

Policy Workshop

Participation after the Arab Spring: Activists' Strategies for Influence

09 - 10 May 2013

09 May

Morning Sessions

08h: 45

Welcome « Opening Speech », by:

Joachim Paul (Director Heinrich Böll, Tunis)

Farah Hached, (President Laboratoire Démocratique)

Muriel Asseburg (SWP, German Institute for International and Security Affairs)

Day one: Stocktaking: *The Dynamics of Activism and Influence since 2011*

09h

Panel (1): Participation in Constitutional Processes

Tunisia and Egypt has gone through the process of (re)drafting constitutions, while Libya is preparing for it. Formal/Informal participation/influence in these processes is an important indicator for the role/weight of grass root / activist structures. How did/does it occur/play out and what may that tell us for their future potential?

Moderated by: *Amine Ghali*

Inputs by: *Amira Yahyahoui, Lubna Azzam, Imen Triki, Rafik Halouani.*

11h: 10 -11h: 30: Coffee break

Panel (2): Institutionalization of Movements

Scholarship on Social Movements agrees that institutionalization is at the same time a central challenge for grass root movements and a condition for sustained influence on political processes. How far is institutionalization of youth, labor, women, activist movements along in the three countries, in which forms (e.g. parties, NGOs, etc.) and what stands in its way?

Moderated by: *Amine Ghali*

Inputs by: *Mohammed Heikal, Nadine Abdalla, Sami Ben Gharbia, Fahem Boaukaddous.*

13h-14h: Lunch break

Afternoon Sessions

14h

Panel (3): Building a Culture of Contestation

In all three countries, grass root structures are highly diverse. Differences exist concerning the social background of activists (e.g., urban vs. rural, middle vs. class), agendas (liberal, leftist, religious, etc.), and links to political parties and personalities. To what extent have activist groups succeeded in establishing/maintaining a culture of democratic contestation and acceptance of difference?

Moderated by: *Wahid Ferchichi*

Inputs by: *Nagwan El Ashwal, Mus'ab Elgayed, Slim Amamou, Alaa Talbi.*

15h40 -16h: 00: Coffee break

(4) Gender and Activism

Women played a prominent role in the movements that brought about regime change. To what extent is that presence reflected in activist groups (in their composition and their agendas)? Which are the dynamics contributing to the marginalization of women in activist structures where and when it occurs?

Moderated by: *Wahid Ferchichi*

Inputs by: *Atiaf Alwazir, Ibthihal Abdellatif, Turkia Alauer.*

10 May 2013:

Day Two: Strategies for Influence

Morning Sessions

09h

Panel (1): Short recapitulation of main issues of first day's discussions

By: *Heiko Wimmen*

Panel (2): From Street Politics to Lobbying: Tactics, Methods, Risks

Different phases and configurations of political contention present different opportunities and risks: continuation of street politics/direct action may help to keep political actors in check and commit them to their agenda, but carries the risk of undermining the political process, or violent confrontation. Establishing formalized interest/advocacy groups may provide direct access to and influence on the political process, but implies the risk of cooptation and loss of grassroots support/bottom-up momentum. In this workshop, activists should brainstorm and discuss what type of tactics and methods may be best suited for the current transitional moment, how a structured dialogue/relationship with political actors and state institutions can be established, what the most immediate risks are and how they may be mitigated and managed.

Moderated by: *Selim Kharrat*

Inputs by: *Adam Arami, Alaa Talbi, Béchir Laabidi, Badr Baabou.*

11h10-11h30: offee break

Panel (3): Donors and Partners: Activists, Civil Society and External Support

Over the past two decades, "Supporting Civil Society" has become a central element of International and European strategies to promote development and democratic governance. External support can provide activist and civil society organizations with significant resources to influence political processes. On the other hand, external donors may come to dominate the agenda of local civil society actors and draw them away from their grass roots, political processes may be hollowed out as external authors channel crucial support through an institutionalized yet unelected NGO sector, circumventing and supplanting official institutions. In this workshop, some experiences and lessons learned in comparable contexts (e.g., Palestine, Eastern Europe) will be discussed, while activists are invited to share and reflect upon their own experiences and expectations in their relation with foreign actors.

Moderated by: *Selim Kharrat*

Inputs by: *Doreen Khoury, Mazen Shaqura, Hafedh Ghadhoun, Rafik Halouani.*

13h-14h: Lunch break

Afternoon Sessions

Panel (4): Coalitions, Issues and Strategies: Who, what and how?

Building alliances and coalitions are key strategies in creating sustained influence on political processes. Choosing strategic issues with wide appeal to mobilize around – e.g., transitional and/or social justice, gender equality, labor rights – may enable a bundling of forces of organizations whose agendas partly overlap. Yet, building broad alliances also presents difficult challenges (e.g., uneven relationships between groups with different resources; differences in the cultures of interaction/decision making, personal incompatibilities). In this workshop, activists should brainstorm and discuss the potentials and difficulties in coalition/alliance building for their organizations/networks, and the strategic issues around which alliances could be formed. A special emphasis should be put on strategies to built bridges between activists/ organization emerging from different social backgrounds/milieus and differentiated agendas (e.g.,urban/rural, secular/religious, human rights/social rights).

Moderated by: Farah Hached

Inputs by: Mohammed Masbah, , Slim Amamou,Alaa Talbi.

15h40-16h00 : Coffee break

Panel (5): Wrap-up

Observations/ Recommendations by two specialists/ Scholars with personal background/ Experience in social movements/ Activist networks.

By: Farah Hached

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Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
German Institute for International and Security Affairs

*SWP participants are fellows in the project “Elite change and new social mobilization in the Arab world” realized by the *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)*. The project is funded by the *German Foreign Office* in the framework of the transformation partnerships with the Arab World and the *Robert Bosch Stiftung*. It cooperates with the PhD grant program of the *Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung* and the *Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung*.