

Contemporary Issues in Comparative Politics

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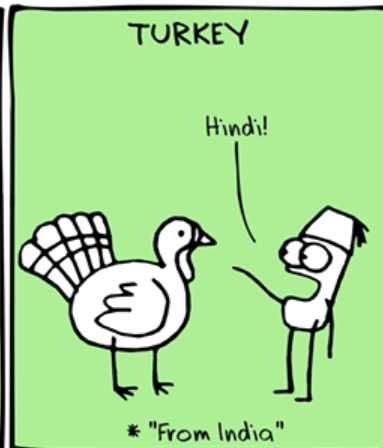
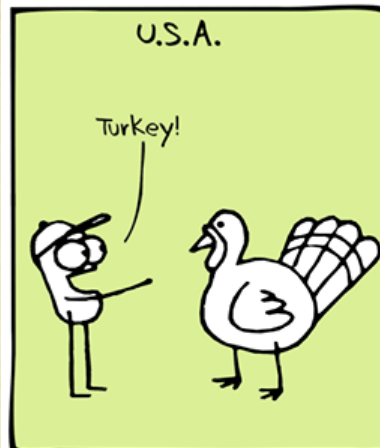
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ITCHY FEET



Last Week

- Executives
- Political Parties
- Interest Groups



WEEK 7 – Social Movements, Contention, and Revolutions

- Forms of contention identified by political scientists.
- Causes of revolutions and related forms of contention.
- The “Arab Spring.”

Concepts

- Contention (can be revolutionary or non-revolutionary)
 - *The pursuit of collective goods largely outside of formal political institutions*
 - Formal institutions are typically linked to complex organizations like the state or corporations
 - Here we are interested in contention that operates at least partially outside these formal channels



Social Movements

- Definition
 - Ongoing, organized collective action oriented toward a goal of social change.
- Examples?
 - Pro-life vs pro-choice



Social Movements

○ Civil society

- *Social movements are a healthy part of civil society (in democracies).*
- *A space **outside** of the organization of the state, in which citizens come together and **organize** themselves. What counts as civil society activity?*

○ Social networks

- *Structures of social ties or connections among individuals. Physical vs virtual networks?*

○ Social movement organization (SMO)

- *Organization created to help maintain and lead social movement activity over time.*
- *Some are elite led, some are grassroots. Examples: Solidarity in Poland vs Green Revolution in Iran. Is leadership, hierarchy necessary?*

Tactics of social movements

- Public demonstrations
- Protest activities
- Community organizing
- Consciousness-raising, educational, propagandist work.
- Educational lobbying



Ex. Civil Rights Movement

- Goals:
 - End racial segregation and discrimination
 - Legal recognition and federal protection of citizenship rights.
- Where: the South (U.S.)
- Methods: civil resistance: non-violent protests and civil disobedience.
 - Ex. Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-56)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FE6Yvy~5aw>
 - Freedom Riders, 1961
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zBY6gkpbTg>



Civil Rights Movement

- **Leaders:** Various factions and leaders including Martin Luther King
- **Outcome:** Led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 –
 - banned discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in employment practices
 - ended unequal application of voter registration requirements
 - prohibited segregation in schools, at the workplace, and in public accommodations.
- **Today:** The struggle continues...



Transnational Movements



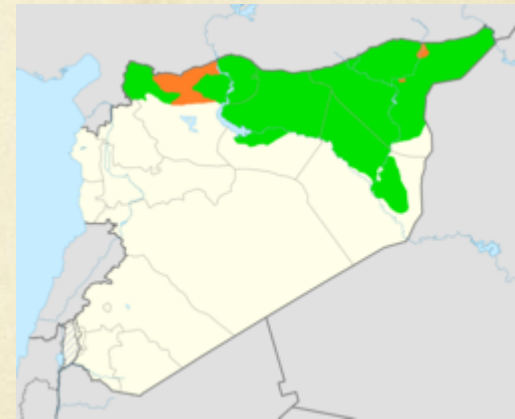
THE WORLD HAS SPOKEN
1,039 Occupation Events in 87 Countries

Revolutions

- Revolutions
 - *Efforts to dramatically transform society and its political and/or social structures.*
 - A topic that is fascinating for political scientists.
- Social revolutions
 - *Revolution that changes class structure*
 - Class structure: groups linked together by economic interest or activity
 - Ex.: French, Russian, Chinese Revolutions

Rojava – Social Revolution in Northern Syria

- Rojava, is a region in northern Syria.
- De facto autonomy in 2012 after the Syrian Civil War.
- A secular polity based on “democratic socialism, gender equality, and ecological sustainability”.



Revolutions

- Political revolutions
 - *Revolutions that primarily alter political institutions rather than social and economic structures*
 - Ex.: American Revolution
 - Not typically considered one of the “great” social revolutions. Why?
 - Changed political regime, but not social structure



Revolutions

- Anti-colonial Revolutions

- *Revolutions brought by subjugated populations against colonial powers, typically to achieve independence.*
- Examples, Algeria, Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe from the 1940s to the 1970s.

- Third World Revolutions

- *Revolutions brought about in resistance, at least indirectly, to powerful states in international system*
- Can overlap with “political” or “anti-colonial” revolution
- Examples: Cuba 1959, Iran 1979, and Nicaragua 1979.

Revolutions

- *Coup d'état*
 - Use or threat of force, typically by the military, to impose a non-electoral change of government
 - Can be distinguished from revolutions (in many cases no social mobilization behind it)



Other Examples of Contention

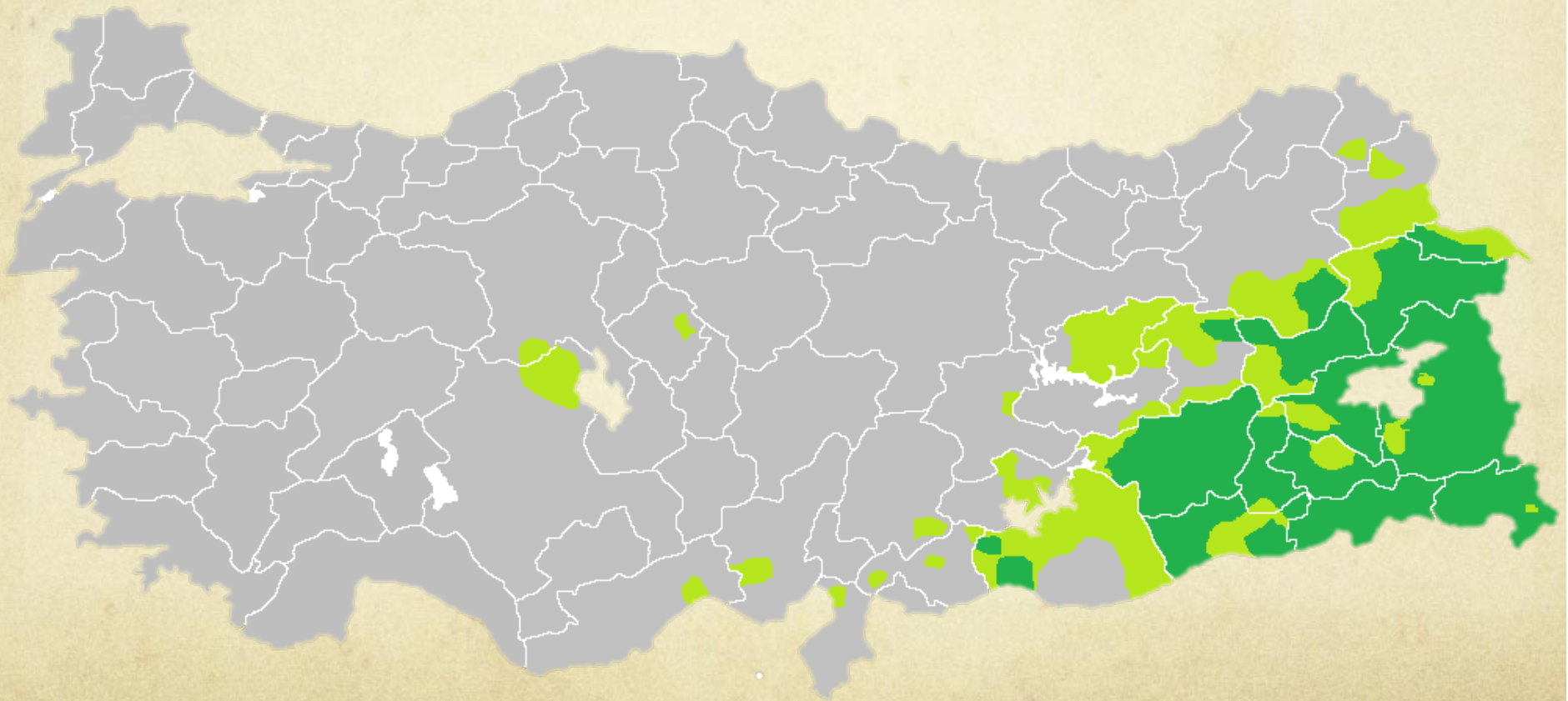
- Insurgencies
- Civil wars
- Terrorism
- “Everyday resistance”

Insurgencies and Civil Wars

- Insurgencies:
 - Organized, armed actors contesting state power
 - Non-state actors in military conflict
 - Insurgents often claim to make revolutions
- Civil war is typically between insurgents and the state
- Guerrilla tactics are common in insurgencies
- Examples: PKK in Turkey (ongoing), FARC in Colombia (ended last year after 52 years of war)

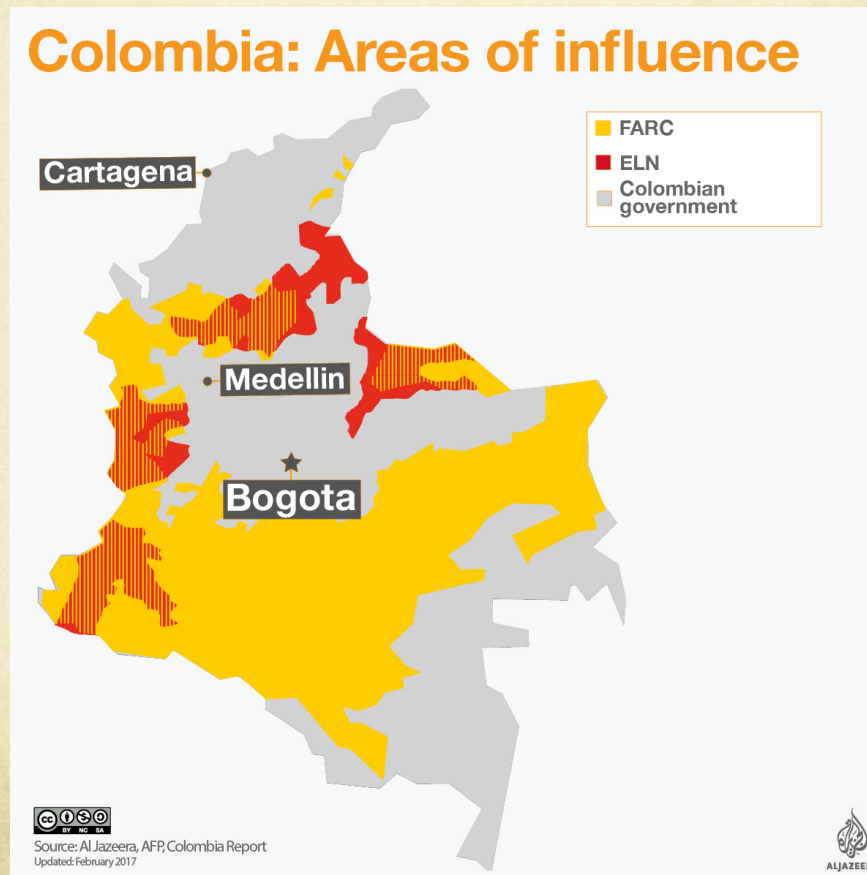
PKK in Turkey

○ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buPgN0Uv-nM>



FARC and ELN in Colombia

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTcFkYb9t4U>



Terrorism

- Definitions of terrorism vary. How would you define it?
- Common definition:
 - *violence aimed at non-military targets*
- Narrower definitions may include:
 - Victims are civilians (not state employees)
 - Violence is to instill fear in population
 - Violence is intended to bring political change
- Terrorism is often conducted by non-state networks of actors (al Qaeda, e.g.)
- Terrorist/Insurgent groups and Political Parties

Everyday Resistance

- Resistance without organizational resources and/or capacity to solve collective action problems
 - Work stoppages
 - Slowdowns
 - Boycotts
 - Sabotage, banditry, or crime

- Not revolutions or social movements



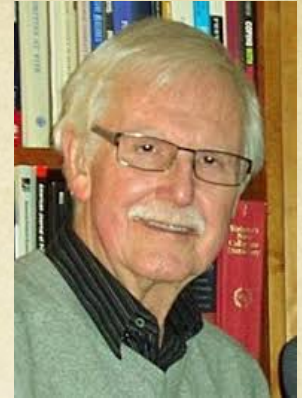
- Example: Poland, 1982. State repression against Solidarity. In one small town, Swidnik, they found a way to protest fake state news. They would always go out during evening news, and to make a point they started carrying their turned-off TV sets with them.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wi4D8B0oQGA>

Why do revolutions happen?



Relative Deprivation and Social Disequilibrium



- Social-psychological theory
- Changing conditions upset equilibrium
- *Theory: major changes cause social strain and conflict which increases demand for revolution often on the basis of relative deprivation (Ted Gurr – Why Men Rebel? 1970)*
- Relative deprivation
 - *having or feeling that one has less than some reference group*

Resource Mobilization Theory

- Focuses on ability of revolutionary actors to mobilize resources
- “Demand” for revolution matters less than opportunities to organize or revolt
- *Theory: Organizational resources matter*
 - Ex.: Urban workers close together can mobilize
 - Ex.: New communications & media matters
 - Ex.: Financing of revolutions matters

Political Opportunities

- Focuses on ability to take advantage of political openings
 - “Demand” for revolution matters less than opportunities to organize or revolt
- *Theory: State breakdown creates political opportunity for revolution (Theda Skocpol)*
 - State loses power to stifle dissent
 - Elites may conflict and split from one another
 - Her argument: State collapse followed by foreign conflict followed by potential for peasant mobilization.



Theda Skocpol
photo credit: Martha Stewart

Rational Choice Theory

- Consider table below:
“Should You Join the Revolution?”

	Participate	Do Not Participate
Revolution succeeds	Share in benefits	Share in benefits
Revolution Fails	Face personal costs or risks	Face no personal costs or risks

- Best strategy: Free ride, don't take risks
- *Theory*: Rationality of joining a revolution depends upon upping individual benefits, lowering risks, etc. (Mark Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma*, 1995).

Another scenario

	Participate	Do Not Participate
Revolution succeeds	Share in collective benefits, but also receive personal favors and special access to resources because I am a revolutionary	Share in collective benefits, but no personal favors or special access to resources.
Revolution Fails	Low likelihood of personal costs because the state is weak and so many people are participating in the revolution.	My group may be targeted for reprisal, so I may face personal costs even though I didn't participate

Culture or “Framing” Explanations

- *Theory: Ability to frame revolution in meaningful way shapes success*
 - Language that makes sense of their grievances
 - Language that channels towards revolutionary activity
- Culture is key to how people frame issues (John Foran, 2005).
- Cultural sources of revolutionary frames
 - Nationalism
 - Ideology (including social/economic classes)

Arab Spring



The Beginning of the Arab Uprisings

- **December 17, 2010:** A young Tunisian fruit seller struggling to make a livelihood, Mohammad Bouazizi set himself on fire.
 - This unleashed nationwide protests against economic stagnation and official abuse
 - The professional army refused the order to fire on the civilian population
- **January 14, 2011:** Tunisia's long-ruling dictator Ben Ali fled and took refuge in Saudi Arabia



Arab Spring

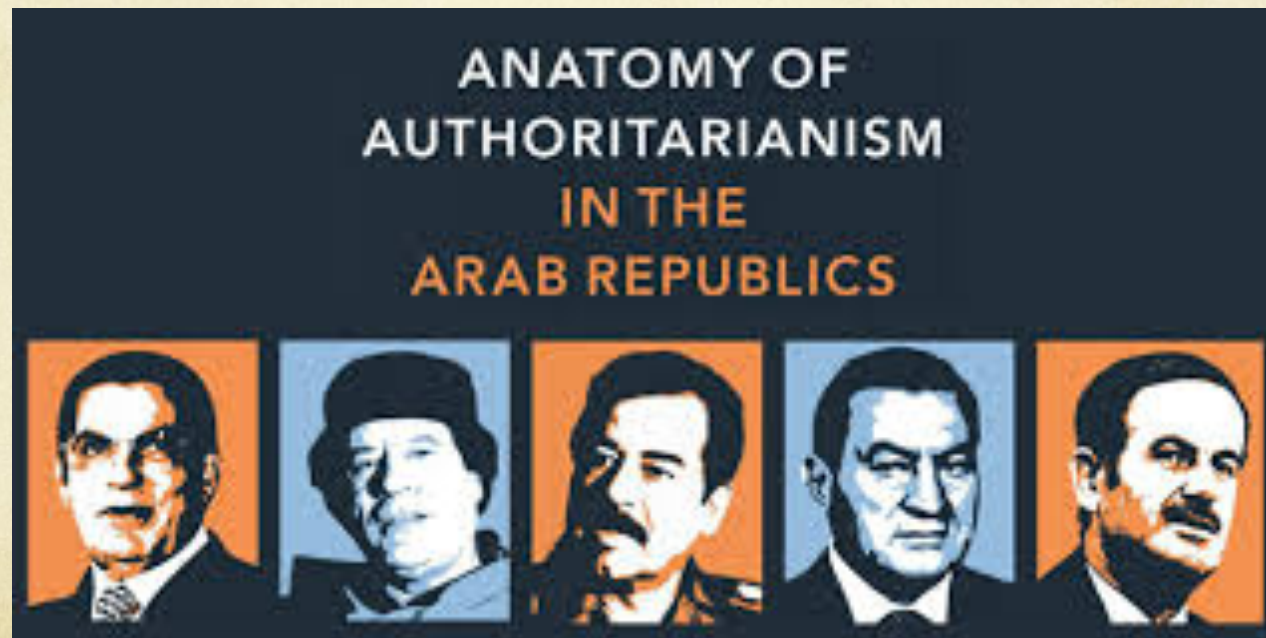
- By the end of 2011, dictators in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen were gone
- In Syria, the regime's attempts to cling to power have pushed the country into a violent, ongoing civil war
- The Arab Spring also produced uprisings in Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Oman, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Western Sahara.
- Most oil-rich Gulf monarchies sought to buy off dissent with subsidies while cracking down on any protests
- These events have also inspired similar movements in Iran, Turkey, and Spain. Even the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States and related movements in Europe have torn a page from the Arab Spring.

The Map of the Spring



Understanding the Uprisings' Dynamics

- The protestors often asked for more dignity, self-empowerment, and a fairer distribution of national resources
- Some causes of the uprising:
 - Authoritarianism



Understanding the Uprisings

FREEDOM HOUSE

2010

Map of Freedom: Middle East and North Africa



Survey Findings: Middle East and North Africa

Freedom Status	Global Country Breakdown	Global Population Breakdown	Regional Country Breakdown	Regional Population Breakdown
FREE	69 (46%)	3,069,704,000 (46%)	1 (6%)	7,634,000 (12%)
PARTLY FREE	56 (30%)	1,367,440,000 (20%)	3 (17%)	38,356,000 (10%)
NOT FREE	47 (24%)	2,333,669,000 (34%)	14 (78%)	324,190,000 (88%)
TOTAL	194	6,790,013,000	18	370,180,000

The Map of Freedom: Middle East and North Africa reflects the findings of Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* 2010 survey, which rates the level of political rights and civil liberties in 194 countries and 14 related and disputed territories during 2009. Based on these ratings, countries are divided into three categories: Free, Partly Free, and Not Free.

A Free country is one where there is broad scope for open political competition, a climate of respect for civil liberties, significant independent civic life, and independent media.

Partly Free countries are characterized by some restrictions on political rights and civil liberties, often in a context of corruption, weak rule of law, ethnic strife, or civil war.

A Not Free country is one where basic political rights are absent, and basic civil liberties are widely and systematically denied.

Freedom House is an independent nongovernmental organization that supports the expansion of freedom worldwide.

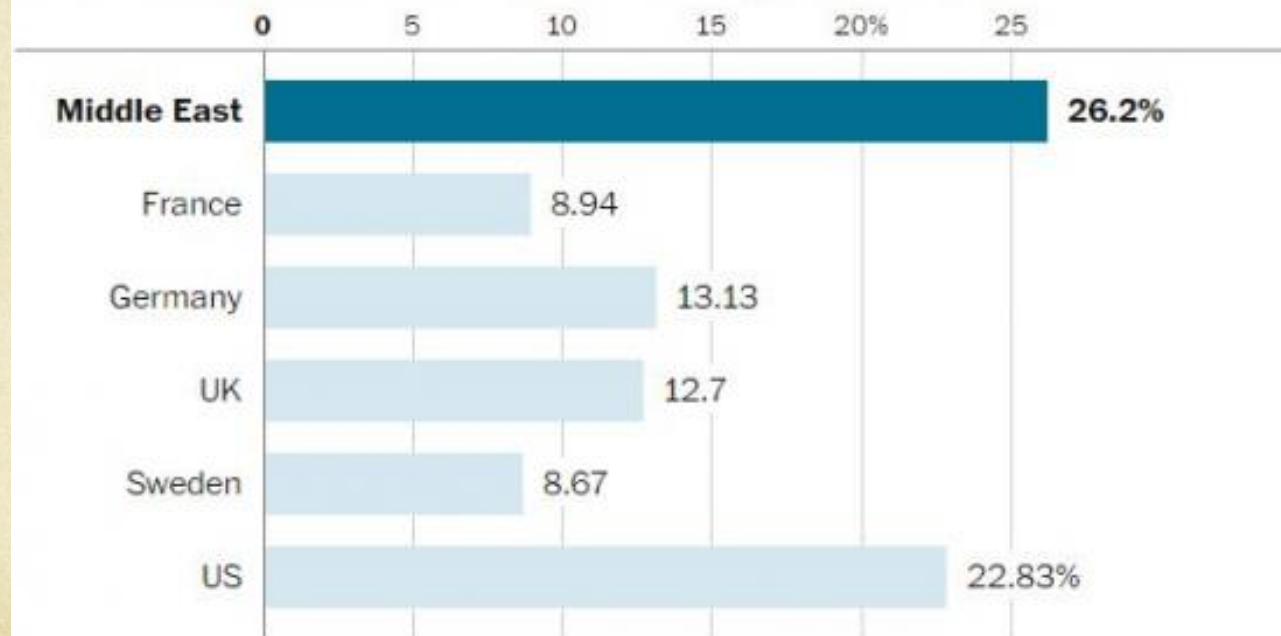
www.freedomhouse.org

Understanding the Uprisings' Dynamics

- Corruption and huge concentrations of wealth in the hands of a select few.

Top 1 percent income share, 2012

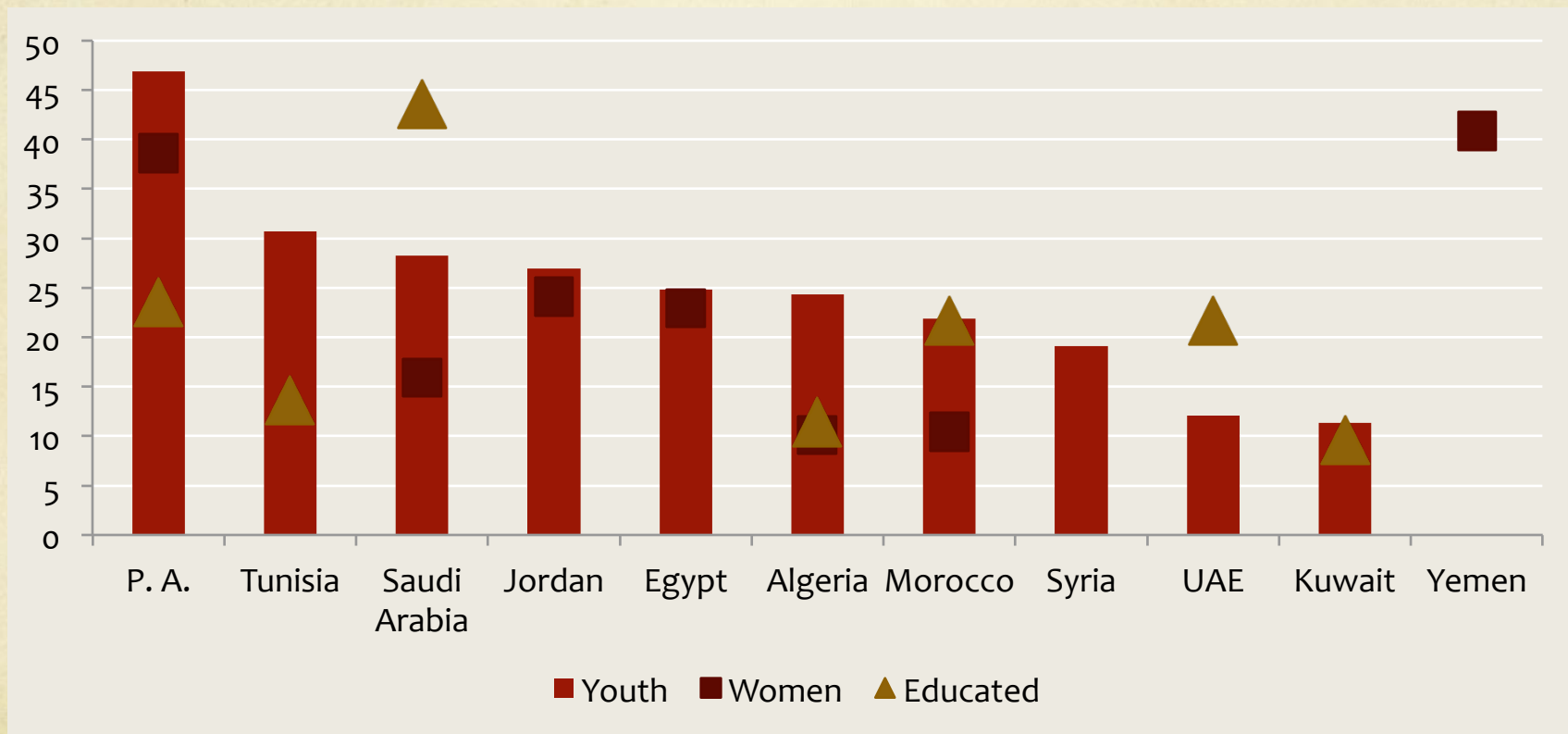
Under a "high inequality" model by the economists Facundo Alvaredo and Thomas Piketty, inequality in the Middle East exceeds even the United States.



German data is from 2010. German and U.S. data include capital gains.

Understanding the Uprisings' Dynamics

- extreme poverty caused by unemployment



Understanding the Uprisings' Dynamics

- a new generation of educated youth with the drive and determination to force a change



Understanding the Uprisings' Dynamics

- Impact of globalization



Understanding the Uprisings' Dynamics

- Access to new information technologies empowered societies to oppose their leaders and undermine their government's traditional monopoly on information
- Social media, Satellite TV, and Al Jazeera took the movements worldwide.



Understanding the Uprisings' Dynamics

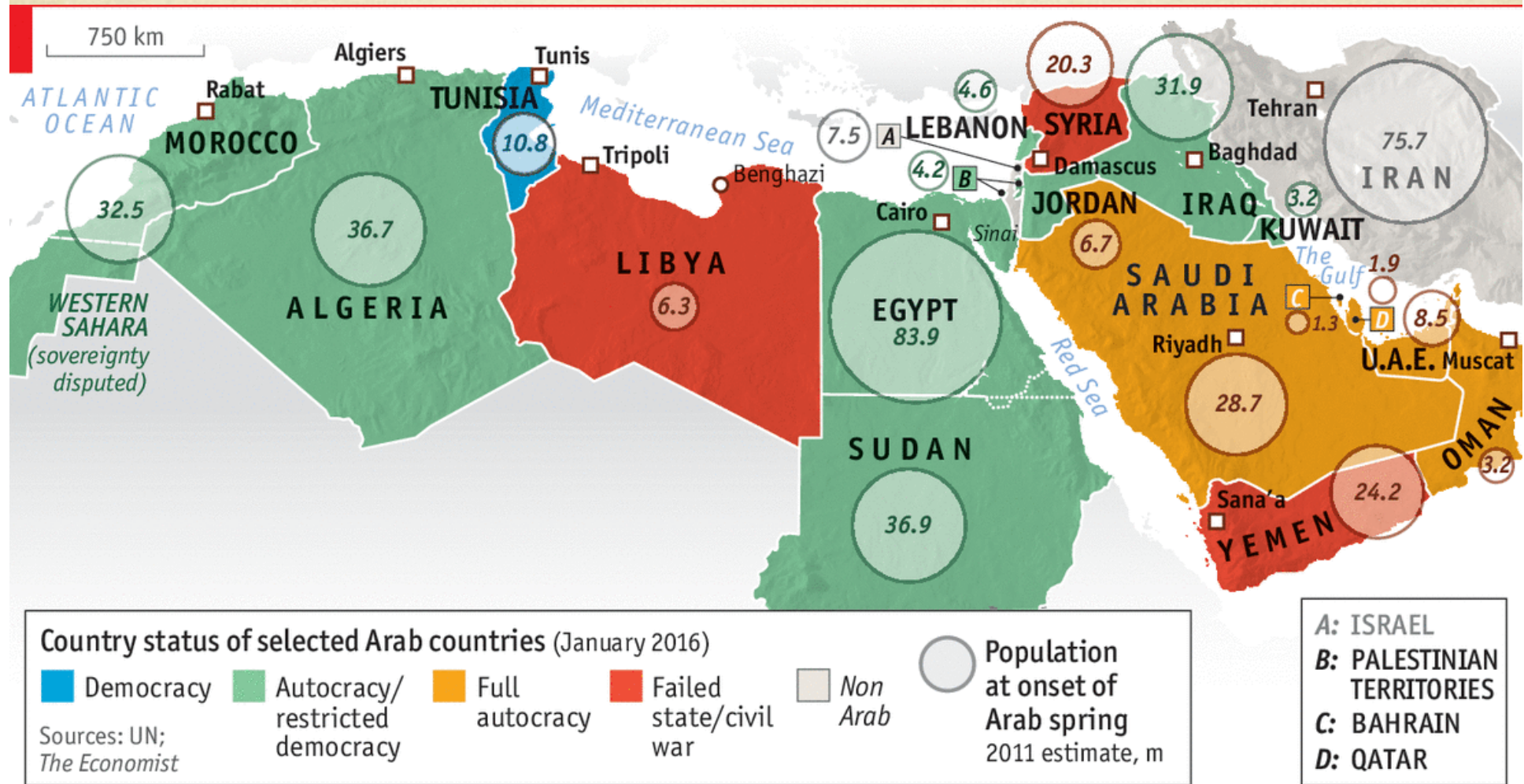
- Women are more educated and they fought for equality for the first time ever in some countries.



What happened?

- **Demonstrations** = rallies, marches, parades, millions take to public squares to chant/pray/sing, sit-ins and sometimes mob riots
- **Protest in the streets** = sometimes peaceful, sometimes violent/disorganized. People demand the end of oppression.
- **Civil disobedience** = strikes, boycotts, wide-spread arrests
- **Social Media** = use of Facebook, smart phones, twitter, blogs, internet videos/photos, chats organizing/communicating to raise political consciousness about censorship, etc.
- **Violent reprisal from authorities** = police violence, soldiers shooting civilians in the streets, censorship, political prisoners tortured, enemies of the state have 'disappeared'

Political Systems Today



Outcomes

- End of many dictators, but who replaced them?
- Monarchies endured: Jordan, Morocco, Gulf Countries
- Conflict and civil war (Syria, Libya, Yemen)
- Rise in Islamism and intolerance of other religions.
- Islamic State was the biggest winner for a long time.
- Social Media: Important, or overrated?
- Economic uncertainty



Long process, and the outcome remains to be seen.

Class Discussion

The Arab Spring of 2011

- Consider 4 theories of revolution:
 - Relative deprivation
 - Opportunities / resource mobilization
 - Rational choice
 - Cultural / framing
- Which theory is best supported?