

Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark

Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II School of International Studies, University of Jordan

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, AMMAN, JORDAN

Bringing People Back In Politics: the Role of Civil Society, Organizations and Political Parties in a Post-‘Arab Spring’ Context

Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II
School of International Studies

University of Jordan

6 –7 April 2014

Bringing People Back In Politics: the Role of Civil Society, Organizations and Political Parties in a Post-‘Arab Spring’ Context

Venue: Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II School of International Studies

Organized by the Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark and the Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II School of International Studies, University of Jordan

Organizers

Zaid Eyadat, Dean and Professor, Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II School of International Studies, University of Jordan

Peter Seeberg, Director of Studies and Associate Professor, Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark

Kristian Holm, Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark

Ikhlas Sweis, Senior Administrator, Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II School of International Studies, University of Jordan

Introduction

Within the last three years the MENA-region has witnessed significant popular mobilization in connection with and following the so-called “Arab Spring”. The Middle East is changing and despite regressive tendencies and setbacks in some states and tragic developments in Syria, it still is relevant to speak of a re-politicized, more dynamic and participatory population in several of the Arab states. Taking this significant reality as point of departure, this conference will analyze popular mobilization and the role of movements, organizations and parties in relation to the recent developments in the Middle East, and – in connection with that – discuss theoretical approaches and paradigms of relevance for the analysis of these new regional dynamics.

Long-standing grievances over repression, corruption, and economic hardship clearly played an important role in mobilizing protests in the early phases of the Arab revolts. A part of the scholarly work on collective action and mobilization following the uprisings in 2011 has focused on political opportunity structures, which emerged in the light of the unexpected developments in the region. In analyzing movements and political parties confronted with a changing reality, scholars have also focused on potential or real threats for the involved actors, which have reacted to the given conditions by mobilizing further political resources with the aim of influencing or maybe even conquering the political scene. An important question three years after the Arab uprisings seems to be to which degree protest movements, old and new political parties etc. have been able to establish sustainable channels of



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how this can be interpreted.

As mentioned by Frederic Volpi (in an article in Democratization) a common question among policy-makers and in the media after the Arab revolts was: why do some authoritarian regimes remain in power while others fall when confronted with similar difficulties? While it might be relevant to underline the continued relevance of a theoretical paradigm based on authoritarian resilience, the specific dynamics of “revolutionary” episodes in individual countries emphasize that the status quo in the MENA-region was not always particularly stable.

In short, the Arab revolts seem to confirm that the Middle East should not be considered a global exceptionality in this sense either, and by analyzing popular mobilization related to movements, NGO's and other civil society phenomena, but also old and new political parties and organizations in the region, it is the ambition of this conference to contribute to the understanding of a changing Middle East. It has been discussed, if political organizations in the MENA-region have gained new momentum in a post-“Arab Spring” context. An aspect of this discussion revolves around an organization like the Arab League, which earlier played a limited political role, but recently appears to have become strengthened and also more explicitly a part on the political rivalry between the Arab states. Furthermore cooperative institutional entities like the Western Mediterranean Forum (5 + 5 Dialogue) seem to have attracted new focus in the light of the ongoing changes in North Africa.

The conference will be organized in themed sections, each with a specific focus on popular mobilization related to movements, parties and organizations, respectively.

The conference is part of the DJUCO-initiative – an academic cooperation project between the Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark and Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II School of International Studies, University of Jordan.

Programme

Sunday 6 April 2014

9:30-10:00	Registration, coffee and tea
10:00-10:15	Welcoming Remarks
	Dr. Zaid Eyadat, Dean of Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II School of International Studies, University of Jordan
	Dr. Peter Seeberg, Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark
	Dr. Ekhliif Tarawneh, President of the University of Jordan
10:15-11:15	Opening Speech
	Dr. Nils Butenschön, University of Oslo: Citizen and the State in the Middle East. Does the “Arab Spring” Introduce a New Era?
11:15-11:30	Coffee Break
11:30-13:00	Panel 1. Bringing People Back in Politics: Popular Mobilization, Civil Society and the State
	Chair: Dr. Naser Tahboub, University of Jordan

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Panel:	Dr. Sylvia I. Bergh, University of Rotterdam: Plus ça change? Observing the Dynamics of Morocco's 'Arab Spring' in the High Atlas
	Dr. Daniel Meier, Oxford University: Popular Mobilizations in Lebanon: from Anti-System to Sectarian Claims
	Dr. Tania Haddad, American University of Beirut: Discussing the Idea of Volunteering in the Arab World

13:00-14:00	Lunch Break
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14:30-16:30	Panel 2. Popular Mobilization, Organizations and NGO's, (I) Chair: Dr. Zaid Eyadat, University of Jordan
Panel:	Dr. Martin Beck, University of Southern Denmark: The End of Regional Exceptionalism in the Middle East? The Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council in the Arab Spring
	Dr. Naser Tahboub, University of Jordan: The Arab Spring; Social Mobilization & Political Parties in Jordan
	Dr. Dina Jane Kiwan, American University of Beirut: Contesting Citizenship in the Arab Revolutions: Women, Youth and Refugees
	Dr. Fabio Merone, Dublin City University and Nena News, Tunis: Ansar al Sharia: from Social Movement to Terrorist Group

20:00	Conference Dinner
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Monday 7 April 2014

10:00-11:00	Political Parties and Movements in a Repolitized Middle East Chair: Dr. Peter Seeberg, University of Southern Denmark
Keynote Speaker	Dr. David M. Rasmussen, Boston College: The Second Arab Awakening and the Emerging Domain of the Political
	Dr. Zaid Eyadat, University of Jordan: A Transition Without Players: The Role of Political Parties in the Arab Revolutions

11:00-11:30	Coffee Break
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11:30-13:30	Panel 3. Popular Mobilization, Organizations and NGO's, (II) Chair: Dr. Martin Beck, University of Southern Denmark
Panel:	Dr. Peter Seeberg, University of Southern Denmark: Old Horses, New Tricks? The Role of Supranational Organizations in the Mediterranean after the Arab Revolts
	Dr. Teije Hidde Donker, European University Institute: Bureaucratic Mobilization: Islamists vs. Bureaucrats after the Arab Spring
	Dr. Walid Abu-Dalbouh, University of Jordan: Jordan within a Changing Regional

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	Setting: Assessing the Role of External Factors in Influencing Reforms
13:30-14:30	Lunch
14:30-15:30	Concluding Remarks
	Dr. Zaid Eyadat, Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II School of International Studies, University of Jordan
	Dr. Peter Seeberg, Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark