

Hasso, F. S. & Z. Salime, (Eds.). *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolution*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

In 2011, Arab countries across the Middle East saw an unprecedented outburst of popular protest and demands for reform. Beginning in Tunisia and eventually spreading to the countries of Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria, the “Arab Spring” swept many long-standing Arab leaders from power. Western media outlets were quick to characterize the uprisings as popular demonstrations for democracy, though such a notion disguises the multifarious event that not only shifted leaders from power but also transformed spaces, challenged identities, and changed the way that citizens of these countries, and those in the Middle East, imagined themselves.

Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolution adds to the scholarship on and the depth of understanding about the varied ways in which revolution during the “Arab Spring” manifested across the Middle East. The product of a collaborative research project begun in 2012, this collection of essays reveals how embodiments, gender codes, and spatiality persistently informed each other in the various “Springs” across the Arab world. *Freedom Without Permission* joins a large body of literature about the Arab Spring yet makes a significant, new contribution by demonstrating how the revolutions and uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East fail to be accurately measured by traditional means and how they challenge classic definitions of revolution. Using interpretive methodologies to reflect on the spaces and bodies within which the revolutions and uprisings took place, the authors of this collective work make four “interventions” in analyzing these revolutions that have not previously been reflected upon. First, the authors define *revolution* to include the affective, intimate, embodied, institutional, and spatial registers of upheaval and transgression to include civil politics as well as intimate politics. This is a departure from traditional social science definitions of *revolution* as transformed states or overthrown regimes (p. 3). Secondly, in addition to altering our perspective of what a revolution is, the authors consider the material spaces within which revolutions occur (including the body) to be multidimensional places and spaces. The body then becomes the central site of politics, and not merely a surface upon which discourses are inscribed (p. 4). Third, this volume highlights the dilemmas that are posed by ideological conflict, sexual difference, and class inequality, which are embodied and inscribed in variety of spaces and how bodies and subjectivities were formed and transformed in the revolutions and uprisings of the Arab Spring (p. 4). Last, the authors of this volume erode the notion of public/private spaces that divide ideological and physical spaces as well as bodies and social relations (p. 5).

Containing case studies from across the Arab World, from Tunisia to Saudi Arabia, each chapter demonstrates the central theme of the book: gendered and sexualized bodies as political sites for both revolution and repression. In doing so, this insightful and innovative work illustrates that domestication of public spaces was central to many of the strategies and methods used in the revolutions and uprisings of the Arab Spring. Editors Frances S. Hasso and Zakia Salime have carefully curated an impressive collection of essays that put forward new theories for thinking about the intersection of politics, gender, and revolution in a nuanced and sophisticated way. Frances S. Hasso is an associate professor in the Program in Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies. Zakia Salime is an associate professor of sociology and women’s and gender studies at Rutgers University.

The book is divided into eight chapters preceded by a detailed introduction that beautifully sets the tone for the authors’ main concerns. Chapter one, written by Sonali Pahwa, an assistant professor of theatre and dance at the University of Minnesota, focuses on women’s personal blogs before the Egyptian revolution and investigates the relationship between digital and political repertoires. Chapter two, by Lamia Benyoussef, assistant professor in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages at Birmingham Southern College, takes us to Tunisia to examine music, poetry, visual culture, Facebook projects and activist campaigns, and the competing “mythscapes” found

therein during the period immediately before, during, and after the revolution. In chapter 3, Susanne Dahlgren, a senior lecturer at the University of Tampere and an academic scholar at the National University of Singapore, considers the Southern Movement and its activities to be part of “civilpolitics,” an imaginary state of power that is subservient and accountable to civil rather than military, tribal, or clerical forces in the southern Yemeni revolution. Chapter four, written by one of the book’s co-editors, Frances S. Hasso, explores Bahrain’s Pearl Revolution. In it, Hasso reveals that the revolution ruptured the gendered arrangements of bodies and voices in space, yet these tensions, he says, have not easily been represented in the images of the marches. Chapter five, written by the book’s other co-editor, Zakia Salime, examines the discursive, performative, and artistic spaces that were created or expanded during the 20 February Movement in Morocco. The 20 February Movement in Morocco was a series of demonstrations, inspired by other uprisings and protests in the region that began February 20, 2011 in Rabat. Salime further shows that the movement created new possibilities for overlapping of politics, gender, and culture by carving out new modes of political engagement and discursive spaces. Chapter six brings us to Saudi Arabia, where Susana Galán explores the Women2Drive campaign and digital activism there. Galán, a PhD candidate in women’s and gender studies at Rutgers University, finds that the Women2Drive campaign is an example of gender politics that intervenes into gender-regulated public spaces through blogs and other virtual media. In chapter seven, Karina Eileraas analyzes Egyptian Aliaa Elmahdy’s nude blogging and suggests that Elmahdy transforms the space of photos, using it to insert herself as a political agent. Eileraas is a visiting assistant professor of gender studies at the University of Southern California. In the final chapter, Banu Gökariksel, an associate professor of geography, jointly appointed in global studies at the University of Chapel Hill and an adjunct instructor of women’s studies at Duke University, reflects on the volume and the overall products of the larger research project. This chapter was particularly enjoyable. Gökariksel examines the Taksim Gezi Park protests in Istanbul and effectively demonstrates that many of the methods and strategies used to domesticate public spaces were shared by Arab and Turkish uprisings. This suggests that the centrality of the gendered and sexualized body as a political site of revolutions and uprisings (p. 223) is a broader pattern that might be seen across uprisings across the region to also include non-Arab countries. It also demonstrates a central point of book, namely that the body has long been an important, intimate material space within which revolutions and uprisings have been played out and through which embodied spatial strategies have been achieved.

The book is well written, and the authors of this volume effectively demonstrate that the revolutions and uprisings of the Arab Spring have not fit easily within any one theory or method and, in the case of each country, are unique. As such, we must assume different approaches and perspectives to consider these events. This book will certainly add to the scholarship and would be a highly informative read for those interested in deeply understanding the multiple levels and spaces in which revolution has happened in the Arab world and beyond. *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions* is an insightful and fascinating read.

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