

POMED Seminar for Policy Professionals, Spring 2010

Autocratic Persistence in the Middle East: Sources and Varieties of Change

Mondays, 7:00-8:30pm
March 11 – May 10

Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)

Course sessions will take place at:

International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)
2121 K St NW, Suite 700, Washington DC 20037

Purpose:

The purpose of this seminar is to equip participants to understand the varieties of political change that have taken place recently and/or may occur today in countries in the Middle East; to distinguish between “façade” reform and genuine democratization; and to identify potential opportunities for U.S. policy to positively impact democratization. These skills will be particularly important for professionals who design, review and implement project proposals in the area of democracy and governance in the Middle East. Lectures will highlight conditions and factors common to the region through the lens of particular country cases.

The seminar will begin by reviewing the purpose of the class and recent relevant history. Next we will consider political economy and economic conditions. The following five lectures will review the role and strategies of various actors relevant for political reform, beginning with ruling regimes before discussing opposition groups and civic organizations. The final two sessions will present a case study, through which participants will apply what they have learned. After reviewing the various elements in the case of Morocco, participants will be required in the final session to offer and discuss potential strategies by which U.S. actors can support democratization in the country.

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Seminar Chair:

Dr. Marina Ottaway, Director of Middle East Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has helped design the course and will offer the first and last lectures.

Lecturers :

Lectures will be delivered by leading experts from academic institutions, think tanks, and related organizations. Lecturers will have both a theoretical understanding of their subjects and a practical knowledge of how these issues relate to U.S. policy. The seminar will be facilitated by POMED staff.

Expectations:

To maximize the benefit of the course and to enhance the quality of discussion, we highly encourage participants to attend every lecture.

Participants may opt to receive a grade. For those students who opt to receive a grade, the grade will be based on three components: a) attendance and participation in class discussions during the first 9 weeks (25%), b) participation in the final class discussion on week 10 (25%), and c) the quality of a final paper (50%). The final paper will require participants to synthesize material from the course and draw recommendations for U.S. policymakers in the form of a 5-page memo.

Suggested readings for each week are available below. Participants will benefit most from the course if they complete the suggested readings prior to class and engage fully in class discussions.

Schedule :

1. (3/11) Political Change in the Middle East: When, How, and What that Means for U.S. Actors – **Marina Ottaway**

This lecture will review the purpose of the course: to equip participants to understand the varieties of political change that have taken place recently and/or may occur today in countries in the Middle East; to distinguish between “façade” reform and genuine democratization; and to identify potential opportunities for U.S. policy to positively impact democratization. The lecture will introduce some basic ideas and questions about political change in the Middle East that will structure the remainder of the course.

- Marina Ottaway, “Evaluating Middle East Reform: Significant or Cosmetic” in Marina Ottaway, Julia Choucair-Vizoso (Ed.) *Beyond the Façade: Political Reform in*

the Arab World, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008.

2. (3/15) Understanding the Present Climate: What's Changed and What Does that Mean for Democracy Support? – **Leslie Campbell**

The Middle East today is different from the Middle East of the 1990s. Policymaking and program design needs to be informed by an understanding of recent history and the way that key actors have responded to pressures. This lecture will provide a quick review of key events, leading to a discussion of how the region's governments have "upgraded" their capacity to manage pressures for reform. Finally, the lecture will review the implications of these changes for U.S. officials who would support democratization.

- Steven Heydemann, *Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World*, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, October 2007.
<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2007/10arabworld/10arabworld.pdf>
- Marina Ottaway, *Middle East Democracy is not a One-Way Street*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 2009.
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=24200>

3. (3/22) Opposition Actors: Secular Parties – **Steven Cook**

Secular or "liberal" parties are one important type of opposition actor in the Middle East. In recent years, they have shown themselves to be, with certain exceptions, less capable of mobilizing voters through ideas or patronage than Islamist movements. This lecture will examine a few such parties, the challenges they confront, and the opportunities they present to American actors.

- Marina Ottaway and Amr Hamzawy, "Fighting on Two Fronts: Secular Parties in the Arab World" in Marina Ottaway, Amr Hamzawy, and Michele Dunne, *Getting to Pluralism: Political Actors in the Arab World*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009.

4. (date TBD) Opposition Actors: Islamist Organizations – **Nathan Brown**

Islamist organizations are a second important type of opposition actor in the Middle East. In recent years, they have generally shown themselves more capable of mobilizing voters than secular parties. However, these groups often struggle to manage tensions between moderate and illiberal wings, the latter of which may reject women's political participation, religious and political pluralism, or even participation in elections. This lecture will examine a few such organizations, the challenges they confront, and the opportunities they present to American actors.

- Amr Hamzawy and Marina Ottaway, "Islamists in Politics: The Dynamics of Participation" in Marina Ottaway, Amr Hamzawy, and Michele Dunne, *Getting to Pluralism: Political Actors in the Arab World*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009.
- Samer Shehata and Joshua Stacher, "The Brotherhood Goes to Parliament," MERIP 240, Fall 2006. Available at: http://www.merip.org/mer/mer240/shehata_stacher.html
- Tamara Wittes, "Three Kinds of Movements," *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 19, No. 2, 2008. <http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/gratis/Wittes-19-3.pdf>

5. (4/5) Civil Society Organizations – **Laura Schulz**

In addition to regime actors and opposition parties, civil society organizations have the potential to play an important role in encouraging political change in the Middle East. Civil societies organizations include a broad variety of civic groups, women's organizations, trade associations, and business groups. This lecture will examine a few such organizations, the challenges they confront, and the opportunities they present to American actors.

- Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. (Johns Hopkins Press, 1986).
- Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, "Toward Civil Society Realism," in *Funding Virtue: Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion*. <http://pomed.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/ottaway-carothers-toward-civil-society-realism.pdf>
- Amy Hawthorne, "Middle Eastern Democracy: Is Civil Society the Answer?" <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CarnegiePaper44.pdf>
- Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Civil Society as Social Control: State Power in Jordan,' *Comparative Politics*, vol. 33, no. 1 (October 2000).

6. (4/12) Labor – **Heba El-Shazli**

In the Middle East and North Africa, labor movements have played a political role in society at least since the 1920s, when unions helped lead anti-colonial movements across the region. More recent years have witnessed numerous instances of labor-focused protest movements that have begun to evolve into broader political movements, such as the April 6 Youth Movement that emerged across Egypt in solidarity with factory workers in El-Mahalla El-Kubra. At the same time, various legal, institutional, and

structural obstacles have prevented labor movements from having a greater impact on political reform. This lecture will give an overview of the state of labor movements across the region, focusing on both the potential of such movements for having a broad impact on domestic political reform and also the structural weaknesses and obstacles confronted by such movements.

- Eva Bellin, "Contingent Democrats: Industrialists, Labor, and Democratization in Late-Developing Countries," *World Politics*, Volume 52, no. 2 (January 2000), pp. 175-205.
- *Justice for All: The Struggle for Workers' Rights in Egypt*. Solidarity Center, February 2010. http://www.solidaritycenter.org/files/pubs_egypt_wr.pdf
- Mustapha K. Nabli, "Long-term Economic Development Challenges and Prospects for the Arab Countries," paper presented at the Conference of the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, February 12, 2004.
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMENA/Resources/Longtermchallarabdev.pdf>

7. (4/19) Political Economy and Current Economic Pressures – **Daniel Brumberg**

By most accounts, political economy has been a major obstacle to change in the Middle East. Various scholars have attributed the persistence of autocracy to state-centric economies fueled by oil and other rents, the distribution of social welfare benefits, and the absence of taxation. Other writers have noted that economic liberalization has not been associated with political opening; rather, economic reforms have often occurred together with political regression. Today, economic conditions and related policymaking are likely to powerfully impact domestic and international pressures for reform. But how? This lecture will review what is known about the links between political economy and economic change on the one hand and political change in the Middle East on the other, while highlighting the implications of these findings for policymaking and program design. It will also review present economic conditions in a few key countries.

- Giacomo Luciani, 'Resources, Revenues, and Authoritarianism in the Arab World: beyond the Rentier State?' in R. Brynen, B. Korany and P. Noble, *Political Liberalization & Democratization in the Arab World* (1995), chapter 11.
- Michael Ross, 'Does Oil Hinder Democracy?' *World Politics* 53 (April 2001), pp. 325-361. Available at: <http://www.polisci.ucla.edu/faculty/ross/doesoil.pdf>
- Michael Herb, "No Representation without Taxation? Rents, Development, and Democracy," *Comparative Politics* (April 2005): 297-316.
- Brumberg, "Authoritarian Legacies and Reform Strategies in the Arab World," in Rex Brynen, Baghat Korany and Paul Nobles (eds.), *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), 229-59.

- Global Economic Crisis Series: Interviews with Navtej Dhillon:
 - Egypt I: http://www.brookings.edu/interviews/2008/1029_egypt_dhillon.aspx
 - Egypt II: http://www.brookings.edu/interviews/2008/1103_egypt_dhillon.aspx
 - Jordan and Syria: http://www.brookings.edu/interviews/2008/1201_jordan_syria_dhillon.aspx
 - Lebanon: http://www.brookings.edu/interviews/2009/0504_lebanon_dhillon.aspx
 - Saudi Arabia: http://www.brookings.edu/interviews/2009/0225_saudi_arabia_dhillon.aspx

8. (4/26) Regime Strategies and Reform – **Michele Dunne**

Ruling regimes in the Middle East are the dominant political actors in their societies. Regime initiatives, whether they represent genuine reform efforts or strategies to merely release pressures while avoiding real democratization, are important and merit close attention. This lecture will review a few examples of regime strategies for dealing with reformist pressures, while examining the implications of these strategies for U.S. policy and program design.

- Michele Dunne and Marina Ottaway, “Incumbent Regimes and the ‘King’s Dilemma’ in the Arab World: Promise and Threat of Managed Reform” in Marina Ottaway, Amr Hamzawy, and Michele Dunne, *Getting to Pluralism: Political Actors in the Arab World*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009.
- Dan Brumberg, “Liberalization Versus Democracy: Understanding Arab Political Reform,” Carnegie Endowment for Democracy Working Paper, 2003: <http://www.ceip.org/files/pdf/wp37.pdf>

9. (5/3) Case Study / Morocco: Setting the Scene – **William Zartman**

The challenge of effectively designing policy and programming lies in moving from theory to practice. This lecture will review the various elements discussed over the course of the seminar in relation to one country case: Morocco. This includes the country’s recent political history and pressures for reform, its political economy and present economic conditions, the monarchy’s strategies for dealing with reform pressures, secular and Islamist opposition groups, civil society organizations, and youth participation. The purpose of this lecture is to prepare participants for the final session, in which participants will be asked to discuss potential strategies for encouraging democratic progress.

10. (5/10) Case Study / Morocco: Designing Democracy Support Strategies – **Marina Ottaway**

In the final session, our seminar chair will return to lead a discussion of potential strategies for supporting democratic progress in Morocco. Participants will be asked to consider the implications of what they learned in the previous session and to discuss potential strategies by which U.S. and local actors could partner to encourage democratic progress.