used in the name of democracy to rid countries of unsavoury leaders and try to induce domestic political transformations that result in long-term democracy. Such interventions are part of the 'liberal international' tradition and have been motivated by a variety of interests, many of which are not related to democracy or human rights, but may create a network of allied states for the state that is promoting democracy in this way. Beyond direct coercion and intervention, there are many avenues through which democratic states and inter-governmental organizations seek to promote democracy and human rights. Indeed, the unintended consequences of overt interventionism have created reticence and criticism among many states to engage in large 'nation-building' projects, such as NATO in Afghanistan since 2001. Democratic states and inter-governmental organizations typically have different financial means to pursue policies that promote democracy and human rights. Budget support and programme funding can range from large-scale reform of state institutions to specific projects that build capacity and bring about incremental change in line with larger objectives to promote democracy and human rights. Such forms of 'aid conditionality' tie financial assistance to demonstrable improvements in democracy and human rights. Some programmes like the US Millennium Challenge Account match aid to achievement across specific assessment criteria. Other programmes look for areas of reform where assistance is likely to make a difference, such as the development programming carried out by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

In addition to these differences in policy motivations and means for realizing different outcomes, often the 'verb' that is used to describe policies matters significantly for the ways in which they are implemented and perceived. During the early 1990s, for example, the verb 'export' was used to describe US approaches to promoting democracy around the world, where it was argued that 'advancing the democratic cause can be America's most effective foreign policy in terms of not merely good deeds but of self-interest as well' (Muravchik 1992: 6). Here, democracy is conceived as a product that can be exported abroad and that it brings benefits to the country that imports it as well as the one that exports it. Perhaps an extreme form of the exportation approach was seen in the neo-conservative policy objectives of taking initial interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq and turning them into longer-term commitments to bring about democracy through force. The Obama Administration has been described as having a more pragmatic than ideological approach to promoting democracy and like his predecessors; Obama has had to maintain close relations with less than democratic countries. Indeed, Obama has pursued a mixed strategy

that combines democratization ‘where it appears to be occurring with a willingness to continue to close ties with seemingly stable authoritarian governments’ (Carothers 2012: 6).

The verb ‘promote’ has been used by the European Union whose European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights ‘provides support for the promotion of democracy and human rights in non-EU countries’ (Landman 2012). The instrument includes efforts to enhance respect for human rights, strengthen the role of civil society, support and strengthen international and regional frameworks and build confidence in electoral processes.³ Through its process of enlargement, the European Union has been able to move beyond the logic of economic integration to one of political integration, where its most well-known Copenhagen criteria for membership include achievements in democracy and human rights. This internal logic to EU enlargement, however, has also influenced its external relations, such that the European Union fully recognizes that as an ‘[a]n economic and political player with global and diplomatic reach, and with a substantial budget for external assistance, [it] has both influence and leverage, which it can deploy on behalf of democratization and human rights’ (European Commission Communication 2001). There is now a combined interest within the European Union in promoting democracy, good governance and human rights in ways that are linked with questions of security, enlargement, technical cooperation, poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as conflict-prevention, crisis-management and conflict resolution.

In contrast to the verbs ‘export’, ‘import’ and ‘promote’, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), a 27-member inter-governmental organization founded in Sweden in 1995 intentionally uses the verbs ‘build’ and ‘support’ for its work on democracy (IDEA 2005, 2008). IDEA’s choice of verbs reflects its overall understanding of democratization as a **process** that is **built within societies** by **people who live in them**, and not by an external model that imposed from without. Since its founding, IDEA has worked on providing expert comparative knowledge across many different issue areas relating to democracy building and now has a range of programmes on electoral processes; constitution-building processes; political parties, participation and representation; and democracy and development. IDEA is thus a significant global ‘knowledge broker’ for individuals and organizations seeking to bring about democracy or to improve the quality of democracy worldwide.

New technology and the ‘norms cascade’

The end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century have shown an exponential growth in new technology that has become increasingly faster, more powerful, less expensive and more widespread than ever before. The integration of smart phone technology with the power of the

internet has led to an explosion of communication and a democratization of voice that has been possible hitherto. A single video captured on a smart phone can transform criminal investigations, accountability for multinational companies and responsiveness of governments. Increasingly, information of consequence can be obtained and disseminated rapidly in ways that challenge 'official' versions of events. In the United Kingdom, for example, video footage captured during the G20 riots in London have changed the nature of a case against the Metropolitan Police and its rough handling of newspaper salesman Ian Tomlinson, who was caught up in the protests and died as a result of his encounter with the police. In the absence of the public-produced video footage, there would not have been enough evidence to find the police responsible for his death.

The use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook has made the kind of mobilization discussed in this chapter even more possible, where key multimedia messages can be shared in seconds contribute to social mobilization in two important ways. First, it is possible to see the new technologies as a 'resource' like money or membership that can be used by a movement to encourage its growth and coordinate its activity. Shared on-line spaces can be used for mobilizing groups and coordinating activities. Indeed, during the student protests in London in November 2011, a group of students from an organization called Sukey made a phone application freely available that allowed individual students to provide real-time updates of police activity and protest dynamics, which were then aggregated, mapped and sent back to individual smart phones (see www.sukey.org). The organization FrontlineSMS has devised cost-effective ways for groups to aggregate text-based information to monitor events ranging from electoral violence to sexual harassment of women (see www.frontlinesms.com). Second, through iteration across networks, messages from social mobilization have become more 'modular' and easier to apply to multiple settings with localized modifications. Charles Tilly, the seminal analyst of 'contentious politics', argued that social movements utilize different 'repertoires of contention' which become modular and 'transportable' between contexts. The new technologies accelerate this modularity and flexibility as new repertoires of contention are shared around the world. Indeed, it is telling that the imagery and messages coming out of the Arab Spring have been replicated through the 'Occupy' movement in countries such as the United States and United Kingdom.

It would be an exaggeration to say that this new technology is the cause of such momentous change, but it has been a remarkable means through which the messages of change can be communicated rapidly. In Tunisia, for example, local protest activities and state response caught on mobile phones and posted in local dialects were picked up by the Tunisian diaspora community, translated into Arabic and then fed back into Tunisia through mainstream media organizations such as Al Jazeera. In this way,

new technology allowed protest groups to ‘leapfrog’ the state, communicate their message to a larger audience that was then fed back into their country and helped mobilize national protests against their government. In this case, grievance was present, communicated, expanded and nationalized through new technology. In an on-line survey of approximately 400 Tunisians, 97 per cent of the sample kept up to date with developments during the revolution during December 2010 and January 2011 on Facebook, 55.3 per cent on YouTube and 22.9 per cent on Twitter. Between 45 per cent and 59 per cent of the sample felt that social media was more informative, safer way to communicate about the developments during the revolution, and both made them angry about the regime and hopeful for the future. More importantly, more than 75 per cent of the sample learnt through social media about local protests and friends and acquaintances who were going to take part (Brauer et al. 2012).

Summary

It is clear from the discussion in this chapter that democracy is ‘made’ and human rights are ‘won’ through social struggle. This struggle has a large domestic component as locally based individuals, groups and organizations come together at critical junctures and seek change ‘from below’ in ways that transcend differences and coalesce around the common cause of political transformation. Where local mobilization is blocked through state retrenchment, groups have the possibility of taking their struggle to the transnational level, where their cause becomes part of a large advocacy network comprised of international non-governmental organizations which interact with states and inter-governmental organizations. These international agents in turn can put pressure on recalcitrant states to implement political reforms and accommodate the demands of local groups. The appeal from below can be in line with the foreign policy interests of states and inter-governmental organizations in ways that bring about political transformation; however, this chapter has made clear that there are many factors that come together in contingent ways that limit the probability of successful transformation. The recent changes in the Arab Spring have many of these different features and offer a stark set of contrasting examples of that illustrate the variety of outcomes possible during significant moments of political transformation. Some domestic mobilizations have been successful in toppling their non-democratic leaders (e.g. Egypt, Tunisia), others have been embraced internationally and supported through military intervention (e.g. Libya), while still others have been met with international paralysis and national resistance (e.g. Syria). The making of democracy and the struggle for human rights are not easily achieved, but as this chapter has shown, they are nonetheless well worth the effort.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Foweraker, J. and Landman, T. (1997) *Citizenship Rights and Social Movements: A Comparative and Statistical Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Risse, T., Ropp, S. C. and Sikkink, K. (eds) (1999) *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith-Cannoy, Heather (2012) *Insincere Commitments: Human Rights Treaties, Abusive States and Citizen Activism*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
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Notes

- 1 Dr Anita Brauer from the German Development Institute in Bonn presented evidence for the case of Tunisia at an event in London on 'New Technology and Human Rights' on 15 December 2011.
- 2 A more formal definition is offered by Rueschemeyer et al. (1992: 6) 'the totality of social institutions and associations, both informal and formal, that are not strictly production-related nor governmental or familial in character'.
- 3 See http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm