Based on aggregate measures such as the Freedom House or Polity 5 indices, one may easily conclude that most of the regimes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are classic examples of stable authoritarianism, where much of the media are under state control, pro-regime forces dominate political life, and opponents are suppressed by a vast array of legal and extra-legal tools. However, the political life of many MENA countries includes several
features that suggest a different picture: elections are held regularly in many countries (Baaklini, Denoeux & Springborg 1999, Blaydes 2010, Lust-Okar 2006), various (often Islamic) social movements make their voices heard (Wickham 2002, Wiktorowicz 2004), judiciaries try to assert their independence (Moustafa 2007), and street protests clamor for political change (Hopkins 2008).

The two different faces of Middle Eastern politics raise both theoretical and methodological challenges: While there is a growing consensus among area specialists that the “transition paradigm” (Carothers 2002) has outlived its usefulness as a conceptual tool (Albrecht & Schlumberger 2004), an alternative theoretical framework has yet to emerge. Recent debates revolving around political opposition (Albrecht 2005, Lust-Okar 2005), electoral politics (Blaydes 2010, Lust-Okar 2006, Magaloni 2006), protest mobilization (Boudreau 2007, Carey 2009, Haklai 2009), and political participation more generally (Lust-Okar & Zerhouni 2008), offer promising avenues in the search for such an overarching framework.

The central aim of the workshop is to debate the current theoretical approaches, and their ability to travel to the Middle East. The workshop will also provide a forum for the discussion of methodological aspects of a number of work-in-progress papers by both younger and more senior researchers working in the field of authoritarian politics.

**Format**

Each session will include presentations of two research papers by two of the participants. Each presentation will last about 20 minutes, followed by a 10 minutes discussion by an assigned discussant and 30 minutes general debate. Each presenter circulates her/his paper in advance and also assigns two pieces of background reading on the topic. The deadline for the submission of papers is May 15, 2010.
Program

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

**INTRODUCTION & CONCEPTUAL ISSUES**

09h00-11h00: Introduction by Prof. Philippe C. Schmitter

*Prof. Oliver Schlumberger (University of Tuebingen): Promoting Democracy - Promoting Autocracy? International Politics and National Political Regimes.***

**Presentation, 11h00-12h00**

**Presenters:** Kevin Koehler and Jana Warkotsch  
**Discussant:** Sophie Besancenot  
**Paper Title:** Getting the Concepts Right: Authoritarianism, the Gray Zone, and the Conceptual Babel in Comparative Authoritarianism  

12h00-14h00: Lunch Break

**PART I: CIVIL SOCIETY DYNAMICS UNDER AUTOCRACY**

This section will discuss the concept of civil society and its limitations when applied to the authoritarian context of the MENA. What are the specific constraints civil society actors under authoritarianism are subjected to? How would that affect their role in processes of political reform?

**Presentation I, 14h00-15h00:**

**Presenter:** Georges Fahmi  
**Discussant:** Teije Donker  
**Paper Title:** Institutionalizing *Allah*: Islamic Religious Authorities and Support for Democratization in Egypt and Turkey  

**Presentation II, 15h00-16h00**

Presenter: **Jessica Northey**  
Discussant: Kevin Koehler  
Paper Title: Associations under Control or a New Public Sphere in Algeria?  

**16h00-16h30: Coffee Break**

**PART II: COLLECTIVE ACTION AND PROTEST UNDER AUTOCRACY**

Conventional wisdom has it that the repressive environment of authoritarian regimes prevents political protest and mobilization, yet there is political mobilization under autocracy in the MENA and beyond. The contributions in this section examine the link between authoritarianism and mobilization in a variety of different settings.

**Presentation I, 16h30-17h30**

Presenter: **Teije Donker**  
Discussant: Georges Fahmi  
Paper Title: Beyond Conflict: Islamic Social Movement Mobilization in the Syrian Authoritarian Regime  

**Presentation II, 17h30-18h30**

Presenter: **Jana Warkotsch**  
Discussant: Alexander Hemker
Paper Title: And yet they mobilize… Patterns of Mobilization against Authoritarian Rule


Thursday, May 27, 2010

Presentation III, 09h00-10h00

Presenter: Alexander Hemker
Discussant: Jana Warkotsch
Paper Title: The Persistence of Strongmen Rule within the Context of Democratization: Local Despotism and Popular Contention in the Post-Authoritarian Philippines

PART III: AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES AND INSTITUTIONS

Considered as signs of democratization and political reform in past scholarship, authoritarian institutions are now recognized to be an integral part of authoritarian rule. In this session, we look at the function of specific authoritarian institutions and discuss the implications of institutionalization under autocracy.

Presentation, 10h00-11h00

Presenter: Kevin Koehler
Discussant: Jessica Northey
Paper Title: Regimes and Institutions: Patterns of Coalition Management in Elections and Legislatures in the Middle East and North Africa
Conclusion

11h00-12h00: Prof. Philippe C. Schmitter (EUI): Exploring the Missing Link between Liberalization and Democratization in MENA.

12h00: Lunch

General References


