

XV Convegno SeSaMO

Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale

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TITOLO/TITLE: Revolution, Regime & State: Self-Criticism within the Arab Spring Experience

SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

PROPONENTE/I – PROPONENT/S:
Mohamad Moustafa Alabsi

Presentation

Our panel is proposing several political concepts such as: legality/Legitimacy, Majority/Democracy, Regime/State, Revolution/Civil War.

It's about opposed notions and concepts taken together, because political crises should always be taken as the results of contradictions: between norms and facts, ideals and realities, crimes and justice, or even between order and chaos.

Revolution is an act of lawlessness, of chaos, that is immediately recovered by an institutional re-organization. A revolution to be achieved, rather than derived or transformed into a civil war, should seize the sovereign institutions of the State and replace their ideology whether by a legal and institutional functioning or by a new ideological dictatorship.

10 years after the beginning of the Arab Spring, the situation in many countries is not a revolutionary one anymore, nor is it a process toward the formation of new democracies. Our panel and speakers will discuss the conceptual and methodological differences between Regime and State, Revolution and Civil War, Dictatorship and Civil Society. Our speakers will focus on the current situations in Syria, Egypt and other examples from the Arab World

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

Chair/Panelist:

Mohamad Moustafa Alabsi is a Syrian researcher in Political Philosophy from Grenoble-Alpes University/France. His Ph.D. research grew in the lights and darkneses of the Arab Spring events and outcomes. Hence, he focused his observation and study on the theoretically unresolved relationship between Revolution & Civil War, between Regime & State and between Violent & Civil Change. Dr. Alabsi argues that Arab Spring stalemates are yet to be challenged and that their positive and negative lessons are yet to be discussed and analyzed. He considers that despite the pessimistic realities in the current Arab World, the appearance of human rights' vocabulary and democratic ideals represents by itself a historical turn and a revolutionary moment in the modern historical experience of Arab Societies and political literature. Therefore, Academics and intellectuals from inside and outside the region must seize this priceless opportunity and build on it a concrete project of knowledge and then of change.

Dr. Alabsi is currently a post-doctoral fellow at Columbia Global Center/Amman under the Mellon Foundation Program for Displaced Scholars. He's also member of

the New University of Exile Consortium in New York and academic instructor at Off-University in Berlin.

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Paper 1: Ayfer ERDOGAN

Ph.D in International Relations and Political Science - Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi

Title: Egypt's Unfinished Revolution: The Role of the Military *politics*

Abstract

The military in Egypt has played a key role in the trajectory of the political transition in the post-Mubarak era. Indeed, of all the actors influencing Egypt's political landscape in the post-Arab Spring, none has been as decisive as the military in shaping the outcome of Egypt's democratic transition. It could not be denied that the January 25 revolution wouldn't have come true if it hadn't been for the military siding with the protestors on the eve of the uprisings. On the other hand, Egypt's failed revolution following a short period of democratic opening owes a lot to the military's continuous interference in politics and hedging off democratic processes. More importantly, military will be the key component of the Egyptian politics for a long time to come, which inevitably places much importance on understanding the characteristics of the Egyptian military. Based on its interests and restraints, it is of great significance to analyze the rationality behind the military's decision-making calculus at the critical junctures, which entails understanding a set of complex economic, social, historical and geopolitical factors in the first place. To this end, this contribution investigates the peculiar characteristics of the Egyptian military, its central role during Egypt's turbulent transition and finally, its hegemonic role in the new political system that is marked by counterrevolution and the reassertion of authoritarianism following the coup in July 2013.

Paper 2: Gianni DEL PANTA

Scuola Normale Superiore, Firenze, Italy

Title: Stop Talking about Generations: Preliminary Notes on how evolutionary Studies Could be Rethought

Abstract

Great historical episodes affect the lives of millions of people, often forcing scholars to critically reexamine their concepts and categories of analysis. The long cycle of revolutionary politics in the Middle East and North Africa represents no exception. By partaking in a debate that has recently developed in *Journal of Historical Sociology* and involved some of the leading scholars in the field, this article contends that it is time to move beyond generations to present the state of revolutionary theory and progress towards more fruitful directions. It aims to do so in two main ways. First is a discussion of what revolution is and is not. The paper suggests to separate the end of a revolution from its beginning, discussing what accounts for the outbreak of a revolutionary situation and proposing a clear criterion to evaluate the success of a revolution. Secondly, it presents a different way of reflecting upon knowledge accumulation in revolutionary theory. The article shows how a series of recurrent debates has taken place across generations, which thereby should not be represented as closed sets. In order to critically rethink about what studies on revolution know, it is suggested that scholars could focus on concepts. The present article takes into consideration three of them: state, actors and ideology.

Paper 3: Mauro PRIMAVERA

Dottorando al XXXIV ciclo di “Istituzioni e Politiche” presso l’Università Cattolica di Milano.

Title: All’ombra del Ba.th. Il ruolo del Partito Comunista Siriano – Ufficio Politico e del Partito Democratico Popolare Siriano prima e durante la Primavera Araba del 2011.

Abstract

Il presente paper intende ripercorrere l’evoluzione storica di due formazioni, il Partito Comunista Siriano – Ufficio Politico (PCF/UF) e il Partito Democratico Popolare Siriano (PDPS). Il primo intento approfondirà il dibattito ideologico sorto all’interno di comunisti e democratici nell’oggetto di valutare il peso del dibattito intellettuale nella società siriana e di individuare quali fossero le posizioni dei due gruppi in merito al baathismo classico e al nazionalismo arabo. Il secondo intento cercherà di esplorare il complesso rapporto fra PCS/UF e PDPS fino alla “Primavera Araba” del 2011. Il terzo tema si soffermerà sul ruolo avuto da queste due formazioni nel convulso periodo della Primavera Araba siriana che, iniziata nel marzo 2011, nei primi mesi si caratterizzò per l’intenso dibattito interno e per le complesse interazioni fra le varie anime laico-secolari e islamiste dell’opposizione antigovernativa. Il focus di questa ultima sezione riguarderà l’“auto-critica” ideologico-politica di comunisti e democratici in seguito al fallimento del processo di democratizzazione e secolarizzazione del Paese degenerato poi nell’escalation della guerra civile. La ricerca, oltre a discutere la letteratura esistente, si servirà delle fonti primarie in lingua araba prodotte dalle citate formazioni che comprendono comunicati ufficiali, dichiarazioni programmatiche, testi di carattere ideologico e interviste dei leader.

Paper 4: Hassan Almohammed

Postdoctoral Fellow- Columbia Global Centers/Amman. Cultural Studies of the Middle East and the Arab World

Title: Représentations visuelles du pouvoir : De l’État-Bien à la résistance médiatique au Moyen-Orient, Le cas de la Syrie (1970-2020)

Abstract

Le présent exposé a pour objectif de proposer une analyse des représentations visuelles en relation avec l'idéologie politique au Moyen Orient. En tant que medium, l'image politique est un élément majeur participant à la construction d'une idéologie étatique aidée par la propagande socio-politique d'un État-Bien, c'est-à-dire un État considérant le pays comme héritage familial.

Cette contribution se penchera sur la présence des images politiques et leur évolution en Syrie durant trois périodes historiques distinctes. (Première période : 1970-2000, la deuxième période : 2000-2011, et la dernière : 2012-2020).

Sur un autre plan, cette proposition permettra de proposer une analyse visuelle de la résistance médiatique née au lendemain de la révolte syrienne en 2011. Elle permettra aussi de comprendre le mécanisme et l'impact des représentations visuelles étant à l'origine d'un imaginaire socio-politique au sein de la société syrienne.