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## Beyond hegemony, world order as domination: Iran's Green Movement and the nuclear sanctions regimes

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Title: Beyond hegemony, world order as domination: Iran's Green Movement and the nuclear sanctions regimes

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Key words: sanctions, Gramsci, hegemony, world order, JCPOA, Iran

#### Abstract

Contributing to neo-Gramscian IR and debates regarding world order, this article puts forward Gramsci's domination as a framework for better understanding the dynamics of a so-called 'western liberal order'. It shows how Gramsci can be used to explore the power relations of world order that moves beyond Eurocentrism by highlighting the agency of the 'non-West' or 'Global South'. In so doing, it illustrates the contradictions of a *liberal* world order. To make its case, it examines the relationship between Iran's Green Movement, and the EU, US and UN sanctions regimes imposed on Iran in response to its nuclear programme. It is argued that domination, rather than hegemony, allows for a better understanding of the power relations in this case.

#### Bibliographical notes

Shabnam Holliday is Associate Professor in International Relations at the University of Plymouth, UK. Her recent publications include Populism, the international and methodological nationalism: global order and the Iran-Israel nexus, *Political Studies* 68(1) 2020. Her research interests include the role of ideas in relation to domestic and international politics, Iran's relationship with the international and IR, and world order.

#### Introduction

In May 2018, the former United States of America (USA) President Donald Trump abrogated the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA, or 'Iran Nuclear Deal') between Iran, the USA, China, Russia, the United Kingdom (UK), and the European Union (EU). Subsequently, in August and November 2018, the US sanctions lifted by the JCPOA were re-imposed. Trump's abrogation of the JCPOA was despite the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) view that Iran had complied with the JCPOA's requirements<sup>i</sup>. Consequently, Trump's actions are indicative of an implicit disregard for the norms and values associated with the idea of a 'western liberal world order', such as the rule of law; collective problem solving<sup>ii</sup>, multilateralism, and interdependence<sup>iii</sup>. Indeed, his actions also threatened to *damage* the liberal international order<sup>iv</sup>.

For a better understanding of both the impact of Trump's actions and also how world order is constructed as part of an attempt to govern the international system, it is necessary

to examine Iran's relationship with the international. Furthermore, it is essential to highlight the agency of *all* actors, including domestic ones; and even those on the receiving end of actions, such as sanctions, implemented in the name of the 'liberal world order'. Focusing only on those who consider themselves the upholders of world order produces a distorted view of global politics. Historical context is also essential. This article explores the idea a 'western liberal world order', not by focusing on those implementing sanctions, but rather on those on the receiving end of these sanctions regimes. The period of analysis is *prior* to the JCPOA and primarily during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency (2005-13). The article examines the *ideas* of those associated with Iran's Green Movement, which refers to individuals and groups associated with Iran's 2009/10 post-election uprising. This is worthy of attention because the discipline of International Relations (IR) often considers ideas such as democracy and sovereignty as purely and inherently '*Western*' norms and values. This case study also highlights the political, rather than economic, impact of sanctions. The focus on ideas is necessary because ideas give us an indication of how the international is perceived<sup>v</sup>. They are integral to world order and not simply a by-product of material forces<sup>vi</sup>.

Ideas attain meaning through discourse. Drawing on the discourse theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, the analysis is based on a discourse analysis of Green Movement texts, which I have mapped alongside the implementation of sanctions. My argument is two-fold. Firstly, for the Green Movement, the ideas of democracy and sovereignty are relational, and the sanctions regimes threaten both. Consequently, there is a clear rejection of sanctions. Furthermore, individuals associated with the Green Movement view sanctions both in the context of a historical trajectory going back to the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1906-11), and in relation to regional dynamics and the impact of the so-called 'War on Terror'. This is because of the legacy of UK and US interference in Iran's affairs. Secondly, this article puts forward Antonio Gramsci's notion of domination, rather than hegemony, as a means of better understanding the power relations between the Green Movement and those states and institutions upholding the norms and values of a 'western liberal world order' through sanctions. This is because the Green Movement has not consented to the 'leadership' of actors associated with a 'western liberal world order'; and the sanctions are indicative of the use of force. Thus, the ideas of the Green Movement call into question both the *liberal* nature of world order and that it is hegemonic, or indeed global<sup>vii</sup>.

The article contributes to three bodies of literature: neo-Gramscian IR, world order debates, and literature on Iran's Green Movement and similar processes in the Middle East. It shows how Gramsci can be used to explore the power relations of world order that moves beyond Eurocentrism and presents world order, in this instance, as domination, as opposed to hegemony. It contributes to world order debates by both highlighting the agency of not only the 'non-West', or Global South, but also a non-state actor. Additionally, it illustrates the contradictions of a *liberal* world order. The contribution to Green Movement scholarship is the focus on its relationship with the sanctions regimes. This builds on growing scholarship stressing the relationship between Middle East uprisings and the international<sup>viii</sup> by highlighting how the international is integral to understanding the ideas articulated by the

Green Movement. Notably, the focus on the external is not a denial of internal factors<sup>ix</sup>, the complexity of which has received considerable attention<sup>x</sup>.

The article proceeds by first addressing the methodology. Then, the article puts forward a borrowing of Gramsci's work as an appropriate analytical tool for exploring world order power relations that goes beyond neo-Gramscian IR's Eurocentrism. After establishing how the Green Movement is understood in an intellectual and historical context, the article demonstrates why sanctions regimes, in this case, should be seen as domination.

### Methodology

This article is part of a wider research project that examines the idea of democracy articulated by Islamic Republic of Iran political and intellectual elites, such as former presidents and self-identifying democracy movement groups and individuals<sup>xi</sup>. The rationale borrows from Larbi Sadiki's work highlighting Arab political and intellectual elite voices regarding the idea of democracy in a broader intellectual and political environment. This is one where Western powers often view democracy as irrelevant to the Muslim world<sup>xii</sup>. Furthermore, democracy is fiercely contested because in different contexts different meanings are attached to the idea. Thus, to gain a better understanding of the meanings attached the idea of democracy, the methodology draws from the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe.

Discourse theory explores how 'social practices articulate and contest the discourse that constitute social reality'<sup>xiii</sup>, such as how the discourse regarding a 'hegemonic western liberal world order' is contested by the Green Movement. It is through discourse that the identities associated with 'western liberal order' are maintained, which is evident in the 'construction of antagonisms and the exercise of power'<sup>xiv</sup>. This approach provides an appropriate methodology because of the centrality of power and *political* analysis; rejection of essentialist social theories that tend to predetermine the outcome of research; and rejection of the need to determine empirical generalisations<sup>xv</sup>. Furthermore, this understanding of discourse assumes that both 'agents and systems are social constructions undergoing constant historical and social changes as a result of political practices'. It also assumes that *all* objects and actions, whose meanings are also negotiated by 'historically specific systems of rules', are meaningful<sup>xvi</sup>. Consequently, the agents of discourse, such as those writing and talking about democracy and/or western liberal world order, and the structures in which they exist are contingent on their environments both historically and contemporaneously.

The method of discourse analysis draws from the logics of equivalence and difference as this highlights the identities, creation of dichotomies, and power relations integral to the notion of a 'western liberal world order'. Power relations are evident in how through discourse, social space is divided and political frontiers are constructed, which are necessary for both identity construction and organising political space<sup>xvii</sup>. This process of dividing space between two camps, or creating a dichotomy, is facilitated through what Laclau refers to as 'equivalential chains'<sup>xviii</sup>. This is a process whereby a subject, or actor, is equated with

particular actions or norms and values that have wider significance. Such a value is the sign 'democracy'.

For Laclau and Mouffe, signs that are yet to have meanings associated with them are elements, and the process of attaching meaning and establishing relationships between different elements is articulation<sup>xix</sup>. Crucially, through articulation meanings are attached to specific signs and those around which there is a partial fixation of meaning are nodal points. For instance, in political discourses, 'democracy' is a nodal point around which meanings are crystallised<sup>xx</sup>. Subsequently, discourse is when there is a 'structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice'<sup>xxi</sup>. For example, the discourses of democracy articulated by the Green Movement attach particular meanings to the sign 'democracy'. However, since meanings and 'social phenomena are never fixed or total', there is an 'ongoing struggle between different discourses to fix the meaning of important signs'<sup>xxii</sup>. Thus, there is only ever a *partial* fixation around a nodal point.

Indeed, the Islamic Republic of Iran and its nuclear programme exists in a social reality whereby the global political space is influenced to varying degrees by the norms and values associated with a 'western liberal world order'. Orientalist discourses that attach specific meanings to the nodal point 'democracy' also influence this political space. These are assumptions regarding who is *naturally* democratic; the 'West' is democratic, and the Arab and/or 'Islamic world' as part of the 'non-West' is incapable of democracy without 'Western' help<sup>xxiii</sup>. Through articulation, this political frontier is created through equivalential chains whereby 'the Muslim world' is *not* equated with democracy, and the 'Western liberal world order' *is* equated with democracy.

By focusing on the political rather than economic implications of the sanctions regimes, my analysis of the discursive construction of democracy reveals the power relations integral to the idea of a 'western liberal world order'. It becomes apparent that the Green Movement's discourse of democracy challenges the Orientalist discourse of naturally democratic/incapable of democracy dichotomisation and constructed political frontier. This is through a process of articulation that attaches different meanings to the nodal point 'democracy'. Consequently, there are two contradictory discourses attaching meaning to democracy showing that there is only ever a *partial* fixation of meaning.

Crucially, the Green Movement, to be addressed in more detail below, has come to represent a broad spectrum of political projects: those who aspire to 'democratic practices *within* the context of the Islamic Republic', and those who aspire to 'a form of secular and/or democratic politics without the Islamic Republic'<sup>xxiv</sup>. The former is Reformism, an intellectual movement that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s that sought to reform the Islamic Republic towards being more democratic. Integral to Reformism is the notion that Islam is inherently democratic and the idea of 'Islamic democracy'. The Green Movement can also be seen in terms of three broad and fluid 'categories': the political and intellectual 'elite' who were historically considered in terms of Reformism and/or the democracy movement; participants who may not have been politically active before 2009; and activists who had a political background before 2009 or are considered political by the government<sup>xxv</sup>.

I focus on political and intellectual ‘elites’ because of their relationship with Reformism. Many of this ‘elite’ considered themselves Reformists; were previously associated with Reformism; and/or explicitly expressed support for the 2009 presidential candidates Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, and later the Green Movement. The texts analysed are statements, letters, and speeches of 1) Karroubi and Mousavi following the tenth presidential election on 12 June 2009; 2) those who historically self-identified as part of the democracy movement (before 2009); and 3) intellectuals, academics, artists, and leading human rights activists who explicitly pledged support for the presidential candidate(s) through open statements. These texts were largely collected between 2009 and 2010 as protests materialised. Due to the varied nature of the Green Movement and the context in which it came about, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the ideas of the ‘elite’ are representative of all those associated with the Green Movement during the 2009/10 protests. The article makes no claims that it is representative. Certainly, there is evidence, addressed below, that anyone associated with Reformism was rejected by political activists. Nevertheless, as noted, all actions and objects are meaningful and regardless of how representative a discourse may or may not be, it is worthy of scholarly attention.

In terms of carrying out discourse analysis, initially the signifiers were the Persian language terms *mardomsālāri* (literally, rule by the people) and *demokrāsi*<sup>xxvi</sup>. Mousavi and Karroubi rarely use these terms. However, there is clearly an aspiration for practices associated with democracy such as the rule of law, human rights, freedom of the press, following the constitution, and freedom to protest. Consequently, I used the signifier ‘Green Movement’. While Mousavi announced the ‘Green Movement’ on 28 July 2009<sup>xxvii</sup>, Karroubi rarely refers to the ‘Green Movement’. The analysis shows that through the process of articulation, meanings are attached to the elements ‘democracy’ and ‘Green Movement’ and thus they become nodal points. Most post-2009 texts are letters to Islamic Republic individuals and institutions regarding the conditions (violence, mass arrests, disregard for the Constitution) after the election.

World order, domination, and hegemony

Gramsci’s notion of domination is helpful for highlighting the power relations between institutions and processes in the name of a ‘western liberal world order’ (EU, UN, and USA sanctions regimes) and those on the receiving end (the Green Movement). Robert Cox, accredited with introducing Gramsci to IR, critiqued ‘problem-solving’ IR because it negated the process of history. Consequently, he put forward a ‘critical’ IR that ‘would examine how dominant states are configured and how they transport ideas and construct institutional structures that embed and complement such ideas’<sup>xxviii</sup>. In so doing, Gramsci’s hegemony was used to provide an alternative to the state-centric power of problem-solving IR<sup>xxix</sup>. However, as part of a wider debate interrogating IR’s Eurocentrism, Cox’s project and neo-Gramscian IR have been critiqued on the grounds that it is Eurocentric<sup>xxx</sup>. This is because in providing a ‘set of prescriptions that might contribute to the transformation of world order’, neo-Gramscians have implicitly universalised what are specific structural qualities<sup>xxxi</sup>. Furthermore, by accepting ‘the hegemonic story of Western modernity in IR’, neo-Gramscians reproduce a

narrative relegating ‘the global South to the theoretical periphery’ by only presenting the ‘East’, ‘global South’ or ‘non-West’ as a site of resistance<sup>xxxii</sup>. Consequently, this process essentially denies the ‘non-West’ agency. Thus, there should be ‘a post-racist critical IR’ that moves away from analyses whereby only the ‘West’ acts<sup>xxxiii</sup> by exploring ‘classes of people that are not located in the West’<sup>xxxiv</sup>.

While these critiques are valid, there is disciplinary blindness regarding the use of Gramsci. A vibrant tradition in Middle East Politics engaging with Gramsci’s work does not suffer from this Eurocentrism. Here, scholars use Gramsci to look at political transformation and popular politics<sup>xxxv</sup>, the state<sup>xxxvi</sup>, counter-hegemony/hegemony<sup>xxxvii</sup>, and civil society and securitization<sup>xxxviii</sup>. In the specific case of Iran, not only has Gramsci’s work been translated into Persian<sup>xxxix</sup>, but so has scholarship on Gramsci’s ideas<sup>xl</sup>. Thus, Gramsci’s work remains a useful analytical tool for moving away from Eurocentrism because his ideas provide useful ‘lines of enquiry for postcolonial scholars’<sup>xli</sup>. It is also evident that there should be disciplinary engagement between neo-Gramscian IR and Area Studies as part of a wider Global IR project that highlights agency beyond the so-called ‘West’<sup>xlii</sup>.

While debates on world order have moved beyond neo-Gramscian IR, the broader world order debate echoes similar concerns regarding the need for a global approach. As Amitav Acharya argues, Global IR should transcend ‘the divide between the West and the Rest’ by recognising multiple forms of agency that embrace local constructions of global order and respect diversity<sup>xliii</sup>. Furthermore, scholars such as Andrew Phillips, Christian Reus-Smit and Samir Saran have challenged the idea of an international order as solely ‘Western’ by highlighting a global approach to history, historical context, and cultural diversity in global politics<sup>xliv</sup>. Interventions on the co-optation or mimicry of authoritarian states<sup>xlv</sup>; engagement with a liberal world order by illiberal actors<sup>xlvi</sup>; and the relationship with a liberal world order<sup>xlvii</sup> have not only highlighted the agency of ‘non-West’, and/or Global South actors in world order construction, but also problems with categories such as the ‘West’. This article addresses neo-Gramscian IR’s Eurocentrism and takes on a Global IR approach to world order by not only focusing on a ‘class of people not located in the West’, but by also highlighting their agency in rejecting a tool of a ‘western liberal world order’ because it is simultaneously detrimental to democracy and sovereignty.

World order is socially constructed<sup>xlviii</sup>. Reus-Smit defines world order as the ‘systematic configurations of political authority, comprising multiple units of authority, arranged according to some principle of differentiation’<sup>xlix</sup>. Muthiah Alagappa defines it as “‘rule-governed interaction’ among states in ‘pursuit of [their] individual and collective goals’”<sup>l</sup>. However, the ‘existence of order depends on’ interstate interaction conforming to the accepted rules<sup>li</sup>. While these two approaches can complement each other, the latter is state-centric. The systematic configurations approach allows for institutions. However, the idea of conforming to accepted rules is essential. Indeed, as Michael Barnett notes, such ‘systematic configurations of political authority’ can only be maintained and have staying power if they are considered legitimate<sup>lii</sup>. This is done through a series of norms and values that are deemed appropriate for maintaining order. Thus, ‘the legitimacy of international

order' relies on whether such an order 'represents the wider segment of the international system, and whether it enjoys the support and participation not just of the established powers, but also of other actors'<sup>lviii</sup>.

While the idea of *universal* norms can be problematic, Cox's understanding of world order is helpful in understanding the *machinations* of maintaining such 'systematic configurations of political authority'. This is because it also highlights the role of institutions and how norms and values are disseminated. For him, world order is a social, economic, and political structure that expresses 'universal' norms and mechanisms laying down 'general rules of states and for those forces of civil society that act across national boundaries'<sup>liv</sup>. He also argues that 'One mechanism through which the universal norms of a world hegemony are expressed is the international organisation'. It is here that the 'institutions of hegemony and its ideology are developed' towards establishing a hegemonic world order and absorbing 'counter-hegemonic ideas'. Thus, the idea of world order is one in which embedded norms and laws are 'transposed onto the international stage'<sup>lv</sup>. Cox's idea of world order also aimed to explain 'the nature and working conditions of international institutions'<sup>lvi</sup> that 'act in accordance with dominant norms of a specific order'<sup>lvii</sup>. The norms and values of a 'western liberal order' include 'democracy, democratic community, progressive change, collective problem solving, shared sovereignty, [and] the rule of law'<sup>lviii</sup>. The UN and the IAEA are such institutions. In relation to the period of analysis, the USA and the EU also consider themselves to uphold the norms and values of a 'western liberal world order'. It is these four actors that are involved in the sanctions regimes.

For Gramsci, hegemony is a process of economic, political, and intellectual leadership. It can be achieved over subordinate groups when a dominant group realises 'not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity'<sup>lix</sup>. While for Gramsci the economic is integral to hegemony, its relevance has been debated. Laclau and Mouffe argue that the hegemonic project has 'ceased to have any *necessary* link with class'<sup>lx</sup>. However, Owen Worth deems this approach problematic because the 'realities of economic production in shaping the processes of social relationships still remain'<sup>lxi</sup>. Nevertheless, Worth concedes that the Laclau and Mouffe approach has some merit because it provides a means to 'extend our understanding of identity, hegemony and resistance within global society'<sup>lxii</sup>. While it cannot be denied that a sanctions regime is an economic project<sup>lxiii</sup>, the focus here is the *ideas* of the Green Movement. In this case, the political impact is the focus; they view sanctions regimes as detrimental to democracy as a political order in Iran.

In addition to hegemony, Gramsci puts forward domination as another type of supremacy by a social group<sup>lxiv</sup>. The nature of the relationship with subordinate groups dictates the difference between hegemony and domination. Crucially, while hegemony is achieved through consent and legitimacy<sup>lxv</sup>, domination is not. Domination is when a 'social group dominates the antagonistic groups, which it intends to "liquidate", or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force'<sup>lxvi</sup>. Thus, domination, 'an anti-thesis of hegemony'<sup>lxvii</sup>, describes a relationship whereby there are 'subordinated groups that do *not* accept' the leadership<sup>lxviii</sup>. Therefore, 'domination is supremacy established by force and maintained by the state



through military, political, judicial and fiscal systems', and does not come about through a process of consent<sup>lxxix</sup>. Indeed, the way that Gramsci juxtaposes hegemony and domination shows that they are seen as antinomies<sup>lxxx</sup>. However, it is hegemony that Cox adapted to explain international system dynamics<sup>lxxxi</sup>. Nevertheless, it remains the case that such an idea does exist in global politics and that policies in the name of the values associated with such an idea of world order has implications. Consequently, it is necessary to explore these dynamics.

The focus here is not on the 'most appropriate' interpretation of the machinations of hegemony and world order, but rather on those on the receiving end of 'western liberal world order' policies. It is through this process of analysis that a deeper understanding of the implications of politics associated with world order can be understood, which subsequently questions the nature of the relationship between the upholders of world order and those on the receiving end. While Cox's hegemony/world order is helpful in terms of identifying institutions that aim to govern the international through a set of values, his interpretation of the nature of power relations is problematic. Cox's view that there was American *hegemony*<sup>lxxxii</sup> assumes that other members of the international community, in all its complex diversity, have, to a certain extent, accepted the intellectual, economic, and political leadership of the USA. Thus, Acharya's approach to world order is more convincing. Such an American liberal hegemonic order 'was for the most part not really a global order. Rather, it was a relationship among a group of like-minded states, mostly Western, led by the US'<sup>lxxxiii</sup>.

Consequently, the extent to which sanctions represent a western liberal *hegemony* must be addressed. Rather, sanctions regimes represent an attempt to maintain political and fiscal supremacy through economic *force*, and significantly have a political impact. Therefore, the relationship between those imposing the sanctions and those on the receiving end is better understood in terms of domination, rather than hegemony. This is because those against whom it is enforced do not accept the 'leadership' of those imposing it. Just as Stephen Gill<sup>lxxxiv</sup> built on Cox's 'hegemony' by arguing that 'the new world order of the early twenty-first century politics is characterised by a politics of supremacy (rather than hegemony)' with an 'American-led 'supremacist transnational bloc'', my contention is that, in this particular case, it is better characterised as domination. Consequently, Gramsci's notion of domination facilitates a better understanding of a not so global world order.

As noted, neo-Gramscian IR has been critiqued for its universalising approach<sup>lxxxv</sup>. Certainly, this is a valid critique and further scholarship has highlighted other ways of maintaining regional and/or world order<sup>lxxxvi</sup>. However, what is evident in the case of the Green Movement is that two values often associated with a *liberal* order, namely democracy and sovereignty, are at the centre of the Green Movement's political aspirations. As far as the Green Movement is concerned, it is those who are seen to uphold a liberal world order that are standing in the way of this political project, and indeed progressive change, another such value.

## The Green Movement: intellectual and historical heritage

Crucially the ideas that indicate the framework for international relations<sup>lxxvii</sup>, which are articulated through discourse, do not exist in an historical and intellectual vacuum<sup>lxxviii</sup>. It is evident that the interconnectivity between democracy and sovereignty has an historical trajectory going back to the Constitutional Revolution. For some Green Movement individuals, the impact of the sanctions regimes on democracy and sovereignty is associated with the nationalisation of Iran's oil industry and the subsequent 1953 *coup d'état* by the USA and the UK; and for some, the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. Furthermore, the specific relationship between democracy and sovereignty is seen in the context of the wider dynamics and implications of imperialism, external interference, and colonialism. Consequently, a brief look at these processes is essential in better understanding the rejection of the sanctions regimes. It is also necessary to further clarify how the Green Movement is understood.

Some of the meanings attached to the nodal point 'democracy' articulated by the Green Movement echo those of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Constitutional Revolution is widely considered as epitomising the beginning of Iran's struggle for democracy<sup>lxxix</sup>. During this revolution, 'divergent concepts of democracy' emerged: European-style parliamentary democracy; social democratic tendencies inspired by Transcaucasian social democratic associations; and expressions of radical democracy<sup>lxxx</sup>. An outcome was Iran's first parliamentary system and the adoption of a constitution inspired by the idea of a constitutional representative democracy<sup>lxxxi</sup>. The international context included an increasing involvement from external powers in Iranian affairs<sup>lxxxii</sup> and fear that Iran's sovereignty was being jeopardised by British and Russian influence. Thus, parliament was set up not only as a means of holding the ruling monarchy to account, but also 'as a guardian against certain foreign encroachments'<sup>lxxxiii</sup>.

During the rest of the twentieth century, 'the interrelated issues of independence and democracy became very important'<sup>lxxxiv</sup>. The interregnum period (1941-53), including Mohammad Musaddiq's premiership (1951-53), is regarded as an important period in the development of democracy<sup>lxxxv</sup>. Following Reza Shah's abdication in 1941, Iran experienced a 'democratic interlude' involving 'greater freedoms of the press'; 'a more prominent parliament'; and 'political debates, party politics, and competition for power'<sup>lxxxvi</sup>. However, the international environment was seen as detrimental to democracy. Increasing British control through the Anglo-Iranian Oil company (AIOC, BP's predecessor) was facilitated by the 1933 thirty-year extension of the concessionary period. Consequently, the AIOC had not only almost turned part of Iran into an autonomous colony, but also indirectly ran the rest of it<sup>lxxxvii</sup>. Thus, Musaddiq nationalised the oil industry. The UK and USA responded with the 1953 coup ousting Musaddiq<sup>lxxxviii</sup>; and with it came the end of the 'democratic interlude'<sup>lxxxix</sup>.

There were interrelated internal and external dynamics to the 1979 Revolution and the subsequent establishment of the Islamic Republic. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini rejected the idea of world order put forward by both the USA and its allies, and the Soviet Union. The former, referred to as 'global arrogance', was seen as the 'oppressor' and was associated with

the 'rich, their foreign patrons, [and] capitalist class'<sup>xc</sup>. Khomeini constructed a 'dark background of exploitative international relations' whereby imperialism, and its 'internal factors', desired the removal of Islam from Muslim countries<sup>xc<sup>i</sup></sup>. While the importance of sovereignty to the creation of the Islamic Republic is clear, its relationship with democracy is debated. Although the Islamic Republic is considered as detrimental to democracy by some<sup>xc<sup>ii</sup></sup>, Reformists consider it as extremely important. With Mohammad Khatami's presidency in 1997, Reformism became a part of Iran's official state discourse. For Khatami, 'Islamic democracy' is 'government for the people' involving people having rights; government having an obligation to the people; and the people having a role in the legitimacy of the government<sup>xc<sup>iii</sup></sup>. Furthermore, 'Islamic democracy' does not exist in isolation of the international; it is equated with a two hundred year-long struggle for independence<sup>xc<sup>iv</sup></sup>. Thus, democracy is seen as integral to sovereignty in an environment where colonialism and imperialism are seen to have hindered both.

Between 2009 and 2014, the Middle East and North Africa witnessed widespread demonstrations and uprisings. While emerging from a 'unique historical and political context'<sup>xc<sup>v</sup></sup>, commonalities included widespread participation of young people and subaltern groups<sup>xc<sup>vi</sup></sup> and a demand for less authoritarian or more democratic practices<sup>xc<sup>vii</sup></sup>. Iran's 2009/10 uprising was initially a civil rights movement reacting to electoral politics<sup>xc<sup>viii</sup></sup> and indicating an inclusive, civic national identity discourse<sup>xc<sup>ix</sup></sup>. It was also a reaction to long-standing and deep social and political divide<sup>c</sup>. The 2009 election is considered controversial because the incumbent Ahmadinejad was re-elected and fraud was widely perceived<sup>ci</sup>. So, Iranians took to the streets demanding 'Where is my vote?'; and Iran witnessed its largest demonstrations since the 1979 Revolution. Three days after the election, over a million 'marched in Tehran's Freedom Square and non-violent rallies continued each day for a week'<sup>ci<sup>ii</sup></sup> with images and slogans reminiscent of the 1979 Revolution<sup>ci<sup>iii</sup></sup>. As noted, Mousavi announced the 'Green Movement' in July 2009 calling on all Iranians to consider the Constitution and basic rights in terms of the colour green<sup>ci<sup>iv</sup></sup>.

Often considered a social movement<sup>cv</sup>, it must be appreciated that the Green Movement comprised several groups and individuals with varied political aspirations noted above. In terms of intellectual roots, many (but not all) of those associated with it would have considered themselves as part of Iran's democracy movement prior to the post-election uprising. For Mousavi, Karroubi, Zahra Rahnavard<sup>cv<sup>i</sup></sup> (Al-Zahra University's Chancellor and Mousavi's wife), and former president Mohammad Khatami, who are sometimes considered the Green Movement's 'leaders', the Green Movement reasserted Reformism. Consequently, these 'leaders' were explicitly part of the Islamic Republic political structure. Furthermore, Khatami supported Mousavi's candidacy, who was prime minister (1981-89) during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88). Khatami's vice president Ali Abtahi supported Karroubi's candidacy, who was former speaker of the parliament and a student of Khomeini. Rahnavard worked towards reforming workplace policies regarding women as one of Khatami's advisors<sup>cv<sup>ii</sup></sup>.

The women's movement played an instrumental role in the Green Movement's emergence through experience of campaign-orientated work and strategies to develop

physical and online social networks<sup>cviii</sup>. This experience developed during Khatami's presidency (1997-2005), which allowed for the proliferation of civil society organisations and printed media in which women played a central role. With the re-emergence of a women's press, women well-versed in both the Quran and feminist ideology strove to re-conceptualise the position of women. Instrumental in this were *Zanan Magazine*, which was led by sociologist Shahla Sherkat, and *Farzaneh Women's Studies Journal*, which was led by Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh<sup>cxix</sup>. Between 2005 and 2009, several campaigns built on the Women's Movement. These include One Million Signatures campaign, Meydaan Zanan, Feminist School, and Focus on Iranian Women<sup>cx</sup>. Crucially, women's participation reflected those across the religious and political spectra<sup>cxii</sup>.

Several intellectuals and academics including the diaspora, artists, clerics, journalists, and human rights activists either explicitly supported or considered themselves as part of the Green Movement. These included some previously associated with Reformism, such as Abdolkarim Soroush, Mohsen Kadivar, and Akbar Ganji<sup>cxiii</sup>. The main constituency of the Green Movement was the middle class', which Kevan Harris defines in terms of social disposition, occupation, and education<sup>cxiiii</sup>. Importantly, the grassroots level (activists and/or protestors that took to the streets) was fragmented with diverse political backgrounds<sup>cxv</sup>. Notably, however, many of these individuals rejected the ideas of the 'leaders' because of the association with Reformism<sup>cxvi</sup>.

#### Sanctions regimes as domination

As noted, world order is the 'systematic configurations of political authority' that is maintained through norms and values upheld by institutions and states in the international system. The idea of a world order can only be global if it is seen as legitimate and representing 'wider segment of the international system'. A hegemonic world order is one whereby the norms, values, and institutions associated with it have been accepted through a process of consent. However, a world order that is not exercised through consent, but rather through force, is better understood in terms of domination. The norms and values of what is often referred to as 'western liberal world order' include the ideas of democracy and sovereignty. However, it is evident that Green Movement discourses not only question the world order as hegemonic, but also as liberal. This is because sanctions are seen as being detrimental to both democracy and sovereignty. Furthermore, the idea of democracy is not only seen in relation to a domestic political order, but also in terms of the nature of political order on the international level. I have mapped democracy movement and Green Movement texts alongside events and official IAEA, UN, US government, and EU documents associated with Iran's nuclear programme. This contributes to not only appreciating the complexity of the sanctions, but also to better understanding of the context in which democracy is articulated. These discourses and the sanctions regimes must also be contextualised with the interrelated regional dynamics of the 'War on Terror' discourse, the Israel-Iran cold war, and concerns over Iran's nuclear programme.

Following the 11 September 2001 World Trade Centre attacks, former President George W. Bush articulated a discourse whereby Iran was equated with 'terror'. Despite cooperating with the USA against the Taliban<sup>cxvi</sup>, Bush attached specific meanings to Iran: 'axis of evil', 'Islamist terrorism', and a threat to 'the peace of the world' because of its support for Hamas and Hezbollah<sup>cxvii</sup>. Later in 2002, following accusations that Iran was 'hiding a uranium enrichment facility at Natanz and a heavy water plant at Arak'<sup>cxviii</sup>, there was increased concern over Iran's nuclear programme. In June 2003, the IAEA stated that Iran 'failed to meet its obligations under its Safeguards Agreement'. Although the nuclear material would require further processing for it to be suitable for a nuclear explosive device, the failure to declare it was a concern<sup>cxix</sup>. By November 2003, the IAEA welcomed 'Iran's decision voluntarily to suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities' and noted 'with satisfaction Iran's decision 'to conclude an Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement'<sup>cxx</sup>. However, in 2004, the IAEA noted 'with serious concern' that Iran had not suspended 'all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities'<sup>cxxi</sup>.

From 2005, Ahmadinejad's presidency saw the reversal of the relative political liberalisation characteristic of Khatami's presidency. While the repercussions of the ongoing 'War on Terror' continued to be played out in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Iran-Israel cold war intensified. In this environment, the USA imposed sanctions in response to the nuclear programme and concerns over support for Hamas and Hezbollah through the 2005 Executive Order 13382. This involved 'freezing the assets of proliferators of weapons of mass destruction and their supporters'<sup>cxxii</sup>. These sanctions extended pre-existing long-standing embargos following the US hostage crisis and the 1996 Iran-Libya Sanctions Act. In 2006, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1696 noted 'with serious concern' the IAEA's findings that there continued to be 'existing gaps in knowledge' regarding 'the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities'<sup>cxxiii</sup>. UNSCR 1696 requested all states 'prevent the transfer of any items, materials, goods and technology that could contribute to enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and ballistic missile programmes'<sup>cxxiv</sup>.

UNSCR 1737 escalated the response and invoked Article 41 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This allows the UN to act against a state short of military action through sanctions. This was due to 'serious concern' because Iran had not 'established full and sustained suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities'; 'resumed cooperation with the IAEA'; nor complied with UNSCR 1696<sup>cxxv</sup>. This was followed by UNSCR 1747 in 2007 enforcing a two-way arms embargo<sup>cxxvi</sup>. UNSCR 1803, also under Chapter VII, extended sanctions to individuals. It asked 'all States to exercise restraint and vigilance' regarding any individuals travelling to Iran who may be associated with 'providing support for Iran's proliferation sensitive nuclear activities or for the development of nuclear weapon delivery systems'<sup>cxxvii</sup>. Crucially, the UNSCR also highlighted support for a resolution, encouraging Iran, China, Russia, the UK, the USA, France, and Germany, that is 'based on mutual respect and the establishment of international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme'<sup>cxxviii</sup>. Six months later, UNSCR 1835 reiterated the demands of UNSCR 1803<sup>cxxix</sup>.

During the same period (2006-08), alongside the intensification of sanctions, Iranians felt the impact of an escalation in the Iran-Israel cold war<sup>cxxx</sup>. It is necessary to understand that these regional dynamics had a political impact on Iranian domestic politics. First, human rights activists and democracy movement individuals were targeted by Ahmadinejad's government in the name of national security<sup>cxxxi</sup>. Second, there was real concern that there would be an Israeli military attack on Iran. Indeed, Iran's nuclear programme and support for Hamas and Hezbollah 'brought the region to the brink of war'<sup>cxxxii</sup>. There were repeated signals indicating a willingness to attack Iran. For instance, in June 2008, the Israel Air Force simulated attacks on targets that were the same distance from Israel as Natanz<sup>cxxxiii</sup>. Notably, this followed USA-led invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan and the US policies of developing regional alliances against Iran and 'establishing long-term military bases next to Iran's borders'<sup>cxxxiv</sup>. This is also in the context of intensifying concern over Iran's actions in the region following the removal of Saddam Hussein who had invaded Iran in 1980. In addition to the established relationship with Hamas, Hezbollah, and Syria's Bashar al-Assad regime, Iran was now able to develop relations with Iraq.

In direct response to this international environment and the legacy of external interference, the democracy movement's ideas of democracy were intrinsically linked to Iran's territorial integrity and national sovereignty. This is evident in an open statement issued by a group of academics. In this text, the meanings attached to the nodal point 'democracy' are related to both international and domestic politics. They state that democracy is 'the best method for governing the country', and the viable method for 'people's participation in major domestic and foreign decision making'. Further meaning is attached by contextualising democracy in terms of the role played by external powers historically and contemporaneously. The text highlights the 'devastating impact' of Iraq's war against Iran which was 'maintained with the support of major world powers'. This is a reference to the Iran-Iraq War when the USA was seen as supporting Iraq, while the Soviet Union armed Iraq. Then there is an explicit rejection of sanctions because they create a state of 'neither war, nor peace'. They call upon peace movements worldwide to 'raise their voice against military interventions and expansionist policies of war-mongers'<sup>cxxxv</sup>. Human Rights Lawyer and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi and journalist Ganji stated similar positions rejecting military attack and sanctions<sup>cxxxvi</sup>. The implication of 'neither war, nor peace', as far as democracy activists were concerned, is that it allowed Ahmadinejad's government to consider some activists as a threat to security<sup>cxxxvii</sup>. Thus, through equivalential chains a political frontier is created between the democracy movement on the one hand, and those responsible for sanctions and Israel on the other. The former is equated with peace and democracy, while the latter is equated with violence.

In 2009, as noted, Iranians took to the streets in response to the disputed election result. The international environment provided an excuse to restrict political pluralism and civil society activism<sup>cxxxviii</sup>. Four days after the election, foreign media were banned from reporting on the protests<sup>cxxxix</sup>. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei accused Britain, the USA, and 'foreign media' of not only being involved in the protests, but also being responsible

for them<sup>cxl</sup>. The protestors were portrayed as foreign agents and subsequently a threat to national security<sup>cxli</sup>; or as ‘a “velvet revolution” financed and directed by the West’<sup>cxlii</sup>. However, Mousavi and Karroubi explicitly rejected such accusations<sup>cxliii</sup>; and ‘the people were well aware of the movement’s homegrown origin’<sup>cxliiv</sup>. The EU rejected accusations of interference<sup>cxliv</sup>.

During the same period (2009-10), the sanctions regimes continued to escalate. The IAEA was concerned that previous UNSCRs (1737, 1747, 1803, 1835) were being defied; that Iran had ‘constructed an enrichment facility in breach of its obligations to suspend all enrichment related activities’; and had failed ‘to notify the Agency of the new facility [near Qom] until September 2009’<sup>cxlvi</sup>. In response, UNSCR 1929, under Chapter VII, declared all states ‘prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to Iran, from or through their territories or by their nationals or individuals subject to their jurisdiction’ of arms and related material<sup>cxlvii</sup>. Alongside these sanctions, former President Barack Obama continued to establish the perceived threat of Iran’s nuclear programme at the heart of Iran-USA relations, and as having implications for regional and global dynamics<sup>cxlviii</sup>. Extending the 1996 Iran Sanctions Act, the US Senate and House of Representatives passed the 2010 Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act, which in addition to a range of economic sanctions, imposed sanctions on those responsible for censorship and committing human rights abuses following the 2009 election<sup>cxlix</sup>. Following a declaration that highlighted concern regarding nuclear programme activity addressed by the IAEA<sup>cl</sup>, in 2010 the EU not only pledged its support for UNCR 1929, but also implemented its own additional restrictions which amounted to economic sanctions<sup>cli</sup>.

During the 2009 election campaign, aspirations for a more democratic political order within the Islamic Republic system were clear<sup>clii</sup>. In a statement given at a domestic and international media conference, Mousavi equates his aims with the nodal point ‘democracy’ by highlighting his aspirations: stronger political parties to facilitate more opportunity for the people to influence; freedom of the press; the rule of law and maintaining the constitution; and free and fair elections. These are all widely considered the norms and values of democracy. Further meaning is attached to nodal point ‘democracy’ by Mousavi’s explicit declaration that he is a Reformist<sup>cliii</sup>. In an interview with the *Financial Times*, Karroubi also affirms his commitment to Reformism, which he equates with respecting people’s rights and giving people freedom of expression within the context of the Islamic Republic<sup>cliv</sup>. As noted above, the idea of ‘Islamic democracy’ is integral to Reformism; and Reformists consider Islam as inherently democratic.

Following the 2009 election and the subsequent arrests and violence, Mousavi’s and Karroubi’s texts focused on the importance of abiding by Iran’s Constitution and the issue of human rights. In this fluid environment, the meanings attached to the nodal point ‘democracy’ also evolved. For instance, on 13 August 2009 in a statement to the medical community, Mousavi states: ‘Our slogans during the election were chosen to fit the framework of the Constitution. Today we are still committed to the same slogans’. Mousavi concludes by referring to “The Green Path of Hope” stating that green is the colour and

symbol of the movement that seeks to ensure the framework of the Constitution<sup>clv</sup>. Thus, in response to changing circumstances, democracy and Reformism are now equated with the Green Movement. Thus, the 'Green Movement' can be considered a nodal point around which meanings are partially fixated.

Echoing democracy discourses noted above, sovereignty and territorial integrity are integral to the meanings attached to the two nodal points 'democracy' and the 'Green Movement'. For Mousavi and Karroubi, sovereignty is implicit because of the intellectual relationship with Reformism. It is explicit in specific texts, such as Mousavi's September 2009 'Green Path of Hope', or '11<sup>th</sup> Statement', issued in response to the protests and subsequent mass arrests. Here, Mousavi states that the Islamic Republic is 'the result of a century-long struggle for freedom, independence, justice and progress in the shadow of piety'. He also declares the necessity for territorial integrity if the post-election situation is to be resolved. This involves guarding against 'the voracious greed of foreign adversaries' and defending 'the essence of the Islamic Republic'<sup>clvi</sup>. In his '13<sup>th</sup> Statement' on 28 September 2009, Mousavi explicitly states his opposition to any sanctions and rejects them because they would affect 'the people' as opposed to 'the government'<sup>clvii</sup>.

These equivalential chains, whereby the Green Movement is equated with territorial integrity and/or sovereignty are also explicit in Mousavi's '18<sup>th</sup> Statement', or 'Green Charter', issued to mark the first anniversary of tenth presidential election. As in earlier texts, meaning is attached to the nodal point 'Green Movement' by equating it with 'strengthening civil society'; enabling 'free circulation of information'; 'active participation of parties and associations'; and 'fundamental human rights independent of ideology, religion, gender, ethnicity, and social status'. These are to be achieved by reforming 'laws and regulations to eliminate any type of discrimination in society'. Further meaning is attached by placing the nodal point in the context of a particular historical trajectory and contemporary politics. Here, the Green Movement is equated with the quest for 'national sovereignty' and freedom and social justice that was manifested in the Constitutional Revolution, the oil nationalisation movement, and the Islamic Republic<sup>clviii</sup>. Regarding contemporary dynamics, Mousavi is explicit: 'The Green Movement strongly insists on protecting independence and draws a line at involvement with foreign forces'<sup>clix</sup>. This shows that the aspiration regarding a domestic order and an international agenda are interconnected.

During this period, elsewhere similar meanings are attached to the nodal point 'democracy'. For Karroubi, the 2009 uprisings are part of the commitment to independence, freedom, people's rights, and establishing the Islamic Republic<sup>clx</sup>. Later, Karroubi maintains that sanctions provide the government an excuse to suppress the opposition<sup>clxi</sup>. When asked what the 'West' can do 'to support a democratic reform process', cleric and former Reformist Kadivar states that 'tightening of sanctions is not the right path ahead'<sup>clxii</sup>. In January 2010, prominent academics pledged support for Mousavi's '17<sup>th</sup> Statement' in which Mousavi asserts 'opposition to foreign rule' and loyalty to the constitution<sup>clxiii</sup>. Thus, a discourse of democracy is articulated that is contingent on the contexts: sanctions are seen as detrimental to democracy and sovereignty.



On 8 November 2011, following an earlier report voicing ‘concerns about possible military dimensions to Iran’s nuclear programme’, the IAEA published a new report announcing bilateral sanctions from the USA, UK, and Canada<sup>clxiv</sup>. Despite meeting with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, the IAEA was concerned that Iran had not ‘suspended its enrichment related activities’. In response to this report, an open letter by 120 academics and human rights defenders, many of whom had close ties with the Green Movement or considered themselves part of it, was published on a Green Movement website. In this text, the meanings attached to the nodal point ‘democracy’ echo those highlighted above. The text opens by showing concern over US, Israeli, and British narratives suggesting the possibility of military attacks on Iran. Democracy is then clearly equated with sovereignty. They demand a ‘peaceful transition to democracy and a government in Iran that emanates from free elections to secure the civil, political, social, cultural, and economical rights of all Iranians.’ They assert that ‘the only way of achieving this goal is through stressing national sovereignty, protecting Iran’s territorial integrity, and recovery of all the rights of the people.’ They later state: ‘We oppose military attacks on our country Iran under any excuse, including those under the guise of concerns for the irresponsible adventurism of the regime in its nuclear activities’. Finally, they ask that the Islamic Republic government help the IAEA ‘to remove all ambiguities from our nuclear program, so as not to give any excuse for the threat of war and destruction’<sup>clxv</sup>. However, in December 2011, the EU agreed on an oil embargo to be implemented in July 2012<sup>clxvi</sup>. In February 2012, Obama issued an executive order blocking any property or interests of the Iranian government both in the USA, or under the control of any US citizen<sup>clxvii</sup>.

These sanctions regimes are indicative of the mechanisms associated with what Cox refers to as American hegemony, and indeed actors associated with a liberal hegemonic order. While it may be considered acceptable by a vast majority of states to control and contain Iran’s nuclear programme, a closer look at the political impact on Iran through the ideas of the Green Movement suggests a disconnect between their policies and the values associated with a liberal hegemonic order, such as democracy, progressive change, and sovereignty. Furthermore, the explicit rejection of the sanctions regimes by groups promoting democracy and progressive change questions the extent to which the EU, USA and the UN can be considered as part of a *hegemonic world* order that has established itself through global consent. Certainly, sanctions, as action short of military action represented in Article 41 of Chapter VII, are better understood in terms of force. Furthermore, in terms of the norms and values of a world order, the aim of associated institutions and governments is to make sure these norms and values are followed. Indeed, as noted above, the institutions of such a world order are intent on absorbing counter-hegemonic ideas. Thus, those who do not subscribe to them, or are seen to be in violation of them, can be faced with condemnation. In the case of Iran’s nuclear programme, disciplinary action took the form of sanctions. However, the political impact of this, as far as the Green Movement is concerned, has been to hinder progressive change. Considering these dynamics, in Gramscian terms the sanctions regimes are therefore indicative of domination, rather than hegemony, and a not so global world order.

## Conclusion

If we are to have a better understanding of the international system, world order, and global politics, it is necessary to appreciate the complexity of all societies regardless of their geographic location and the agency of all. This article has endeavoured to create a better understanding of world order and Iran's relationship with it by focusing on the idea of democracy as it has been articulated by the Green Movement prior to the JCPOA.

A discourse analysis of Green Movement texts not only highlights their agency, but also illustrates the contradictions of the 'western liberal world order' and challenges the Orientalist discourse that influences this political space. Furthermore, it is clear that domestic and international politics shape each other. Not only have external factors affected how democracy is understood, but there is also a clear international agenda. This is the removal of sanctions to maintain Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In order to better understand these power relations of 'world order', the article has put forward Gramsci's domination. The notion of domination contributes to understanding the forceful nature of 'western liberal world order' in this particular case. This is not only because of the fact that there is no consent, but also because it has acted against its own liberal norms. In so doing, the article builds on extant scholarship that has questioned the hegemonic and global nature of the idea of western liberal world order.

This case study also draws attention to the divisions between the so-called 'West' and 'the rest', which exists not only in the practice of global politics, but also in IR. The article has endeavoured to use Gramsci's work to highlight the former and address the latter. neo-Gramscian IR can move beyond Eurocentrism and Orientalism. By making Iran the main focus, Iranians as part of the Global South are the agent in global politics.

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<sup>i</sup> IAEA, 'GOV/2018/7', 22 February 2018, <<https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/18/03/gov-2018-7-derestricted.pdf>> (9 September 2021)

<sup>ii</sup> John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011)

<sup>iii</sup> See Riccardo Alcaro, 'The Liberal order and its Contestations. A Conceptual Framework', *The International Spectator*, 53(1) 2018, pp. 1-10

<sup>iv</sup> John Peterson, 'Present at the Destruction? The Liberal Order in the Trump Era', *The International Spectator*, 53(1) 2018, pp. 28-44

<sup>v</sup> Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999)

<sup>vi</sup> Amitav Acharya, *Constructing Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 11

<sup>vii</sup> See Acharya, *Constructing*, p. 11. Constructing a global order, involves legitimate and effective world order involving representation and participation of both strong and weaker/emerging powers.

<sup>viii</sup> Jamie Allinson, 'Counter-revolution as International Phenomenon: The Case of Egypt', *Review of International Studies*, 45(2) 2019, pp. 320-44; Brecht De Smet, *Gramsci on Tahrir* (London: Pluto Books, 2016); Derya Göçer Akder and Meliha Benli Altunışık, 'The International from the perspectives of Gezi Protestors', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 31(1) 2018, pp. 72-81; Mahmood Monshipouri and Ali Assareh, 'The Islamic Republic and the "Green Movement": Coming Full Circle', *Middle East Policy*, 16(9) 2009, pp. 27-46;

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Daniel Ritter, *The Iron Cage of Liberalism: International Politics and Unarmed Revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

<sup>ix</sup> Halliday, *Revolution*

<sup>x</sup> Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel (eds.), *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and the Struggle for Iran's Future* (New York: Melville House Publishing, 2010); Güneş Murat Tezcür, 'Democracy Promotion, Authoritarian Resiliency, and Political Unrest in Iran', *Democratization*, 19(1), 2012, pp. 120-40

<sup>xi</sup> See Shabnam Holliday, 'Democratization in Iran: A Role for the EU?' in Michelle Pace (ed.) *Europe, the USA and Political Islam* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2011), pp. 58-78; Shabnam Holliday, 'Iran's own Popular Uprising and the Arab Spring' in Larbi Sadiki (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratization* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 527-537; Shabnam Holliday and Paola Rivetti, 'Divided We Stand? The Heterogeneous Political Identities of Iran's 2009-2010 Uprisings' in Shabnam Holliday and Philip Leech (eds.), *Political Identities and Popular Uprisings in the Middle East* (London: Rowman and Littlefield International, 2016), pp. 17-36; Shabnam Holliday, 'The legacy of subalternity and Gramsci's national-popular: populist discourse in the case of the Islamic Republic of Iran', *Third World Quarterly*, 37(5) 2016, pp. 917-33

<sup>xii</sup> Larbi Sadiki, *The Search for Arab Democracy: Discourses and Counter-discourses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 3-4

<sup>xiii</sup> David Howarth and Yannis Stavrakakis, 'Introducing Discourse Theory and Political Analysis', in David Howarth, Aletta Norval, and Yannis Stavrakakis (eds.) *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 1-23, p. 3

<sup>xiv</sup> See Howarth and Stavrakakis, 'Introducing', p. 9

<sup>xv</sup> Howarth and Stavrakakis, 'Introducing', pp. 6-9

<sup>xvi</sup> Howarth and Stavrakakis, 'Introducing', pp. 2, 6

<sup>xvii</sup> Aletta Norval, 'Trajectories of Future Research in Discourse Theory', in Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis (eds.) *Discourse*, pp.219-36, p. 220

<sup>xviii</sup> Norval, 'Trajectories', p. 220; Ernesto Laclau, 'Populism: What's in a Name?', in Francisco Panizza (ed.) *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy* (London: Verso Books, 2005), pp. 32-49, 37

<sup>xix</sup> Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), p. 105

<sup>xx</sup> Phillips and Jørgensen, *Discourse*, p. 26

<sup>xxi</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, p. 106

<sup>xxii</sup> Phillips and Jørgensen, *Discourse*, pp. 26, 28

<sup>xxiii</sup> See Aletta Norval and Amr Abdulrahman, 'EU Democracy Rethought: The Case of Egypt', in Pace (ed.) *Europe*, pp. 10-39; Nicola Pratt, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Arab World* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2007), p. 1-2

<sup>xxiv</sup> Holliday and Rivetti, 'Divided', p. 17, my emphasis

<sup>xxv</sup> Holliday and Rivetti, 'Divided', p. 19

<sup>xxvi</sup> I have used the *Iranian Studies* journal's transliteration system.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Mir-Hossein Mousavi, 'Future of the Green Movement', 6 Mordad 1388/28 July 2009, <<https://irandataportal.syr.edu/future-of-the-green-movement-28-july-2009>> (9 September 2021). The Gregorian calendar is not usually used in Iran. Therefore, Iranian and Gregorian dates are given.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Owen Worth, 'Recasting Gramsci in international politics', *Review of International Studies*, 37(1) 2011, pp. 373-92, p. 375

<sup>xxix</sup> Worth, 'Recasting', p. 375

<sup>xxx</sup> John Hobson, 'Is Critical Theory Always for the White West and for Western Imperialism? Beyond Westphalia towards a Post-Racist Critical IR', *Review of International Studies* 33(1), 2007, pp. 91-116; Alison Ayers, 'Introduction', in Alison Ayers (ed.) *Gramsci, Political Economy, and International Relations Theory: Modern Princes and Naked Emperors* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 1-26; Mustapha Pasha, 'Return to the Source: Gramsci, Culture, and International Relations', in Ayers (ed.) *Gramsci*, pp. 199-216; Robbie Shilliam, 'Hegemony and the Unfashionable Problematic of Primitive Accumulation', *Millennium*, 33(1) 2004, pp. 59-88

<sup>xxxi</sup> Shilliam, 'Hegemony', pp. 61-2

<sup>xxxii</sup> Pasha, 'Return', p. 201

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Hobson, 'Critical', p. 95

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Ayers, 'Introduction', p. 15

- <sup>xxxv</sup> Asef Bayat, 'Revolution without Movement, Movement without Revolution: Comparing Islamic Activism in Iran and Egypt', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40(1) 1998, pp. 136-69; De Smet, *Gramsci*; Holliday, 'Legacy'; Philip Leech, 'Underlying Fragility: The Absence of Hegemony and Popular Demonstrations in the West Bank 2011-2012', in Holliday and Leech (eds.), *Political*, pp. 59-76; M. Michaelsen, 'Beyond the "Twitter Revolution": Digital Media and Political Change in Iran', in P. Weibel (ed) *Global Activism: Art and Conflict in the 21st Century* (ZKM, Center for Art and Media, 2015); John Chalcraft, *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Hsinyen Lai, 'The 'Juffair dilemma': Arab Nationalism, Alignment and 'National-Popular Collective Will' in Bahrain', *Third World Quarterly*, 41(11) 2020, pp. 1828-42
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Nazih Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab state: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: IB Tauris, 1996); Ali Ansari, *Iran, Islam, and Democracy* (London: Gingko Library, 2019)
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Giluia Daniele, 'Israeli Grassroots Activism: Recent Waves of Protests and Heterogeneous Political Identities', in Holliday and Leech (eds.) *Political*, pp. 77-94; Dani Filc, 'Populism as Counter-hegemony: The Israeli Case', in Mark McNally and John Schwartzmantel (eds.) *Gramsci and Global Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 119-34; Nicola Pratt, *Democracy*; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978); Sara Salem, 'Gramsci in the Postcolony: Hegemony and Anticolonialism in Nasserist Egypt', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 38(1) 2021, pp. 79-99
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Nicola Pratt and Dina Rezk, 'Securitizing the Muslim Brotherhood: State Violence and Authoritarianism in Egypt after the Arab Spring', *Security Dialogue*, 50(3) 2019, pp. 239-59
- <sup>xxxix</sup> M. Alaviniya, *Prison Letters* (Tehran: Nashr-i Agah, 1362/1984); G. Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Zendegi-ye Mardi-ye Enqelabi* (Tehran: Kharazmi, 1360/1981).
- <sup>xl</sup> See Leonardo Paggi, *Le Strategie del Potere in Gramsci: Tra Fascismo e Socialismo in un Solo Paese, 1923-1926*, trans. into Persian by A. Ahmadiaryan (Tehran: Nashr-e Rokhdād-e Now, 1379/2010); Renate Holub, *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Modernism*, trans. into Persian by M. Hakimi (Tehran: Nashr-e Cheshmeh, 1373/2004); Perry Anderson, *The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci*, trans. into Persian by S. Itimad (Tehran: Nashr-e Tarh-e Now, 2017)
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