

**Charles Phelps Taft Research Center**  
**at the University of Cincinnati**  
**Graduate Enrichment Award**

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All required materials must be included in a single document, uploaded to the electronic submissions system, no later than 5PM on the published day of the deadline. Departmental review is required for this program, as well as a letter of support. Applicants should submit their application with enough time to receive departmental review prior to the close of the deadline. Taft does not accept an obligation to review applications that have not received intradepartmental review by the close of the deadline.

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**I. General Information**

- a. Name: Anwar Mahajna
- b. M#: xxxxxxxxx
- c. Department: Political Science
- d. Position: Student
- e. Project Title: Egyptian women's activism: Between Structure and Agency
- f. Time Period: 2014- 2017
- g. Travel Location (if applicable): NYC
- h. Travel Dates (if applicable): March 8 – March 15, 2016
- i. Probable Results of a Grant (such as publications, working papers, and presentations): A presentation on my experience at the UN. I will also write a paper on my experience and observations at the UN and how it benefited my research project.

**II. Budget**

- a. Transportation: \$257
- b. Direct Research Costs: \$1499
- c. Per Diem: \$ 0
- d. Total Amount Requested from Taft: \$ 1756
- e. Have you already or will you in the future apply for other grants for this project, including departmental support? No

### **III. Taft Grant History**

Please list your grant history with Taft for the last 5 years, in reverse chronological order, including project title, grant type, grant date, and amount of award, as well as project development subsequent to the grant, e.g. publication.

#### Competitive Lecture Grant

Date it was awarded: February 2012

Lecture title: "Social Media and the Women of the Arab Spring"

Amount: \$1266

#### Taft Enrichment Award

Date it was awarded: 2/2014

Project title: Women's Activism and Regime Change: A Case Study in Egypt

Unfortunately, I was not able to use the award money to travel to Egypt. I have applied for a visa to Egypt multiple times since February, 2014. My applications have been pending for almost two years. I think this delay is due of my status as an Israeli Palestinian. I am still in contact with the Egyptian consulate in NYC and hoping to resolve the issue soon. Until this issue gets resolved, I am collecting social media posts, available online interviews, and articles to help me with my project.

#### Taft Graduate Student Travel Grant

Date it was awarded: (2014)

Project title: Women's Political Participation in Egypt's Arab Spring Uprising: "Bargaining with Patriarchy" and the Deployment of Feminine Identities.

The paper was presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention in New Orleans.

#### **IV. Project Narrative**

Since the events of January 25, 2011, Egypt went through multiple regime changes. After the resignation of Hosni Mubarak, the head of the liberal authoritarian regime that controlled Egypt from 1981- 2011, Egyptians had their first democratic elections in which they elected the Muslim Brotherhood as their representative. Lasting only two years, this regime could be considered a democracy before the military recently took control of the government and imprisoned the members of the Muslim Brotherhood. During this period, both women's organizations and individual women were active in promoting global socioeconomic rights. They were, and still are, active in trying to influence the drafts of the constitutions in the different periods of transition. The importance of women's organizing in the period of regime breakdown, transition and post transition in Latin America and Eastern Europe has been demonstrated by scholars like Lisa Baldez (2003), Georgina Waylen (2003, 2007), and Miki Caul (1999). However, less work has been done on women's political and organizational interactions with the different types of regimes. More research is needed to understand how women's organizations adapt the way they frame their strategies and alliances to different types of regimes. This research project aims to answer the following questions: How did the political and gender opportunity structures change during the various Egyptian regime transitions from 2010 to 2014? How did Egyptian women activists respond to the changing political and gender opportunity structures during the period of rapid political changes in Egypt from 2010-2014? In this case, regime type would constitute the independent variable and strategies of women's organizing would constitute the dependent variable.

Egypt is a good site for examining how women's movements interact with the national and international actors/institutions and organizations during the different stages of regime

change because, in a short period, Egypt went through various transitions with women actively involved in the resistance movement throughout. In order to analyze and compare the various mobilization organizing that women's organizations used in the different periods of regime change in Egypt, I attempt to conduct personal interviews with selected Egyptian activists. Moreover, I am currently collecting social media posts and news articles addressing women's activism in Egypt. Additionally, I intend to consider civil society and social movement literature as well as review current democratization literature regarding mass organizing during transition. This will help me build a theoretical framework that will enable me to analyze women's organizing and how it interacted with the political context during regime transitions in Egypt.

Currently, I am collecting news articles, videos, and social media posts, which include reports on and interviews with prominent Egyptian women activists. I examine media content because it represents and influences the public. This is due to the evolution of the World Wide Web, which changed the internet "into a collaborative framework where technological and social trends come together" (Al-Kabi et al. 2014, 182). Moreover, the popularity of the web has "been accompanied with an increase in freely available online reviews and opinions about different topics, subjects, or entities" (Al-Kabi et al. 2014, 182). I decided to rely on social media to collect data on the Sisters' organizing strategies (DV) because it played a major role in the Arab Spring as a medium of communication and organizing (Howard et al., 2011; Lotan et al., 2011; Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2012; Starbird & Palen, 2012). Moreover, social media was a central platform for the Sisters to campaign during the 2012 elections. Furthermore, I chose to examine the interviews and content available online due to visa problems and potential dangers (including arrest) to those and myself I had hoped to interview. I have not yet had the chance to visit Egypt

and conduct my own interviews. Initially, I planned to visit Egypt in the summer of 2014 to conduct semi structured face-to-face interviews with women's organizations there. However, the visa applications I submitted to the Egyptian consulate in NYC since February 2014 have been pending with no definitive response. This issue might be due to my Israeli passport.

The available interviews with and documents on Egyptian women's activism provided me with a rich source of data. However, taking the activists' quotes in these articles and utilizing them to strengthen my argument has its limitations. The quotes of the participants are taken out of their context and integrated in the context of the articles and then again in this paper. As Prior notes, "one must always keep upper most in mind that words taken out of context can provide a severely misleading picture of what the talk is really about" (Prior 2003, 20). In addition, I do not know how much of the conversation with the activists the authors quoted or included in their articles.

Due to my visa issues and the limitation in the date I have collected so far, I have been looking for other avenues to connect with Egyptian activist. Thus, I decided to apply for the Practicum at the United Nations' (UN) 60<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women Meeting as a Temporary Delegate of the UN. Every year, the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) holds meetings with delegates representing the participating countries to discuss issues women face around the world and to urge government representatives in attendance to make a commitment to the advancement of women. This year's meetings will be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City in March. At the same time, these meetings are held, local and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) representing women from all over the world hold panels, presenting the particular problems their members and fellow women in their country face, opening these issues to discussion and attempting to find solutions with the help of

the international community. The practicum is sponsored by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Throughout the practicum, the participants, share hotel rooms and interact on a daily basis at social events and discussion sessions. These interactions between the participants will be very beneficial for my research. Experiencing and hearing about women's activism directly from women activists from Egypt and around the world is of great value for my research. It will help me enhance my theoretical and empirical understanding of women's organizing strategies such as the medium and language they chose for organizing. It would be interesting to see how women activists navigate, employ, and interact with international institutions in the United Nations. Most importantly, I will connect with women activists from Egypt whom I could interview for my research. They could also connect me with other women activists who were involved during the January 25 revolution in Egypt and are still involved after. These connections will allow me to use snowball sampling (current research participants recruit future ones) to recruit more interviewees from Egypt.

The research of women's activism during recent regime changes in Egypt is important for gathering information that will eventually lead to building a more generalizable theory of women's organizing strategies and regime change. The combination of documents and interviews will provide detailed descriptions of women's activism during the various regimes transition in Egypt. It will expand the analysis of regime change to include the gendered nature of the process. In addition, the Egyptian case is very recent and it is still developing. Understanding how regimes affect women's organizing and how women's organizing affect regimes might help women's movements develop more effective strategies to achieve their goals of improving women's status, promoting equality and simulating democratic reforms for all citizens. This study could be a base for future studies

that will examine and compare cases of women's activism and regime change in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Syria.

The Taft Enrichment Award would support the travel to NYC, in order to conduct further research in the form of interviews for my dissertation. It will serve as the foundation for my dissertation. The fee to attend the Practicum is \$1499. This fee included registration, hotel accommodation, and meals for the whole week. The airfare and ground transportation were not included in this fee. Flight costs currently average around \$257.

The Taft Enrichment Award will enable me to enhance my knowledge of the interaction between women's organizing strategies and regime type. It will allow me to shape the direction of the project as I interview more representatives of women's organizations in Egypt. It will also help make direct contact with some women's organizations in Egypt, which in turn will enable me to narrow down the number of organizations I will include in my dissertation. Since I could not find a list of organizations in Egypt, I plan to use the connections I build to create a list that will include as many women's organizations as possible. Finally, The Taft Enrichment Award will support an essential trip and research procedure for the completion of my dissertation.

## **References**

Baldez, Lisa. "Women's movements and democratic transition in Chile, Brazil, East Germany, and Poland." *Comparative Politics* (2003): 253-272.

Caul, Miki. "Women's Representation in Parliament The Role of Political Parties." *Party politics* 5, no. 1 (1999): 79-98

Waylen, Georgina. *Engendering transitions: Women's mobilization, institutions, and gender outcomes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Waylen, Georgina. "Gender and transitions: What do we know?." *Democratization* 10, no. 1 (2003): 157-178.

### **A detailed budget**

The registration fee for the Practicum	\$1499
Airfare	\$257
Amount Requested	\$ 1756

### **Schedule**

A detailed schedule for the practicum will be released at the end of November.



# ANWAR MAHAJNA

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## EDUCATION

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**University of Cincinnati (Class of 2017)**  
McMicken College of Art and Sciences  
PhD in Political Science

**Ben Gurion University/Israel (2008-2011)**  
Medical Science Faculty  
Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences  
(B.Med.Lab.Sc.)

**University of Cincinnati (Class of 2013)**  
McMicken College of Art and Sciences  
Master of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies  
Thesis: Women's Political Participation in Egypt's Arab  
Spring Uprising: "Bargaining with Patriarchy" and the  
Deployment of Feminine Identities  
Committee members: Dr. Anne Runyan, Dr. Amy Lind &  
Dr. Laura Jenkins

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### **Graduate Summer Undergraduate Mentoring Program (GSUM/SUMR-UC)**

*A graduate summer research mentor (June 2015 – August 2015)*

Served as a research mentor for an undergraduate student. Introduced the student to research ethics, methods, and procedures. Guided the mentee through the various stages of research such as literature review and data collection.

### **Department of Political Science at the University of Cincinnati**

*Graduate Teaching Assistance Assistant (June 2015- August 2015)*

Worked with Dr. Laura Jenkins and Dr. Rina on a research project entitled "*Williams Divergent? Gender and Methodological Diversity in Political Science Dissertations, 2012-14.*" The project was presented at the American Political Science Association Conference in San Francisco (September 2015). My main role in the project was to analyze and present the data with SPSS.

### **Department of Political Science at the University of Cincinnati**

*Graduate Teaching Assistance Assistant (August 2014- May 2015)*

Graded and evaluated students' papers and tests for Political Inquiry class taught by Dr. Mathew Arbuckle.

### **Department of Political Science at the University of Cincinnati**

*Graduate Teaching Assistance Assistant (January 2013-May 2014)*

Graded and evaluated students' papers and tests for Intro to American Politics class taught by Dr. Emily Hilty.

Graded and evaluated Students' papers for International Human Rights class taught by Dr. Rebecca Sanders.

**Department of Political Science at the University of Cincinnati**

*Graduate Research Assistant (August 2013-May 2014)*

Working with Dr. Rebecca Sanders on research projects related to surveillance and anti-human rights movements.

**Department of Africana Studies at the University of Cincinnati**

*Graduate Assistant (January- May 2013)*

Worked with Dr. Carolette Norwood on a study examining the spatial clustering of HIV/AIDS prevalence in Cincinnati metropolitan area.

**Hebrew Union College**

*Graduate Assistantship (January-June 2012)*

Conducted an archival research project entitled “*Religious Ritual, the Family Unit, and Inclusiveness in Reform Judaism 1975-Present.*”

**Teaching Assistant for University of Cincinnati’s Human Sexuality Class (August 2012-December 2012)**

Lecture on Feminism, grade student papers.

**Endocrinology and Chemistry Labs at Soroka Hospital in Beer Sheva, Israel**

*Intern, Lab Technician (August 2010-August 2011)*

Honed and developed skills in lab management by conducting experiments, tests, and research. Tested blood and fluid samples, analyzed drug concentration in blood, and summarized data for doctors. Managed orders of materials and chemicals for the lab and gained skills in budgeting and lab financing.

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**LEADERSHIP AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

**Political Science Graduate Student Association (PSGSA)**

*President (August 2014- August 2015)*

Serve as the primary representative for PSGSA at the Graduate Student Governance Association. Organize both academic and social activities throughout the academic year to enrich the environment and experience of graduate students in the department. Attend departmental functions and meetings.

**Amnesty International USA**

*Ohio Student Activist Coordinator (August 2013- Current)*

Serve as an advisor to student and youth groups in Ohio on group activities, campaign opportunities and policy-related issues; acts as a liaison between AI groups, staff and other volunteer leaders; promotes area-wide initiatives; and acts as a spokesperson for AI where appropriate. Served on the planning committee for Amnesty International Midwest Regional Conference. Helped invite speakers, recruit volunteers, advertise and plan conference sessions.

**University of Cincinnati Amnesty International**

*President (August 2012- August 2013)*

Raise awareness about key international human rights issues through petitions and donations, bring survivors of torture to speak on campus, plan and coordinate campus-wide campaigns. Coordinated trip for a cohort of students to attend a regional conference to heighten engagement and deepen knowledge about Amnesty’s global initiatives.

**Racial Awareness Program (RAPP)**

*Participant (August 2012-April 2013)*

Accepted into the 9-month intensive program, which provides a forum for students to challenge, debate, and educate each other on issues of social justice. Enhanced my ability to communicate, deepened knowledge about oppression, and further developed skills to create inclusive communities.

### **Organizing for America, Cincinnati, OH**

*Volunteer (June 2012- August 2012)*

Participate in phone banking to recruit volunteers for the campaign, assist in canvassing and tabling events to re-register new students to vote in Cincinnati.

### **Planned Parenthood, Cincinnati, OH**

*Healthy Neighborhood Outreach Intern (August 2012- September 2012)*

Conduct weekly door-to-door canvasses to educate residents about Ohio Medicaid eligibility. Register voters and collect voter pledge cards as part of a large-scale voter registration and engagement project.

### **Perach (Flower) Program in Bedouin Elementary Schools, Israel**

*Volunteer at Alhwashli School in Alhwashli Village and Ala'hd School in Ala'hd Village (2009, 2010)*

Traveled to Bedouin villages weekly to teach young Bedouin girls English, assist with homework, and facilitate educational games. Gained exposure to the status of women in Bedouin culture and the roots of their struggles.

### **Hadash Youth Political Party, Israel**

*Member and Volunteer (2010-2011)*

Organized university events to raise political awareness during Operation Cast Lead in Gaza. Invited members of the Israeli Parliament to lecture about the war, distributed informational flyers, and coordinated student protests.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

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*“Women’s Movement in Egypt: A Comparison Between the 19th and 21st Century”* Presentation at the Graduate Student History Conference, University of Western Ontario (*September 2012*).

*“Women’s Political Participation in Egypt’s Arab Spring Uprising: “Bargaining with Patriarchy” and the Deployment of Feminine Identities”* Presentation at Amnesty International Midwest Regional Conference (*November 2013*).

*“Women’s Political Participation in Egypt’s Arab Spring Uprising: “Bargaining with Patriarchy” and the Deployment of Feminine Identities”* Presentation at ISA National Convention (*February 2015*).

*“The Muslim Sisterhood: Activism and Regime Change”* Presentation at Midwest Political Science Association Conference (*April 2015*).

## **Publications**

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Mhajne, Anwar. "Christine Sylvester. War as Experience: Contributions from International Relations and Feminist Analysis." *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. In press.

## **Awards**

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*Graduate Students Governance Association Conference Travel Award (2014)* in support of presenting my research at ISA Annual Convention (\$400)

*Taft Graduate Student Travel Grant (2014)* in support of presenting my research at ISA Annual Convention (\$500)

*Taft Enrichment Award (2014)* in support of my summer research (\$2500)

*University Graduate Scholarship (2013- currently)* - Full tuition & fees

*University Graduate Scholarship (2011- 2013)* - Full tuition & fees

## **LANGUAGE SKILLS**

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**Fluent in Arabic, Hebrew, and English.** Fluent reader, writer, and speaker of Arabic, Hebrew, and English.