



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

Protesting power-sharing: citizenship acts and eventful protest in divided societies

Nagle, J. (2025). Protesting power-sharing: citizenship acts and eventful protest in divided societies. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 48(1), 97-118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2024.2319814>

Published in:
Ethnic and Racial Studies

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:
[Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal](#)

Publisher rights
Copyright 2024 The Authors.

This is an open access article published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits distribution and reproduction for non-commercial purposes, provided the author and source are cited.

General rights
Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Queen's University Belfast Research Portal is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy
The Research Portal is Queen's institutional repository that provides access to Queen's research output. Every effort has been made to ensure that content in the Research Portal does not infringe any person's rights, or applicable UK laws. If you discover content in the Research Portal that you believe breaches copyright or violates any law, please contact openaccess@qub.ac.uk.

Open Access
This research has been made openly available by Queen's academics and its Open Research team. We would love to hear how access to this research benefits you. – Share your feedback with us: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/oa-feedback>



Protesting power-sharing: citizenship acts and eventful protest in divided societies

John Nagle

To cite this article: John Nagle (2025) Protesting power-sharing: citizenship acts and eventful protest in divided societies, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 48:1, 97-118, DOI: [10.1080/01419870.2024.2319814](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2024.2319814)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2024.2319814>



© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 20 Feb 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 703




View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Protesting power-sharing: citizenship acts and eventful protest in divided societies

John Nagle 

Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Sociology and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, UK

ABSTRACT

This article examines waves of citizen protest against the ethnic citizenship regime of consociational power-sharing. It seeks to contribute to research on power-sharing by bringing together the literature on “acts of citizenship” and “eventful protest” to show how protest waves in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and Lebanon seek to contest, destabilize, reimagine, and enact new forms of inclusive citizenship in ethnically divided societies. While research suggests that popular mobilization has destabilizing effects on power-sharing, this paper indicates that protest forms offer important forms of democratic participation and renewal for consociational systems. Towards this, the article illuminates four interweaving citizenship frames developed in protests: Citizens (Demos) versus Elites (Ethnos); Trans-sectarian; Inclusionary; and Inclusionary. The article draws on interviews, media and policy data to explore the voice of protestors.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 19 July 2023; Accepted 8 February 2024

KEYWORDS Ethnicity; protest; power-sharing; citizenship; divided societies; social movements

Introduction

Over several weeks in October and November 2019 nearly one-third of Lebanon's population reported taking part in protests known as the “Thawra” (Arab Barometer Lebanon 2021, 21). At the same time, millions of Iraqis participated in protests called “Tishreen”. Five years earlier in Bosnia and Herzegovina, hundreds of thousands of citizens took part in “Plenum” protests. While these three protest waves occurred in separate places, a set of common issues drove protest: corruption and weak public services, sectarianism, unemployment, and failing human rights. Despite these discrete issues,

CONTACT John Nagle  john.nagle@qub.ac.uk

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

protest actors distilled them into powerful frames that attribute blame on the political system and its elites for failing citizens.

This political system targeted by protestors is consociational power-sharing. Consociational power-sharing has become dominant as the main institutional framework to end political violence in divided societies, including Lebanon, Burundi, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Ireland and Iraq (McCulloch 2014, 501). The objective of consociationalism is to give guarantees – de jure or de facto – of representation for ethnonational groups in government and even in the public sector (Lijphart 1977). While consociationalism is viewed by proponents as an optimal framework to build peace and democracy in contested states (Wolff 2011), anxieties are also voiced concerning its performance, including dysfunctional governance, corruption and clientelism, institutionalizing ethnic divisions, and marginalizing individuals and groups who do not define themselves as ethnic (Nagle 2020).

This article examines protest movements in Lebanon, Iraq and Bosnia and Herzegovina as expressions of “insurgent citizenship” (Holston 2007), which confront, destabilize and reimagine the entrenched ethnic citizenship regime of power-sharing based on “closed, totalizing and exclusive ethnonational bloc boundaries” (Todd, Curristan, and Dornscheider-Elkink 2022, 896). In seeking to disrupt entrenched regimes, the article asks if protest waves have forged new modes of political imagination in divided societies beyond ethnicity? As such, the article examines the impact of protest on consociational power-sharing? Towards addressing this, the article examines four broad but interlinked forms of citizenship used by protest movements: Citizens (Demos) versus Elites (Ethnos); Trans-sectarian; Inclusionary; and Inclusionary. Yet, while protest has articulated new forms of political citizenship, this article also draws attention to the discursive and coercive practices used by ethnic elites to constrain non-ethnic politics.

Towards understanding these issues, the article develops a framework bringing together “citizenship acts” and “eventful protest”. “Citizenship acts” refers to practices of disrupting and challenging prevailing citizenship regimes that reproduce inequality and exclusionary boundaries (Isin 2008, 18, 36). Beyond challenging existing norms and practices delineating the boundaries of citizenship, citizenship acts seek to bring into being new imaginaries of progressive and inclusive relationships with the state. “Eventful protest” (Della Porta 2008) captures forms of contentious politics that seek to transform structures and collective identities by fueling mechanisms of social change. In “eventful protests”, organizational networks develop, frames are bridged, and links between members foster reciprocal trust. This article illuminates how citizenship acts are imagined, enacted, and performed in eventful protests in ways that generate political subjectivity and inclusive citizenship beyond the confines of ethnicity.

This article also seeks to make two interlinked contributions to literature on consociationalism, ethnicity and protest. First, while protest represents a

significant arena of struggles for democratization, consociational scholarship has rarely sought to understand the dynamics of grassroots politics. The elite-level focus of power-sharing research has been cautious about bottom-up forms of grassroots politics. As Bogaards notes (2006, 120), “popular participation in politics is perceived as a potential threat to the fragile power-sharing arrangements that make democracy possible and guard social peace in an ethno-plural society”. In contrast, the article argues that protest forms provide important forms of democratic participation and renewal for consociational systems. Second, the article indicates the potential of protest to generate new forms of inclusive citizenship that contest the basis of ethnic citizenship in divided societies.

Power-sharing, citizenship and protest

While there are many forms of power-sharing, consociationalism is an institutional apparatus designed to end intrastate conflict in divided societies. Consociationalism includes four key elements: a grand coalition representing the main ethnic groups; proportionality in communal representation; community autonomy on issues deemed to be vital; and constitutional vetoes for groups (Lijphart 1977; McCulloch 2014; Wolff 2011). In this system, “political parties are based foremost on ethnic interests; that ethnic quotas determine the allocation of key posts, and that state institutions, especially in education and the security sector, are segmented by ethnic group” (Howard 2012, 155).

For advocates, consociationalism provides a framework for peace and democracy in the aftermath of armed conflict (Wolff 2011, 1796). For this reason, there is a “growing trend among constitutional designers – national and international – to support consociational settlements” (McCulloch 2014, 501). Yet, consociationalism represents a specific form of “citizenship regime”, defined as an “institutionalized system of formal and informal norms that define access to membership, as well as rights and duties associated with membership, within a polity” (Vink 2017). The citizenship regime of consociationalism is that citizens’ primary identity and membership in deeply divided societies is located within ethnic/ethnonational¹ groups rather than in cross-cutting forms, such as the state, class, gender and/or sexuality (Nagle 2016).

Consociationalism receives criticism for institutionalizing a form of ethnic citizenship wherein individuals are seen as mere ciphers of their respective communities. Concerning its citizenship regime, two interrelated aspects are identified: *Institutionalisation* and *exclusion*. *Institutionalisation* refers to the governmentality of consociationalism which ensures that ethnic citizenship is the dominant form beyond other codes of political imagination in the state. As Mujkić (2007, 113) argues concerning Bosnia’s consociational system: citizens belong to an “ethnopolis” where “the exclusively ethnic form of political representation has negated the political citizen in the

pluralism of his or her identities and political interests". Institutionalisation can come in many forms, including quota systems to determine ethnic group representation in key government posts and public sector jobs alongside the use of census data to determine quotas (see Stojanović 2018).

Exclusionary captures the consequences of a system based on institutionalizing ethnicity. Through institutionalizing ethnic identities in consociational systems, the corollary is that it is exclusionary by limiting space for individuals and groups that do not identify as ethnic (Murtagh 2016; Nagle 2016). As Hromadzic (2012) argues, consociationalism constructs "invisible citizens": citizens who refuse to define themselves within ethnicized categories are bureaucratically unseen and socially undesirable. The term "Ethnic-rejecting Others" (Agarin, McCulloch, and Murtagh 2018) is also used to describe citizens within a consociational system who disidentify from ethnically based categories for ideological, political, or other reasons. In a system that prioritizes the recognition of ethnic group identities, "Others", "are typically subjected to patterns of political marginalisation and exclusion that are problematic for a liberal democracy", including "legal discrimination in public employment, housing subsidies and other spheres of political and social life" (Stojanović 2018, 341–342).

Thus, through emphasizing ethnic groupness, it is rare to find strong rights and protections in consociational formats for groups that cross-cut ethnic divisions, such as migrants, women, and LGBTQ+ populations. Where consociations omit rights and representation to women and LGBTQ+ groups, there is a risk that it will generate sexual and gender hierarchies (Deiana 2016; Geha 2019a; Hayes and McAllister 2013). As Mackay and Murtagh (2019, 5) argue: "in a system predicated on the recognition of communal identities, women ... find themselves marginalised and their interests subordinated to the ethno-national agenda".²

Yet, these non-ethnic Others are not simply disempowered actors; the politics of ethnic polarization is undercut by a significant section of the citizenry who contest their status as members of discrete and homogeneous ethnic categories. Towards this, a growing body of scholarship has drawn attention to the mobilization strategies of non-ethnic forms of grassroots activism. Research has explored, for example, how feminist and LGBTQ groups have mobilized for equality and rights within power-sharing systems as well as broader waves of citizen discontent against corruption and declining levels of public services (Deiana 2016; Geha 2019b; Kurtović and Hromadžić 2017; Majed and Salman 2019; Milan 2017; Murtagh 2016; Nagle 2016; 2017; 2018; 2022).

This article takes a different focus by asking how the citizenship regime of consociationalism is subject to political struggles aimed at forging new forms of political subjectivity? In addressing this, the article draws on the literature on citizenship "from below" and "acts of citizenship". Contentious citizenship from below captures attempts to escape, redefine, or even refuse existing

hegemonic citizenship categories by forging new inclusive forms. For marginalized and excluded social groups, the struggle is to “rupture or break the given orders, practices and habitus” of citizenship regimes (Isin 2008, 18). According to Isin (2008, 39), “citizenship acts” inaugurate new actors as “activist citizens” who “create multiple sites and scales of struggle” (Isin 2008, 39). In so doing, the power of citizenship from below is that it encourages participatory and inclusive democracy in contexts where citizens experience a democratic deficit. There are numerous ways in which acts of citizenship are generated. Protest forms a particularly spectacular performance of citizenship from below and acts of citizenship. Through protest, citizens contest existing citizenship acts that enforce inequality and marginalisation while also providing an instrument to imagine new scripts for citizenship based on inclusion, participation and equality.

Some protests engender particularly powerful effects. Della Porta (2008) terms these “eventful protests”, since they are transformative, not necessarily in leading to policy change, but that they create new feelings of solidarity, forge and consolidate alliances, bridge frames and foster social trust. Eventful protests “transform structures largely by constituting and empowering new groups of actors” and put in motion social processes that “are inherently contingent, discontinuous and open ended” (Sewell 2008, 517). Della Porta (2008) emphasises two interrelated aspects of eventful protest. First, alliance building helps construct common platforms, social forums and political programmes between diverse groups. Second, new movement identities develop and are given content during eventful protests. Alliance building is achieved by developing “tolerant” inclusive identities, stressing differences as a positive quality of the movement, and new codes and ideas develop from the interaction of different social actors typically excluded from the system. This article seeks to develop our understanding of eventful protests as important spheres for enacting citizenship acts. The article does this by illuminating eventful protests in divided societies as citizenship acts that innovate scripts, practices, alliances and identities that challenge the established citizen regimes of consociationalism.

Protest provides an important lens through which to examine citizen action about consociationalism. Consociational theory and practice have been wary of incorporating grassroots mobilization and popular participation into power-sharing in post-conflict societies (Bogaards 2006). Certainly, the primary purpose of consociationalism is to sustain stability and peace in deeply divided societies and it is the respective ethnic elites who are given primacy in achieving this status (Lijphart 1977). In this top-down model of democracy and conflict management, as Garry et al. (2022, 547) summarise, it is “political elites, rather than ordinary citizens, who are in the best position to reach decisions on contested issues that can be accepted as legitimate”. Intergroup bargaining and compromise in the executive reaches of

government are typically conducted in secret to insulate elites from their publics who might be less inclined to support moderation.

Protest, as an expression of bottom-up popular mobilization appears a threat to the elite-level politics of consociationalism. Protest enacts “conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents” – between actors who seek “control of the same stake – be it political, economic, or cultural power – and in the process make negative claims on each other – i.e. demands which, if realized, would damage the interests of the other actors” (Della Porta and Diani 1999, 20–23). In the context of a divided society, in which ethnic cleavages overlap with political ones, protest risks destabilising consociational institutions through the actions of grassroots groups pressuring ethnic elites into hardline non-accommodative positions.

Yet, beyond this characterisation as a threat to consociational stability, does protest have other effects which may be positive for democracy and inclusivity? At a broader scale, an extensive body of research demonstrates how protest movements have shaped the inception of “democratic innovations” (Talpin 2015, 78). Protest actors voice a fundamental critique of conventional politics by experimenting with participatory and deliberative ideas of democracy in places where politics is increasingly elite-driven and polarising. Such protest movements develop radical models of participatory citizenship that augur new forms of political imagination (Milan 2017). In establishing political parties, protest actors identify and promote novel issues overlooked by established parties. Beaulieu’s (2014) research on electoral protests, for example, shows that collective action can increase the probability of democratic reform.

Protest, thus, may generate both positive democratic and negative destabilizing effects on consociationalism as well as fomenting unpredictable forms of agency and outcomes. Protest by actors proclaiming to act as hard-line defenders of particularistic ethnic interests represent one end of the spectrum, potentially unmooring consociational pacts by enflaming intergroup antagonism and pressuring ethnic elites to engage in rounds of ethnic outbidding. On the other end, trans-ethnic, civic forms of mobilization, through expressing collective demands against corruption, political violence, and deteriorating public goods, offer opportunities to strengthen the democratic functions of consociationalism. Likewise, protest that embraces groups typically marginalized and excluded from consociationalism, such as women, LGBTQ+ movements and migrants, illuminate flaws in the system and point to the need for institutional reform.

Case studies and methods

This article draws on major waves of protest in three places: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and Lebanon. There are key reasons why these three case

studies are identified for research on protest. These respective consociational systems seek to recognise the main ethnic or ethnonational groups in the state: Croat, Bosniak and Serb in Bosnia (Deiana 2016); Christian and Muslim in Lebanon (Geha 2019b; Salloukh 2019); Shia, Sunni and Kurds in Iraq (McGarry and O’Leary 2007).³ Although power-sharing arrangements in the three states are not identical, they are beset by several shared problems: growing sectarian polarization, dysfunctional institutions and weak public services, corruption and clientelism, and poor human rights concerning gender equality and LGBTQ populations (Dodge 2020; Epic 2021; Fakhoury 2019). These states are also marked by increasing democratic backsliding and a move towards semi-authoritarianism in recent years. Lebanon, Bosnia and Iraq continue to have low female representation in parliament and exclude LGBTQ populations (Al-Hassani 2020; Deiana 2016; Geha 2019b; Nagle and Fakhoury 2021). Survey data from the three places illuminate growing levels of citizen disaffection, distrust and anger at their respective ethnic elites and the political system.⁴ Dissent has built momentum through waves of citizen protest.

These protests are respectively known as the “Plenum” (Bosnia and Herzegovina 2014), “Tishreen” (Iraq 2019-) and “Thawra” (Lebanon 2019-).⁵ These protests began over specific issues and quickly developed into major demonstrations against the power-sharing governments. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, protests started in the city of Tuzla in 2014 as workers demonstrated against the privatization of local industry (Kurtović and Hromadžić 2017; Mujkić 2016). The Thawra protests began in October 2019 (Majed and Salman 2019) after the Lebanese government proposed new taxes during an economic collapse ranked by the World Bank as among the three most severe seen anywhere since the mid-nineteenth century and which left over 50 per cent of the population below the poverty line (Arab Barometer Lebanon 2021; Epic 2021). Iraq’s 2019 Tishreen protests were initiated in response to heavy-handed tactics used by the security forces against university graduates engaging in a sit-down demonstration near the Prime Minister’s office in Baghdad (Epic 2021, 42).

These protests differed from earlier waves not only in size but also concerning the ensemble of actors that cross-cut sectarian, regional, gender, and generational boundaries on an unprecedented scale. Thus, alongside ordinary citizens, protests featured labour, LGBTQ, feminist and anti-sectarian activist groups. Equally significant is that these waves of protest do not limit their claims to effecting policy reform in terms of public services; they entail a scale shift in framing, from specific policy demands to the meta-issue of democracy (Della Porta 2020). These protest movements articulate a desire to transform their respective consociational systems and to blame power-sharing elites for multiple crises. The claim that protestors in Lebanon, Iraq and Bosnia sought to criticize and even call for a

transformation of power-sharing is evident in the chants, slogans and frames produced during protests. A report on Lebanon and Iraq protests recorded how protestors made a “direct link between governance systems characterized by sectarian or ethnosectarian power-sharing on the one hand and failing public services and deteriorating infrastructure on the other” (Epic 2021, 3). Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Plenum movement represented a “public denial of ethno-nationalism” (Riding 2018, 20). Notably in Lebanon, protestors chanted demanding “the overthrow of the sectarian regime” while in Iraq demonstrators stated “no to political sectarianism” – direct references to power-sharing.

It is important to stress that the spectacular waves of protest in Bosnia, Iraq and Lebanon are not necessarily evident in other consociational societies. This highlights that power-sharing does not automatically invite mass demonstrations from discontented citizens. A broader research agenda would thus need to consider the macro and microinstitutional differences in consociational arrangements and the varying political opportunity structures that shape protest across a wide range of cases.

By focusing on the three waves of contentious the article’s intention is to understand how citizenship acts are enacted through eventful protest. Rather than engage in comparative case-study analysis to produce causal inferences about social phenomena, the research aims to identify similarities between protest frames in terms of how actors challenge the dominant citizenship regimes of consociationalism. In this way, the approach used in this article closely corresponds to “eventful temporality” methodology, which tracks how sudden and inherently unstable events can transform the most apparently durable trends (Sewell 2008). “Eventful temporality” is used in protest scholarship to highlight moments of both “dramatic change and relative stability” (Gillan and Edwards 2020, 505). It shows how protest, at certain times, is eventful when they prise open critical junctures “capable of mobilising big waves of contention” (Gillan and Edwards 2020, 505).

To understand the eventful temporalities of protest in the three states, the article draws on a wide range of sources and material. Media and policy reports, including regional media accounts, on protests provide secondary data to understand the dynamics of contention in Lebanon, Bosnia and Iraq. Media accounts and reports were selected through a purposive sample that exclusively focussed on protests. These accounts thus include academic reports and those generated by activists themselves. Reports were supported by survey data – particularly Arab and Balkan Barometer – which provide public opinion on protests and power-sharing in the three places. The research design included ethnographic fieldwork during protest waves in Lebanon. This ethnographic research used in this article focuses exclusively on Lebanon as a basis to examine more broadly protest activist narratives about power-sharing.

Fieldwork was conducted in Lebanon (2014–2021) and included research during the You Stink (2015) and Thawra protests (November 2020). While fieldwork permitted an opportunity to see protest frames – enacted in slogans, graffiti and chants – develop in real-time, the main source of data for this article is from interviews. Interviews were conducted in Lebanon with 60 activists – including You Stink, Thawra, and Beirut Madinati – various LGBTQ groups and feminists, policymakers and human rights organisations. An interpretivist epistemology was utilized for interviewing protest activists. The interpretative framework focuses on understanding how actors endow social and political action with meaning. Through utilising an interpretative framework, interviews gave scope for protest activists to explain and rationalise their role in protest performance and to imagine what futures they hope for.

Interview analysis was conducted thematically. Open codes were used in the analysis and were based on the explanations activists used to categorise the key themes generated by interviewees when discussing a range of concerns, including their motivation for taking part in a protest and the frameworks they use to understand the meaning of protest narratives. From here, interview data and themes were given codes and then amalgamated into broader categories. These broader categories allowed for focused coding, in which interviewees emphasized links between consociationalism and protest.

Citizens (Demos) versus elites (Ethnos)

A major theme running through protests in Lebanon, Iraq and Bosnia and Herzegovina is a vision of citizenship that foregrounded the voice of the people (the demos) in contrast to the top-down ethnic elitist (the ethnos) structure of power-sharing. Elites in consociational systems are accorded the role of representatives and defenders of their respective communities' interests (Bogaards 2006). As communal protectors, elites in consociational systems, while they are incentivized to engage in moderation, can also use rhetoric and symbolic politics to create “us” versus “them” polarizing sectarian narratives. This politics is particularly acute in ethnic outbidding strategies in electoral cycles when intracommunity competition is intense. For Mujkić (2016, 222), in power-sharing elections, “citizens are subjected to systematic manipulation through sentiments of fear of collective extinction”. Elites, he argues, seek to direct citizen anger into “ethnopolitically correct expressions”, which is “anger against the ethnic other” (Mujkić 2016, 223).

Elites further make claims as carers for their ethnic constituencies by demanding resources on their behalf (Della Porta and Tufaro 2022). Patronage networks – in which material goods are provided by communal elites in exchange for votes and loyalty – determine how many citizens gain

access to a range of services, from medical care to education, refuse collection, security and the supply of gas and electricity. In this system, marked by the ongoing retrenchment of the state in terms of distributors of public goods (Kurtović and Hromadžić 2017), elites use services as instruments of treasure and coercion, meaning that the most vulnerable members of society are obligated to seek material support from leaders (Salloukh 2019).

The Plenum, Thawra and Tishreen protests deliberately targeted ethnic elites as the objects of blame for multiple crises – economic, corruption, ethnic polarization, and weak public services. The specification of blame aids mobilization by identifying “villains”, and such demonization fuels powerful emotions for protest (Jasper 2008, 412). Protest frames in Bosnia, Lebanon and Iraq articulated common themes, labeling elites as “thieves”. Protestors further compared ethnic elites to contaminants, a metaphor for power-sharing as a danger to the health of citizens. For one Iraqi activist, the power-sharing elites “have eaten away at the country like cancer” (Abdul-Ahad 2019), while a Lebanese activist said “they are just killing the country”.⁶ Protestors made a distinction between the civic protestors as a model of peaceful citizenship and the divisive politics of the warlords now reimagined as political leaders. Lebanese activists called out “we are all in this together” and “they can no longer divide us like they used to” (see Ayoub 2019).

Protests developed narratives designed to delegitimize the authority of the ethnonational elites. Elites were targeted for overseeing bad governance and for expropriating public resources through corruption. A Lebanese protest activist compared power-sharing elites to the “mafia”, claiming that they have been “sucking the blood out of this country for 40 years ... these elites have ‘incited sectarian hatred and thrive on the politics of fear’”.⁷ Beyond blaming elites, protest movements in Lebanon, Iraq and Bosnia and Herzegovina called for their removal. Lebanese protestors shouted “All of you means all of you”, a demand that the entire cadre of elites, irrespective of their ethnic identity, needed to be removed from power, a call echoed in Bosnia with “Let’s fire all the politicians”. A Lebanese protest organizer explained the importance of assigning blame to the ethno-sectarian elites: “All of them have killed, they have been in the civil war, they have corruption cases against them ... We don’t trust these politicians and their political parties. That’s what we hope for to get rid of them; they are a dictatorship” (Nagle and Mabon 2023, 393).⁸

In targeting ethnic elites as the source for myriad failures, protest actors engage in “signalling mechanisms”, acts that attribute blame to decision-makers by highlighting the political dimension of deteriorating conditions (Bremer, Hutter, and Kriesi 2020). Such expressions of attributing blame and responsibility to elites can be a powerful mechanism through which elites lose public support. Thus, protests, by focusing anger on ethnic

elites, rather than on different ethnic groups, opened vistas for reframing citizenship as one in which ordinary people do not have to be reliant on elites who claim to be communal leaders. A leading protest organiser explained the importance of assigning blame to the elites for Lebanon's postwar situation, marked by continuing political violence, political dysfunction, corruption and collapsing infrastructure:

Leaders that are benefiting from the sectarian system make you feel threatened, they make you feel like the Other victimizes you, your anger should be against the people governing because what we are experiencing is because of the bad policies of the people governing. It is not because of the "other" sect. That is the biggest win of the protest, is that it made people realise that their actual enemy is not the Other, but it is the people in power.⁹

Trans-sectarian citizenship

Consociationalism is principally applied to contested states characterized by mutually exclusive claims to political sovereignty and statehood. Consociationalism thus accepts that there are states deeply divided along ethnicity, sect, or ethnonationalism (McCulloch 2014). While consociationalists accept that ethnic identities are not primordial entitlements, they claim that "ethnic divisions are resilient rather than rapidly biodegradable and cannot be wished away" (McGarry and O'Leary 1995, 338). Underlying consociationalism is the assumption that the main groups are unlikely to integrate, and individuals are more likely to identify with ethnic rather than trans-sectarian or broader civic identities.

In contrast to the politics of essentialism, ethnic outbidding and sectarian rhetoric deployed by ethnonationalist parties, protestors emphasized shared forms of belonging and civic identity. The message of anti-sectarianism was articulated by protestors in the form of the movement itself, which is purposely constructed to be inclusive and non-sectarian. Thus, protest movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon and Iraq, rather than represent the vested interests of one sectarian group, purposely seek to bring together citizens across sectarian divisions and they articulate civic instead of ethnic politics. In Bosnian protests, for example, "new patterns of civic solidarity beyond the imposed, two decades-long patterns of solidarity based on ethnicity" (Mujkić 2016, 230). In so doing, protest movements emphasised their unity and commonality across ethnic lines in distinction to a system that institutionalises ethnic boundaries. As Riding (2018, 19) writes of the Plenum, the protests "enabled citizens to become citizens again and to form bonds and ties beyond their ethnicities, in order to then reimagine society together".

Trans-sectarianism links with "everyday universalism" (Todd, Curristan, and Dornschneider-Elkink 2022). Everyday universalism captures the process through which citizens in divided societies forge common and universalist

values, such as working-class solidarity or common experiences of suffering, which transcend sectarian cleavages. A Lebanese activist explained that “everybody who came to the protest came about issues that concerned them ... all people from all sects are affected by this problem because we equally shared the burden of this inefficiency and chaos. We have the same power cuts we are unable to pay the rent”.¹⁰

Protest movements across the three cases stressed the possibility of new forms of collective identity – such as class and nation – that transcend particularistic sectarian encapsulations. Class identity, as opposed to ethno-sectarian belonging, as a principle organising structure of state-society relations was captured in Bosnia with the statement “we are hungry in three languages”, a reference to how austerity and declining living standards are felt by all citizens regardless of the ethnonational group they belonged to (Kurtović and Hromadžić 2017, 280). This desire to construct new forms of inclusive political belonging was coherently expressed in Iraq’s protests through the demand for a “civic state where representation is based not on identities but on issues” (Jabar 2018, 7).

These expressions of everyday universalism that centre on collective rather than ethnicized citizenship are evident in the slogans and chants developed by protestors. Tishreen protestors used the slogan “Not Shia, not Sunni, not Christian. We’re all one Iraq” to demonstrate that grievances were collective rather than confined to one group. The concept of the nation beyond the confines of sectarian identity was further articulated in the chant: “We want a homeland” (International Crisis 2021, 6), an expression of a need for national unity in distinction to fracture along ethnic lines. This notion of collective citizenship in contrast to the perceived divisiveness of power-sharing was identified by a Lebanese activist: “Sectarianism never makes a contrary happen, it’s the opposite of a country because you keep thinking and conceiving yourself as just a member of a group, instead of thinking of yourself as a citizen in a country”.¹¹

Inclusionary citizenship

The objective of consociationalism is to provide inclusive governance in terms of accommodating the main ethnonational groups in power-sharing institutions. As noted earlier, this focus on ensuring the inclusion of ethnic groups has the corollary of marginalizing forms of political identity that are not ethnic, including “Others”, those who reject ethnic categories, and feminist and LGBTQ groups. Notably, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Lebanon, executive and parliamentary positions are reserved for specific groups. In the case of Bosnia, specifically, the power-sharing system prohibits citizens who do not identify as members of the country’s Bosniak, Serb, or Croat “constitutive peoples” from the presidency and membership in the House of Peoples,

“despite 2009 and 2016 rulings that the exclusion of members of other ethnic groups violated the European Convention on Human Rights” (Freedom House Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022). Despite constitutional measures designed to protect the political rights of individuals regardless of whether they identify with one of the main ethnic groups, “the dominant role of ethno-sectarian parties and the allocation of key offices according to informal religious or ethnic criteria reduce the likelihood that politicians will act in the interests of the whole population” (Freedom House Iraq 2022). Empirical data further illuminates how women are marginalized in power-sharing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and Lebanon. In Lebanon, despite a record 86 women running for office during the 2018 parliament elections, only 6 of the 128 members elected were women, which ranks Lebanon 139th in the world for women’s participation in government (Geha 2019a). As Geha (2019a, 36) illuminates the “intersection of formal and informal institutions of power-sharing can create insurmountable obstacles to women’s political representation”. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, only nine women won seats in the House of Representatives in 2018 (Freedom House Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022). Similarly, research on Iraq shown women politicians are typically selected from within the networks of the main sectarian parties (Alkhudary 2022).

In opposition to exclusion, protest waves in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and Lebanon fostered inclusionary acts of citizenship. Protests were marked by network and alliance building by activists soldering connections between several political projects seen to be excluded by power-sharing, ranging from gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, disability, labour movements, and demands for protections for domestic workers. Women played leading roles in organising protests. Lebanese Thawra protestors stated that the “revolution is a woman”, arguing that the erosion of patriarchy comes with the transformation of power-sharing. In Iraq, where “government institutions are designed to exclude and exploit women and girls”, Tishreen protests foregrounded feminist voices which sought to challenge the “foundation of a corrupt system built on women’s and girls’ exploitation” (Al-Hassani 2020: np). Thus, Tishreen was also a “protest against the broader social, political and economic conditions which continue to enable and justify patriarchal violence in the country” (Halawa 2021: np). The visibility of women in Bosnia’s Plenum was notable in the context of a power-sharing system accused of entrenching patriarchy (Deiana 2016). The protests, furthermore, represented an “archipelago of autonomous subjects’, embracing laid-off workers, single mothers, pensioners, and independent unions (Mujkić 2016, 237). The inclusion of LGBTQ+ activism was particularly prominent in Lebanon’s Thawra. The importance of the intersectional dimension is emphasised by a protest activist who argued for the need to understand power-sharing through an “intersectional lens”, which illustrates connections and stratified layers between class, racial identity, ability and sexuality.¹²

With building intersectional programmes and alliances comes the pluralization of politics. Pluralization refers to the insertion of new agendas and identities into the public sphere that have previously been excluded by the logic of consociational structures. Through establishing connections between issues, protest movements have managed to forge alliances between marginalized groups and the wider citizenry, embracing feminist, LGBTQ, and migrant workers. Protest networks made connections between several issues, ranging from anti-racist struggles, demands for wealth redistribution, LGBTQ+ rights and migrants. In so doing, protestors sought to dismantle the structural conditions which maintain sectarianism and social inequality. In Lebanon, activists weaved together various campaigns, calling for an end to homophobia, and demanding a “feminist revolution” and rights for migrants.

Participatory citizenship

The exercise of veto rights integral to consociationalism often leads to dysfunctional governance beset by policymaking logjams in the executive that can threaten the stability of the system. Deadlock is resolved by elite-level summit diplomacy conducted in secrecy to broker deals. In this top-down democracy, citizen input is absent from decision-making processes since information about compromises could only help to fuel discontent among radicals within each group and increase polarisation. Direct democracy and mass participation are therefore seen as problematic to consociationalism.

While power-sharing advances a model of democracy that is top-down and elitist, Plenum, Thawra and Tishreen activists made a virtue of bottom-up forms of democratic engagement, which fostered decentralised and leaderless organization, egalitarian and inclusive public spheres, and participatory modes of decision-making. In this way, protest movements are incubators of emerging ideas about democracy in divided societies. An activist explained that “we demanded accountability, transparency, social justice, citizen participation”.¹³ Activists promoted modes of bottom-up democracy and citizen participation and solidarity networks in opposition to a system that marginalises the political voice of ordinary citizens.

Citizen plenums and protest tents provide models of deliberative democracy and prefigurative politics where citizens discuss and act out citizen futures (Kurtović and Hromadžić 2017; Milan 2017). The Plenum Movement “established self-governed assemblies and resolved to embed new radically democratic or horizontal forms of governance” (Riding 2018, 19). Maintaining a non-hierarchical structure, the plenum hosted deliberative debate where decisions were made on a one-person-one-vote basis. Such displays of direct democracy form prefigurative politics – a political mode of organisation in which participants develop new models of “citizenship at odds with

the existing one based on the institutionalisation of ethno-national categories" (Milan 2017, 1346). In the Plenums, citizens were able to practice the democracy denied to Bosnians by the post-war framework.

Protest movements in Iraq and Lebanon reclaimed key public spaces (Tahir Square in Baghdad and Martyr's Square in Beirut) which have given transparency and inclusivity to civic participation. Protest tents in Iraq and Lebanon functioned as public spheres where citizens fostered discussion on the "structural problems" of political power. For one Lebanese protestor, the tents allowed participants to examine how their political and sectarian leader was controlling their lives. Iraq's Tishreen protests were purposely leaderless, and the protest tents were notable for encouraging inclusion and diversity rather than reproducing hierarchies and exclusionary boundaries. The tents provided a forum to discuss issues related to gender equality and feminist politics that the national parliament refused to debate. As Al-Hassani (2020) noted in the protest tents: "feminist agendas are common, tackling women's rights issues and challenging the misogynistic status quo". In such spaces, citizens debated whether it is possible to transform power-sharing and, if so, how to achieve this objective. An activist explained:

That would be the ultimate ideal route (changing the power-sharing system) if you really want to get the best type of representation for the people, but at this stage you have to take it step by step. Going from here to there cannot be done in one year, you have to first target the people, the corruption and then you target the system.

Constraining citizenship

This article illuminates how grassroots protests foster acts of citizenship through eventful protests. Citizenship acts are collective performances that break existing "social-historical patterns" (Isin and Nielsen 2008, 2), while eventful protests are moments of contentious action that build new alliances and identities and foreground alternative modes of democratic citizenship and participation (Della Porta 2008). Yet, protests have generated responses by power-sharing elites designed to contain and tame radical protest. The capacity of protest actors to transform, reform and gain inclusion into citizenship regimes is delimited by several interlocking discursive, coercive and institutional practices used by elites in power-sharing systems.

First, power-sharing elites countered protests by using the frame of loyal/disloyal citizens. Party loyalists in Lebanon – whose sense of security is anchored to sectarian elites – initially joined in protests and then withdrew following accusations of "treachery". "Ethnonational spin" was spread by all three nationalist blocs in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a bid to ethnicize, divide and delegitimize the movement (Mujkić 2016, 14; Murtagh 2016, 159). In all three states, where many citizens are beholden to clientelistic networks to gain access to basic services, communal

leaders could threaten to withdraw support to those accused of disloyalty. In Bosnia, protestors responded to such threats by chanting “They hit us with ‘identity’ – and we hit back with ‘bread’” (Kurtović and Hromadžić 2017, 280), highlighting the failure of elites to provide the most basic living needs.

Second, at the discursive level, ethnonational factions harness their media networks to delegitimize protest claims. Central to this is framing protest actors as threats to security and stability enshrined in power-sharing. Rhetoric and acts to securitize power-sharing are inextricably bound up with attempts to perpetuate regime survival. Elites also seized on the appearance of trans-sectarian/ethnic and diverse identity groups in protests as evidence of dangerous pluralism and moral decay. Social media campaigns run by sectarian parties in Iraq distorted the image of protesters by accusing them of participating in drug taking, same-sex relations and premarital sex in protest tents. Female protestors were labeled as “whores” in a misogynistic smear campaign (Al-Hassani 2020; Halawa 2021) and women activists were deliberately abducted. In a speech about Lebanon’s Thawra, a media personality warned: “If this sodomy revolution is successful, and they implement non-sectarian laws, they’ll pass laws related to their homosexuality” (Nadeem 2019). A Lebanese activist explained: “We were accused of course of being atheists, that we are with LGBTQ rights, which is the case. We did not respond to these rumours but they tried to kill our credibility in this way”.¹⁴

Third, by securitizing non-sectarian movements as a threat to peace and stability, ethnonational factions routinely use counter-protest violence through state forces and paramilitaries. Iraq’s government forces and militias allied to ethnonational factions were responsible for killing up to one thousand protestors and carrying forced abductions and disappearances of prominent activists (Epic 2021). Bosnian activists were framed as “drug addicts”, “criminals” and “terrorists” who threatened to return Bosnia to civil war. Protestors encountered active intimidation and brutality at the hands of the political parties and authorities (Kurtović and Hromadžić 2017; Mujkić 2016; Murtagh 2016). The security forces and militia groups attacked peaceful protestors in Beirut. Loyalists connected to a political party set fire to protest tents and on one occasion 54 people were injured after security forces used rubber bullets and tear gas during a protest. A protest organiser explained:

They (ethnonational parties) sent partisans to initiate violence. We didn’t call for violence at any moment. I was always about protesting for our democratic rights peacefully. We faced violence from the security forces.¹⁵

Conclusion

This article has brought together the literature on acts of citizenship and eventful protests to highlight how ordinary people contest and reimagine

the ethnic citizenship regime of consociationalism. This article has argued that protest is an important forum for contentious politics in power-sharing systems. Yet, research on scholarship has rarely engaged with the issue of protest. Street politics, as an expression of bottom-up popular mobilization, is at odds with the top-down focus on ethnic elites as the bastions of peace and stability in divided societies. Protest, however, has multiple and often unpredictable impacts on power-sharing. On the one hand, street demonstrations on behalf of hardline ethnic factions have the potential to antagonise communal relations while forcing ethnic leaders to escalate the politics of polarisation. On the other hand, non-sectarian protest movements, which embrace citizens from across ethnic cleavages, force power-sharing elites to become more transparent and accountable; it opens new horizons in terms of citizen participation, communal trust building, and including groups often excluded from power-sharing systems.

A key question to ask is what changes have the three protest waves effected in relation to power-sharing? Protest scholarship illuminates the manifold consequences of protest on democratization, including policy change and reform, effecting transformations in public opinion, and even building hybrid protest parties that participate in the electoral arena and win seats in parliaments (see Della Porta 2020). Protest activists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and Lebanon have not, as they hoped, transformed or overthrown power-sharing in their respective societies. Realising that the long-term transformation of consociational arrangements may require efforts to mobilise within the system, activists in the three states debate the merits of pursuing electoral politics as hybrid protest parties. While the Plenum protest movement rejected formal electoral politics on the basis that such a movement would represent the movement co-option within the very system that they seek to dismantle, Lebanese and Iraqi protest activists have contested power-sharing elections. In Lebanon's 2022 national power-sharing election, the Thawra list won 13 seats, comprising more than 10 percent of representatives in the parliament, while Tishreen activists secured nine of the 329 seats in the Iraqi Council of Representatives in 2021 (International Crisis 2021).

To get the formation of political parties, the prior waves of eventful protest have provided the engine for new forms of non-sectarian citizenship to emerge and become politically salient through alliances across groups. Protests challenge a model of citizenship in which ethnic leaders are granted the power to act as mediators and defenders of their respective communities. Protests articulate a vision of citizenship that is inclusive and trans-sectarian rather than one that conforms to ethnic polarisation. Such acts of citizenship shift conflict dynamics in divided societies away from inter and intrasectarian forms. It further enables a vision of a radically different form of political organization – the *Demos* as opposed to the dominant *Ethnos* (Mujkić 2016, 231). All

these innovations create a foundation for the political and social transformation of citizenship, even if sectarian structures were not completely dismantled. A protest activist looked back:

I was involved in many campaigns politically, and I was disappointed several times. Every time I thought that we had failed but now looking back at these things I don't think we failed at all. There was an accumulation of experiences, of small achievements, and successes that created this build-up. We are accumulating knowledge, accumulating political consciousness and creating networks that support each other and can come to the rescue whenever it is needed.¹⁶

Notes

1. The terms “ethnic”, “ethnonational” and “sectarian” are used in this article since these are used in the scholarly literature to describe group-based cleavages in divided societies. I recognise however that these group identities are not fixed, homogeneous or external to political pressures.
2. This is not to say that consociationalism cannot be reformed so that it provides stronger protections for non-ethnic forms of identity. The institutional structure of consociationalism, McCulloch (2020, 55) argues, can be re-designed in specific settings to “offer strong enough rights protections and representation for groups beyond the ethno-divide”.
3. While Lebanon’s consociational system accommodates Christians and Muslims according to a 50/50 quota system, 18 sects are officially recognized (see Fakhoury 2019).
4. The 2020 RCC Balkan Barometer (2020) shows that citizens across Bosnia ranked the national government as the least popular institution (20 per cent approval). Arab Barometer (Arab Barometer Lebanon 2021) highlights that only one-in-ten Lebanese favour maintaining the power-sharing system. Just four per cent say they are satisfied with the government’s overall performance. The same survey for Iraq (Arab Barometer Iraq 2021) indicates that just 24 per cent are completely satisfied or satisfied with the government’s overall performance.
5. Plenum, Thawra and Tishreen are all terms used by protestors and the media to describe the protests. Plenum protests were an open-ended civic forum of citizens gathered by their concern for the common good (Mujkić 2016, 227). “Thawra” means “Uprising” and “Tishreen” means “October” in Arabic.
6. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 21 November 2020.
7. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 13 January 2020.
8. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 13 January 2020.
9. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 20 November 2020.
10. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 20 November 2020.
11. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 21 November 2020.
12. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 23 October 2016.
13. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 22 November 2020.
14. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 21 November 2020.
15. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 23 November 2020.
16. Interview with protest activist, Beirut, 23 November 2020.

Acknowledgments

The author thanks Lisa Smyth for help with the literature on eventful methodologies and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on earlier drafts of this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work is supported by the Leverhulme Foundation the project received ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee for the School of Social Sciences, The University of Aberdeen [Ref: 2017-616].

Ethics statement

This article is part of a research project on non-sectarian movements in divided societies, entitled “Gender equality and LGBT rights after conflict: non-sectarian social movements and consociationalism in Northern Ireland and Lebanon”. Funded by the Leverhulme Foundation the project received ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee for the School of Social Sciences, The University of Aberdeen (Ref: 2017-616).

ORCID

John Nagle  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8836-9942>

References

- Abdul-Ahad, G. 2019. “At Least 40 Killed and Dozens Injured in Baghdad amid Protests Sweeping Iraq.” *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/25/protesters-killed-and-dozens-injured-in-baghdad-amid-protests-sweeping-iraq>.
- Agarin, T., A. McCulloch, and C. Murtagh. 2018. “Others in Deeply Divided Societies: A Research Agenda.” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 24 (3): 299–310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2018.1489488>.
- Al-Hassani, R. 2020. “The Seeds and Blossoming of Iraq’s October Spring.” *Zenith Magazine*, October.
- Alkhudary, T. 2022. “Gendered Networks of Power: The Parliamentary Quota and Women’s Substantive Political Representation in Iraq.” *LSE*. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/middle-east-centre/research/Iraq-Research/Gender-quota>.
- Arab Barometer Iraq. 2021. “Iraq: Country Report.” <https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/Iraq-Arab-Barometer-Public-Opinion-2021-ENG.pdf>.
- Arab Barometer Lebanon. 2021. “Lebanon: Country Report.” <https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/Public-Opinion-Lebanon-Country-Report-2021-En-1.pdf>.

- Ayoub, J. 2019. "A Look at the Lebanon Uprising through its Chants." <https://shadomag.com/do/a-look-at-the-lebanon-uprising-through-its-chants/>.
- Balkan Public Barometer. 2020. "Bosnia: Trust in Government." <https://www.rcc.int/balkanbarometer/results/2/public>.
- Beaulieu, E. 2014. *Electoral Protest and Democracy in the Developing World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bogaards, M. 2006. "Democracy and Power-Sharing in Multinational States: Thematic Introduction." *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 8 (2): 119–126.
- Bremer, B., S. Hutter, and H. Kriesi. 2020. "Dynamics of Protest and Electoral Politics in the Great Recession." *European Journal of Political Research* 59 (4): 842–866. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12375>.
- Deiana, M. A. 2016. "To Settle for a Gendered Peace? Spaces for Feminist Grassroots Mobilization in Northern Ireland and Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Citizenship Studies* 20 (1): 99–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2015.1054790>.
- Della Porta, D. 2008. "Eventful Protest, Global Conflicts." *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 9 (2): 27–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2008.9672963>.
- Della Porta, D. 2020. *How Social Movements Can Save Democracy: Democratic Innovations from Below*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.
- Della Porta, D., and M. Diani. 1999. *Social Movements: An Introduction*. Oxford: Wiley.
- Della Porta, D., and R. Tufaro. 2022. "Mobilizing the Past in Revolutionary Times: Memory, Counter-Memory, and Nostalgia During the Lebanese Uprising." *Sociological Forum* 37 (S1): 1387–1413.
- Dodge, Mansour. 2020. "Sectarianization and Desectarianization in the Struggle for Iraq's Political Field." *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 18 (1): 58–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2020.1729513>.
- Epic. 2021. *The Long Game: Iraq's "Tishreen" Movement and the Struggle for Reform*. Enabling Peace in Iraq Center. https://enablingpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Tishreen_Report_October_2021.pdf.
- Fakhoury, T. 2019. "Power-Sharing After the Arab Spring? Insights from Lebanon's Political Transition." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 25 (1): 9–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2019.1565173>.
- Freedom House Bosnia and Herzegovina. 2022. *Bosnia and Herzegovina*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/bosnia-and-herzegovina/freedom-world/2022>.
- Freedom House Iraq. 2022. *Iraq*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/iraq/freedom-world/2022>.
- Garry, J., J. Pow, J. Coakley, D. Farrell, B. O'Leary, and J. Tilley. 2022. "The Perception of the Legitimacy of Citizens' Assemblies in Deeply Divided Places? Evidence of Public and Elite Opinion from Consociational Northern Ireland." *Government and Opposition* 57 (3): 532–551. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2021.4>.
- Geha, C. 2019a. "The Myth of Women's Political Empowerment Within Lebanon's Sectarian Power-Sharing System." *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 40 (4): 498–521. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2019.1600965>.
- Geha, C. 2019b. "Politics of a Garbage Crisis: Social Networks, Narratives, and Frames of Lebanon's 2015 Protests and their Aftermath." *Social Movement Studies* 18 (1): 78–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1539665>.
- Gillan, K., and G. Edwards. 2020. "Time for Change." *Social Movement Studies* 19 (5-6): 501–515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2020.1806813>.
- Halawa, H. 2021. "Iraq's Tishreen Movement: A Decade of Protests and Mobilisation." *Istituto Affari Internazionali* 26: 1–21.

- Hayes, B. C., and I. McAllister. 2013. "Gender and Consociational Power-Sharing in Northern Ireland." *International Political Science Review* 34 (2): 123–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512112452170>.
- Holston, J. 2007. *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Howard, L. M. 2012. "The Ethnocracy Trap." *Journal of Democracy* 23 (4): 155–169. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2012.0068>.
- Hromadzić, A. 2012. "Once We Had a House: Invisible Citizens and Consociational Democracy in Post-War Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Social Analysis* 56 (3): 30–48. <https://doi.org/10.3167/sa.2012.560303>.
- International Crisis. 2021. "Iraq's Tishreen Uprising: From Barricades to Ballot Box." <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/223-iraqs-tishreen-uprising-barricades-ballot-box>.
- Isin, E. F., ed. 2008. *Recasting the Social in Citizenship*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Isin, E. F., and G. M. Nielsen, eds. 2008. *Acts of Citizenship*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Jabar, F. A. 2018. "The Iraqi Protest Movement: From Identity Politics to Issue Politics." *LSE Middle East Centre Paper Series* 25: 1–30.
- Jasper, J. M. 2008. *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kurtović, L., and A. Hromadzić. 2017. "Cannibal States, Empty Bellies: Protest, History and Political Imagination in Post-Dayton Bosnia." *Critique of Anthropology* 37 (3): 262–296. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X17719988>.
- Lijphart, A. 1977. *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Mackay, F., and C. Murtagh. 2019. "New Institutions, New Gender Rules? A Feminist Institutional Lens on Women and Power-Sharing." *Feminists@ Law* 9 (1): 1–54.
- Majed, R., and L. Salman. 2019. "Lebanon's Thawra." *Middle East Report* 292 (3): 6–9.
- McCulloch, A. 2014. "Consociational Settlements in Deeply Divided Societies: The Liberal-Corporate Distinction." *Democratization* 21 (3): 501–518. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2012.748039>.
- McCulloch, A. 2020. "Power-Sharing: A Gender Intervention." *International Political Science Review* 41 (1): 44–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512119861021>.
- McGarry, J., and B. O'Leary. 1995. *Explaining Northern Ireland*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- McGarry, J., and B. O'Leary. 2007. "Iraq's Constitution of 2005: Liberal Consociation as Political Prescription." *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 5 (4): 670–698. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icon/mom026>.
- Milan, C. 2017. "Reshaping Citizenship through Collective Action: Performative and Prefigurative Practices in the 2013–2014 Cycle of Contention in Bosnia & Herzegovina." *Europe-Asia Studies* 69 (9): 1346–1361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2017.1388358>.
- Mujkić, A. 2007. "We, The Citizens of Ethnopolis." *Constellations (Oxford, England)* 14 (1): 112–128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8675.2007.00425.x>.
- Mujkić, A. 2016. "Bosnian Days of Reckoning: Review of the Sequence of Protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013–14, and Future Prospects of Resistance." *Southeastern Europe* 40 (2): 217–242. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18763332-04002004>.
- Murtagh, C. 2016. "Civic Mobilization in Divided Societies and the Perils of Political Engagement: Bosnia and Herzegovina's Protest and Plenum Movement." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 22 (2): 149–171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2016.1169060>.

- Nadeem, M. 2019. "LGBTQ, Women's Rights Part of Uprising Conversation." *The Daily Star Lebanon*. www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2019/Nov-14/495548-lgbtq-womens-rights-part-of-uprising-conversation.ashx.
- Nagle, J. 2016. *Social Movements in Violently Divided Societies: Constructing Conflict and Peacebuilding*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Nagle, J. 2017. "Ghosts, Memory, and the Right to the Divided City: Resisting Amnesia in Beirut City Centre." *Antipode* 49 (1): 149–168. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12263>.
- Nagle, J. 2018. "Beyond Ethnic Entrenchment and Amelioration: An Analysis of Non-Sectarian Social Movements and Lebanon's Consociationalism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41 (7): 1370–1389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1287928>.
- Nagle, J. 2020. "Consociationalism is Dead! Long Live Zombie Power-Sharing!." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 20 (2): 137–144. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12329>.
- Nagle, J. 2022. "Disarticulation and Chains of Equivalence: Agonism and Non-Sectarian Movements in Post-war Beirut." *Third World Quarterly* 43 (6): 1343–1360. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1948830>.
- Nagle, J., and T. Fakhoury. 2021. *Resisting Sectarianism: Queer Activism in Postwar Lebanon*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Nagle, J., and S. Mabon. 2023. "Fierce and Accommodationist Divided Cities: Understanding Right-to-the-City Protests in Beirut and Manama." *Peacebuilding* 11 (4): 381–402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2023.2219119>.
- Riding, J. 2018. "A New Regional Geography of a Revolution: Bosnia's Plenum Movement." *Territory, Politics, Governance* 6 (1): 16–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2016.1260491>.
- Salloukh, B. F. 2019. "Taif and the Lebanese State: The Political Economy of a Very Sectarian Public Sector." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 25 (1): 43–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2019.1565177>.
- Sewell Jr, W. H. 2008. "The Temporalities of Capitalism." *Socio-Economic Review* 6 (3): 517–537. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwn007>.
- Stojanović, N. 2018. "Political Marginalization of 'Others' in Consociational Regimes." *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 12 (2): 341–364. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-017-0375-4>.
- Talpin, J. 2015. "Democratic Innovations." In *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (online ed.), edited by D. Della Porta, and M. Diani. Oxford Academic. Accessed 24 October 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199678402.013.53>.
- Todd, J., S. Curristan, and S. Dornschneider-Elkink. 2022. "How Moderates Make Boundaries After Protracted Conflict. Everyday Universalists, Agonists, Transformists and Cosmopolitans in Contemporary Northern Ireland." *The British Journal of Sociology* 73 (4): 885–902. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12962>.
- Vink, M. 2017. "Comparing Citizenship Regimes." In *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship* (online ed.), edited by A. Shachar. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198805854.013.10>.
- Wolff, S. 2011. "Post-Conflict State Building: The Debate on Institutional Choice." *Third World Quarterly* 32 (10): 1777–1802. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2011.610574>.