TUNISIA, EGYPT, 2011-2015:
REVOLUTION, ISLAMISM, COUNTER-REVOLUTION?

Karim Emile Bitar
The Political Science Institute
Saint-Joseph University – Beirut
invites you to a seminar on

Middle East Politics

featuring

Tunisia, Egypt, 2011-2015:
Revolution, Islamism, Counter-Revolution?

Karim Bitar
Associate Professor of International Relations at the Political Science Institute of USJ, Senior Fellow at IPS, Editor of LENA hors les murs

Turkey in the Middle East: between powerfulness and powerlessness

Jana Jabbour
Lecturer at Sciences Po Paris, and Research Associate at CERI and IREHAMO

To defeat ISIS, the world must better understand its drivers and attractions

Rami Khouri
Senior Public Policy Fellow Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, AUB and Syndicated columnist, Agence Global Syndicate, USA, and The Daily Star

December 16th 2015 at 4:00 pm
USJ – Faculty of Law and Political Science
Guillemet Amphitheater

Campus des Sciences Sociales
Huilein street
Email: hsp@usj.edu.lb • Tél. : 01-421443
• Dec 17 2011: A Historical Turning Point, a Seismic Shift
• « The Middle East’s Freedom train has just left the station. » Rami Khouri
• How Bouaziz’s Vegetable’s Cart Dethroned Ben Ali and brought down the Police State
• Police State vs Military Rule: the role of the armies in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria...
The Bouazizi symbol:

- Youth Unemployment
- Centre vs Peripheries
- The Humiliation Factor
- Myths and realities
Tunisia: an exception or a model?

The Tunisian Economy
Textile and Tourism

Unemployed university Graduates
Education: 7% of GDP
Revenge of Bourguiba?

Tunisia as a pioneer
- Abolition of slavery in 1846
- Constitution of 1861
- Contraception in 1962
- Abortion in 1965

Ellen Laipson, Stimson Center: the Tunisian Exception
Nadia Marzouki and Hamza Meddeb: Tunisian Miracle or Tunisian Mirage?
To every revolution, its Lady Macbeth

- Leila Ben Ali’s role
- The World Bank’s Study on the Tunisian kleptocracy
- The predatory system
- The succession problem
- The revelations of Wikileaks
Tunisia’s first democratic election and Ennahda’s Victory

- Instance supérieure pour la réalisation des objectifs de la révolution (ISROR)
- Instance supérieure indépendante pour les élections (ISIE)

- 2011: The Left and Ennahda: a treacherous alliance?
- 2015: Nidaa tounes and Beji Caid Essebsi: Bourguiba redux?
A revolution confiscated?
The unprecedented concession phone call
Has Tunisia passed Samuel Huntington’s Two-Turnover test?
- Understanding Ennahda Success?
- Idiosyncratic factors?
- After Ghannoushi?
- Isamo-conservatism and democracy
- Nidaa Tounes & Ennahda
- Towards a return of the Deep State?
“The Arab awakening is a tale of three battles rolled into one:
• people against regimes;
• people against people;
• and regimes against other regimes.”
Hussein Agha and Robert Malley

Nowhere is this more evident than in Syria: all three dimensions are forcefully present, simultaneously
The New Middle East Proxy Wars: Iran vs Saudi Arabia

“The best framework for understanding the regional politics of the Middle East is as a cold war in which Iran and Saudi Arabia play the leading roles. These two main actors are not confronting each other militarily; rather, their contest for influence plays out in the domestic political systems of the region’s weak states. It is a struggle over the direction of the Middle East’s domestic politics more than it is a purely military contest. The military and political strength of the parties to civil conflicts, and the contributions that outsiders can make to that strength, is more important than the military balance of power between Riyadh and Tehran.”

F. Gregory Gause, III
• The rising regional influence of Iran
• The roots of Saudi panic
• Consequences in Iraq, in Syria, in Lebanon, in Yemen, in Bahrain
Great ideological storms of the 20th Century (Isaiah Berlin)

Liberal Democracy seems to have triumphed in the West but the MENA region has yet to settle the debate

Revolutions and Counter-revolutions, panarabism, panislamism, secularism, liberalism, authoritarian nationalism, nihilism...

The Constitutional Debates

Tunisia’s attempt to transcend polarization

Women, minorities, pluralism, freedom of conscience...
The underlying causes of the Egyptian Revolution

• Wake-up call: The brutal killing of Khaled Said...

• The end of a political cycle
  • Mubarak worn down by the exercise of power, authoritarianism, police brutality, torture, plans of a dynastic succession, hardware vs software: Arab nationalism and anti-colonialism vs actual foreign policy...

• The Economics of the Egyptian Revolution
  • Demise of a Rentier State, Inflation, youth unemployment, absence of territorial planning or land management, rent economies, rising inequalities, corruption, kleptocrats...

• Demographic changes
  • Demographic Boom between the 1920s and the 1980s, followed by a rapid decrease in fertility rate, and an increase in the literacy rate...

• Social networks and the Internet Revolutions
  • Wikileaks and the global quest for transparency, satellite channels, the end of governmental control over the media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube...
The Alexandria blogger Khaled Said, police brutality, Waël Ghonim and the Facebook effect
The underlying causes of the Revolution: politics, economy, demography, Media & Internet

The Egyptian people and the Egyptian Army rejected the very idea of a dynastic succession

“A hereditary ruler makes no more rational sense than a hereditary dentist.”

Thomas Paine

Hosni Mubarak and his son Gamal: The poster says:
«If you give your son a mobile phone, you are nice,
If you give your son a car, you are generous,
But if you give your son a country and a people to play with along with his friends, you are... Mubarak»
Les causes démographiques

- Boom démographique entre 1920 et 1980

Après 1980 :
- Baisse rapide et importante du taux de fécondité
- Hausse significative du taux d’alphabétisation
- Sortie progressive du modèle endogame

Quelles conséquences ?
- Emergence de l’individu
- Rôle accru des femmes
- La démocratie au sein de la cellule familiale

Critiques de l’approche démographique :
- Une fixette d’Emmanuel Todd ?
- Une vision téléologique de l’histoire ?
Demographic transition

Tahrir Square in the 1950s

Aswan

Tahrir Square in 2011

The demographic transition and its consequences

Egypt’s population reached 90 M

Counter-Demographic transition?
The Economics of the Egyptian Revolution: Demise of a Rentier State 1 / 2

• Egypt is largely dependent on economic rents and politically-motivated external financial flows

- Oil
- Suez Canal ($5 billions in 2008)
- US Foreign aid ($ 2.1 billion per year)
- Tourism, 15 million tourists, $ 12 billion per year before the revolution
- Remittances : $ 7 to 8 billion per year
The Economics of the Egyptian Revolution: Demise of a Rentier State 2 / 2

- Revenue dependent on foreign or geopolitical factors: stability, price of oil, US aid...

- Rent is not reinvested to promote production

- Both external and domestic rent appropriated by the State, which holds various monopolies, particularly in the trade sector → inflation of the public sector

- Allocation of income from rents allocated mainly towards the privileged groups that support the political regime in power

- The 2008 crisis, inflation of food prices
"If you want to liberate a society just give them the Internet.” Wael Ghonim

The short phase of cyber-utopism

Is the Information Superhighway a Superhighway to freedom and democracy? Not so fast
THE CITIZENS OF EGYPT FIGHT PRESIDENT MUBARAK WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

EGYPT

facebook

TWEETING
SOCIAL NETWORKING
BLOGGING

TEXTING

DOWN WITH MUBARAK

E-GYPT
The Facebook generation was instrumental in bringing down Mubarak but failed miserably at the elections.
The dilemma of Egyptian Democrats
Mohammed El Baradei’s Boycott
The end of the hopes and dreams of the revolutionary youth
A full-fledged Counter-Revolution?

The coup d’Etat and its consequences
Political Prisoners
Journalism under fire
Treason of the Clercs? The intellectuals and Sisi
Alaa El Aswany’s itinerary: « Democracy is the solution?»
• The Morsi – Sisi relationship

• The Faustian Bargain between the authoritarian regimes and the islamists

• A dilemma for the Copts
The Muslim Brotherhood in Government

- Concentration of power
- Incompetence
- Authoritarianism and sectarianism
- Attenuating circumstances?
The forces at play

THREE PLAYERS CHESS GAME

• The Armies
• The Islamists
• Civil Society Liberals and Progressives
Manufacturing Pharaohs? The persistence of authoritarianism in the post-revolutionary phase
The worse of both worlds?

New monsters to tame

The IMF, the MB and their neoliberal economic policies
Were the Revolutions a Trojan Horse for Radical Islam?

• The Arab Revolutions and the Islamic Revolution
• Is there any truth to the cliché: «From the Arab Spring to the Islamist Winter»?
• Political Islam after the Arab Spring: myth and realities
• The old regimes’ faustian pact with the islamists
• A new role for the Salafis
Egypt between revolution, islamism and counter-revolution

- The return of authoritarianism
- Whither the Muslim Brotherhood?
- Politically motivated external financial flows
- The US dilemma regarding Foreign Aid
The Indigenous Revolution vs Foreign Intervention Dilemma

- The Militarization of the Syrian Revolution
- The Debate over Intervention in Syria
- The Pitfalls of Foreign Intervention
- Arming the rebels

- Tunisia & Egypt vs Libya & Syria
- The conditions of a successful transition are missing

The consequences on the post-Assad configuration:
The means determine the end

5 YEARS DOWN THE ROAD?
“If a dictator is overthrown after a peaceful civic resistance process, 28% chance of a civil war after 5 years. In case of a protracted armed struggle against a dictator, 43% chance of civil war after 5 years.”

“If a dictator is overthrown through peaceful struggle, there is a 51 percent chance of a successful democratic transition after five years. In case of an armed struggle, the chances are only 3 percent.”

From Erica Chenoweth & Maria J. Stephan Research
Sayyid Qutb and the radicalization of Political Islam

- 1906-1966
- Jahillya Concept: No compromise with political power
- Political Violence and Takfir
- The spiritual father of modern-day jihadist movements
- His trip to the United States: the trauma of sexual promiscuity
- Qutb’s legacy
Why the Turkish Model did not to work in Egypt

• Egypt is no Turkey

• AKP vs MB

• The Egyptian military

• It’s the economy, stupid!

Mursi kicking SCAF’s Marshall Tantawi out while reading a book titled: Erdogan’s way to power
Towards the Pakistanization of Egypt?

- Powerful military
- Powerful islamists
- Long protracted struggle
- Foreign Dependency
An ungovernable country?

- The intense polarization could lead the parties to resort to street politics

- In the Ministry of Interior, the prevailing «security doctrine» holds that protesters are nothing but traitors serving foreign agendas rather than active citizens
ÉGYPTE
L'ENVERS DU DÉCOR

SOPHIE POMMIER

Chroniques
de la Révolution Égyptienne

Alaa El Aswany

Dans les coulisses du Proche-Orient
Mémoires d'un journaliste diplomate
(1952-2012)

Éric Rouleau

L'Immeuble Yacoubian

Marwan Hamou

Dictionnaire amoureux de l'Égypte

Robert Solé

L'Égypte entre démocratie et islamisme
Le système Moubarak à l'heure de la succession

Jean-Noël Ferrié

fayard

Plon
Geopolitical Trends: Fragmentation, **State Collapse**, Rise of Non-State Actors

- Several countries on the verge of full-scale disintegration
- Centrifugal Forces and Weakening of Central Authorities
- **Non-State Actors setting the agenda:** Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya...
- End of Sykes-Picot? The entire territorial framework born following the demise of the Ottoman Empire is beginning to shatter
- "**Statisation of armed groups and militisation of States**" (Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou)
- Hyper-centralized States have collapsed, few structures to rebuild social cohesion
- The monopoly of violence and the legitimacy questions
- States who have weathered the Arab Spring drew the wrong lessons and hardened repression, the police states are back in force
CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION...

Questions or comments?

karimbitar@yahoo.com

@karimbitar

Karim Emile Bitar

www.facebook.com/karimbitar