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SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

TITOLO/TITLE: Taking Stock of a Revolutionary Decade

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ABSTRACT (1500 parole/words):

In the wake of the 2007-08 economic and financial crisis, the world has witnessed the outbreak of an unprecedented number of mass mobilizations (Chenoweth 2020; Beissinger 2022). The Middle East and North Africa has been the epicentre of this upsurge in the activity of the masses from below. It also represents the region that epitomizes at best one of the main contradictions of today's politics: that is, the incapacity of mass protest movements to unleash deep social and political transformations. In reacting to this, researchers have debated whether and to what extent these events could be considered as revolutionary episodes and why, to borrow from Asef Bayat's (2017) lexicon, revolutions that were particularly strong as movement achieved so little in terms of change. More broadly, the events in the Arab world and neighbouring countries have opened up reflections in the field of study on revolution. Scholars have questioned whether the habit to divide scholarship into generations retains its enduring validity, the supposedly emergence of a fifth generation of studies, the possibility to move beyond generational thinking, and how the field might evolve in the wake of the changing nature of revolutionary episodes (Abrams 2019; Lawson 2019; Bayat 2021; Beck and Ritter 2021; Alexander 2022; Allinson 2022; Beissinger 2024).

This panel invites scholars to take stock of the revolutionary decade that the Middle East and North Africa writ large experienced in the 2010s and beyond. It aims to gather researchers who, starting from different perspectives (for instance, comparative politics, international relations, sociology, political theory, political economy, anthropology and the like) and based on a plurality of methodologies, could study and reflect on revolutions, revolutionary situations and revolutionary movements. Within this broad framework, the panel encourages the submission of paper proposals addressing one or more research topics from the following non-exhaustive list:

- How revolutionary episodes in the Middle East and North Africa have affected the field of study on revolution and where it is heading for;
- The structural factors that could account for the outbreak of revolutionary situations, paying specific attention to political economy, uneven development, and the dynamics at play between the international and the domestic;
- How revolutionary processes emerged and developed over time, addressing in particular the contingent character of the sequence of events, their uneven internal temporality and the different spatialities of contentious politics;

- The character of revolutionary movements, their organization, internal composition, repertoire of mobilization, ideological framework and the like;
- The specific role that collective actors such as the labour movement, the peasants, trade unions, the women, youth groups, minorities, political parties, NGOs, non-state actors and the like have played in paving the way to and supporting the revolutionary mobilizations;
- How and why revolutionary movements were not successful, exploring the ideological context in which they operate, their intellectual points of reference, the lack or the weakness of revolutionary parties, the subaltern cultural politics, the incapacity of the labour movement to lead the process and the like;
- The success of counter-revolutions, focusing in particular on the international order and the material and ideological interests of imperialist and regionalist powers, domestic state apparatuses, neo-reformist parties, Political Islam and the like;
- How the failure of revolutions has impacted on subsequent political trajectories, such as regime dynamics, deployment on the international chessboard, policy, fate of revolutionary movements, class balance, gender relations, protection of minorities and the like;
- Whether and to what extent revolutionary activists and leaders have learned from defeats, changing or partially reframing their own political positions and ideological orientations

References

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

Gianni Del Panta is Junior Assistant Professor in Political Science at the University of Pavia, Italy. His main research interests concern political regimes, revolutionary movements, and the dynamics at play between protests from below and authoritarian regimes, especially in North Africa.

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