

4 THE SECT-SEX-POLICE NEXUS AND POLITICS IN BAHRAIN'S PEARL REVOLUTION FRANCES S. HASSO

My interest in gendered embodiments in built environments in the Arab revolutions emerged as I watched videos and photographs of contrasting masculinities in Bahrain in early 2011. Particularly striking were images of unarmed young men in denim jeans, often shirtless, arms raised and hands gesturing in peaceful appeal to police. Occupying the clean avenues of the business district of central Manama, they faced sophisticated military vehicles and an array of fully armed, shielded, and helmeted security men, usually naturalized as citizens and non-Arabic-speaking (figure 4.1). Such scenes coexisted with equally compelling large gender-segregated marches organized by al-Wefaq National Islamic Society. In these contrasting visual tableaux black-robed and veiled girls and women walked on one side of major thoroughfares, separated by sometimes invisible medians from boys and men wearing a variety of clothing styles who walked in parallel. Bahrain's small geographic area, residential partitions on the basis of sect and class, maldistribution of resources, and a post-1979 culture of gender segregation inspired by the Iranian revolution persistently foreground such embodied-spatialized dynamics. I argue that gendered and sect boundaries increasingly "interarticulated,"¹ or worked through each other, as long-standing conflict between the majority of citizens and Al Khalifa rulers intensified into the 14 February Revolution, also called the Pearl Revolution. Rather than further conservatizing the society, such imbrications paradoxically worked to shift gendered norms and embodiments in public space as dramatically as had the 1979 Iranian revolution.



FIGURE 4.1. A Bahraini antigovernment protester gestures in front of riot police on an overpass near the Pearl Roundabout in Manama, Bahrain, 13 March 2011. AP Photo / Hasan Jamali.

I understand sectarianism to be produced like racism, through “racializing” projects that transform difference,² in this case religious difference, into inequality and violence. The “racial formation” approach, developed by Michael Omi and Howard Winant to understand U.S. racial history and revisited multiple times since initial publication of their book in 1986, challenges categorical understandings of difference (e.g., “the Shi‘a” and “the Sunna”) by attending to institutional, especially state-sponsored, projects that “accrete over historical time to shape both the racialized social structure and our psychic structure as racial subjects.”³ Racial formation assumes race to be “neither an essential fact nor an illusion,” a judgment that also applies to ethnic, linguistic, and religious difference.⁴ Zaheer Barber examines violent religious-based communalism in India through a “racialization” framework, arguing for “structural and ideological similarities” between communal and racial conflicts. Too often, he contends, explanations for communal violence rely on the “internal logic” of religions,

“underplay[ing]” institutional factors, including law. This is a rare scholarly example that applies the racial formation approach to non-U.S. contexts. In Baber’s case, and in many examples of sectarianism in the Middle East, identities are racialized “through the construction and deployment of an identifiable discourse of quasi-biological, immutable differences,” despite indistinguishability on the basis of phenotype or morphology.⁵ In a germane study of violence in mid-nineteenth-century Mount Lebanon, Ussama Makdisi illustrates the modernity of a “culture of sectarianism,” challenging linear progress-oriented historiographical explanations that attribute sectarianism to primordialism and tribalism.⁶ Examining conflict in Bahrain through a racialization framework, where sectarian formation is understood as resembling racial formation, even when Arabic “race” words such as *jins* and *‘irq* are not explicitly used, allows us to see how sect, ethnicity, religion, and citizenship status become resources for categorical boundary-building, facilitating repression, material extraction, and regime maintenance in Bahrain and elsewhere.

Gender and sexuality are crucial symbolic, embodied, and institutional resources for sect-based racialization in the sect-sex-police nexus in Bahrain. As Priya Kandaswamy argues, Omi and Winant’s *Racial Formation* neglects gender and naturalizes sexual difference despite the centrality of gender and sexuality to racial formation.⁷ Scholarship on sectarianism in the Middle East also avoids the centrality of sex and gender to the reproduction and policing of such boundaries. Sectarianism and racism are similar in their reliance on state and nonstate forms of law to restrict miscegenation and to control gendered and sexual behavior, marriage, and divorce. Informed by the work of Jacques Rancière, I understand *police* to be any system or sensibility of separation, partition, and distribution designed to produce hierarchy and inequality, and *politics* as enacted and shared transgressions of such systems and sensibilities.⁸ Police in Bahrain works through sectarian discourse, racialized naturalization policies, security forces dominated by non-Bahrainis, and gendered and sexual forms of violence and control. In contrast the Pearl Revolution offered a politics of multiple emancipatory enactments and transgressions whose results have been new gendered imaginaries, subjectivities, and ways of inhabiting space. Attention to visibility, embodiment, and symbolic enactments in space—sartorial practices, vocal expressions, activist visual and sound productions—illuminates sect-sex-police dynamics and politics in Bahrain.

Doing independent research in a highly repressive state such as Bahrain is difficult, to say the least. The state monitors public and private expression on email, telephone, streets, Twitter, websites, Facebook, YouTube, Internet cafés, and Skype, and even in Shi‘a community spaces such as *ma’tams*.⁹ Bahraini ministries use human intelligence, filtering technologies, electronic targeting programs, CCTV cameras, surveillance blimps, and face recognition software for these practices.¹⁰ Antiregime expression by identifiable Bahrainis may lead to prison, torture, dismissal from government and private-sector jobs, restrictions on international travel, and loss of citizenship. My tourist visa to enter Bahrain to conduct research was revoked within a week of its approval by the Ministry of Interior on 17 June 2013, four days before I was scheduled to travel, with no reason provided by the Bahraini ambassador to Washington or the Bahrain Ministry of Interior in Manama. This chapter instead relies on open-ended, largely recorded interviews with ten informants in England in July 2013, evenly split between men and women, informal discussion and observation, including at two Bahraini community events in London, and conversations by telephone and email with activists and informants. I do not attribute most quoted material because anxiety was pervasive. I analyze visual and textual material gathered from independent media, regime and opposition websites, Facebook organization pages, satellite channels, YouTube channels, and Twitter feeds.

In this chapter I first use a historical lens to examine regional and local dynamics and the mechanism of rule in relation to inequalities and distinctions in Bahrain based on sect, class, citizenship, and gender. I offer an account of the making of politics in the 14 February Revolution, with particular attention to spatiality and embodiment. I discuss the crucial role of symbolic and discursive action in the Pearl Revolution and examine gendered turning points and anxieties to substantiate my argument of a sect-sex-police nexus in Bahrain.

Lines of Control in the Corporate Family-State

Inequality genealogies are based on citizenship, indigeneity, religious affiliation, ethnicity, gender, and class or wealth in Bahrain. Bahrain is a state in the internally differentiated region of lower Asia Minor, which has long-standing histories of circulation and crossing. Bodies and spaces are never-

theless divided, contained, and distributed through a number of modern mechanisms. Such containments and subjectifications are not only impositions from the top; they work through bodies, minds, feelings, and space on multiple scales.¹¹ These containments are occasionally ruptured in daily life and at historically significant moments.

A Sunni Arab family-based authoritarian regime, Al Khalifa, rules a country whose majority of 700,000 citizens are Shi‘a Arab.¹² Noncitizens, especially long-term and structurally itinerant migrant workers from South Asia, compose about half of the 1.2 million residents of Bahrain.¹³ The regime distributes resources and manipulates citizenship rules to demographically buttress its subordination of Bahrainis of Shi‘a origin, whom it considers disloyal. These processes in turn feed a sensibility of disadvantage and claims making among Bahraini Shi‘a, especially in relation to foreign men and their families.

Sheyma Buali illustrates how the built environment in Bahrain “maps the marginals,” or indexes racialized and classed forms of partition and containment through differentially available housing and housing quality based on sect, ethnicity, citizenship status, and class; permanent and mobile checkpoints, patrols, and barricades; and cyber and other surveillance.¹⁴ The ruling family privatizes land and water for its benefit and invests low amounts in health, education, and infrastructure for the majority of Bahrainis.¹⁵ Environments have been transformed in the past fifteen years to include towns and reclaimed islands subcontracted by the state to foreign developers, horizons dotted with icons of financialization, shopping malls, fake harbors, and vast housing developments and gated private communities for the rich—what a non-Bahraini Arab who often visits Bahrain calls “bubbles within bubbles.”

“Bahrain Economic Vision 2030” brands Bahrain as “business friendly,” a campaign slogan plastered on London cabs in 2010, although Buali tells me the buildings in the “computer-generated landscapes” do not exist.¹⁶ The corporate report, website, and images of this campaign express a capitalist modernity that hides its exclusions and appropriations. Similarly since 2006 “Northern Town” has existed as a plan and series of images to ameliorate a housing crisis for the vast majority of Bahrainis but has yet to materialize.¹⁷ Spaces of luxury living and consumption that actually exist include communities such as the Amwaj island private housing development.¹⁸ Built for expats, residency is limited to wealthy Bahrainis and non-

Bahrainis.¹⁹ In contrast Shi'a majority towns and villages are "hemmed in and securitized," in the words of a young male Bahraini academic, experiencing enclosure without luxury.

Residential segregation between Shi'a and Sunni majority villages and towns, as well as urban and rural cultural divisions, often map onto class divisions in Bahrain.²⁰ The capital city of Manama, explained Abdulhadi Khalaf, has long "been cosmopolitan in the sense that while neighborhoods were generally segregated, there were always a couple of houses that belonged to this or that family from the other side." A young male revolutionary contended that an ideological aspect of this rural-urban divide disappeared after 14 February 2011: "The families that live in Manama are usually citified, well-educated and stayed back from social movements, and in villages the families are usually workers or peasants who were the most politically involved. . . . In the latest movement this division melted because the state targeted everyone, including the Shi'a merchants of Manama, who were formerly allies of the ruling family."²¹

State jobs are distributed to reinforce regime wealth and power, "coup-proof" rulers, and reduce opportunities for cross-sect class or ideological solidarities.²² According to Khalaf, public works jobs are "dominated by Sunni menial laborers," while "sweepers, orderlies, and grounds workers" in the electricity and health departments are largely Shi'a. In other sectarian formation projects, when the Bahrain Defense Force was established in 1968, all the officers were men from the ruling family, while rank-and-file soldiers represented Bahraini men broadly. Over time, however, service work in the military went to Shi'a men and soldiering positions to Sunni men. While the Bahrain women's police force established in 1970 includes Shi'a and Sunni Bahrainis,²³ the much larger male police force excludes Shi'a Bahrainis and relies on Sunni men of Bahraini and non-Bahraini origin. Policemen are recruited externally, trained, and offered "political naturalization" (citizenship) and housing to assure their loyalty. These practices transform the demographics of Bahrain, harden racialized partitions, and increase the disfranchisement of Baharna indigenous people. They also assure significant divisions between men in the police force, who often do not speak Arabic, and the policed.²⁴ Institutionalized partitioning, Khalaf contended in an interview, was necessary because the country is "too small to maintain physical segregation."

Unlike in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, less than twenty miles away, Bahraini women drive and hold high-level political and professional posi-

tions in most economic sectors. Unlike in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, university classrooms are gender-integrated.²⁵ Like much of the lower Arabian Peninsula, however, Bahrain expresses a habitus of gender segregation and male dominance through built environments, social and political institutions, and everyday practices. On public buses women sit in front seats and men in the back, although the well-off eschew public transportation altogether as low status. Gender segregation is the comfortable and taken-for-granted practice in most settings.

Nevertheless gendered relations and discourse seem less misogynistic and patriarchal than they are in more and less gender-integrated settings I have studied in Egypt, Jordan, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and the United Arab Emirates. Verbal and physical sexual harassment of girls and women in public spaces is rare in Bahrain.²⁶ A female Bahraini informant who has been imprisoned observed, “In protests, and especially in difficult circumstances where you are rounded up, it is not a sexualized environment. I don’t know what explains it.” A religiously conservative Shi’a man in his late thirties agreed that the gender environment in Bahrain differs from that in surrounding Arab countries. Seeming to realize the significance of his words as he responded to my question about gender culture in Bahrain, he elaborated that when he was growing up, the Quran teacher (*al-mu’allima*) in villages “was usually a woman. Between six and nine years old [in the early 1980s], I learned Quran from a woman.” When I asked why that was, he responded, “It might be because she could read and was better-educated than village men, so she taught the boys and girls.” Such accounts indicate the importance of a contextualized rather than linear understanding of gender relations in Bahrain.

Hussain al-Shabib, a human rights activist in his twenties, stressed that before 1980 mixed-gender socializing “was normal”: “My father tells me that when he visited his friends’ homes, their mothers and sisters would sit with them without hijab, wearing *mishmars* [colorful shawls]. When I was recently comparing family photographs of my grandmothers and my mother, I noticed my grandmother wearing a fancy [nonreligious] head-dress as a younger woman, and they are standing in the street by a car.” He asked her teasingly, “Grandma, where was this?” She replied, “No, no, no! No one could see us!” In contrast to a weak culture of gender segregation in the 1970s indicated by his grandmother’s clothing, his mother “is wearing a hijab and *’abaya* [black robe] in the 1980s.”²⁷ Shi’a Bahrainis, he continues, were

definitely impacted by the Iranian revolution. In my religious classes as a child [in the late 1990s], most of the lessons were about what? “Do not talk with women, it is *haram*. There must be segregation. It is banned to sit like we are, with a foreign woman, blah, blah, blah.” They made us think that religion completely revolves around these matters. My grandmother is religious, but it is the religiosity of our grandparents, in opposition to my mother, who was raised by movement Islam, which is so different. Even my great aunt is more open [than the younger generation] and named her daughter after [a Lebanese singer]. We were shocked when she told us. We were raised to think that singing is haram. “How could you name your daughter for a singer?”

In Bahrain women’s rights are instrumentalized by the government to reinforce sectarian divisions between a masculinist undemocratic regime and the majority Baharna, whose main opposition organization is also masculinist and led by men. The largest political mobilization in Bahrain before February 2011 occurred on 5 November 2005, as 100,000 Baharna marched to protest a campaign to allow parliamentarians and state appointees to codify family law, subsuming Sunni and Shi’a jurisprudence systems. For pious Shi’a codification requires a shift from revered sources of religious authority in Lebanon, Iraq, or Iran to laws and policies produced in Manama by a government that does not represent them. King Hamad bin Khalifa has used the threat of codification against the opposition al-Wafaq Society whenever Shi’a Bahrainis push for increased political rights. Many Sunni and Shi’a women’s rights activists supported codification in 2005, arguing against the unfairness, misogyny, and corruption in marriage, divorce, and child custody matters in shari’a courts, where male judges use “independent reasoning” based on Islamic jurisprudence. The rights activists had allies among parliamentarians, Sunni and Shi’a. Most Shi’a religious scholars in Bahrain, all men, were against codification since it undermines Shi’a clerical institutions.²⁸

In the end marriage law was codified only for Sunni Bahrainis in May 2009. As a secular male Bahraini human rights activist in his late twenties put it during an interview, the regime excels at strategically claiming its gender “modernity,” but “when it comes to the hardcore issues related to women, they make it a bargaining chip with the opposition because they know they can press the buttons of the community. . . . If you are an out-

sider, you might say ‘Yes, by God, the government has a right to make this [family] code. Why does al-Wefaq stand against the rights of the people?’ But when you take a closer look you see that they used the family law as a political bargaining chip and the opposition was stupid enough to play this game.”²⁹

Sect differences have seldom led to sustained clashes in Bahrain, and such clashes have rarely been triggered simply by sect affiliation.³⁰ Like other racializing formations, Sunni-Shi‘a differences are inflamed into sectarianism by institutional practices and systems, particular incidents, and storytelling. Cyber activists in their twenties and thirties reported in interviews that in the decade before 2011, intense sectarian attacks by pro-regime forces largely occurred in digital spheres and state-sponsored media. Visual and textual material triggered “comment wars” that have been “amplified a thousand times” since 2011. Attacks on Shi‘a Bahrainis frequently articulate racism through sexualization. In built environments sectarianism has reached unprecedented levels since 14 February 2011, as shrines, mosques, and cemeteries were destroyed or vandalized by regime or pro-regime forces.³¹ “Sunni public figures” for the first time called for economic boycotts of some Shi‘a-owned business.³²

“In the Gulf There Isn’t a Public Square”

For Bahraini activists the conflict with the regime broadly turns on expressing the existence of a disfranchised majority through disruption and transgression of space, place, and dominant discourse. The revolutionary mobilizations in Tunisia and Egypt offered an undeniable opportunity to world-build with others, particularly after 25 January 2011. As a leftist male activist in his twenties stated, “Just the thought that we would be the third group of people to go to the streets—we couldn’t wait [*ma sadaqna*]!” Activists picked 14 February as the mobilization date because it marked the tenth anniversary of a referendum that overwhelmingly approved the National Action Charter put forth in late 2000 by the newly installed ruler, Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, who declared himself king in 2002.³³

As for location, the Bahraini activist and intellectual Ala‘a al-Shehabi explained:

Some guy started carrying out a field study, asking, “Where is our Tahrir?” In the Gulf there isn’t a public square, a public space that

has history or meaning. He studied various locations and made the case on Bahrain Online [which has fifty thousand members] for the Pearl Roundabout given its numerous exits and the symbolic monument.³⁴ People started throwing out other ideas and critiquing them and voted on three locations. It was only an idea that, ideally, if we could occupy a place, it would be the Pearl Roundabout given its accessibility to villages. But people differed on strategy: Should we all gather at the Pearl Roundabout, or should we start in our areas and try to get to the Pearl Roundabout? There was no leadership on that.

The choice of the traffic roundabout with the iconic Pearl Monument of six massive white spires (representing sails) carrying a pearl is ironic. It was built by the Khalifa regime in 1982 as an homage to the six kingly governments of the Gulf Cooperation Council in advance of the third GCC meeting in Manama (figure 4.2).

The “14 February Announcement from Bahraini Youth for Freedom” was released on 3 February 2011 at 1:33 a.m. on the Facebook page of Bahrain Online (Multaqā bahrayn).³⁵ The statement “calls on the people of Bahrain to take to the streets” and to choose “a central and lively location that is easy to reach in the capital.” Mobilization rhetoric, communicated through graffiti and Twitter, repeatedly called for unity across sect, ethnic, and class differences. Bahraini activists held a solidarity event with Egyptians outside the Egyptian Embassy in Manama on 4 February and joined Egyptian expats in celebration outside the embassy on 11 February, when President Hosni Mubarak was compelled to step down.³⁶ On 14 February marches and protests occurred in at least twenty-seven villages. Al-Shehabi explains that residents would hear “a rumor of people going out at eight a.m. from a particular mosque. You never knew who made the call or whether it was genuine, you just showed up. Someone would say, ‘Allahu akbar,’ and people would start marching, with others coming out to join them from every corner. That’s how it happened. I saw people walking, so I started walking with them.”

Police shot twenty-one-year-old ‘Ali Abdulhadi Mushaima in the back late in the afternoon on 14 February, killing him as he returned to his home in the village of Daih from a protest.³⁷ Tensions were high as riot police and a few hundred mourners waited outside the morgue in Salmaniyya Medical Complex in Manama on the morning of 15 February to take Mushaima’s body for a procession and burial. Police lobbed teargas and shot at mourn-



FIGURE 4.2. Demonstrators gather at Pearl Square in Manama, 25 February 2011. Reuters / Caren Firouz.

ers outside the hospital, killing thirty-one-year-old Fadhel al-Matrook of 'Isa Town and injuring others.³⁸ As news spread, thousands joined the funeral procession for Mushaima as it moved to Daih. After his burial mourners were motivated by a “whisper”: “Let’s go to the roundabout. We have buried him, but we are not done.” They marched 1.5 kilometers back to Manama using a road they were surprised was open, arriving in the early afternoon for an unprecedented gathering that became an encampment.³⁹

By the evening of 16 February, the 14 February Revolution Youth Coalition was established in the roundabout, according to a male activist who helped found it, “although it did not come out publicly until March.”⁴⁰ By this account al-Wefaq Society did not request “authorization from the roundabout [*takhwil min al-duwwar*] to speak as our representative. So we tried to establish this logic by forming youth demands that were finalized between 18 and 19 February.” The tame demands emerged from negotiation between youth activists and “the majority of opposition groups and figures in Bahrain.”⁴¹ A member of the National Democratic Action Society, the largest leftist organization in the country, gathered statements of support for the document from political societies and individuals, “creating a reality.” Afterward “the machine began to work and things were running on Bahrain Online, where we didn’t have a say.” This informant reported

that “the opposition in London didn’t agree to the statement” because it was too moderate. To roundabout activists’ satisfaction, the demands were the basis “of the seven negotiating points announced by the crown prince on 13 March 2011.”

Despite generational and ideological differences between al-Wefaq and activists in the 14 February Revolution Youth Coalition, and occasional tension apparent in interviews and published accounts, the distinctions between opposition trends *in* Bahrain can be overdrawn.⁴² The main ideological tensions are between some London-based opposition leaders and activists living in Bahrain. As a second male revolutionary noted, “All these things are mixed together in Bahrain. You cannot, for example, clearly categorize the followers of al-Wefaq as separate from the followers of the 14 February Coalition or the followers of other groups. We cannot determine the space each occupies or the membership size of each. In terms of the 14 February Coalition, it is an unknown matter [*shaghla ghamitha*] because nothing [membership and leadership] is clear to anyone.”

Police violently cleared the roundabout encampment before dawn on 17 February, killing four people that day and another the following day and injuring hundreds. Police withdrew on 19 February, and protesters tore down the barbed wire and reoccupied the roundabout.⁴³ After this “hit” activists “cut lines of communication with each other because we did not even know some of the people we were sitting with. We were very worried about who might be a *dabbous* [undercover spy].”

In late afternoon of 22 February tens of thousands of Bahrainis poured into the Pearl Roundabout encampment in a march called by al-Wefaq, demanding the resignation of the longtime prime minister and the end of Khalifa rule.⁴⁴

On 14 March, invited by some of the Khalifa rulers, the GCC sent in a “Peninsula Shield Force” of about one thousand Saudi Arabian national guardsmen and five hundred Emirati police. They entered through the sixteen-mile-long King Fahd Causeway that connects Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and attacked the Pearl Roundabout encampment on 15 March.⁴⁵

On 18 March, in a shocking three-hour operation, state forces demolished the Pearl Monument itself, deeming it too dangerous to exist.⁴⁶ Police and military forces barricaded the area, renamed it “Farooq Junction,” although it remained closed to human and vehicular traffic, and imposed a security cordon around Manama.



FIGURE 4.3. The logo of the 14 February Revolution Youth Coalition, established March–April 2011. The words “Steadfastness” and “Struggle/Resistance,” an image of the Pearl Monument as an ever-present shadow, and the fist of struggle are depicted in the colors of the Bahraini flag.

Resisting, Resignifying, and Cyber-Amplifying

Representations of the destroyed concrete object that was the Pearl Monument, sometimes with splatters of blood and an attached Bahraini flag calling it “Martyr’s Square,” are ubiquitous in Bahrain and cyberspace. In a brilliant essay Amal Khalaf describes how English-language foreign media eager to have a narrative parallel with Cairo’s Tahrir Square called the Pearl Roundabout (Duwwar) the Pearl *Square* instead. Bahraini revolutionaries went from mocking this designation to adopting the word *midan* for signifying a discursive civic square of engagement on multiple scales. Khalaf shows how the destroyed Pearl Monument has “many afterlives” as an “image-memory” that Bahraini activists refuse to allow to disappear (figure 4.3).⁴⁷

A symbolic turning point occurred in 2011 when opposition forces encouraged use of the red and white Bahrain flag—redesigned and decreed by a new king in 2002 as the official state flag—to express the indigenous, nonsectarian, national or *watani* nature of the revolt. Shi‘a Bahrainis are regularly accused by regime and pro-regime partisans of being traitors with strong affinities to Shi‘a in Iran, Lebanon, or Iraq. In turn Arab Shi‘a Bahrainis generally understand the Khalifa as a settler-colonial family from central Arabia who, with British intervention, have consolidated their con-

trol on the indigenous population for over two hundred years. A male revolutionary explains why the resignification of the flag is remarkable:

I never recognized the Bahraini flag as the flag of the country because it was imposed by a colonial power. Now it has become our flag by coincidence [*alamna bil sudfeh*]. The irony is that when the crackdown came, the government relied on Saudi Arabia to help them. During the crackdown, if we were caught at a checkpoint with a Bahraini flag, we would have to be artful [in how to explain it]. Before 14 February protesters regularly carried Hizbollah and other flags. But people were instructed not to carry any flag except the Bahraini flag and not to carry banners and placards with the picture of any one individual.

These previously common male visages at demonstrations included well-known Shi‘a religious and political authority figures from Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran. Nevertheless, he continued, revolutionaries were “hit with the broken record of sectarianism, treason, and national betrayal that the government relies on. They were defeated and could rely on nothing but bullets and lies. The regime was desperate to build the issue of sectarianism [*mawthu‘ al-ta‘ifiyya*] in response to this uprising. Our strategy was to minimize opportunities for a sectarian discourse as much as possible,” although revolutionaries did not always meet this goal in his opinion.

Resignification of meaning and space on multiple scales remained an explicit aspect of the Pearl Revolution. The 14 February Revolution Youth Coalition #Decisive Moment 3 mobilization campaign on 15 June 2013, which repeats an action from December 2011,⁴⁸ blurred divisions between home, neighborhood, and street; incorporated people less likely to travel significant distances from home or neighborhood; and resignified the front stoop as a site of collective politics. Using graffiti, Twitter, and Facebook, the campaign coordinated a “first call” of alert at 3:15 p.m., a “second call” at 3:45, and a “third call” at 5:15.⁴⁹ During the second call people were invited “to gradually peacefully gather *in front of their homes* without raising any slogans or banners” and “furnish” and occupy spaces outside the front door.⁵⁰ Families and friends sat in front of homes on plastic chairs and mats, drinking tea, eating, and talking. During the third call people participated in marches.⁵¹ When I shared my thesis that decentralized methods facilitate broad inclusion, activists insisted in contrast that they strategize under enclosure conditions. Given residential segregation and the lim-

ited number of roads leading to the heart of power in Manama, they see a regime “containment strategy” that “isolates and fragments people in a small country,” according to the sociologist Abdulhadi Khalaf. He continued, “If I were the police, I would welcome decentralized protest because protesters . . . spoil their space but not the space that the regime wants to move in.” Activists in the 14 February Revolution Youth Coalition prefer to stage events in Manama and Muharraq to assure media visibility and curtail business as usual. Protests in these sites erode containment of Shi’a villages.

Activists nevertheless magnify dissensus despite geographical containment by using YouTube and other cyber venues to post videos and images of protest. A cyber activist reported that every village in Bahrain has a YouTube channel. Cyberspace is a central site of politics, as illustrated by a video from February 2012 of young activists in the village of Sitra attacking with Molotov cocktails the large and likely unoccupied fortress-like local police station in the night hours. The video illustrates staging attentive to the impressive nighttime effects of light and sound on a cyber audience and scheduling when no police were likely to be hurt. The video had been watched over 230,000 times on YouTube when I viewed it.⁵²

Turning Points, Ruptures, and Anxieties in Gendered Body Politics

There is little doubt that the 14 February Revolution opened space for “new actors, new layers, and new groups,” maintains Ala’a al-Shehabi. Activists in the Pearl Roundabout quickly realized that “even the old opposition was part of formal politics,” as were organizations such as the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, because these formations

worked within restrictions and boundaries that existed before February 14. With the uprising you had informal task-oriented collectives forming. . . . But they realized they needed new organization. So the heads of the committees in the Pearl Roundabout had nightly meetings. . . . We are talking about a very intensive period that lasted three or four weeks. You could see that a new public sphere was forming, with its own power. . . . There were definitely women at the committee level, at the medical tent, the media tent, they were everywhere. They were very organized. When you start off on the same footing

on a blank page there is no space for previous social boundaries to be enforced. So when al-Wefaq tried to come to the Roundabout to say we need gender segregation, there was definitely resistance in the crowd. But it was decided that if there was an area where some women feel more comfortable, that was fine. There was still mixing, and no one was enforcing segregation. As the revolution continued, you got a sense of the tension women's activism produced, with statements from al-Wefaq such as "I urge our good women to please retreat [from] confrontations." You don't go telling [the activist] Zainab al-Khawaja to retreat. She goes looking for a confrontation!

As mentioned, spatial segregation by gender is common in large public gatherings organized by al-Wefaq. Most women wear black 'abayas and hair covers and group behind or beside men during marches (figure 4.4). These practices visibly communicate conservative notions of respectability and propriety but do not necessarily represent women's and men's gendered or religious motivations and subjectivities. 'Abayas have become anonymizing uniforms that hide decentralized activities that are less sanctioned by dominant institutions.⁵³ Sartorial and gender-segregated spatial practices also hide the degree to which spatial gender norms and acceptable forms of embodiment have been seismically shifted by events since February 2011. Al-Shehabi, who covers her hair, noted that when "non-hijabi" women get comments these days, such as "Why the hell are you not properly dressed?," the critics are typically other women, while men may insist, "It's her right. It's her freedom." Even in her conservative village, where she could "not be out without a 'abaya as a child" in the late 1980s and 1990s, dress standards for girls and women have "loosened enormously" since 2011.

On the island of Sitra, where about half of households have boys or men in jail, according to Amal Khalaf, women's participation is "about bodies, numbers of bodies, and the recognition that bodies have power in space in Bahrain. . . . So it is really important that people make themselves visible." Girls and women are indeed active in barricade building, general strikes, graffiti actions, noise making, and chants. They also make and throw Molotov cocktails, disrupt the contentious Grand Prix Formula 1 race, and engage in pitched battles with riot police.⁵⁴ Notwithstanding the use of Molotov cocktails and firebombs by some girls and women, their



FIGURE 4.4. Bahraini antigovernment protesters march toward the Pearl Roundabout on 1 March 2011, men on one side of the road and women on the other, in the capital of Manama. Tens of thousands of Bahrainis, largely Shiites, participated in the march, urging unity among Sunnis and Shiites in demanding political reform. AP Photo / Hasan Jamali.

activism is likely facilitated by the nonmilitarized nature of the Bahrain uprising, which may not remain so.

Hussain al-Shabib noted that women's leadership and participation in the 14 February Revolution at all levels is "pivotal" (*mihwari*) and "impossible to overstate at this point. It would have been impossible to sustain the revolution without women." There are many "distinctive indications" of a gendered cultural turning point linked to 14 February 2011. Among these is that women "who do not wear hijab returned to the front [*raja'at lal-wajih*]" and that "the social restriction against the presence of women who do not wear hijab is gone." This coming out is illustrated most dramatically by covered and uncovered women physicians and nurses of both sects who, with male colleagues, treated the injured across sects, protected them from police and security forces, and have been outspoken against the Khalifa government. Many of these medical personnel were beaten, imprisoned, and tortured and have become national figures in their own right.⁵⁵

A male revolutionary in his midthirties substantiated a shift in gender norms with regard to the inhabitation of space: “The generation of 14 February is more liberal and uses public space with a larger sense of freedom. Ten years ago a young woman could not go to a meeting without having her little brother with her. This is no longer true as girls attend meetings like everyone else and go to places like Costa Coffee, which include men and women. This is true even for the most conservative families. I suspect this scares conservative forces.” He cautioned that “matters of religious conservatism” are nevertheless unresolved in Bahrain. He feared “the jihadi, Salafi, or Wahhabi forces, who hate the king. Women’s representation is not a major Sunni or Shi’a problem in Bahrain, even among conservative forces. The current female minister is from the Muslim Brotherhood, and al-Wefaq has women at the highest levels now.⁵⁶ It is the Salafi-Wahhabi forces who may really be against any opening of public space or expanding women’s rights.” This activist distinguished women’s participation from women’s substantive influence in high-level decision making and leadership in al-Wefaq and the government, however. He thought such influence “doubtful” because “the dominant frameworks remain conservative and Islamic, and the masculinist point of view continues to be present and concentrated in Bahraini society.”

Widely significant and unprecedented was the bold sonic breach of a mixed-gender space by Ayat al-Qurmezi, a twenty-year-old college student from a modest class background who performed an original poem onstage during the Pearl Roundabout encampment in February 2011. The poem was structured around a fictional encounter between (King) “Hamad” and Satan (Idlis), where Satan is the humane character, and included xenophobic remarks about South Asians awarded citizenship, housing, and other resources by Hamad at the expense of his own people. In the YouTube version the carefully listening men in the audience are heard to say “Clever, clever” and to laugh. They seem startled by Qurmezi’s audacity and egg her on during the performance. A young Bahraini intellectual who spoke to me in English called it a “radical performance”: “You can hear her voice cracking. She is expressing something that they never had the eloquence or gall to say.” He criticized her at the same time for breaking “with the radical message when the poem becomes xenophobic. . . . It is orgiastic xenophobia coupled with a kind of precise critique of power.” In addition to the thousands who heard the performance live in the Pearl

Roundabout, videos circulated widely on the Internet and led to Qurmezi's arrest and torture.⁵⁷

In another kind of gendered-ideological breach, this one increasingly common in corporate space, a widely disseminated video posted to YouTube on 23 September 2011 by a pro-regime man shows Bahraini girls and women wearing black robes and hair covers, marching and chanting in young feminine voices for the downfall of the regime on the bottom floor of the posh City Centre Mall while apparently Sunni men on the higher atrium floor counterchant, record, and look down on them. In the "about" section on YouTube, the pro-regime uploader explains to his presumed English readers (lightly edited by the author): "Bahraini citizens in City Centre Mall refused this type of action and replied to the protesters against their political chanting and demanded that they get out. City Centre is commercial property that is owned by a business group. Protesting inside private property is against the law and the security forces took action to enforce the law against these illegal actions."⁵⁸ In this passage the author constitutes himself and his group as "citizens," in contrast to the protesters; the mall as private property available to him but not the protesting voices; and his alignment with the Law and Police against the women protesters.

Zainab al-Khawaja, born when her parents were in exile in Denmark, is probably the most outspoken and publicly confrontational Bahraini woman activist. She was in prison during most of 2013 and rearrested in December 2014, the latest of many arrests. On 15 December 2011 police attacked a demonstration and sit-in of several hundred people, mostly women. Then twenty-seven years old, al-Khawaja, whose father and husband were imprisoned at the time, remained to occupy, in Amal Khalaf's words, "the grassy area of the Bergaland [Burgerland] traffic roundabout, just her one body. She is looking at the police, she is not scared, and they are literally dragging her across the roundabout." The series of European Pressphoto Agency photographs of the incident quickly became powerful iconography (figure 4.5).⁵⁹ Like al-Khawaja, many Bahraini women who have been named and targeted by the regime for revolutionary activity are in their twenties or thirties, married, and with young children. Al-Khawaja discussed the difficulty of prioritizing motherhood in an English-language radio interview on February 2012 before one of her arrests.⁶⁰

Confrontational activism by girls and women and the repression of police, intelligence, and security services have produced multiple responses



FIGURE 4.5. The activist Zainab al-Khawaja screaming while being arrested during a protest at the Bergaland traffic roundabout in Abu Seba village, north of Manama, Bahrain, 15 December 2011. European Pressphoto Agency / Mazen Mahdi.

from Baharna men and male-dominated institutions, including admiration, protectiveness, and an impulse to pull them back into comfortable zones of appropriate behavior. Abdulhadi Khalaf maintained that women's disproportionate involvement in the revolution is "more women-led than men-approved." Many men "have a problem seeing this kind of activism." Those interested in "self-preservation" are happy for women's involvement but would rather they not engage in risky activity that forces men to "become macho" and "take more action than we should" given the attached danger. "We have to defend them when the police come," these men say, but they must "learn that women can suffer too." His analysis is consistent with a casual discussion I had with two Bahraini women later that day in July 2013 in a car in London. They agreed that through their actions and words Bahraini women force men to be more militant than may be comfortable or safe. They revealed that many Bahraini women are angered by cautiousness and use language that queers men who do not participate in confrontation.

Calls for girls and women to restrain themselves come from at least two other masculine subject positions, argued Abdulhadi Khalaf. First, there is competitiveness and "envy that women are more daring, really daring.

During the Grand Prix Formula 1 Race in 2012 and 2013, it was women who got into the track” despite security restrictions. Rihanna al-Musawi and Nafissa al-Asfur were indeed arrested in April 2013 for such a breach on the second day of the race and were accused of being part of the leadership of the 14 February Revolution Youth Coalition. Both women reported being tortured, beaten, and abused in detention, including rape, forced disrobing, and other forms of sexualized humiliation and assault.⁶¹ Similarly, Abdulhadi continued, “Zainab al-Khawaja has daring that very few men have. There are many others like her: Fatima Hajji, a medical doctor, the nurse Rula al-Saffar—they do not confront police, but they have not succumbed to pressure from the regime.”

The main Shi‘a cleric for al-Wefaq, ‘Isa Qasem, and the leader of al-Wefaq, Ali Salman, are motivated by a third gender logic when they try to restrain or police women, Khalaf argued: “They have actually voiced objection that women are so active.” The warnings are typically in a patronizing language: “For their own good, girls and women should not seek confrontation with the police. They should not go in the forefront because the police are godless, and so on, and will attack anyone.” He found “the consequences fascinating because no one listened to them.” There is a “self-synergizing process that is moving on its own.” Even young Bahraini women students who are so religious they will not shake their male professor’s hand are “so immersed in the struggle that I don’t think they will ever listen to such a call. This is notable but does not mean they will not fall in line sometime in the future.”

The Sect-Sex-Police Nexus

Family and community forms of gender-sexual policing to some degree respond to regime apparatuses in Bahrain that use sexualized measures to control men and women activists through shame.⁶² Such methods include rape, sexual assault, forcing detainees to disrobe, removing women’s hair covers, monitoring sexual behavior to blackmail activists, and using sexual seduction to bait potential spies. I term this the sect-sex-police nexus. It is widely known among Bahrainis that intelligence forces have blackmailed male activists video-recorded having sex and have used other sexualized methods in attempts to trap them. There are stories of women (*mujan-nadat*) hired by the National Security Agency to pretend to admire or be in love with men activists on social media, offer Shi‘a temporary marriage

(*mut'a*), and put men in compromising intimate situations to elicit information on their activities and networks.⁶³ In another method a man and woman activist will be arrested at the same time, but the woman will be released “in two minutes,” putting her under suspicion as a collaborator. The names of released women are sometimes “publicized by opposition forums,” leading one woman to attempt suicide. Al-Shehabi criticized “the sexual undertones” of the opposition focus on women collaborators because “everyone became suspicious of any woman who was a successful activist. Is she really an infiltrator or an activist?”

The regime and its supporters have been preoccupied with the sexual activities of activists since the early days of the revolution. Regime and sectarian Sunnis used state-sponsored television and digital venues to spread a sectarian-sexual narrative with multiple layers that accuses activists of gender-mixing and using the roundabout for sex and *mut'a*. Soon after police and military forces destroyed the Pearl Monument, according to a young male activist, King Hamad's information advisor and president of *Al-Ayyam* newspaper, Nabil al-Hamer, “published a picture of women's underwear on his personal Facebook page with the caption, ‘Leftovers of the Roundabout [*Min mukhalafat al-duwwar*].’ He deleted it, but people had taken a screenshot.” A group called Bahrain Shield, reportedly affiliated with Chief of Police Tareq al-Hassan, on 7 June 2011 posted on YouTube an unintentionally campy video produced in a solemn evidentiary genre that staged women's panties and bras, unused condoms, and condoms with “semen” in them purportedly left behind in razed tents of the encampment.⁶⁴

In another Bahrain Shield video, posted on YouTube on 15 June 2011, male teenagers and young men are accused of luring schoolgirls to the Roundabout for nefarious purposes. After aerial video footage that follows a group of teenage girls walking through the encampment into a tent, sequential title cards of stark white Arabic against a black background declare: “As you saw . . . these young students [fem.] were taken into one of the tents surrounded by adolescents [masc.] and young men.” The next title card asks: “And the question here is *why*? And what happened *to them* [*bi-hinna*, feminine plural] inside these tents?” (emphasis added). Rather than voice-overs, the videos intersperse Arabic text with pictures and video, accompanied by ominous instrumental music.⁶⁵ The “why” implies that the *real* reason activists occupied the Pearl Roundabout was to sexually exploit girls and women. The phrase *to them* represents men as moti-

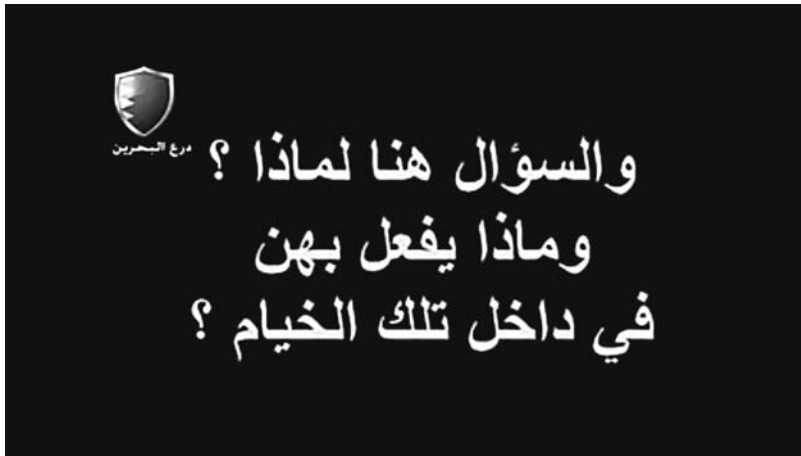


FIGURE 4.6. “And the question here is why? And what happened to them inside these tents?” Screenshot from Bahrain Shield, “Witness What Happened to Girl Students in the Roundabout,” YouTube, 15 June 2011, 2:22, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dyoIwoHLMQ>.

vated by greed and sexual desire rather than political principles and girls and women as objects of exploitation and victims rather than political or sexual subjects (figure 4.6).

Male pundits had free rein on Bahrain state television to accuse women of sexual improprieties. Other material distributed virtually by sectarian forces labels Shi‘a as Zoroastrian and of Iranian origin, with Shi‘a women subject to special vitriol.⁶⁶ Sectarian rhetoric from regime and pro-regime forces, contends al-Shabib, aims “to trash” revolutionaries by referring to the roundabout as *duwwar al-mut‘a* (the temporary marriage roundabout). It urges activists to “go back to the [demolished] mut‘a circle” and calls oppositional Shi‘a *wilad al-mut‘a* (children of temporary marriage) and *a‘yal al-mut‘a* (families of temporary marriage). This “basically say[s] we are illegitimate bastards.”

Activists are accused of having sex in Tent 6 of the Roundabout, which was near a palm tree the Manama municipality identified by this number, according to al-Shehabi. Interrogations of men and women frequently focus on Tent 6, said al-Shehabi: “‘Tell us what you were doing there.’ They built this idea that Tent 6 was where people were having mut‘a relations.

They tell people, ‘You just wanted to go there for whores.’ But you know what? There was no privacy. Everything was open. I spent most of my time there. For the regime, either Iran was behind this or it was about sex.” Another woman reported that having sex at the Roundabout “would have been really difficult, [because] there were many families. If you were going to have sex with a boyfriend or girlfriend, maybe you would drive your car far away from kids, and you won’t do it anywhere where anyone in your family would ever, ever find out.”

A Bahraini woman whose male relative’s torture sessions included sexual assault said he was regularly asked, “Tell us who you slept with. You’ve got to tell us!” A woman arrested in 2012 with a group of journalists and a young man they had paid to drive them during the Formula 1 Race reported, “The first thing I was asked by police was, ‘What were you doing in the car with five men anyway?’” She responded, “Can you tell me what law I broke? Are you going to charge me with a violation of honor?” When they asked her about packaged condoms they found in the glove compartment of the vehicle, she responded, “It’s not my car. It’s not my responsibility.’ They wanted to intimidate me and say ‘We have something on you.’” A well-known woman activist who spent many months in prison told Amal Khalaf that a woman police officer taunted her through the cell door, “We found condoms in your car. Are you having sex in the car, you whore?” Such language is ubiquitous online, according to Khalaf, given the desire of pro-government social media “to discredit protesters in any way, shape, or form.” The focus on sex, she argued, feeds into a Sunni racist discourse that Shi’a “are just animals.” While most opposition people “didn’t care,” according to al-Shabib, others “went to the extreme and attacked the other side by calling them ‘wilad al-misyar,’” or children of a Sunni form of convenience marriage.⁶⁷ These activists also dubbed the al-Fatih Sunni mosque in Manama *tajammu’ al-misyar*, or the misyar gathering.

Sex and racialization were frequently co-articulated, casting aspersions on the reputations of women activists, making suspicious nonmarital relationships between consenting adults, and increasing family pressure on especially women activists to avoid the appearance of impropriety. As a male Bahraini scholar in his twenties astutely observed, sexual and racial discourse “criminalizes the entire edifice” of the Pearl Roundabout and the opposition. I contend it also *trivializes* the opposition and forces activists to define sex, intimacy, and joy as separate from politics when they are rarely so.

Conclusion

Anxieties about authenticity, rootedness, allegiance, and legitimate belonging remain crucial in Bahrain, animated by a variety of policing practices and discourses. Despite boundary building, Bahraini elites are part of regional and global networks of clerics and religious authorities, rulers, military leaders, weapons merchants, intelligence and security entrepreneurs, capitalists, and culture ministers. Affinities and connections overlap and exceed the bounded and purist assumptions of nationalist, patriarchal, and racializing ideologies in other ways. For example, there are thick lines of family relations between Bahrainis and people in Iran, Hasa in coastal eastern Saudi Arabia,⁶⁸ Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Iraq.

Global and regional networks also include independent Bahraini intellectuals, feminists, and liberal and radical bloggers, journalists, webmasters, artists, filmmakers, hackers, and other cyber and media activists who have informally worked with each other on a number of scales for many years before 2011. Despite challenges, Bahraini activists have constituted new spaces, embodiments, and imaginaries by enacting freedom and equality in what Gillian Rose has termed “paradoxical space,” where it is “impossible to find a position that is outside of hegemonic discourse” and yet people try. It remains important in Bahrain that these emancipatory imaginaries and practices do not depend on what Rose calls “exclusions” or “dualities.”⁶⁹

This chapter shows how sex and gender and sectarianism are embodied and work through each other, the built environment, discourse, and digital space in Bahrain. Gender and sexuality are foundational to sectarianism, which I treat as a racializing dynamic that is central to policing. I use verbs rather than nouns—for example, *racializing*, *gendering*, *making*, and *sexualizing*—to stress the productions and enactments of police and politics on many scales, in contrast to assumptions of givenness and stability. The 14 February Revolution marks a historical turning point in that it transformed relations between bodies and space, loosened gendered restrictions, and produced new sex-gendered subjectivities, embodiments, and tensions. Among the revolution’s notable dimensions is a rise in women-led confrontational street politics not necessarily authorized by Bahraini opposition men, which has produced sublimated tensions not captured by images of orderly gender-segregated marches. For their part Bahraini state officials and their supporters strategically deploy conservative ideologies

of sexual respectability and purity to discredit women and men activists and consolidate police.

NOTES

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1. I borrow this term from Judith Butler. Vikki Bell, “On Speech, Race and Melancholia: An Interview with Judith Butler,” *Theory, Culture and Society* (April 1999): 168.

2. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 1994).

3. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “Once More, with Feeling: Reflections on Racial Formation,” *PMLA* 123, no. 5 (2008): 1567.

4. Priya Kandaswamy, “Gendering Racial Formation,” in *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Daniel Martinez HoSang, Oneka LaBennett, and Laura Pulido (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 23.

5. Zaheer Baber, “‘Race,’ Religion and Riots: The ‘Racialization’ of Communal Identity and Conflict in India,” *Sociology* 38, no. 4 (2004): 702–3, 706, 711. On phenotype and morphology in the racial formations approach, see Nikhil Singh, “Racial Formation in an Age of Permanent War,” in HoSang et al., *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, 277.

6. Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 5–7.

7. Kandaswamy, “Gendering Racial Formation,” 24, 25, 40.

8. Jacques Rancière, “Ten Theses on Politics,” *Theory and Event* 5, no. 3 (2001): 1–4 (Thesis 1), 11–13, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v005/5.3ranciere.html; Jacques Rancière, “The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics,” in *Reading Rancière: Critical Dissensus*, edited by Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp (London: Continuum, 2001), 1–17.

9. Bahrain has separate ma’tams for women and men and more than one of each of these structures in most villages, towns, and cities; sometimes they are attached to

Shi'a mosques. For more information, see Fuad Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 154; Sophia Pandya, *Muslim Women and Islamic Resurgence: Religion, Education, and Identity Politics in Bahrain* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 83–87; Sophia Pandya, "Women's Shi'i Ma'atim in Bahrain," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 6, no. 2 (2010): 31–58.

10. Reporters without Borders, "Countries under Surveillance: Bahrain," n.d., <http://en.rs.org/surveillance-bahrain,39748.html>; "Bahrain to Set Up New Surveillance System," *TradeArabia Business News Information*, 7 September 2013, http://www.tradearabia.com/news/LAW_242349.html; Privacy International, "Surveillance Briefing: Bahrain. The Role of Surveillance Technology Companies," 2012, accessed 2014, <https://www.privacyinternational.org/reports/surveillance-briefing-bahrain/the-role-of-surveillance-technology-companies>; English News Today—Russia Today, "Surveillance for Sale: UK Exports Spyware to Bahrain," YouTube, 5 August 2013, accessed 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90-hkiT8fHw>.

11. For an interview-based discussion with Judith Butler on subjection and subjectification in relation to gender and racialization, see Bell, "On Speech, Race and Melancholia."

12. Citizens include Shi'a and Sunni of Arab and Persian origin, Jews and Christians of Arab and Persian origin, Muslims of African and South Asian origin, and other ethnicities, identifications, and mixtures. The state gathers no public data that I am aware of on sect proportions among citizens, but it is widely known and accepted that Shi'a of Arab origin composed about two-thirds of citizens at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

13. Andrew M. Gardner, *City of Strangers: Gulf Migration and the Indian Community in Bahrain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); Bahrain Census 2010 (Arabic), accessed 28 September 2013, <http://www.census2010.gov.bh/results.php>. The 2010 data indicate a dramatic rise in foreign residents since 2001, but without extensive research I cannot provide a definitive explanation for this.

14. Sheyma Buali, "Mapping the Marginals," unpublished paper, 26 June 2013, kindly provided by the author.

15. See article, diagrams, and especially videos on land appropriation by the ruling regime: Justin Gengler, "How the Failure of Gulf Air Explains the Failure of Bahrain," *Bahrain Politics*, 29 January 2012, <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2012/01/how-failure-of-gulf-air-explains.html>; Joshua Eaton, "What's Really Going On in Bahrain: An Interview with Activist Ala'a al-Shehabi," *Spare Change News*, 14 June 2013, <http://sparechangenews.net/2013/06/whats-really-going-on-in-bahrain-an-interview-with-activist-ala-a-shehabi/>.

16. Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman al Khalifa, King Hamad bin Isa al Khalifa, and Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander Sheikh Salman bin Hamad al Khalifa, "Our Vision: From Regional Pioneer to Global Contender. The Economic Vision 2030 for Bahrain," 2008, <http://www.mofa.gov.bh/img/partners/Vision2030Englishlow-resolution.pdf>. Tellingly the Arabic hyperlink in the top right hand of the page resulted in "404 not found" (last checked 23 February 2016): <http://www.bahrainedb.com/en/about/Pages/economic%20vision%202030.aspx#.UkLxJW3ODIT>. See images: <http://humanette.blogspot.com/2010/06/gulf-ads-on-black-cabs.html>.

17. For articles and images on Northern Town in construction and business publications, see Bahrain Projects and Construction Forum, SkyscraperCity, <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=321441>; “Bahrain Will Not Meet Housing Targets—Minister,” *Construction Week Online*, 30 March 2013, <http://www.constructionweekonline.com/article-21633-bahrain-will-not-meet-housing-targets—minister/#.UkML-W3ODTR>; “Bahrain Building 30,000 Homes for Citizens,” *TradeArabia Business News Information*, 23 January 2013, http://www.tradearabia.com/news/CONS_229451.html.

18. For information on and images of Amwaj Islands, see the corporate website <http://www.amwaj.bh/>; <http://www.amwaj-islands.com/about-amwaj-islands/>; “Bahrain Developments,” *Click Bahrain*, n.d., http://www.clickbahrain.com/clickbahrain_developments.asp, which includes information on many development projects in Bahrain; and the *Amwaj Families Bahrain* Facebook page, with over eight hundred likes: <https://www.facebook.com/AmwajfamiliesBahrain>.

19. Currently with about two thousand residents, Amwaj was one of a few places it was safe enough for organizers to physically meet to plan the 14 February 2011 uprising. Those who could afford to moved there in February and March 2011, although public figures such as the physician Nada Dhaif were arrested on the island beginning in late March.

20. Nelida Fuccaro, “Understanding the Urban History of Bahrain,” *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 9, no. 17 (2000): 49–81. During a July 2013 interview with me in London, the Bahraini sociologist Abdulhadi Khalaf explained that residential segregation based on sect decreased in the 1920s and 1930s with the establishment of common places of interaction such as the British oil company BAPCO and public schooling. By the mid-twentieth century Bahrainis who had “improved their income” had moved to new neighborhoods “open to everyone.” In response sects were determined in advance in state public housing projects such as ‘Isa Town, built in the 1960s, although “in the end the township, markets, clinic, and so on were common to both groups, which worked nicely for the integrationists but not the regime.”

21. ‘Abbas Mirza al-Marshad and ‘Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja provide a history of Bahrain’s political organizations since the early twentieth century in *Political Organizations and Societies in Bahrain: A Descriptive Human Rights Study* (Arabic) (Manama, Bahrain: Fardis, 2008).

22. Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain*, 123–33.

23. Staci Strobl, “The Women’s Police Directorate in Bahrain: An Ethnographic Exploration of Gender Segregation and the Likelihood of Future Integration,” *International Criminal Justice Review* 18, no. 1 (2008): 39–58.

24. The sociologist Abdulhadi Khalaf describes the Bahraini system as a classic case of “vertical segmentation,” whereby people relate to each other and access resources through patrons who are either part of the ruling regime or obsequious to it. The logic of the Bahrain police force strongly resembles that of *fidawi* personal militias of Al Khalifa estate sheikhs in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Composed of nontribal Sunnis, slaves of African origin, and Baluchis, *fidawis* were “the coercive instrument[s] of the estate” and its Khalifa sovereign until the estates were abolished by the British in the early 1920s (Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain*, 47, 114). For more on policing in Bahrain, see Khuri,

Tribe and State in Bahrain, 89–90, 110, 122, 114–15; Staci Strobl, “From Colonial Policing to Community Policing in Bahrain: The Historical Persistence of Sectarianism,” *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 35, no. 1 (2011): 19–39; Nelida Fuccaro, *Histories of City and State in the Persian Gulf: Manama since 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 157–60. Bahraini Shi‘a clerics benefit from a similar system of segmentation based on allegiance of followers that in turn translates into resources for their *mathhab* (school of religious authority). Certain Sunni and Shi‘a clerics benefit from government appointments to oversee *waqf* (religious) properties, which they may lease out for their rent-seeking interests, including to relatives and friends.

25. The first Parliament, of 1973, considered a polarizing proposal by an alliance of Sunni and Shi‘a clerics to gender-segregate medical services and higher education, which “the government considered positively.” The matter was superseded by other conflicts, and Parliament was dissolved by the emir in 1975, according to Abdilhadi Khalaf, who was elected to that Parliament.

26. A well-traveled activist in her thirties who is alert to gender inequalities among Bahrainis noted that Bahraini men are “very respectful of women” and that rates of gendered violence are comparatively low. It is difficult to ascertain this matter systematically or to know if it is as proportionally true for low-status migrant workers in their relations with each other or with Bahraini employers who sponsor their residency. See Gardner, *City of Strangers*, for forms of “structural violence” faced by Indian migrant men in Bahrain.

27. For a historical snapshot of daily lives, food, dress styles, built environment, and gendered dress, mobility, and spatial practices in analysis, diagrams, and photographs, see a rare PhD dissertation based on 1960 fieldwork in the Bahrain village of Saar by the Danish anthropologist Henny Harald Hansen, “Investigations in a Shi‘a Village in Bahrain,” PhD diss., National Museum of Denmark, 1968.

28. Sandy Russell Jones, “God’s Law or State’s Law: Authority and Islamic Family Law Reform in Bahrain,” PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2010, especially 2–18, 177–78, 210.

29. Shi‘a women in Bahrain may choose to follow the Sunni family law code as an option in family courts.

30. Laurence Louër, *Shiism and Politics in the Middle East*, translated by John King (London: C. Hurst, 2012), 102; Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain*, 194–97; Fuccaro, *Histories of City and State in the Persian Gulf*, 151–60.

31. Between mid-March and mid-May 2011, the Bahrain Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs and Waqf demolished over twenty-eight Shi‘a mosques and religious buildings on the stated basis that they were unlicensed, including a mosque in Aali that was over two hundred years old and another in Sitra that was about one hundred years old; a McClatchy story reports the number of demolitions to be “far greater.” The regime has made it difficult to rebuild mosques and has demolished licensed building in progress. See “Bahrain Targets Shia Religious Sites,” *Al Jazeera*, 14 May 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/video/middleeast/2011/05/2011513112016389348.html>; Roy Gutman, “While Bahrain Demolishes Mosques, U.S. Stays Silent,” *Truthout*, 8 May 2011, <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/977:while-bahrain-demolishes-mosques-us-stays-silent>; Bahrain Center

for Human Rights, “Mosques under Construction Re-Demolished by Authorities in Bahrain,” 9 December 2012, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/5550>. YouTube videos sourced to *Al Jazeera*’s website could not be watched in the United States.

32. Louër, *Shiism and Politics in the Middle East*, 102.

33. The full text of the National Action Charter can be found at http://www.bahrain-embassy.or.jp/en/national_action_charter.pdf. In gendered terms this is a conservative document but includes commitments to enfranchise Bahrainis of Shi’ a origin and address economic and social inequalities. The key provisions of this charter have not been implemented.

34. Bahrain Online was established by Bahraini cyber activists in 1999.

35. Bahrain Online’s Facebook page is at https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=138126829585520.

36. Wikimedia Commons image of the 4 February 2011 event is at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bahrain_protest_Egypt_embassy.jpg. See “Bahrain Opposition Calls for Rally,” *Al Jazeera*, 13 February 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/02/2011213185556388117.html>.

37. “Death of Ali Abdulhadi Mushaima,” Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_of_Ali_Abdulhadi_Mushaima.

38. Video outside Salmaniyya Medical Complex is at “Bahrain: The Fall of the Martyr Fadhel Matruk” (Arabic), YouTube, 15 February 2001, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_UjXiEoBg. “Death of Fadhel Al-Matruk,” Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_of_Fadhel_Al-Matruk.

39. Images from 13–15 February 2011 (in reverse order): “Bahrain Protest Photos,” Cryptome, 17 February 2011, <http://cryptome.org/info/bahrain-protest/bahrain-protest.htm>. An op-ed by an observer about the early days of the encampment: Ayesha Saldanha, “Three Days at the Pearl Roundabout,” *New York Times*, 18 February 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/19/opinion/19battuta.html?_r=0%20%28op%20ed%20about%20pearl%20roundabout.

40. Roundabout activists reported pressure from Bahraini opposition leaders in London to name an organization because those outside worried that the moderate al-Wefaq, established in 2001, “would take over.”

41. The statement (provided to me by an activist who was part of the encampment) called for a new constitution drawn by a democratic parliament, a parliament-elected prime minister, an independent judiciary, freedom of opinion and expression, a constitutional monarchy based on “separation of three powers,” release of all political prisoners, an end to “political naturalization,” investigations of corruption and return of looted wealth, and accountability for torture, killing, and other violence.

42. Al-Wefaq, for example, ran parliamentary candidates in the 2000s, all of whom resigned in 2011. The main oppositional trends in Bahrain eschewed such participation given a problematic constitutional framework.

43. A series of images that include 17 and 18 February is available here: Alan Taylor, “Deadly Attacks against Protesters in Bahrain,” *Atlantic*, 18 February 2011, <http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2011/02/deadly-attacks-against-protesters-in-bahrain/100011/>; “Bahrain Protests: Your Stories,” *BBC News*, 19 February 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>

/world-middle-east-12516237. The following joint statement was released following the 17 February statement: “Statement of Civil Society Organizations in Bahrain Regarding the Brutal Attack on Protesters in the Pearl Roundabout,” *Jadaliyya*, 29 February 2011, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/688/statement-of-civil-society-organizations-in-bahrain-regarding-the-brutal-attack-on-protesters-in-the-pearl-roundabout>.

44. “Thousands Protest Government in Bahrain,” Reuters, 22 February 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/video/idUSTRE71IoX320110222?videoId=189186386>; “As Protest March Unfolds, Bahrain Urges ‘National Dialogue,’” CNN, 22 February 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/meast/02/22/bahrain.protests/>.

45. YouTube postdating is based on time in California. See hyya999, “Video of Repression of the Pearl Roundabout for Today 16/3/2011” (Arabic), YouTube, 15 March 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebTu9Z6qRiQ#t=60;Xgotfiveonitx>, “Bahrain: Hundreds of Bahraini Police Launch Assault on Pro-Democracy Protesters in Capital Manama,” YouTube, 16 March 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrBLzjJQqks>.

46. Martin Chulov, “Bahrain Destroys Pearl Roundabout: Focal Point of Pro-Democracy Protests Demolished as Authorities Try to Rid Capital, Manama, of Demonstrators,” *Guardian*, 18 March 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/18/bahrain-destroys-pearl-roundabout>. Also see videos of the 17 February attack on protesters in the Pearl Roundabout on “Pearl No More: Demolishing the Infrastructure of Revolution,” *Jadaliyya*, 18 March 2011, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/956/pearl-no-more_demolishing-the-infrastructure-of-re.

47. Amal Khalaf, “The Many Afterlives of Lulu: The Story of Bahrain’s Pearl Roundabout,” *Ibraaz*, 28 February 2013, <http://www.ibraaz.org/essays/56>. A slightly revised version of this essay was later published as Amal Khalaf, “Squaring the Circle: Bahrain’s Pearl Roundabout,” “The Arab Uprisings of 2011,” special issue, *Middle East Critique* 22, no. 3 (2013): 265–80.

48. See Facebook page of The Decisive Moment (Arabic), <https://www.facebook.com/pages/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B8%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%85%D8%A9-The-Decisive-Moment/195331817226817>; Abu Haider, “#Bahrain: #Sitra-Avnu 6 Clashes on 31-12-2011. #The Decisive Moment,” YouTube, 31 December 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5YkRCmdIw>.

49. The Coalition of 14 February Youth Facebook page, 15 June 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=572121369505565&set=a.178717292179310.64487.178269738890732&type=1&theater>.

50. The Coalition of 14 February Youth Facebook page, 15 June 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=572127979504904&set=a.178717292179310.64487.178269738890732&type=1&theater>.

51. The Coalition of 14 February Youth Facebook page, 15 June 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=572151832835852&set=a.178717292179310.64487.178269738890732&type=1&theater>.

52. Al-Shahid Muhammad (Arabic), “Bahrain: Burning a Police State after Killing a Protester,” YouTube, 8 February 2012, accessed 3 July 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NniIqQNSphk>.

53. “Voices of the Network: Bahraini Women Are the Frontline of Protests” (Arabic), *France 24 Arabic*, YouTube, 19 January 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Lr-pqYQ-CKY. The segment is based on an interview with a twenty-something Bahraini woman (face is blurred) describing women’s activism.

54. The active involvement of women and men in Formula 1 protests is illustrated in “Bahrain Grand Prix Formula 1 Highlights Tensions between Government and Protesters,” *World Post*, 20 April 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/20/bahrain-grand-prix-formula-1_n_3123285.html. A rare film of revolutionary action and interviews made undercover by the French filmmaker Stéphanie LaMorré is “Documentaire: Bahreïn, plongé dans un pays interdit,” 17 August 2012 (Arabic and French, with occasional English), https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ToD_FjjK_bc (URL terminated).

55. A moving representation of the release of women medical personnel is Biladi4Feb, “Greeting the Freed Heroine Rula Al-Saffar 2011-8-21” (Arabic), YouTube, 21 August 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Q3_32Xsu4N4. A story about the physician Nihad al-Shirawi is in *Al-Wasat*, 12 November 2011, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3353/news/read/607954/1.html>. A video of a nurse, Rula al-Saffar, giving a talk at an al-Wefaq event with her hair uncovered is Bahraini Bahrani, “Daih Video” (Arabic), YouTube, 12 May 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=SqRsqoggACU.

56. Thirty percent of al-Wefaq board members are women; the Shura Council includes elected women; and women are three of ten members of the General Secretariat, according to al-Wefaq leaders I conversed with in London.

57. A video recording of al-Qurmezi’s performance is at Shayala13alam, “Ayat Al-Qormezi—A Poem Worth a Year of Brutal Torture and Imprisonment [Eng Subs],” YouTube, 15 June 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcCEk9s82ac>. The xenophobic remarks appear at 6:09. Richard Spencer, “Bahraini Woman Poet Tells of Torture While in Custody,” *Telegraph*, 14 July 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/bahrain/8638396/Bahraini-woman-poet-tells-of-torture-while-in-custody.html>. The video “Verses of Bahrain and the Revolutionary Poet” (Arabic), uploaded to YouTube by AhrarQatif on 6 May 2011, discusses her imprisonment and torture and includes an interview with her mother: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=PhdBVs2x5Io#at=51.

58. Hsamar, “City Center Protest #Bahrain,” YouTube, 23 September 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=JJdaqApuA2EIn.

59. Eeyore, “Caught on Camera: Female Human Rights Activist Handcuffed and Dragged along Ground for Sitting on a Roundabout (and Now SHE’S Been Charged with Assault),” *Vlad Tepes*, 17 December 2011, <http://vladtepesblog.com/2011/12/17/caught-on-camera-female-human-rights-activist-handcuffed-and-dragged-along-ground-for-sitting-on-a-roundabout-and-now-shes-been-charged-with-assault/>.

60. Melissa Bell, “‘Angry Arabiya,’ Bahraini Activist and Danish Citizen, Released from Jail,” *Washington Post*, 21 December 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/angry-arabiya-bahraini-activist-and-dutch-citizen-released-from-jail/2011/12/21/gIQAmooD9O_blog.html. This account is notable for al-Khawaja’s tweets

upon release from prison; she comments on a woman political prisoner left behind as well as “hugging and cuddling” her daughter Jude. Preethi Nallu, “The Khawajas on Valentine’s: Heartbeats of Activism,” *Al-Akhbar English*, 14 February 2012, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/4157/>. Her remarks on motherhood appear at 16:10.

61. Sadeq Shehab, “Rihanna Al-Musawi Astonishing Court Hearing Strikes Bahrain with Anger,” Corbis Images, 12 July 2013, <http://www.corbisimages.com/stock-photo/rights-managed/42-49764509/rihanna-almusawi-astonishing-court-hearing-strikes-bahrain>; Yumna Marwan, “Bahraini Women Activists Detained, Beaten,” *Al-Akhbar English*, 2 May 2013, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/15687/>; “Naked Regime: This Is Why Rihanna Al-Musawi Was Targeted,” *Bahrain Mirror*, 17 July 2013, <http://bhmirror.no-ip.biz/news/10266.html>.

62. Abdulhadi Khalaf, “Double Efforts to Contain Women’s Mobility in Bahrain” (Arabic), *Al-Safir Al-Arabi*, 10 October 2012, <http://arabi.assafir.com/article.asp?aid=344&refsite=arabi&reftype=home&refzone=slider>.

63. “Recruited Activists in the Dirtiest Game . . . the Latest Trap by the Authorities” (Arabic), *Mirat al-Bahrain*, 16 July 2012, <http://bh-mirror.no-ip.org/news/5069.html>.

64. Khalaf, “The Many Afterlives of Lulu,” 17.

65. Bahrain Shield, “Pictures of the Scandals of the Mut’a Roundabout Published for the First Time” (Arabic), YouTube, 7 June 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aih5LZzd9I&list=PLTOgz3bT-TwV7tgKYDDJFYFR1DkDmler&index=14&feature=plpp_video; Bahrain Shield, “Witness What Happened to Girl Students in the Roundabout” (Arabic), YouTube, 15 June 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dyolwoHLMQ>.

66. Lualua, “Stations with Lamees al-Dhayf: The Exploitation of Women’s Sexuality” (*Jinsaniyyat al-mar’a*), YouTube, 1 June 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epecpU4NWWw>. This is a weekly segment on the satellite television station Lualua. Bahrain material begins about four minutes into the video, and remarks described in the text are at 4:37 and 5:10.

67. Frances S. Hasso, *Consuming Desires: Family Crisis and the State in the Middle East* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 124–25.

68. Hasa is the area between Qatif and Salwa, a Shi’a-dominant oasis region that was part of historic Bahrain.

69. Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 137, 138.