



The Arab spring through the lens of social sciences

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Seminar Spring 2014

Mondays 13:00-15:00, Badia Seminar Room 2

Registration with Maureen Lechleitner (Maureen.Lechleitner@EUI.eu)

The Arab spring presents a classical case: how to understand an event through the study of social structures, cultural paradigms, history and theoretical models (democracy, state, social movements). Social sciences have developed a huge knowledge on Middle Eastern societies: was the Arab spring predictable? How is it understood now? To what extent does it validate categories previously used (Islamism, secularization, democratization, “traditional” societies etc.)? We will concentrate on the use of conceptual paradigms as well as case-studies.

- 1) Orientalism revisited. The famous debate between Edward Saïd and Bernard Lewis has shaped and politicized the “academic” debate on Middle East. But did the debate miss something?
- 2) Post-colonial studies: the problems of the Middle East are defined essentially as a consequence of the post-colonial order: failed states, oil rent, creation of Israel. Does imperialism explain everything (or a big part of everything)?
- 3) Islamism. A more recent concept, Islamism, has been pushed forward by political scientists to understand modern Islamic fundamentalism. But wasn't it a new form of orientalism?
- 4) Hard facts. What is the state of the art of the academic knowledge on Middle East? Anthropology, political science, economy?
- 5) The contribution of the social movements theory on the debate. Is religious mobilization a social movement?
- 6) Can Arabs be democrat? Are the transition theories helpful to understand the Arab spring? Could salafis become democrats?
- 7) Religious revival and modernization theory? What does mean “secularization”?
- 8) Case studies: Egypt and Tunisia.
- 9) Case studies: Egypt and Tunisia.
- 10) Wrap up discussion.

Biblio

Background:

Dale EICKELMAN: *The Middle East and Central Asia, An Anthropological Approach*, Prentice Hall, 1998

Edward SAID Orientalism;

Asef BAYAT

Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East. . 2nd edition: Stanford University Press, 2013.

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["The Transformation of the Arab World"](#)

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July 2012, Volume 23, Number 3

Mahmood SABA, *Politics of Piety, the Islamic revival and the feminist subject*, Princeton University Press, 2005.

Youssef COURBAGE and Emmanuel TODD: *A Convergence of Civilizations: The Transformation of Muslim Societies Around the World*, Columbia University Press, 2011.

Cesare MERLINI, Olivier ROY "Arab Society in Revolt", Brookings 2012

Tunisia

http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/10463/a-betrayed-revolution_on-the-tunisian-uprising-and

http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/10839/social-struggles-in-tunisia_a-curse-or-a-revolutio

Syria

<http://pomeps.org/2013/12/political-science-and-syrias-war/>

Egypt

http://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/POMEPS_BriefBooklet20_Egypt_web.pdf

Yemen

http://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/POMEPS_BriefBooklet19_Yemen_Web.pdf

A list of papers commenting the situation and written by scholars:

<http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/category/uprising-in-egypt/>

Problems of research:

General

Stephen Walt

<file:///G:/My%20Documents/textes%20divers/Walt%20%20%20Public%20Sphere%20Forum.htm>

Middle East:

Nadia Marzouki: MESA paper (to be distributed)

http://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/POMEPS_Conf12_Book_Web.pdf