

The Middle East from below – Dynamics of subversion

WORKSHOP, 8-10 DECEMBER 2011, Marburg

The apparent absence of organized mass ideologies in the ongoing social upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa, is remarkable. Nationalism and Islamism were not the driving force behind the mass protests. Instead, a new ideational orientation of actors emphasizing individual desiderata—such as freedom, human dignity, and social equity—has placed itself centrally in the midst of the new developments.

Processes of individualized opposition have been taking place under the surface in these regions for years. Various groups of social actors like intellectuals, artists, youth, and women have been engaged in subverting the dominant political, social, and cultural conceptions. In contrast to previous ideology-based mass movements, recent dynamics of resistance are characterized by individual, non-hierarchical, spontaneous actions and behavior.

The workshop aims to provide theoretical lectures and empirical case studies, discussing relevant topics such as the adequate terminology to grasp these dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa.

It represents as well a prelude to a series of workshops that will be hosted over the coming years within the framework of the Marburg University research group: Triumph of subversion? The end of mass ideologies, and new oppositional dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa. It will contribute to discuss the project's theoretical fundamentals and its essential terminology. Due to the number of different academic disciplines involved, we consider it necessary to focus on defining four central terms—the political, individualization, social movements, and youth—in order to analyze their different meanings and connotations on an interdisciplinary level.

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International Workshop
December 8-10, 2011

Center for Near and
Middle Eastern Studies

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

Keynote, 6:15 pm

Asef Bayat (Urbana-Champaign, IL)
The Arab street as political sphere

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

Opening, 9:00 am

Albrecht Fuess, Rachid Ouaisa,
Friederike Pannewick (Marburg)

9:30-12:00 pm

The political as dissent

Chair: **Yvonne Albers (Marburg)**

9:30-10:00
Oliver Flügel-Martinsen (Bielefeld)
Considerations on the political. Emancipatory perspectives & conceptual problems

Discussion 10:00-10:15

10:30-11:00

Lisa Wedeen (Chicago)
Abandoning 'legitimacy'? Order, disorder and ideology in Syria

11:00-11:30
Hanan Toukan (London)
Making the invisible visible? Disaggregating art and the public sphere in contemporary Lebanon

Discussion 11:30-12:00

Lunch

1:00-3:15 pm

Individualization as opposition

Chair: **Karolin Sengebusch (Marburg)**

1:00-1:30
Monika Wohlrab-Sahr (Leipzig)
What is individualization and how can we research it? Some conceptual considerations on the strengths and weaknesses of a widely-used concept

Discussion 1:30-1:45

1:45-2:15

Kathrin Sharaf (Freiburg)
Etisalat: Local appropriation of the internet in middle class Cairo

2:15-2:45
Amel Boubekeur (Algier)
New post-revolutionary cultures of subversion in the Maghreb

Discussion 2:45-3:15

Coffee break

3:45-6:15 pm

Movements as collective actions

Chair: **Ali Sonay (Marburg)**

3:45-4:15
Dieter Rucht (Berlin)
Theories on social movements and political protest: An overview

Discussion 4:15-4:30

4:30-5:00

Dimitris Soudias (Erlangen)
Resistance is a learning process – Tactical repertoires and the Egyptian street: 2000 - 2011

5:15-5:45

Sophie Richter-Devroe (Exeter)
Palestinian women's everyday resistance: Between 'normality' and 'normalisation'

Discussion 5:45-6:15

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

9:30-12:30 pm

Youth as social actor

Chair: **Ines Braune (Marburg)**

9:30-10:00
Linda Herrera (Urbana-Champaign, IL)
The rise of Generation Rev: Conceptualizing Arab youth in the digital age

Discussion 10:00-10:15

10:45-11:15

Albrecht Fuess (Marburg)
"La guerre des prenomms". Migrating Hip Hop between France and North Africa

11:15-11:45
Ali Sonay (Marburg)
Being young and political in Egypt. The case of the April 6 movement

Discussion 11:45-12:30

Lunch