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SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

**TITOLO/TITLE: A CENTURY OF SOCIAL MOBILISATION IN MOROCCO:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM A HISTORICALLY- INFORMED ACTIVISM**

PROPONENTE/I – PROPONENT/S: Laura Feliu, Ferran Izquierdo and Natalia Ribas-Mateos

ABSTRACT (1500 parole/words):

A panel connected with the publications:

-Book in Spanish: Feliu, Laura, Mateo Dieste, Josep Lluís & Izquierdo Brichs, Ferran (2018) UN SIGLO DE MOVILIZACIÓN SOCIAL EN MARRUECOS, Barcelona, Bellaterra.

<http://www.ed-bellaterra.com/php/lLibresInfo.php?idLlibre=1446> –

-Book in English: in preparation with IBIDEM-Verlag, 2022. Edited by Feliu, Mateo, Izquierdo and Ribas-Mateos.

This work fills a notable gap in literature about activism in the MENA region and in globalisation literature in general. It is an instructive case study on the history of social mobilization intervening in contemporary societies to promote social change. Through this new publication on social mobilization in Morocco, we highlight activist and engaged academic research in social movements as well as use multidisciplinary tools and methodologies (from anthropology, geography, history, and international relations). The privileged theoretical and methodological framework used conforms with a crossroads between public policy approaches, the sociology of power and the theory of social movements and the practicalities of such social movements, with close links to activism, especially since the Arab Spring.

With this panel we would like to have papers which are able to stimulate reflections on the idea of social mobilisations from a theoretical point of view, in the study of social transformation as it has been applied to the region, and particularly to Morocco, and by questioning and problematizing the understanding and framing of social movements from a historical perspective. Particularly, regarding the following dimensions: growing inequalities, unemployment, fiscal crisis, corruption, access to public health and social services, environmental crisis, food and water scarcity, social control, censorship and repression, violence (state violence, armed conflicts, etc.), political representation, participation, regimes' legitimacy crisis, identity politics, sectarianization, migration, borders and mobility.

With this panel we would like to have papers which analyse social actors and bottom up processes of change, both historical and contemporary. Papers which analyse how crisis and change are reflected addressing both the national and transnational level. Papers which explore the complexity of the methodologies (empirical and theoretical) used over the years

to investigate crisis and change by, for instance, discussing research in difficult contexts, research ethics, research funding, etc.

- **Objectives of the panel and of the book in the English version**

We approach new debates. Our main objective, as academic activists, is to highlight through this publication the need to learn from each other's struggles, practice, debates, reflections – as well as sharing and documenting different experiences. How are social movements generated, how do they develop? How are they repressed? How do they die? What enables them to move beyond borders (Morocco or the Arab World)? What prevents them? What is their current shape, singularity, and when do they collapse? How do their original framed ideas, structures and social practices directly or indirectly affect their results in society? How can they best handle encounters with the authoritarian state and with the articulation with global capitalism? Bearing all these questions in mind, the book seeks answers, answers designed to provide a “longue durée perspective”, answers researched and elaborated by academics who are also activists.

We look for new perspectives on the understanding of global movements that are rooted in history but have become active in neoliberal times. The book contains both academic knowledge and solid grounding for activist-oriented political action, whether in the MENA region or beyond. With this book we address a key issue in the contemporary transformation of world politics. We need to research and think how to match academic knowledge, through theoretical and empirical exploration, with key action in social movements.

We are particularly concerned about finding how research paths for social movements in a consistent and elaborated manner from theory to reflection on social movement actions; it involves on one hand a trans-disciplinary approach to social sciences with a historical perspective across all, and, on the other, a tandem work with social movement academics and thinkers. This type of tandem work not only expands the body of work about Morocco but goes beyond Mediterranean societies to connect with social movement-activists with globalisation perspectives.

- *Brief information about the book:*

The Spanish version of “A century of social mobilization in Morocco” is divided into twenty-five chapters, of which twenty-two are case studies, preceded by a detailed exordium and an initial chapter by the editors in which the process of shaping the Moroccan power regime is degenerated from its roots and its evolution to the present day. This introduction is essential to understanding the scope of the editors' proposal as it shows the reasoning followed and prepares the reader to understand the rest of the work. It is therefore a kind of critical ‘state of the question’ in which the framework of research and the fundamental concepts of the work are presented. The selection of the twenty-two cases of popular revolts collected offers a rich diversity of actors and casuistic with a varied geographical representation, including urban, rural and peripheral. Thus, the main enclaves present in the work are Casablanca (1907, 1965 and 2000), Fez (1907 and 1990), the Eastern Rif (1909, 1921, 1958, 1984 and 2004), Meknes (1937 and 2011), Tangiers (1952, 2011 and 2015), Salé and its surroundings (1930 and 2008), Taza (1915) and Imider (2011).

The first of our arguments that underpin the book points out the great structural transformations that have shaped the current power regimes. We take a longue durée

perspective, by understanding the emergence of capital and the state as central resources in the processes of power accumulation, and how these resources and the elites compete for control, and influence social mobilizations.

Secondly, the book covers the dynamics of social mobilization. The structure of the regime in power has a direct impact on both the type of regime response (strategy) and its possibility of survival (control of resources and capacities), as well as the configuration and dynamics of the mobilization. Different regime models provoke different reactions that, in turn, affect the dynamics and chances of success of social mobilizations. These dynamics can become a comparative tool in helping us understand why revolts have different processes and results. It is not enough to focus on apparent processes of democratization; the analysis should be extended to the entire power regime, not just the political. In this sense, the extension of the analysis to cover all actors and resources involved in the power regime, complements and enriches the analyses of the political system. Resistances are related to the processes of accumulation (economic, political, ideological etc.), by the elites and, ahead of these processes, to the population's objectives of improving their living conditions. Resistances mainly occur against these dominant processes of power accumulation.

Thirdly, the fate of social mobilizations, and even revolutions, is directly linked to the strength of the elites they face, what some authors have called 'the structure of opportunity' (see Tilly, 2006 and Kriesi, 2004), which is directly linked to the degree of concentration of power. Social mobilization is always embedded within a relationship of power, and as such is influenced by all actors involved in it. And, as in any social relationship, it is the actors with the greatest power that influence the most in their dynamics. These claim-making acts, collective or individual, have both practical and policy implications. Through direct action, people make themselves heard; they create realities on the ground that the authorities sooner or later have to come to terms with.

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PROFILO ACCADEMICO DEL/DELLA/DEI/DELLE PROPONENTE/I – SHORT BIO OF PROPONENTS

LAURA FELIU

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0979-6477>

FERRAN IZQUIERDO

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0403-3171>

NATALIA RIBAS-MATEOS

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1106-4467>

INDIRIZZO/I EMAIL/EMAIL ADDRESSES:

N.Ribasmateos@gmail.com (coordinator). Laura.feliu@uab.cat ferran.izquierdo@uab.cat