Street, Shrine, Square, and Soccer Pitch

Comparative Protest Spaces in Asia and the Middle East

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A shrine to the Virgin Mary on a once empty parking lot on the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) symbolizes Filipino people power. It lies at the intersection with Ortigas Avenue, the main thoroughfare that cuts across the upper and middle class as well as expatriate commercial and residential areas of San Juan and Pasig, just shy of the Asian Development Bank.

EDSA is Manila's gateway, a 26-kilometer stretch of asphalt and concrete that traverses the city's eight municipalities from Caloocan City in the north to Pasay City in the south. It is no coincidence that the shrine rose at this particular intersection as a site for secular pilgrims in search of a home for their moral vision.

Soccer stadiums, thousands of miles to the west from where ancestors of the Arab community in the Philippines and Southeast Asia set sail, symbolize the battle in the Middle East and North Africa for political freedom; economic opportunity; ethnic, religious, and national identity; and gender rights. The soccer

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pitch (the playing field) constituted a world in which the game was played as much on as off the pitch. Until the eruption of the Arab revolt in December 2010, the stadium—alongside the mosque—was the only alternative public space available for the venting of pent-up anger and frustration against regimes dominated by military and security forces. It was the training ground in countries like Egypt and Tunisia where militant soccer fans prepared for a day in which their organization, militancy, and street-battle experience would serve them in the final showdown with autocratic rulers determined to hang on to power.

Soccer had its own unique thrill—a high-stakes game of cat and mouse between militant enthusiasts and security forces and a struggle for a trophy grander than the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup: the future of a region. The soccer match offered the disenfranchised a voice in an environment of forced silence and official misrepresentation, challenged the political and social boundaries set by authoritarian regimes, and thrived on goalposts enlarged by globalization.

Nonviolent revolts such as those in the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, and Morocco have changed and are changing the political landscape in emerging nations. Protestors transform public spaces—what William Sewell calls "spatial agency"—from constrained physical landscapes into venues of people power.[1] The revolts in Bangkok, Jakarta, Manila, Cairo, Tunis, Manama, Amman, Casablanca, and Sana'a turned pedestrian streets, corridors, avenues, and roundabouts into stages for uninhibited political expression. Many of these venues have acquired the aura of a holy ground, a pilgrimage site where protestors seek redemption and deliverance from various forms of social and political injustice.

This article compares the various protest spaces in Asia and the Middle East. Whether street, square, or soccer pitch, these sites have created the political architecture for collective enactment as protestors across both regions turn the constraints of a built-up environment to their political advantage in a unique act of shared creativity aimed at advancing the social and political struggle. In doing so, protestors refashion political meanings and reconstruct and renovate physical spaces. They convert them into battlefields over competing visions of the future of a country or region with demands for greater transparency, accountability, accommodation, and tolerance. They turn them into venues that give a voice to the disenfranchised and provide a unique platform for building bridges across gaping divides.

The article projects EDSA and the soccer stadium as venues of political enactment. Over a matter of years, both became the stages for political expression in an environment of repression and autocratic rule. It employs Sewell's notions of

"spatial structure" and "spatial agency," both based on Dingxin Zhao's description of Beijing's Tiananmen Square as the ideal ecology for a student protest, to explore EDSA and the soccer stadium as perfect settings for popular uprisings.[2] The term *shrine* connotes a demarcation in people's minds. For Filipinos, EDSA is a sort of political "promised land" perceived in terms of time, place, and sentiment. For Middle Easterners and North Africans, the soccer stadium represents the reclamation of dignity and the assertion of identity in a show of strength and force bolstered by numbers.

Street, Shrine, Stadium, and Era

The shrine was erected within a year after the first Filipino uprising in 1986 to commemorate what many Filipinos see as a shining moment in their history. A gigantic statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary painted in gold rose on an elevated portion of the parking lot. Her image is a reminder of the first supposed EDSA miracle in which rosaries, statues, scapulars, and medals bearing her image stopped the tanks of President Ferdinand Marcos and ended his 21-year dictatorship.

Mass is held in a chapel beneath her statue. Surrounding the chapel are shopping malls, high-rise condominiums, a bus stop, and an underground parking lot. A flyover above the shrine and across both avenues affords commuters and passengers a full view of the Virgin Mary, a religious reminder of the sanctity of popular protest in a world of hypersecularism.

The shrine is large enough to contain a stage. The anniversary of the people-power uprising was celebrated every February with a Mass officiated by the late Archbishop Jaime Sin and a host of other church luminaries, followed by a program recalling the dramatic events of the four-day uprising. Key actors return to the shrine garbed in the clothes they wore during the protests, embellished by flab and wrinkles acquired with each passing year. After the reenactments, the stage is transformed into an entertainment platform with showbiz celebrities celebrating Marcos's departure from the Philippines. The combination of pious, political, and leisure activities marks the popular uprising as an ecclesiastically approved kind of political struggle-cum-all-night-revelry.

The Ecology of EDSA

In the consideration of contentious politics, Sewell notes the vital role of spatial structures: "Geographical structures [that] might be regarded as parallel to economic structures, occupational structures, political structures, or demographic structures—that is, as entrenched facts of social life that have their own autono-

mous (or at least relatively autonomous) logics and that determine or at least tightly constrain social action."[3] Echoing Anthony Giddens, Sewell argues further that although structures are "durable and constraining," they also provide an enabling effect that allows "humans to reproduce themselves and their social world . . . [and] also are subject to transformation as a consequence of the very social action that they shape." In studying contentious politics, Sewell directs attention to spatial agency—the ways in which protestors confront the constraints of space and convert these into political advantages that will advance the social struggle, refashion political meanings, and restructure the "strategic valence of space."[4] Thus, while space is characterized by immobile fixtures, it is also subject to reconstruction. Protestors create, produce, and renovate space—not just to imbue fresh meanings to it but to convert it into a strategic resource that transforms the overall environment for protest.

If the soccer stadium, with its enclosed infrastructure designed to evoke competition, passion, rivalry, and confrontation, is a natural site for an uprising, then EDSA would seem at first glance a strange, if not curious, venue for protest. Unlike China's expansive Tiananmen Square or Argentina's Plaza de Mayo, EDSA in 1986 was a comparatively narrow six-lane highway divided by an island that organized, albeit unconvincingly, the flow of traffic. Instead of a vast quadrangle on which most collective action tends to take place, EDSA is a long, narrow asphalt worm traversing metropolitan Manila that hosts thousands of vehicles transporting urbanites across the city. The omnipresence of vehicular traffic alone would already pose a ready-made limitation to any massive gathering.

EDSA's long stretch of highway is an artery fed by thousands of road capillaries that run in both directions, making it easy for the public to get to the highway from anywhere. A network of commercial establishments—shops, eateries, banks, and hotels—as well as outdoor vendors hawking towels, bottled water, cigarettes, paper fans, and snacks abets the road network. Daily commuters negotiate the highway in both directions, the quickest way to traverse the metropolis, their trek made slightly more convenient by the various amenities on offer.

EDSA's built environment includes gated communities for the upper and middle class that are surrounded by thick walls to keep out vehicular noise. The artery branches out into these communities and the amenities that provide them the comforts of urban life. As one travels deeper into these tentacles, one encounters the enclaves of the poor—the squatter settlements. They are relatively far from the main artery but close enough to be visible from the middle-class households. This is particularly true in Makati, Mandaluyong, and San Juan, where wealthy communities dot both sides of EDSA.

Gen Fidel Ramos and Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, whose defection in February 1986 from the Marcos regime marked the beginning of the popular revolt, may not have realized that their choice of Camp Crame as their base was the perfect site for protestors to negotiate the fine balance between structure and agency. Located along EDSA on the borders of San Juan, Mandaluyong, and Quezon City, the military camp was easily accessible to the residential communities.

On the evening of 22 February 1986, when Archbishop Sin called on the public in a Catholic radio broadcast to go to EDSA to protect the mutineers, neighbors offered one another transportation to one of the road capillaries where they would park and then walk to EDSA. From the north, the Quezon City residents drove to the commercial district of Cubao, where they left their cars to join protestors ready for the march to Camp Crame. To the east of Quezon City, within a one-kilometer radius or so from the military camps, were the communities of White Plains, Blue Ridge, and St. Ignatius Village, whose residents converged with those of Loyola Heights and the university further up north. On the western side were Greenhills, Wack Wack Subdivision, and the residents of Little Baguio in San Juan. Directly adjacent to the south of Camp Crame is Corinthian Gardens and Valle Verde. This network of neighborhoods provided the warm bodies in the first hours of the revolt. One of the more famous meeting places was the Isetan Department Store, located in the heart of the Araneta Center, a commercial area in Cubao. Agapito "Butz" Aquino, the younger brother of slain senator Ninoy Aquino, went on the air on Radio Veritas to call on friends and volunteers "to meet me at Isetan in Cubao . . . to join us and increase our number so that we can prevent a bloody confrontation."[5]

Shortly after the cardinal's and Aquino's radio announcements, approximately 100,000 people gathered in front of the gates of Camp Crame.[6] Networks of neighborhoods mobilized quickly in response to the radio calls, achieving what David Harvey calls "time-space compression."[7] People poured out continuously from the side roads of EDSA into the main avenue with the crowds swelling through the night, achieving instant "copresence" and the bodily force of numbers.[8] They brought food for the mutineers and soldiers, as the cardinal had asked them to do. The camps welcomed the arrival of local and foreign journalists.

This scenario repeated itself 15 years later in January 2001 during a second uprising. On 19 January at around 9 a.m., several university professors and hundreds of students from universities and schools in Quezon City marched from the Diliman campus down EDSA. Marchers formed groups along the 10-kilometer stretch to join them on their way to the shrine. By the time they arrived around noon, their ranks had swelled to approximately 30,000. It was a "traveling copres-

ence," facilitated by past experience and text messages on the ubiquitous cellular phone network urging users to gather at EDSA, whose narrow lanes swelled into wide avenues of protest. The artery hosted a new generation of protestors—a young constituency raised with the advantage of advanced technology. From the southern business district of Makati City, protestors formed a human chain that ran the seven-kilometer stretch from Ayala Avenue to the EDSA shrine, forcing the redirection of traffic.

From an avenue that seemingly limits large gatherings because of its architecture, EDSA was transformed by protestors into a roadway that led them to their shrine of political change. They converted a mundane avenue into "a matrix of power."[9] As the protestors took over EDSA, the notion of *people power* was born, and the term entered Philippine political discourse for the first time. EDSA was "power charged"; it no longer was a neutral, empty territory. With the achievement of a Durkheimian sense of "collective efflorescence" during the uprisings, EDSA became permanently transformed.

The Shrine as Stage and Sentiment

The shrine, built shortly after the first uprising, constitutes a "setting" that involves

> furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it. A setting tends to stay put, geographically speaking, so that those who would use a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance when they leave it.[10]

The shrine was the physical setting of people power in both uprisings, the locus of performance where human actors played out their social roles. In 1986 Cory Aquino was the quintessential bida, the animator of the protest theater, supported by a cast of millions—all determined to bring down the curtain on Marcos's presidency. The stage décor was an avalanche of banners, streamers, and insignias wrapped in unmistakable yellow. It was a grand symphony of people surrounding themselves with the colors of protest—a sudden burst of expression against a repressive regime gone pale and colorless in 21 years of misrule. The theatrical backstage fuelled people power: a public address system to keep the protestors informed; a hookup to Radyo Bandido (Bandit Radio), which operated in secrecy from an undisclosed transmission tower after Marcos loyalists raided and destroyed Radio Veritas, the Catholic radio station; an endless supply of food and water for the rebel soldiers; portable toilets installed at strategic locations along

the highway; and, of course, the rosaries and religious statues of the Virgin Mary with which protestors confronted Marcos's army and weapons. Communication networks were mobilized via telephone and citizen-band radios. Taxi drivers spontaneously organized themselves to transport protestors to the shrine.[11]

The evening vigils extended into mornings that transformed EDSA into an entertainment stage on which showbiz personalities adopted a political stance and the posture of protest. Freddie Aguilar, one of the Philippines' best-known singers, left the club where he regularly sang to head for EDSA on the second night of the uprising. On an improvised stage on the roof of a six-wheel truck, he and his band played past midnight. Television crews provided the floodlights, converting EDSA into a big outdoor ballroom.

Nonetheless, EDSA is also a venerated public space, a repository of meanings collectively crafted and brought into fruition by shared sentiments, sanctified by the Church and the rituals of adoration and blessing. During the early hours of the second day of the first uprising, Enrile recalls the active mobilization of religious rites:

> When daylight came Father Niko of the Magallanes Village Parish arrived with Father Bernas and Jimmy Ongpin [business and former minister of finance in the Aquino government], and we held mass at the social hall [in Camp Crame]. Read to us during the mass was the story of the Exodus, the liberation of the Israelites from bondage. We all attended the mass and received communion. Afterwards, General [Ramon] Farolan and I were asked to kneel by Father Nico and President Bernas of the Ateneo [a Jesuit university]. And they gave us the blessing and poured holy water on us.[12]

A central meaning of EDSA, like that of soccer stadiums in the Middle East and North Africa, was conquest of the fear that governed life for decades of martial law and hindered the effective galvanizing of oppositional energies. Martial law enabled military forces accused of human-rights violations to keep the population quiescent. The millions who gathered at EDSA to defy Marcos's military machinery and the thousands who confronted security forces in the stadiums rediscovered their courage to end a long tyranny of silence. Many who participated at EDSA and in stadium protests and confrontations feared a military attack—yet, bolstered by large numbers of others, they experienced a newfound bravery with which to stop tanks, security forces, and loyalist thugs dead in their tracks.

More importantly, the meaning of EDSA and the stadium was passed on to the next generation as protestors turned their revolts into a family affair. The depth of meaning that this evoked was boundless as parents witnessed the success and continuation of the spirit of EDSA and the stadium as well as the power of collective sentiment, channeled towards political change in the generation that succeeded them.

The shrine is more than just a vessel that contains the historical memories of a nation in protest. In the words of David Cole, the shrine is the embodiment of an "illud tempus," "a time of origins, the period of Creation and just after, when gods walked the earth, men visited the sky, and the great archetypal events of myth—war in heaven, battles with monsters, the Quest, the Flood, the Fall—took place."[13]

For Filipinos, EDSA is a gathering place for the expression of a collective sentiment. It represents an era when it all began, a symbol of a political cosmology in which Filipino society was said to have truly emerged—not from the artificial demarcations created by the past maneuverings of competing colonial powers but from the singular action of millions of anonymous citizens who left the security of their homes to craft a nation in their own image. For a country whose 500-year history was a series of colonial misadventures, political letdowns, and bungled attempts at nationhood, those four days at EDSA marked a grandiose departure from an overburdened past. For once in five centuries, Filipinos experienced the nation as truly their own creation—a tangible possibility, an "imagined community" with which to display to the world the result of their own handiwork.[14]

Soccer: Playing for the Future of a Region

If EDSA is a shrine, then Middle Eastern and North African soccer stadiums are battlefields layered with multiple struggles. They often are also simultaneous symbols of resistance and of the price tag that autocratic rulers put on expressions of dissent.

Autocratic rulers and militant soccer fans fought in recent decades for control of the pitch and the credibility that emanates from the one institution and venue which commands the kind of deep-seated passion evoked by religion in a conservative swath of land stretching from the Atlantic coast of Africa to the oil-rich sheikhdoms of the Gulf. For militant soccer fans known as "ultras" (diehard, highly politicized, violence-prone support groups modeled on similar organizations in Serbia and Italy), who emerged as soccer increasingly became a political football, it is a battle against the yoke of autocratic rule, economic mismanagement, and corruption. It also signifies the quest for dignity—for national, ethnic, and sectarian identity and women's rights.

The ultras' key role in the 2011 popular revolt extended a tradition of soccer's close association with politics across the Middle East and North Africa evident until today in derbies in cities like Cairo, Amman, Tehran, and Riyadh. In Egypt the tradition dates back to when the British colonial power introduced the game to the North African country in the early twentieth century. Founded as an Egyptians-

only meeting place for opponents of Britain's colonial rule, Al Ahly (the National) was a nationalistic rallying ground for common Egyptians. Its players still wear the red colors of the precolonial Egyptian flag. Dressed in white, Zamalek—first named Al Mohtalet (the Mix) and then Farouk in honor of the hated and later deposed Egyptian monarch—was the club of the British imperial administrators and military brass as well as the Cairo upper class. The clubs' bitter feud has been no less political since Egypt became independent.[15]

For rulers the soccer pitch is a key tool to polish their tarnished images and distract attention from simmering discontent—and at times a symbol of their brutality. Former Egyptian and Iranian presidents Hosni Mubarak and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as well as Al Saadi al Gadhafi, son of the late Libyan leader Col Mu'ammar Gadhafi, identified themselves with their country's national teams, turning their successes and failures into barometers of how their regimes were faring. Uday Hussein, the deposed Iraqi dictator's sadistic son, humiliated players for a missed penalty or errant pass by having their heads publicly shaved in Baghdad's Stadium of the People. Football legend and former Iraqi goalkeeper Hashim Hassan recalled that, after losing a 1997 World Cup qualifier against Kazakhstan, he was forced to lie with his whole team on the stadium's grass where Uday's goons beat them with sticks on their feet and backs; afterward, they were imprisoned for a week.[16] Mr. Mubarak and his sons fanned the flames of nationalism in late 2009 after Egypt lost its chance to qualify for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, bringing Egypt and Algeria to the brink of a soccer war. Gadhafi adorned his country's stadiums with quotations from his Green Book that explained his idiosyncratic theories of democracy.[17]

Soccer also goes a long way to explain the military's support and involvement in the game in various Middle Eastern and North African nations. In football-crazy Egypt, at least half of the Egyptian Premier League's 16 teams are owned by the military, the police, government ministries, or provincial authorities. Military-owned construction companies built 22 of Egypt's soccer stadiums. Similarly, in recent years Iran's Revolutionary Guards have taken control of a number of prominent soccer teams.

In times of crisis, stadiums often become mass-detention centers and killing fields. Syrian security forces have herded antigovernment protestors into stadiums in Latakia, Dera'a, and Baniyas. The use of the stadiums evoked memories of the 1982 assault on the Syrian city of Hama to crush an uprising by the Muslim Brotherhood in which at least 10,000 people were killed. A 1983 Amnesty International report charged that the city's stadium was used at the time to detain large numbers of residents who were left for days in the open without either food or shelter.[18]

US and Iraqi forces discovered mass graves in several Iraqi stadiums after the overthrow of Saddam in 2003. Shortly after their 2001 overthrow of the Taliban, US-led international forces played soccer against an Afghan team in Kabul's Ghazi Stadium to highlight the change they were bringing to the war-ravaged country. The Taliban had used the stadium for public executions. Believing it still haunted by the dead, Afghans are afraid of entering the stadium after dark. Even the night watchmen limit their patrols to its perimeter. Christian militiamen responsible for the 1982 massacres in the Beirut Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla, to which Israeli invasion forces turned a blind eye, converted a local soccer stadium into an interrogation center and execution ground. Some 800 Palestinians were killed in the two camps. Somali jihadists used Mogadishu's stadium—once one of East Africa's most impressive, filled with 70,000 passionate fans during games—as an Islamist training and recruitment center until government forces backed by the African Union forced them to abandon the city.

Fans from Algeria to Iran have resisted efforts by the region's autocratic rulers to control stadiums politically by repeatedly turning them into venues to express pent-up anger and frustration; assert national, ethnic, and sectarian identity; and demand women's rights. "There is no competition in politics, so competition moved to the soccer pitch. We do what we have to do against the rules and regulations when we think they are wrong. . . . You don't change things in Egypt talking about politics. We're not political; the government knows that and has to deal with us," said a militant Egyptian fan after his group last year overran a police barricade erected to prevent it from bringing flares, fireworks, and banners into a stadium.[19]

If defeat created political opportunity, then so did victory. Thousands of women stormed the stadium in Tehran when the Iranian national team triumphed against Australia in the 1998 World Cup, protesting their banning from attending soccer matches. Rumor has it that attacks on banks and public offices by fans shouting antiregime slogans during the qualifiers for the 2002 World Cup prompted the government to order the national team to lose its final match against underdog Bahrain because it feared the protests that a victory would produce.

Weekly battles in Egyptian stadiums with security forces and rival fan groups prepared Cairo's militant soccer supporters for clashes on the city's Tahrir Square that forced Mubarak from office in February 2011.[20] Similarly, antigovernment protests on the football pitch preceded mass demonstrations that erupted in Tunisia in December 2010 and sparked the wave of protests sweeping the Middle East and North Africa. Tunisian fans jeered Confederation of African Football (CAF) president Issa Hayatou in November during the Orange CAF Champions League return final between Esperance Tunis and TP Mazembe from the Demo-

cratic Republic of Congo. In the first encounter between the two teams in Congo, lost by Esperance, the fans charged that the Togolese referee had been corrupt and waved banknotes at Hayatou. The protests led to clashes between the fans who, like their counterparts in Egypt, became street-battle-hardened.

The eruption of popular revolts across the Middle East and North Africa starting in December 2010 prompted embattled autocratic rulers in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Syria, Bahrain, and Yemen to cancel all professional matches in a bid to prevent the soccer pitch from becoming an opposition rallying point. The suspension failed to produce dividends. On the contrary, the ultras—at the vanguard of a people-power uprising—won their first major victories when the battle spilled out of the stadium into the streets of Tunis and Cairo's Tahrir Square. A sense of empowerment, coupled with the organizational skills and street-battle experience garnered in four years of weekly clashes with security forces that the ultras of crowned Cairo archrivals Al Ahly SC and Al Zamalek SC brought to Tahrir Square, made them a force to be reckoned with.

The ultras' influence was evident in the organization and social services as well as the division of labor established on the square as tens of thousands camped out for 18 days, leaving Mubarak no choice other than stepping down on 11 February. Much in the way that a municipality would organize services, protestors were assigned tasks such as the collection of trash. They wore masking tape that identified them by their role—medic or media contact, for example.

Meanwhile, the ultras—often committed anarchists who oppose hierarchical systems of government—joined those who patrolled the perimeters of the square and controlled entry. They manned the front lines in clashes with security forces and progovernment supporters. Their faces were frequently covered so that the police, who had warned them by phone to stay away from Tahrir Square, would not recognize them. Their experience benefited them in the struggle for control of the square when the president's loyalists employed brute force in a bid to dislodge them. The ultras' battle order included designated rock hurlers, specialists in turning over and torching vehicles for defensive purposes, and a machine-like quartermaster crew that delivered projectiles like clockwork on cardboard platters.

Theirs was a battle in which they had nothing to lose and everything to gain. Weekly stadium battles with the police and rival fans were a zero-sum game for ownership of a space they saw as theirs. Much like hooligans in Britain whose attitudes were shaped by the decaying condition of stadiums, Egyptian and Tunisian ultras were driven by the regime's attempt to control their space by turning it into a virtual fortress ringed by black steel. The struggle for control produced a complete breakdown—social decay in a microcosm. If the space was expendable,

then so was life. As a result, militant fans would confront the police each weekend with total abandon.

Breaking Down the Barrier of Fear

The militants' street-battle experience enabled them to help protestors break down barriers of fear that had kept them from confronting the regime in the past. "We were in the front line. When the police attacked we encouraged people. We told them not to run or be afraid. We started firing flares. People took courage and joined us; they know that we understand injustice and liked the fact that we fight the devil," said Mohamed Hassan, "a soft-spoken 20-year-old computer science student, aspiring photographer, and a leader of the Ultras White Knights" (UWK)—militant supporters of the Zamalek team.[21]

Marching from the Cairo neighborhood of Shubra, Mohamed, a small-framed man with a carefully trimmed three-day stubble, led a crowd that grew to 10,000 people; they marched through seven security barricades to Tahrir Square on 25 January, the first day of the protests. This was the day that he and his cohorts had been preparing for in the past four years, honing their fighting skills in running battles with the police (widely viewed as Mubarak's henchmen) and with rivals from other teams:

> A group of White Knights, including Mohamed, sought at one point to break through a police barrier to reach the nearby parliament building. "When I see the security forces, I go crazy. I will kill you or I will be killed. The ultras killed my fear. I learnt the meaning of brotherhood and got the courage of the stadium," he said. He pointed to a scar on the left side of his forehead from a stone thrown by police who stymied the fans' first attempt to break through to parliament. As blood streamed down his face, he regained his courage from the crowd behind him: "They are our brothers. We can do this."[22]

"We fought for our rights in the stadium for four years. That prepared us for this day. We told our people that this was our litmus test. Failure was not an option," said Ahmed Fondu, another UWK leader, who proudly describes how he captured camel-mounted Mubarak loyalists attacking the protestors and held them captive in the Sadat metro station near Tahrir Square.[23] The battles on Tahrir Square—like those on Sana'a's Change Square and Manama's now-destroyed Pearl Monument, like those years earlier on Manila's EDSA—have changed society and imbued significant segments of the population with a sense of unity and power that inevitably weakens but remains a distinct memory marking an entire generation. A transition of power had taken place even before presidents like Mubarak and Tunisia's Zine el Abidine Ben Ali were forced to resign after decades in office and as thousands in Syria for months faced down tanks and naval

vessels. The courage to take a stand, exercised initially by activist soccer fans in Tunisia and Egypt, was embraced by a wider population no longer afraid to speak or assemble.

Twenty-five years ago, the same wall of fear broke down in the Philippines. Ana, a middle-class housewife, recalls her outrage at the shooting of Benigno Aquino, the opposition senator. It was her anger that broke through the wall. Hundreds of thousands of Filipinos gathered in the streets to express their rage and their pride. "There was a groundswell of people," she said. "It felt so good to see all of those people, hundreds and thousands of people, day in day out. It made me feel good to know that there are still many, many Filipinos who love our country."[24]

Soccer as Background to the Benghazi Revolt

Gadhafi's controversial soccer-playing son, Saadi, a leader in his father's fight for survival, took manipulation of the game to garner public support to the extreme. Football became an arena of confrontation between Gadhafi supporters and opponents long before the eruption of the revolt in 2011. Resentment against the Gadhafis in the eastern opposition stronghold of Benghazi started to build up when the fortunes of the city's soccer team, Al Ahli (Benghazi), tumbled on and off the field a decade ago when Saadi took a majority stake and became captain of its Tripoli namesake and archrival.

Saadi's association with Al Ahli (Tripoli) meant that the prestige of the regime was on the line whenever the team played. Politics rather than performance dictated the outcome of its matches. When Al Ahli Benghazi had a 1–0 lead on its Tripoli namesake in the first half of a match in the summer of 2000, the referee helpfully imposed two penalties against it and allowed Al Ahli Tripoli an offside goal in the second half. Benghazi's players walked off the pitch but were ordered to return by Saadi's guards, and Tripoli won 3–1.

That summer, Al Ahli Benghazi also played against a team from Al-Baydah, the hometown of Saadi's mother and the place where the first anti-Gadhafi demonstrations against corruption in public housing were staged. Benghazi fans were so outraged by a penalty that they invaded the pitch, forcing the game to be abandoned. Off the pitch, the angry fans set fire to the local branch of the Libyan Football Federation, headed by Saadi. In response, the government dissolved the Benghazi club, demolished its headquarters, and arrested 50 of its fans. Public outrage over the retaliation against Benghazi forced Saadi to resign as head of the federation, only to be reinstated by his father in response to the federation's alleged claim that it needed Gadhafi's son as its leader.

The Benghazi-Tripoli rivalry played out as opponents, aided by the imposition of a no-fly zone above Libya by an international military coalition, and supporters of Gadhafi battled for the future of Libya. For fans of Al Ahli Benghazi, the wresting of control of the city from Gadhafi's forces represented payback time. By contrast, "Al Ahli Tripoli fans cheered Saadi [in March] as he toured Tripoli's Green Square on the roof of a car, waving and shaking the hands of supporters, who chanted 'God, Libya and Muammar only.'"[25]

Redefining Protest Space, Reconquering Territory

Egypt's postrevolution mood is marked by a newly acquired sense of entitlement and demand for far-reaching reform. Protestors imbued with what people power can achieve continue to demonstrate in a bid to clean out the remnants of the former regime, ensure that Mubarak-era officials are held accountable, and maintain pressure on the country's military rulers to fulfill their pledge to lead Egypt to democracy. The road to reform and nation building in a post-people-power context promises to be very long and arduous, much like what the EDSA experience has become—an illustration of the challenges that confront a country after a peaceful uprising has successfully dethroned dictators. A grandiose battle in public discourse over a vision of society continues long after the departure of President Marcos.

The shrine itself has hosted far fewer numbers every year during the people-power anniversaries. Gone are the lengthy ceremonies to reenact the events of February 1986 that brought together the urban middle class, the Church, and the military. In the ensuing years after a few other failed attempts at people power, many celebrants and well-wishers decided to stay home instead. During the 16th anniversary in February 2002, the rector of the shrine, Father Socrates Villegas, declared it "off-limits" to political activities. Former president Fidel Ramos, himself a beneficiary of people power, echoed the same sentiment: "I do not think there should be another momentous event like EDSA. . . . What we Filipinos have to do is to strengthen our democratic institutions that will lead to sustainable development and peace and security."[26] An entire contingent of police cordoned off the shrine. Their presence was so ominous that it elicited public reaction to what the shrine has become: a heavily patrolled arena that was once a symbol of freedom and openness.

In February 2008, 21 years after EDSA, protestors again besieged the shrine—though in far smaller numbers—over a whistle-blower's confession to a corrupt deal that allegedly involved the Philippine president. To calm fears of another people-power uprising, the protestors gathered there to hold a "prayer vigil." Of-

ficials of the Catholic Church, nonetheless, requested that the Philippine National Police prevent protestors from using the shrine for political purposes, much in the same way that the Egyptian military has cordoned off Tahrir Square to ensure it is no longer a protest site. The shrine is now exclusively religious territory and no longer available for protest, the Church said, eager to put people power firmly in the past. The Egyptian military has restored Tahrir to its decades-old role as a key traffic artery. Both are sites where people power began, and both were being demystified by forces that had played a key role in the revolt's success—the Catholic Church and the military.

Confusion and uncertainty attend Filipinos' and Egyptians' grappling with the contested meanings unleashed by people power. Discourse about the direction of social and political development is being reshaped in ways that echo former Philippine president Ramos's emphasis on building and strengthening the institutions of governance to deepen and consolidate democracy and preserve the military's perks and privileges in the process.

As the national conversation in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa proceeds with a renewed spirit of citizenship, protest spaces will continue to be reconfigured. The soccer pitch and the shrine will evolve as collective meanings and values slowly take form. In the post-EDSA Philippines, this conversation occurred off-site—away from the shrine, the street, and the stage. Instead, it took place in the structures of decision making, among groups of officials, citizens, and ordinary people who participate in these socially sanctioned mechanisms. It was an often tedious and painstaking process that required the skills of negotiation and compromise rather than the slogans and media sound bytes of a protest site.

The struggle in the Middle East and North Africa has moved out of the stadium into larger public spaces and in some cases into the smoke-filled rooms of political horse-trading. Tunisia has already embarked on the road charted by the Philippines as political forces negotiate the precise structure of their future democracy. In Egypt the terms of the transition are still being negotiated in and off the street in a process that is far more convoluted and contentious. In Jordan and Morocco, the street maintains pressure on a monarch who, unlike most Arab rulers, has opted for engagement of protestors rather than oppression in his bid to retain power. Elsewhere in the region, fierce battles involving varying degrees of violence, ranging from the postrevolt Libyan government's inability to disarm a plethora of militias to brutal civil war in Syria, will shape the outcome of the revolts and the transition to a more open, transparent society.

Notes

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2. Ibid.; and Dingxin Zhao, "Ecologies of Social Movements: Student Mobilization during the 1989 Prodemocracy Movement in Beijing," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 6 (May 1998): 1502.
3. Sewell, "Space in Contentious Politics," 54.
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5. Monina Allarey Mercado, ed., *People Power: The Philippine Revolution of 1986; An Eyewitness History* (Manila: Writers and Readers Publishing, 1986), 106.
6. Quijano De Manila, *Quartet of the Tiger Moon: Scenes from the People Power Apocalypse* (Manila: Book Stop, 1986), 27.
7. Sewell, "Space in Contentious Politics," 60.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 68.
10. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 97.
11. Herminio Astorga, former vice-mayor of Manila, recounts that a group of taxi drivers congregated at the Luneta Park in downtown Manila, about 10 kilometers from where the uprising was taking place, to shuttle hundreds to the uprising for free. Mercado, *People Power*, 109.
12. De Manila, *Quartet of the Tiger Moon*, 36.
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