



SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POPULAR MOBILISATION IN THE MENA

Digest of Current Publications and Events

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CALL FOR PAPERS & CONFERENCES

Cosmos Conference “The Contentious Politics of Higher Education. Student Movements in Late Neoliberalism”

15-16 November 2017, Florence, Italy

Deadline: 15 July 2017

The Centre on Social Movement Studies, directed by Professor Donatella Della Porta, calls for papers addressing the recent global wave of student protests for a two-days conference to be held in Florence, at the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Scuola Normale Superiore (SNS), on 15-16 November 2017.

University students have traditionally engaged in contentious collective action. New generations of political leaders have emerged out of the student movement, often associated to broader hopes of renewal and regeneration. The events of 1968 show students as a key actor committed to a varied program of progressive change which included issues such as the fight against bureaucratism, oppression, and imperialism. The most common depiction of students doing radical politics stems from the images of rallies and clashes with the police in the streets of Paris or Los Angeles. To be sure, education has been traditionally a contentious issue. The right to attend educational programs was one of the core demands of worker movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries all over the world. The origins of the welfare state are closely related to the granting of primary education and the idea of minimum levels of compulsory instruction. Education systems have been one of the components of the welfare state, although scholars have paid far more attention to other aspects such as health and pension systems. In historical perspective, the granting of access to higher education to the lower classes was the culmination of the extension of demands that consolidate the access to education (and state provision of it) as social right.

Student activism has been sometimes related to the emergence of new middle classes and the expansion of the public sector but also as expressions of demands of emerging sectors so far excluded from the political system. Over the course of the twentieth century, and in successive waves which combine contentious and non-contentious mechanisms and their participation in broader struggles along with other actors such as labour unions, women and peace movements, and left parties, student political activism has resulted in democratization (either restoration or further consolidation), the expansion of the welfare state, and overall in the creation of more opened and inclusive societies. Several recent episodes of massive student protests in countries in Europe, Latin America and Africa, have triggered questions over the main characteristics of a new wave of campus activism taking place across the world. For sure, these protests address the neoliberal transformations of the system of higher education, enacted by governments of all political leanings, promoting the outsourcing of personnel, the managerialization of governing bodies, the introduction of tuition fees as well as cuts to public funding. The outburst of the economic crisis in 2008 has represented a decisive watershed in this process of marketization: as many governments across the world have adopted the neoliberal and pro-austerity agenda as a way out of the crisis. These measures accelerated the implementation of neoliberal reforms in countries where they previously

did not exist. Although differences between countries continue to be pronounced, national higher education systems are becoming more alike in the sense of being more market-oriented, even in countries with a strong state intervention tradition. Such transformations were not only aimed at meeting effective and well-structured policy designs, but they were also triggered by the logic of vested interests, power relations, and social conflicts. This is where our research interest comes in with our focus on the contentious politics of higher education. Over the past ten years, students of all around the world have indeed contested these policies and their implementation with different degrees of success.

The Centre on Social Movement Studies (COSMOS: <http://cosmos.sns.it/>), directed by Professor Donatella Della Porta, calls for papers addressing the recent global wave of student protests for a two-days conference to be held in Florence, at the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Scuola Normale Superiore (SNS), on 15-16 November 2017. We look for research contributions, both from junior and senior academics (especially sociologists and political scientists), who have worked on this topic over the last years. We are especially interested in contributions that link protests to policy transformations within the broad arena of higher education. Abstracts should be 300-400 words and suitable for a 15-20 minute presentation. Please send your abstract and contact details to Lorenzo Cini (Lorenzo.Cini@sns.it) or Cesar Guzman-Concha (cesarguz@gmail.com) by the deadline of July 15th. Decisions on abstracts will be made by July 30th. The conference is organised under the auspices of the Centre On Social Movement Studies (COSMOS) at the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, SNS. Unfortunately, we are not able to cover travelling costs, but we will offer coffee breaks and light lunches. No conference fees are demanded.

During the conference, we will also present the findings of our two-years research project, entitled “The Contentious Politics of Higher Education. An International Comparison of Student Movements”, whose aim was to compare and assess the political and policy outcomes of the recent student protests occurred in Chile, Quebec, England, and Italy.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact either Lorenzo Cini (lorenzo.cini@sns.it) or Cesar Guzman-Concha (cesarguz@gmail.com).

More information [here](#)

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TALKS & OTHER EVENTS

North Africa at the Crossroads

11 July 2017, 7-9pm

Venue: Room G3, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Russell Square, London, WC1H 0XG

Speakers include: Mohamed Boutayeb and Souad Jellal (Moroccan public sector trade unionists); Jaouhar Bani (Tunisian activist); Anne Alexander (Middle East Solidarity magazine)

Organised by *Middle East Solidarity magazine* with the support of SOAS Unison

Tickets £3 (unwaged), £5 (waged), available in advance via Eventbrite or on the door.

Six years after the region gave birth to the Arab Revolutions, with the uprising which toppled dictator Ben Ali in Tunisia, the contradictory pressures on the Maghreb are as sharp as ever. Analysis in the mainstream media focuses on the growth of jihadist groups in Libya and the threat of terrorism, ignoring the role played by NATO's 2011 military intervention in creating the conditions for groups like Islamic State to grow.

Yet across the region, movements demanding social and political change for the poor continue to challenge state repression. From mass public sector strikes in Morocco, to protests against unemployment, corruption and austerity in Tunisia and Algeria, the battle for social justice continues. In some areas, such as Morocco's Rif region, these issues have combined with longstanding grievances from the Amazigh-speaking population about their marginalisation and oppression by the state to create an explosive mix of protest and resistance.

This event will explore the state of the Maghreb's movements for social justice and political change. Speakers will address political developments since 2011, including the role of Islamist movements, and analyse how the current wave of social struggles is shaping opposition to the region's rulers.

Tickets & more information [here](#)

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RECENT & FORTHCOMING BOOKS

The Impossible Revolution - Making Sense of the Syrian Tragedy

Yassin al-Haj Saleh

July 2017 – Hurst

The intellectual voice of the Syrian revolution recounts the devastating impact of the Assads' tyrannical rule. Yassin al-Haj Saleh is a leftist dissident who spent sixteen years as a political prisoner and now lives in exile. He describes with precision and fervour the events that led to Syria's 2011 uprising, the metamorphosis of the popular revolution into a regional war, and the 'three monsters' Saleh sees 'treading on Syria's corpse': the Assad regime and its allies, ISIS and other jihadists, and Russia and the US. Where conventional wisdom has it that Assad's army is now battling religious fanatics for control of the country, Saleh argues that the emancipatory, democratic mass movement that ignited the revolution still exists, though it is beset on all sides. *The Impossible Revolution* is a powerful, compelling critique of Syria's catastrophic war, which has profoundly reshaped the lives of millions of Syrians.

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JOURNAL ARTICLES & OTHER ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

The prolonged decay of the Palestinian National Movement

Tariq Dana

National Identities, Pages 1-17, Published online: 29 Jun 2017

While the failure of the Palestinian National Movement (PNM) in achieving its stated objectives is widely acknowledged, the causes of this failure are subject to interpretation. The central argument of this article is that the priority accorded by the PNM's leadership to the statehood ambition over the liberation precondition is a principal factor as it led to transformation of the PNM through the Oslo process. As a consequence, the PNM was stripped of structures, functions, and characteristics typically associated with national liberation movements and therefore categorizing the PNM in its current state as an anti-colonial liberation movement is specious and flawed.

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Unpacking the effects of repression: the evolution of Islamist repertoires of contention in Egypt after the fall of President Morsi

Jannis Grimm, Cilja Harders

Social Movement Studies, Pages 1-18, Published online: 28 Jun 2017

The military coup against president Morsi in July 2013 sparked the largest wave of Islamist mobilization in Egypt's modern history. As the ousted president's supporters took to the street in what became known as the 'anti-coup' movement, they were met with fierce repression. This article retraces the contentious dynamics in the summer of 2013 in a nested research design and with a focus on contentious repertoires. Drawing on data for over 2400 protest events and debunking the myth of a swift defeat of the anti-coup protests, we show how repression, besides affecting protest levels, markedly changed the quality of contention. Most notably, three transformative events involving massive repressive violence impacted on protest spaces, tactics and timing: rather than binary notions of escalation vs. demobilization, adaptive mechanisms of decentralization, diversification and substitution dominated the anti-coup movement's reaction to repression. Centralized mass protests evolved into smaller, more flexible, and highly decentralized forms that were better fit to skirt the regime's repression efforts. Our findings have important implications for the theorization of the protest–repression-nexus. They prompt scholars to conceive of repression and backlash as multi-layered phenomena and study their effects in a disaggregate framework.

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Questioning the 'immortal state': the Gezi protests and the short-lived human security moment in Turkey

Oğuzhan Göksel, Omer Tekdemir

British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Pages 1-18, published online 26 June 2017

This article has three interrelated objectives: firstly, it challenges monolithic depictions of the 2013 Gezi protests and conceptualizes the so-called 'Spirit of Gezi' as *a highly influential—albeit temporary—power* in the politics of Turkey. Secondly, it traces the success of the HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) in the 7 June 2015 parliamentary election back to Gezi while acknowledging the roots of the party within the Kurdish political movement. Thirdly, it examines the manifestation and subsequent decline of what is termed *the human security moment* in Turkey. The arguments of the work are mostly based on interviews with Gezi activists. It is argued that Gezi produced a discursive challenge to the national security-oriented understanding of the 'Kurdish question'. Yet, even though the human security-oriented Gezi discourse had brought the Kurdish political movement and the Turkish left together, it ultimately failed to permanently transform Turkish politics due to the collapse of the peace process in June 2015. In addition to contributing to the literature on Gezi, the article also draws insights for security studies. It concludes that alternative discourses to the state-centric securitization approach to conflicts such as the Kurdish question can only have a lasting effect under conditions of ceasefire.

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Political activism in Iran: strategies for survival, possibilities for resistance and authoritarianism

Paola Rivetti

Democratization, Pages 1-17, published online 11 June 2017

This article examines mobilizations and activism in authoritarian settings by considering the case of Iran. By focusing on the transformation of activism since the 1990s and the green movement, it advances an explanation of how oppositional political groups have been able to survive and produce forms of resistant subjectivity despite authoritarian constraints. In order to do so, the article brings together two scholarly traditions, namely Social Movement Theory (SMT) and the study of subjectivity and resistance as framed by Sari Hanafi. SMT explains how activists have been able to navigate repression and create opportunities for mobilization while shifting between formal and informal politics. The study of subjectivity helps conceptualize the type of subjects or political citizens that authoritarian environments generate. The article builds on field research with activists conducted in Iran and Turkey between 2007 and 2016. It argues that authoritarian constraints allow autonomous activism to flourish while emptying of meaning the regime-sanctioned political infrastructures.

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L-Makhzan al-'Akbari: Resistance, Remembrance and Remediation in Morocco

Miriyam Aouragh

Middle East Critique, Pages 1-23, published online 07 June 2017

Morocco was prompted by the sense of making and witnessing history that began as the backdrop to the mass uprisings across the region in 2011 and continued well into 2012. At several moments the country at large burst into a mosaic of rebellion. As expected, the state intervened with media propaganda, smear campaigns and intimidation to pre-empt the growing impact of the activists and as such to erase this revolutionary episode effectively from Morocco's collective memory. This article examines the practices and implications of the remediation of past experiences of struggles and brings the memories of past resistance together with experiences of present struggles. This article takes particular interest in the intersection between 20Feb activists' political projects and the growing array of digital politics and allows us to understand better the impact of digital media in times of revolution.

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Legitimacy and protest under authoritarianism: explaining student mobilization in Egypt and Morocco during the Arab uprisings

Kressen Thyen, Johannes Gerschewski

Democratization, Pages 1-20, published online 25 April 2017

Political protests constitute a major concern to authoritarian regimes. Existing research has argued that they indicate a lack of regime legitimacy. However, empirical evidence on the relationship between legitimacy and protest participation remains rare. Based on new survey data from Morocco and Egypt, this study investigates whether legitimacy played a significant role in student mobilization during the 2011 uprisings. In doing so, we first develop a context-sensitive concept of legitimacy. This allows us to differentiate the ruler's legitimacy claims and the citizens' legitimacy beliefs. Furthermore, we distinguish between two different objects of legitimacy: the broader political community and specific regime institutions. Our empirical analysis suggests that legitimacy had an independent and significant impact on students' protest participation, yet in more nuanced ways than generally assumed. While protest participation was driven by nationalist sentiments in Egypt, it was motivated by dissatisfaction with the political performance of specific regime institutions in Morocco.

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Women on the frontline: can a network provide a platform for activists in the volatile MENA region?

Dido Michielsen

Gender & Development, Volume 25, 2017 - Issue 1, Pages 53-67

The article shares the experience of Women on the Frontline (WoF), a network of about 30 women's rights organisations with its origins in the Netherlands, and covering seven countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The organisations participating in WoF all have their own agendas and particular needs, but they share one common goal: sustainable peace in their country, with women and men playing an equally important role in the efforts to achieve this. This article relates how WoF was founded and how the organisation has had to adjust its goals since the Arab Uprisings. Progress made on women's rights has been challenged and it seems the clock has been turned back in the face of conflict and growing extremism, involving actors who draw on fundamentalist interpretations of religion to further their political aims. WoF is currently supporting the organisations to become stronger and get their stories heard internationally. Participating in a network can offer significant support in itself in challenging times.

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Weathering the storm: why was there no Arab uprising in Algeria?

Gianni Del Panta

Democratization, Pages 1-18, published online 04 January 2017

This article re-opens the discussion of why there was “no Arab Uprising in Algeria.” After critically reviewing previous findings, the paper suggests that the stability of the Algerian regime was mainly a result of the non-formation of a cross-class and cross-ideological coalition. Splitting this hypothesis into its two main parts, it will be shown, first, that the working class was the missing element. Two factors explain this: (a) the numerical and strategic marginalization of productive workers – in turn, an effect of the process of de-industrialization that hit the country from the late 1980s onwards; and (b) the presence of an aristocracy of labour in the hydrocarbon sector, from which a tiny minority of workers produced an overwhelming amount of wealth. Secondly, the enduring distrust among opposition groups – a direct legacy of the still-too-recent civil war, as well as an effect of the specific institutional environment that developed from the mid 1990s onwards – prevented the establishment of a “negative coalition” through which all opposition forces could jointly mobilize against the regime.

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Working on the Revolution in Bahrain: From the Mass Strike to Everyday Forms of Medical Provision

Amy Austin Holmes

Social Movement Studies, Volume 15, 2016 - Issue 1, Pages 105-114

The 2011 Arab Spring uprising with the highest levels of popular support took place in Bahrain. This level of mobilization was due in part to the organizational capacity of trade unions and professional associations, and yet their role in the ‘near-revolution’ has received very little scholarly attention. In contrast to Egypt and Tunisia, where the official trade union federations played an ambiguous or even hostile role as workers began to organize strikes during the protests against Ben Ali and Mubarak, the official General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions not only supported the protests against the Al Khalifa regime, but called for two general strikes. As significant as the strikes were, the work of unpaid volunteers constituted another less recognized, but equally important form of labor activism. Understanding the mass mobilization in Bahrain, and elsewhere, requires an encompassing approach to labor: one that can conceptualize equally the ability of collectivities to stop working, but also the ability to collectively continue to work, even on an unpaid basis. I will illustrate the contradictory role of the labor movement with examples from the Bahrain Teachers’ Association and the Bahrain Nursing Society. The majority of members of both associations were women. Finally, the Bahraini regime punished both forms of labor activism – both the teachers who went on strike, and the nurses who declared they would not strike but continue to work and care for the injured protesters.

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Rethinking the Arab Spring: uprisings, counterrevolution, chaos and global reverberations

Richard Falk

Third World Quarterly, Volume 37, 2016 - Issue 12, Pages 2322-2334

This article evaluates the aftermath of the Arab Spring through the dual optic of a regional phenomenon and a series of country narratives. These narratives are categorised by reference first to the secular states that found a path to stability after experiencing strong uprisings that drove rulers from power, second to the states in which the uprisings generated prolonged resistance and continuing acute instability, and third to the monarchies that neutralised the uprisings at their inception and restored stability. When other dimensions of conflict are taken into account, it seems likely that the Middle East will continue to experience chaos, intervention and counterrevolution for years to come, and possibly even a second cycle of uprisings directed at the evolving order.

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Crossing the Ideological Divide? Egypt's *Salafists* and the Muslim Brotherhood after the Arab Spring

Annette Ranko, Justyna Nedza

Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, Volume 39, 2016 - Issue 6, Pages 519-541

An important strand in the literature has stressed the analytical distinction between the Muslim Brotherhood's brand of Islamism and the *Salafist* movement. This article examines the shifts that have occurred within these two movements in Egypt since the Arab Spring. It specifically asks whether approximations between them in terms of strategies of actions have been paralleled by ideological approximations. The article argues that both movements have seen increased diversification which has—especially at the fringes—involved a reshaping of identities and ideological approximations that may facilitate cooperation between segments of these movements in the future.

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A *Longue Durée* Approach to the Role of Civil Society in the Uprisings against Authoritarianism in the Arab world

Michael Schulz

Journal of Civil Society, Volume 11, 2015 - Issue 4, Pages 424-439

This article will show how a 'new history', inspired from *longue durée* approaches, can be methodologically applied, and how it equips us with analytical tools that improve our capacity to understand the long-term changes that fostered the civil society-based resistance in the Arab world.

Although we cannot predict the exact timing of such resistance efforts, the application of the *longue durée* method provides us with tools that help us understand why and how the many uprisings transpired. This complements, and partly contrasts with, most previous research, which had its main focus on discussion of short-term factors that were claimed to have caused the Arab mass-mobilized resistance in 2010–2011. The article draws upon and intends to contribute to the theoretical debate on contentious politics within social movement research, resistance studies, and civil society-driven democratization research.

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Comparing International Dimensions of Revolutionary Situations: The cases of Egypt 2011 and Turkey 2013

Derya Göçer Akder, Zelal Özdemir

Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe, Volume 23, 2015 - Issue 2-3, Pages 181-194

This paper will look at the lessons we can draw from recent uprisings in the Middle East with regard to the theories of revolutions. Within the wider theoretical debate of the causes, processes and outcomes of revolutions the paper will focus on the international political dimensions of the revolutionary situations as distinct from the revolutionary outcomes. The article will disentangle and conceptualize the international politics surrounding these revolutionary situations. The paper will propose a framework of analysis of international politics in revolutionary situations by drawing not only on the Egyptian Uprising but also on the Gezi Uprising in Turkey in the same region. We argue that the role of the international should be neither downplayed nor exaggerated at the expense of domestic agency, and we need to combine structural and agential elements as we build a conjunctural understanding of international factors in revolutionary situations. In studying a region where the involvement of international factors during periods of domestic political change is complex, we need the same complexity in our frameworks of analysis and such frameworks will contribute to comparative studies of revolutionary situations.

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Ḥizb al-Nahḍah: from revolution to government and to a second referendum

Mohammad Dawood Sofi

Contemporary Arab Affairs, Volume 8, 2015 - Issue 3, Pages 398-40

The year 2011 witnessed watershed events in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), resulting in long-awaited political and social transformation, with Tunisia acting as catalyst and *modus operandi* for the other countries of the region. Although the so-called ‘Arab Spring’ now seems to be gripped in a stalemate in Egypt, where vagueness still prevails, and in Syria and Libya, where the security situation continues to be extremely precarious and unstable, there seems to be a

wind of change in the political context in Tunisia, where on 26 October 2014 the population witnessed the second post-revolution elections. The political party *Ḥizb al-Nahḍah* (Renaissance Party), officially founded in 1981, has been having a considerable impact on the political milieu of the region since its political career has experienced a renewed boost. Furthermore, Salafism has emerged as a legitimate force in the country demanding al-Nahḍah to redefine its role and strategy. While in power al-Nahḍah faced multifarious political, social and economic challenges that compelled it to devise new strategies and policies to suit the changing socio-political climate. In addition to exploring post-revolution transitions and transformations in Tunisia, this paper focuses on *Ḥizb al-Nahḍah*, the issues and challenges it encountered while in power, and those that lie ahead.

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Popular Mobilizations in Lebanon: From Anti-System to Sectarian Claims

Daniel Meier

Democracy and Security, Volume 11, 2015 - Issue 2, Pages 176-189

In Lebanon, the Arab uprising is often analyzed through the lens of the side effects the Syrian uprising had on the country thanks to the massive refugee influx and involvement of Sunni and Shia Lebanese in Syria's battleground. In fact, popular mobilizations happened prior to and during the current crisis as two different types of effects of the Arab uprisings at large. First, in late 2010 emerged an anti-sectarian movement that brought up an anti-system claim in line with other Arab social movements targeting authoritarian regimes and corruption. Second, the Sunni radical mobilization that started in Saida in 2011 around the popular Imam Sheikh Assir gathered resentments toward the Shia leading party Hizbullah as involved alongside the Syrian regime and, surprisingly, adopting an active minority mobilization strategy. Both movements conducted demonstrations of different types (from classic marches to on-road sit-ins) starting from a completely opposite perspective and in a very different environment: when the anti-sectarian mobilization faded, the sectarian one rose. This article will try to address the historical process of both mobilizations and assess their differences in light of several mobilization theories. It intends to raise questions about the types of actors involved, their discourses and justifications, and the contextual local and political environments.

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Class forces, transition and the Arab uprisings: a comparison of Tunisia, Egypt and Syria

Jamie Allinson

Democratization, Volume 22, 2015 - Issue 2, Pages 294-314

This article intervenes into an ongoing debate on authoritarian regimes in the Arab world following the uprisings of 2011, in particular addressing the perceived failure of those uprisings to bring about “transition” to liberal democratic models. Drawing upon the method of comparative historical sociology used in seminal analyses of democratization and dictatorship in Europe, Asia and the Americas, the article seeks to explain the varying trajectories of the Arab Uprising states in terms of several structural factors, namely the balance of class forces, the relative autonomy of the state and the geo-political context. The article provides an empirical comparison of the cases of Egypt, Tunisia and Syria as points on a continuum of outcomes following the Arab uprising. The article mounts a critique of the absence of class analysis in mainstream transition theory and hypothesises instead an important role for workers’ movements in bringing about even basic elements of liberal democracy. The empirical comparison is shown to support this hypothesis, demonstrating that in Tunisia, the state where the worker's movement was strongest a constitutional settlement has been reached while Syria, the state with the weakest and least independent workers’ movement has descended into counter-revolution and civil war: the case of Egypt lying between these two poles.

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Globalization, democratization, and the Arab uprising: the international factor in MENA's failed democratization

Raymond Hinnebusch

Democratization, Volume 22, 2015 - Issue 2, Pages 335-357

What explains the almost wholly negative impact of international factors on post-uprising democratization prospects? This article compares the utility of rival “diffusionist” and neo-Gramscian political economy frames to explain this. Multiple international factors deter democratization. The failure of Western democracy promotion is rooted in the contradiction between the dominance of global finance capital and the norm of democratic equality; in the periphery, neo-liberalism is most compatible with hybrid regimes and, at best, “low intensity democracy”. In MENA, neo-liberalism generated crony capitalism incompatible with democratization; while this also sparked the uprisings, these have failed to address class inequalities. Moreover at the normative level, MENA hosts the most credible counter-hegemonic ideologies; the brief peaking of democratic ideology in the region during the early uprisings soon declined amidst regional discourse wars. Non-democrats – coercive regime remnants and radical charismatic movements – were empowered by the competitive interference of rival powers in uprising states. The collapse of many uprising states amidst a struggle for power over the region left an environment uncongenial to democratization.

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Change and Continuity after the Arab Uprising: The Consequences of State Formation in Arab North African States

Raymond Hinnebusch

British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Volume 42, 2015 - Issue 1, Pages 12-30

This article provides a comparative macro-level overview of political development in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. It examines their evolution from the colonial period through several distinct phases, showing how differences in their origins were followed over time by a certain convergence towards a common post-populist form of authoritarianism, albeit still distinguished according to monarchic and republican legitimacy principles. On this basis, it assesses how past state formation trajectories made the republics more vulnerable to the Arab uprising but also what differences they make for the prospects of post-uprising democratisation. While in Morocco the monarch's legitimacy allows it to continue divide-and-rule politics, in Egypt the army's historic central role in politics has been restored, while in Tunisia the trade union movement has facilitated a greater democratic transition.

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Neoliberal Urbanism and the Arab Uprisings: A View from Amman

Najib B. Hourani, Najib B. Hourani, Ahmed Kanna

Journal of Urban Affairs, Volume 36, 2014 - Issue sup2, Pages 650-662

As suggested in our introduction to the articles collected here, the onset of the Arab uprisings in December 2010 and the speed with which they moved across the region, were indicative of a broadly shared and long-simmering frustration with the corruption, predation, and arbitrary violence of increasingly autocratic regimes. Despite ample warnings, the uprisings caught many—especially U.S. policy makers, the western media and the think-tank pundits upon whom they rely—quite by surprise. Given the dominance of the argument that the Arab and Islamic worlds are exceptionally resistant to modernity, secularism, and democracy, a paradigm through which Westerners might understand largely secular and democratic Arab uprisings, was not readily available. Especially in 2011–12, conferences were convened, articles penned, and books published all seeking to uncover how it was that the intellectual frameworks upon which so many had relied for so long suddenly collapsed.

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Conceptualizing solidarity and realizing struggle: testing against the Palestinian call for the boycott of Israel

Sriram Ananth

Interface: a journal for and about social movements Volume 6 (2): 143 – 163 (November 2014)

The idea of solidarity in transformative political work has been quite fundamental, albeit in very different ways, to both Marxist and Feminist debates. However, despite the widespread implications and applications of these two strands of thought, the scope of solidarity as a liberatory idea has rarely been systematically explored in the context of real - life struggles, which lends greater theoretical rigor to understanding the relationship between solidarity and transformative political work. I take a first step in doing that by putting selections from these two bodies of literature in conversation with each other and juxtaposing them against a brief discursive analysis of a current call for solidarity from Palestinian civil society seeking the boycott, divestment, and sanction (BDS) of the Israeli state until Israel complies with international law and human rights norms as laid out in the demands of the call. I argue that theoretical explorations of solidarity need to be constantly tested against real struggles that occupy different realms of socioeconomic and spatial difference, as displayed by the Palestinian BDS call/movement, because it is in the lived politics of solidarity - based struggle that one is able to determine where greater attention to difference is needed, where commonality of interests lies, and how to engage with the contradictions arising from different forms of solidarity for a transformative (and in this case, transnational) political movement.

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Betrayal or realistic expectations? Egyptian women revolting

Reem Wael

Interface: a journal for and about social movements Volume 6 (1): 478 – 491 (May 2014)

In the last two years, we have witnessed chain of uprisings in the Arab world, widely recognized as the Arab Spring. This paper will focus on the Egyptian revolution, particularly assessing the chances of women's emancipation as a result of the newly founded 'freedom' and democracy. The gender cause is a threat to national revolutions because it leads about half the population to explore and relate to a major aspect of their identity, gender, which is detrimental to the national cause. This paper argues that, according to the foundation of the nationalism and the technicality of revolutions, there is little chance for women's liberation to occur amidst national struggle, which dismisses and even demonizes any cause distracting people from the national one. National revolutions are inherently male, recognizing male efforts and contributions and reflecting male aspirations. Women are expected to contribute to the national struggle by abiding by the rule of men. This can be seen in many examples in history and also in events taking place in Egypt since the ousting of President Mubarak.

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Ultras in Egypt: state, revolution, and the power of public space

Connor T. Jerzak

Interface: a journal for and about social movements Volume 5 (2): 240 - 262 (November 2013)

In this article, I explore the relationship between organized soccer fans — Ultras — and the Egyptian state. I argue that Ultra groups became politicized as they sought autonomy in public space, but faced resistance from Egyptian security forces. To make this argument, I trace the history of Ultra groups. I show how Ultras made relatively few political statements in the first years after their 2007 inception. However, these groups become increasingly politicized in reaction to police harassment. This harassment was motivated by the fact that Ultras subverted state control over public spaces. The events of the 2011 Arab Spring further politicized the Ultras and transformed them into revolutionary actors by giving them the opportunity to delegitimize the authoritarian state's entire presence in public space. However, the greater public visibility of Ultras came at a cost, partially fracturing Ultra groups and giving state forces a desire for retaliation that was realized in the Port Said massacre. Despite these challenges, Ultra groups have continued to seek autonomy in public spaces, protesting authoritarian tendencies in the post - Mubarak era. I conclude with an afterward, explaining how Ultras not only defy authoritarianism in Egypt, but also dominant narratives about Egyptian society.

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NEWS PIECES & COMMENTARY

Revitalizing Palestinian Nationalism – Options versus Realities

Perry Cammack, Nathan Brown, Marwan Muasher

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Fifty years after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the Palestinian national movement seems to be at a crossroads. Repeated efforts to negotiate a two-state solution have faltered, and the traditional instruments of Palestinian nationalism—the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Fatah, and, since 1994, the Palestinian Authority (PA)—face crises of confidence. While the current path is likely to lead to continued occupation, settlement expansion, and further internal division, the strategic alternatives could unravel Palestinian institutional and diplomatic achievements, with no certainty of success. A coherent strategy is needed, along with a new generation of leaders that can stem the political ruptures and inject new life into Palestinian institutions. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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In Cairo, the pot boils

Amr Khalifa

3 July 2017, Middle East Eye

On the anniversary of the military coup which brought Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to power, Egyptians are bursting with anger at his regime. Here are three ways this could boil over. “Sisi has failed himself and Egypt,” Bahey Eldin Hassan, director of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights, told me last night, the eve of the fourth anniversary of the coup that ousted Mohamed Morsi from power. Since the uprising in 2011, a binary of Islamist or military rule has dominated Egypt’s political arena, which has been a nightmare at different times, for different Egyptians. But no one in their darkest nightmare could have imagined the noxious mixture of systematic repression, security failure and economic recession which has followed. Many Egyptians admit publicly to feeling broken. Analysts have suggested we are tired and, with muted reaction on the streets to the Red Sea island ratification this past month, the revolution may seem like a distant dream. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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March for ‘justice’ by Erdogan opponents in Turkey gains momentum and alarms government

Kareem Fahim

3 July 2017, Washington Post

The midday sun was roasting, their limbs were aching, and the protesters, from Turkey’s largest opposition party, still had 125 miles to march before Istanbul, their destination. The road had been hard: One elderly protester died of cardiac arrest, and another was hospitalized with heart spasms. But spirits were soaring as they walked through Duzce last week, holding banners that said “justice,” to protest a spate of government arrests. A march that had seemed likely to fizzle or be stopped by the authorities had instead swelled in size since it left Ankara, the capital. In recent days, pictures of the growing crowds have been passed around on social media, attracting newcomers. The spectacle has provoked an increasingly venomous response from officials, who have started associating the protesters with terrorist groups — a sure sign the demonstration has touched a nerve, organizers said. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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The pro-democracy movement and June 30: Then and now

1 July 2017, Mada Masr

Four years have passed since the ouster of former President Mohamed Morsi on June 30, 2013, along with Muslim Brotherhood rule. Since then, Egypt has faced important political transformations that have translated into economic and social change. On the fourth anniversary of this crucial point

in the country's political history, we explore the various actors who made June 30, 2013 possible, including: Pro-democracy political forces, the Salafi political movement, Coptic communities and the Coptic Church and Al-Azhar. What did they want back then, and where are they today? "When there is a vacuum in hegemonic power, you have to overcome that depression and make an ambush. But you have to be patient. This is politics. Politics means patience." I spoke to Fatemeh Sadeghi, professor of political science at the Azad Islamic University in Tehran, Iran, on the eve of July 12, 2013, a few days before the first-term election of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. In comparison to his predecessor, Rouhani is known for his political moderation, and he is cautiously celebrated by some of Iran's political dissidents. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Morocco's Rebellious Mountains Rise Up Again

Ursula Lindsey
28 June 2017, NYT

In the town of Al Hoceima, Morocco, the Eid holiday at the end of Ramadan was a time of clashes rather than celebration. The police and authorities blockaded roads leading to the town and prevented protesters from gathering in its main square. Crowds managed to assemble anyway, on side streets, before being violently dispersed by riot police. Young men threw stones; the police fired tear gas. Al Hoceima, at the foothills of the Rif, a northern mountain region with a long history of rebellion, has been the center of a protest movement for eight months. The uprising has landed hundreds in jail, led tens of thousands to demonstrate across the country and unsettled this quiet North African kingdom. It has also exposed divides: between developed coastal cities and a neglected, resentful interior; between young people eager to challenge authority and an older generation fearful of change; and between an all-powerful monarchy and a street movement with no traditional leaders. It all started in October in Al Hoceima, a city of 56,000 people on the Mediterranean coast. A fishmonger named Mouhcine Fikri was caught with a shipment of banned swordfish. When the police and port officials tossed the fish into a garbage truck, the distraught Mr. Fikri jumped in and was crushed to death by the truck's compactor. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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The Relentless Tide of Morocco's Rif Protests

Maâti Monjib
21 June 2017, Carnegie Middle East Centre

In recent weeks, the protests that first started last October in the mountainous Rif region of northern Morocco have gained traction: protesters in Al-Hoceima have begun hitting the streets during the day, whereas previous demonstrations this Ramadan had been only at night. The protesters' resolve is strengthening despite increasingly violent crackdowns, with at least one demonstrator suffering

head injuries on Thursday June 8. About 150 demonstrators have reportedly been arrested so far, 25 of whom have already been sentenced to prison for disturbing public order, and others could face charges of terrorism or endangering state security. The government has designated some areas off-limits to demonstrators, like the densely populated Al-Hoceima neighborhoods of Sidi Abid and Diour al-Malik, which have been the epicenter of protests in the past several weeks. Police man checkpoints at all of the exit and entrance alleys, granting access only to local residents who show their ID cards. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Mass protests on Gaza's borders over electricity crisis

Ezz Zanoun

16 June 2017, Al-Jazeera

Hundreds of Palestinians protested on Friday along Gaza's borders with Israel, as international rights groups warned of a "total collapse" of basic services amid a steadily worsening electricity crisis. The Gaza Strip is in the middle of an electricity shortage that has left its two million residents with just a few hours of power a day, turning many aspects of everyday life in the Hamas-governed territory upside down and raising concerns about of a looming humanitarian crisis. Earlier this week, Israel reduced the amount of electricity it supplies to Gaza to about three hours a day after Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas cut electricity funding to the Israeli-besieged territory. The move was widely seen as a move by Abbas to step up pressure on the rival Hamas movement. The UN humanitarian coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territories, Robert Piper, warned the additional power cuts would have a disastrous effect. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Tunisia gas field protesters reach deal, production to restart – government

16 June 2017, Reuters

Protesters blockading oil and gas fields in southern Tunisia have reached an agreement with the government to end a sit-in and allow production to restart immediately, the government and protesters said on Friday. Protests over jobs in southern Tataouine and Kebili provinces hit oil and gas production in a region where French company Perenco and Austrian producer OMV operate. The deal calls for jobs in oil companies and development projects. Labor Minister Imed Hammami told a press conference the agreement would allow production to restart immediately. "It is an agreement that addresses all our demands for the region and we will end the sit-in," Tarek Haddad, one of the protest leaders at the Kamour site told Reuters. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Egypt: Crackdown continues amid controversial land deal

Farah Najjar

15 June 2017, Al-Jazeera

Egypt's recent blocking of 64 websites that are not aligned to state media's narrative is part of the government's crackdown on civil society, analysts have said. With presidential elections scheduled to take place next year, and amid the controversial Tiran and Sanafir deal that was approved by parliament on Wednesday, analysts say that this is the government's attempt at neutralising resistance and eliminating potential presidential candidates. The blocking of news websites was described by UK-based rights group Amnesty International as an "onslaught against media freedom". "With this move, the Egyptian authorities seem to be targeting the few remaining spaces for free expression in the country. It shows just how determined the authorities are to prevent Egyptians from accessing independent reporting, analysis and opinion about Egypt," said Najia Bounaim, Amnesty International's North Africa Campaigns director in a statement on Tuesday. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Morocco Witnesses Its Biggest Protests In Years

Gilad Shiloach

12 June 2017, vocative

Morocco is witnessing a wave of anti-government demonstrations after thousands have taken to the streets of the capital Rabat and other major cities over the weekend. Local authorities estimate the number of protesters ranged between 12,000 and 15,000, a figure activists derided, claiming the number was closer to a million. The protest was a show of solidarity against corruption and abuse in Morocco's neglected Northern Rif region, which has a largely ethnic Berber population. Demonstrators demanded the release the scores of activists who were arrested during the turmoil in the Rif, including protest leader Nasser Zefzafi. It was one of the largest protests of its kind in years for the North African monarchy, and political unrest is rare. The leading force was the Islamist "Justice and Spirituality" movement which is banned from official politics but according to Reuters is the only opposition group able to mobilize on a massive scale as they did during the Arab Spring protests in 2011. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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POSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

2 year post-doctoral position based at CEFRES (Prague): "Islamic Activists in Exile: Europe, Middle East and South-Asia

Deadline: 23 August 2017.

This research project will associate one post-doctoral researcher with CAS researcher Giedre Sabaseviciute.

Description: Candidates will be expected to contribute to the project on the contemporary exiled Islamic activists in European, Middle Eastern and South-Asian cities. The project aims to research the ways in which the experience of exile affect the trajectories of activism, focusing on how different national context influence their career choices, which vary between the continuation of activism, involvement into different causes, or disengagement. Possible research topics include but are not restricted to 1- circulation of ideas, norms and activism through human networks; 2- patterns of activist network formation; 3- relationship between the exiled activists and their host countries; 4- continuities and ruptures in individual trajectories of activism. Candidates are expected to have conducted their doctoral research in one of the regions covered by the project (The Gulf, Turkey, South-Asia), to be proficient of one of its languages (Turkish, Arabic, Malay), and have an important knowledge of the fieldwork. Interdisciplinary approach is preferred, as well as some experience in ethnographic and biographical research, media studies, and discourse analysis.

Applicants may contact Giedre Sabaseviciute before applying for any relevant questions on their application. Please write to: saba@orient.cas.cz

More information and application [here](#)

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Assistant Professor in international political economy, St. Olaf College

Application reviews from: 15 September 2017

The Department of Political Science at St. Olaf College invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track position in international political economy at the Assistant Professor level to begin in August 2018. We are looking for candidates who would teach courses in international relations and contribute to inter-disciplinary coursework in one of the following programs: Russian Area Studies, **Middle East Studies**, or African Studies. The ideal candidate should have broad expertise in both the theory and practice of international political economy.

Regular teaching responsibilities include teaching both introductory and upper level courses. Duties

also involve advising students, committee service, and various departmental and institutional obligations. This appointment may be eligible for additional professional development funding.

A complete application includes:

1. A cover letter
2. A curriculum vitae
3. Graduate transcripts
4. Writing Sample
5. Three Letters of Recommendation
6. Other Materials

If you have questions or need assistance with the application process, please send an email to (psposition@stolaf.edu) or call 507-786-3127.

Formal review of complete applications will begin on 15 September 2017. Members of the department will be available at the annual APSA conference for interviews.

The Department of Political Science promotes the systematic and critical analysis of government, politics and public policy. Its six, full-time, faculty members conduct research that enriches understanding of political life and public affairs in a global context, not only for other scholars but for decision-makers and citizens as well. More information about the political science department may be found at wp.stolaf.edu/poli-sci/

Founded in 1874, St. Olaf College is a residential, coeducational liberal arts college with approximately 3,000 students and 800 faculty and staff employees. It is located in Northfield, Minnesota, about 45 minutes from Minneapolis and St. Paul with their rich and diverse cultural resources. The college offers an academically rigorous, nationally ranked liberal arts education that fosters the development of the whole person in mind, body, and spirit and emphasizes a global perspective.

A liberal arts college affiliated with the Lutheran Church (ELCA), St. Olaf College is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and actively seeks diversity in its students, faculty, and staff. The college is especially interested in qualified candidates who can contribute to the diversity of our community through their teaching, research, and/or service.

To provide a safe and secure educational environment, St. Olaf College verifies the accuracy of all credentials presented by applicants and conducts a background check on every new hire.

More information and application [here](#)

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Assistant Professor in Middle East Politics (tenure-track), Claremont McKenna College

Application reviews from: 1 August 2017

The Department of Government of Claremont McKenna College (CMC) invites applications for a tenure-track position at the assistant professor level in the subfield of Middle Eastern politics,

beginning July 1, 2018. A qualified candidate, with PhD in hand or a nearly completed doctoral dissertation, would have research experience on the domestic politics or policy of one or more Middle Eastern countries, as well as expertise on the international issues that these countries face. The candidate would have sufficient mastery of one or more Middle Eastern languages to engage in the research. The candidate must have demonstrated ability to maintain an active, high quality research program and the highest standards of excellence in teaching. The teaching load at CMC is two courses per semester.

Due to the endowment that funds this position, if the selected candidate achieves tenure at Claremont McKenna College, he or she would become the Weinberg Chair in International Relations or Comparative Politics and the Middle East.

All applications must include a cover letter, curriculum vitae, detailed research statement, and a statement regarding teaching philosophy. Letters of recommendation are required from three or more references and should evaluate the candidate's research and teaching.

The review of applications will begin August 1, 2017, and will continue until the position is filled. CMC is a highly selective undergraduate institution ranked among the top liberal arts colleges nationally. It is part of The Claremont Colleges, which also includes Pomona College, Scripps College, Harvey Mudd College, Pitzer College, Claremont Graduate University, and Keck Graduate Institute. Combined, the members of The Claremont Colleges have more than 6,000 students. Claremont is located 35 miles east of downtown Los Angeles.

Given our commitment to cultivating a challenging and inclusive educational environment, we seek candidates who can demonstrate a commitment to teaching, mentoring, and inspiring students representing a broad range of socioeconomic backgrounds, political opinion, genders, races, ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientations, and religions.

More information and application [here](#)

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