Another look at the Arab Springs

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(translated by Andrew Brown)

The worsening civil war in Syria, the authoritarian restoration in Egypt, the political tension in Tunisia, the destabilization of Lebanon, the perpetuation of chaos in Iraq and Libya, the increasingly authoritarian posture of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey, the spectre of a resumption of armed conflict in Afghanistan – if indeed that conflict has ever ended – can give rise to facile puns on the 'Arab Autumn' or the 'Arab Winter', and the crocodile tears and malign glee that go with the refrain 'We told you so (we told you that Muslims were unfit for democracy)!'

From the perspective of the historical sociology of politics, the inane and infantile quality of these comments has been matched only by the naive enthusiasm that had accompanied the 'Arab Springs' at the beginning of 2011. Having for my part emphasized the, to put it mildly, premature character of the exaggerated optimism shown immediately after the 'Jasmine Revolution' in Tunisia, (1) I feel justified in today warning against the irresponsibility, not to say downright stupidity, of all the strange 'liberals' and 'democrats' and various 'secularists' who endorse the military coup in Egypt, under the surrealist pretext

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that it is not actually a coup. They would make the same claim if, tomorrow, the army took over power in Tunisia or Turkey. Obviously, they have learned nothing from the Algerian generals' putsch in January 1992 and the terrible civil war that ensued, even though the direct responsibility of the military security forces for the launching and prolongation of this putsch is now public knowledge.

We cannot prevent intellectuals and activists in the Arab world applying electrodes to their genitals and personally oiling the hinges of the dungeons into which they will soon be thrown, nor can we prevent their Western counterparts making others pay for their own phobias about identity. Nevertheless, let us try to introduce a little sociological reason into a debate that has lost its philosophical, ethical and political bearings.

Can we speak of an 'Arab Spring'?

However journalistic and intuitive it may have been, the analogy of the 2011 uprisings in the Arab world with the 'Springtime of the Peoples' in 1848 (rather than the 'Prague Spring' of 1968) made sense for three reasons. (2) This historical comparison indicated from the start that the said 'Spring' should be viewed in the plural even though it was discussed in the singular. From one national situation to another, the domino effect was evident, just as it was in Europe in 1848. However, each case retained its specificity, both in its origins and in its contingency. Just as the February Revolution in Paris had little to do with the Risorgimento, demands for German national unity or the Budapest uprising against the centralizing absolutism of the Habsburgs, even though the French revolt did claim to share the same Zeitgeist as the others, the overthrow of Ben Ali in Tunisia and of Mubarak in Egypt, the armed rebellion against the Gaddafi dictatorship in Libya, the civil protest against Assad's dictatorship, the challenge to Saleh in Yemen, the occupation of Pearl Roundabout by

protesters in Bahrain, the February 20 Movement in Morocco – to mention just the main incidents in the first half of 2011 – were responses to specific logics following a regional rhythm.

The invocation of the chronotype of 1848, and particularly the French events, also had the advantage of reminding us that one political revolution can hide another, in this case a social mobilization on which it can piggy-back and which it soon represses once it has taken advantage of it: in France, in 1848, the overthrow of the July monarchy in February led to the crushing of the workers' movement in June, and the introduction of an ultra-conservative Republic that was eventually suppressed by its own president, who in December 1851 established a Second Empire. In other words, after February comes June... and then December. In Tunisia, it was indeed a social issue that shook the regime of Ben Ali, and it comes as no surprise that the successors of this regime did not respond to it, even though they have not (yet?) bloodily suppressed the poor who are claiming their due. In particular, the Gafsa mining region is still neglected, apparently without this giving much worry to Ennahda or even, more curiously, to the Left, the 'democrats' and the intellectuals of Tunisia. (3) In Egypt, the journey from February to December was accomplished even more swiftly.

Thirdly and lastly, 1848 simultaneously sealed the triumph of the national idea, and even of the nation-state, along with that of a global capitalism able to take advantage of free trade, the Industrial Revolution, the invention of steam machinery, the construction of transcontinental railways and the deployment of transoceanic telegraph lines. The 'Springtime of the Peoples' demonstrated that this was not a zero-sum game, but a synergy between the universalization of the nation-state and of capitalism. (4) The lesson remains valid for the contemporary Middle East and Maghreb.

On the one hand, the community of Muslim believers – the *ummah* – has no significant political expression, except in the form of an Organization for Islamic Cooperation

and an Arab League, beside which the European Union looks like some Gregorian choir. It has built up a regional system of nation-states backed by the Islamist parties themselves: they are national parties that do not subvert the state which they intend to take control of, and they are sometimes the most zealous heirs of nationalism, such as the Lebanese Hezbollah, victorious over the Israel Defence Forces, or the Palestinian Hamas, the only real force of resistance to Israeli occupation. The trajectory of the Iranian revolution had already demonstrated that the nation-state is not soluble in Islam. From this point of view, the existence of a Green International, the unity of action ascribed to the Muslim Brotherhood across the Near and Middle East and the Maghreb, and the extent of the 'arc of crisis' in which jihadists are said to be active between Afghanistan and Mauritania (if we are to believe French neo-conservatives), are partly fantasy. The undeniable movement of fighters from one front to another, the policy of 'franchising' Al-Qaeda, the ideological aura of the founders of the Muslim Brotherhood, the exchanges between the movements who support it today, and the political funding and arms shipments that come from the Gulf – none of these subsume national or local logics that remain irreducible, as has been specifically demonstrated by the nuanced history of the Muslim Brotherhood itself in Egypt and Syria. (5)

On the other hand, the region has been part of the neoliberal era since the 1980s, and Islamic parties claim an affiliation with the 'Islam of the market' (6) on the model of the Turkish AKP, as has quickly been proven by the orientation of the economic policy of the PJD in Morocco, that of Ennahda in Tunisia and, fleetingly, that of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (yet again, the Islamic Republic of Iran, however revolutionary and socialist in tendency it may have been in its infancy, has been no exception since the economic liberalization of Rafsanjani's Reconstruction in the 1990s, backed by the reformist Mohammad Khatami from 1997 to 2005 and radicalized by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad during his two presidential terms, in 2005-2013, despite – or thanks to – his populist style, and now

endorsed by Hassan Rohani). This conjunction of the national idea and capitalist globalization under the guise of Islam is so obvious in contemporary Arab-Muslim societies that it justifies us describing them in terms of national-liberalism rather than of neo-liberalism – a national-liberalism of which Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Ahmadinejad are the flamboyant heralds. (7)

That said, we must admit that the object of the 'Arab Springs' was ideologically and politically constructed by the actors themselves, by the media, by the Western leaders who were taken off guard – and also, incidentally, by many researchers who took advantage of this windfall and rushed with fury into the new 'transitological' breach, notwithstanding their previous disappointments and the harsh criticism that this normative and purposive approach had met with since the 1990s, especially in the writings of Guy Hermet and Michel Dobry. (8) By trying to find a new 'wave' of democratization, both groups have locked themselves into Byzantine discussions on the sex of the 'Arab revolutions', on their very reality and their nature, on their 'origins' and 'causes', going via the profits and losses of decades' worth of historical and sociological studies that have pinpointed the futility of such questions. In so doing, they have flattened out the historicity of the different national *and local* situations that constitute the 'Arab Springs', highlighting ahistorical and asociological generic categories such as 'youth', 'Islam', 'civil society', and 'social networks'. They have also introduced an arbitrary periodization that is politically and ideologically biased. Why not take as the starting point of the 'Arab Springs', or at least the 'Muslim Springs', other popular movements, such as the Algerian riots of October 1988, the political revolution of March 1991 in Mali, the election of Mohammad Khatami as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1997, or the Indonesian *Reformasi* in 1998? Perhaps the only reason is to remain faithful to an Orientalist fantasy of Arab identity, to placate the twitchy susceptibilities of a large southern neighbour whose self-serving wrath is feared, and to ensure one does not overstep the bounds of what is 'correct' from the security point of view.

Basically, it is the term 'Arab' that is the problem, rather than the idea of a 'Spring', and even more the semiological monster of a supposedly 'Arab-Muslim' world. For not all Arabs are Muslims, the majority of Muslims are not Arabs, and it is not only Arabs who live in Arab countries but also Berbers, Kurds, Jews, Armenians, Christians from Europe and, increasingly, immigrants of all origins. The question, moreover, is less ethnic or religious than methodological. Are we talking about Islam when we talk about democracy or capitalism in this region of the world? Or of a particular historicity that is irreducible to the already complex historicity of this one religion? Or of social structures that are potentially at odds with this universalist monotheism, such as the principle of segmentarity which Ernest Gellner so insistently highlighted, and in which he saw one of the foundations of the Islam of confraternities of saints, one that was in tension with the orthodox and scholarly religion of the *ulemas*?

In any case, it would be a very deficient historical sociology of politics that did not immediately place the events of 2011 in the context of previous demonstrations – even if this means relativizing the role of 'social networks' in the triggering of the dispute – by underscoring the long social, political and civic struggles attesting to an old tradition of activism: for example, the strikes in the mining basin of Gafsa, in Tunisia, in 2008; the hunger riots that hampered economic liberalization in the years 1970-1980, and were bloodily repressed, in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco; civic movements such as the One Million Signatures for the Repeal of Discriminatory Laws against women in Iran from 2003 onwards; the Green protest movement against electoral fraud in the same country in 2009; and the 'Beirut Spring' of 2005, after the assassination of Prime Minister Hariri.

This is not just an academic question. It is highly political, and intensely topical: in Tunisia, Decree 97 in 2011 defined the revolutionary period (opening up the possibility of entitlement to compensation for victims of police repression) as having lasted from 17

December 2010 to 14 January 2011, and thus excluding activists or young people from the Gafsa mining region who suffered the wrath of the regime after the 2008 strike; (9) the mobilization of the latter led the authorities to grant protesters injured during these events monetary compensation of the same order, but in a discretionary way, outside any legal framework. This is likely to lead to litigation on the part of the 'martyrs' of the general strike of 1978 or the bread riots of 1984.

More fundamentally, the 'Arab Springs' have been able to follow in the footsteps of the radical nationalism of the 1950s (such as Youssefism in Tunisia, particularly in a city like Jendouba), Islamic reformism of the nineteenth century, including the 'modern moment' (10) of Islam (from which directly sprang the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and more broadly the very idea of a 'civil state' (*madani*) that we owe to the reformer Muhammad Abduh and that has been taken up by most contemporary Islamic parties) and local histories, such as the particularism of the town of Gafsa or the revolt of the Chambi Jebels in Kasserine, in the early twentieth century in Tunisia.

The 'Arab Springs' did not so much punctuate a linear political 'change' as they condensed 'transformations' of various kinds, complex transformations that only their own historicity, from one situation to another, can help us to understand. (11) They simultaneously played a part, at regional level, in a single 'generational situation' (12) that was also characterized more or less, and among other factors, by the rise and fall of authoritarianism, the demographic transition, and the implementation of neo-liberal government policies in place of statist economic nationalism. But each of these factors appears in a singular light on the national scale and takes different forms in the provinces of different states. The 'generational situations' in terms of the sub-region are mediated by 'concrete groups' on which militant solidarity or attending the same universities, sometimes in the West, may confer a transnational dimension, but which once again were forged primarily in the hidden

recesses of national and local history, in unions, parties, fraternities, educational and cultural institutions, film clubs, sports teams, and business circles. In fact, every so-called Arab-Muslim society has its unique stories, national stories and local stories, which appear in highly diversified form in the organization of social relations, of economic production and exchange, of institutions, and of the way these develop in 'imaginary' modes. At the polar opposite of the different versions of historicism, whether of liberal and 'transitological', or of Marxist or culturalist inspiration, we need to base our approach on this principle of historicity if we seek to understand what the 'Arab Springs' were and are becoming, in their plurality and also in their relative unity, in their combinations and permutations.

Scenarios

If we temporarily focus just on the short-term events that have shaken this part of the world since 2011, we see several scenarios emerging, which should be considered outside the teleological and normative narratives of transition or treason, and which can moreover succeed, or overlap with, one another. In other words, nothing is decided, because history is contingent, and no explanatory factor overdetermines it.

The first scenario which the course of events (especially electoral events) seems to have made possible was the conservative response to the popular mobilization that Islamic parties were able to provide through their well-established presence in society, their invocation of Islamic principles of a kind to meet religious needs and the hope for greater social justice, the prestige conferred on them by years of repression at the hands of now reviled authoritarian regimes, the magnitude of the funding they received from the oil-rich monarchies of the Gulf, and their relative political virginity. (13) We are not forcing comparative reasoning if at this point we talk about the renewal of the 'passive revolution'

constituted by the co-opting of independence by the social establishment, or by a small counter-elite of rural origin, and the 'transformism' ('trasformismo') that ensued, taking the concept from Antonio Gramsci's analyses of Italy in the late nineteenth century. It was of course the electoral victories of Ennahda in Tunisia and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt that most clearly illustrated this scenario in 2011-2013, and until recent months, as well as the victory of the Party of Justice and development (PJD) in Morocco, in the particular context of the monarchy and the pre-eminence of the Makhzen. (14) This was not an unprecedented route: the check kept on popular anger by the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, during the riots of October 1988, at the request of an army overwhelmed by the uprising of urban youth, and in the three years of a true multiparty system that followed; the confiscation of the Iranian revolution under the tutelage of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic Republic Party which followed his lead; the participation in the Indonesian *Reformasi* of major Muslim political and social forces after the overthrow of General Suharto in whose regime they had also been involved, were all cast in the same mould. Furthermore, the more or less explicit model of Islamic parties involved in this process of a conservative response to popular mobilization was the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, even though the way it came to power, through the ballot box, in 2002, had nothing to do with a revolutionary-type situation and was part of a radically different social, economic and historical context. (15)

The conservative response with which Islamic parties have met the political crisis has no necessary or exclusive relationship with the Muslim religion. In a seminal work, *Aux frontières de la démocratie*, Guy Hermet has brought out its logic in Europe in the nineteenth century, Christian in its belief. He concluded: 'Paradoxically, [...] the best strategists of democratization are not always the most convinced democrats, while those responsible for the failure of democracy in many cases rank among its most zealous heralds.' (16) Islam is likely to inspire revolutionary commitment – as with activists in the People's Mujahedin and Foqan

in Iran in the 1970s, who were involved in armed struggle against the power of Khomeini's supporters, deemed too conservative by them – or an authoritarian or even socialist-style reformist sensibility that we have seen at work in various trends on the Turkish Left. But the key factor is now elsewhere: in the neoliberal orientation of contemporary conservative Islamic parties, embodied primarily by the AKP of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül and the neo-brotherhood (*cemaat*) of Fethullah Gülen, who even define themselves as organizations of 'service' (*hizmet*) – a neoliberal orientation that has in turn been adopted by Ennahda in Tunisia, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Party of Justice and Development in Morocco, and that promotes a privatization of welfare in the mode of 'charity', including patronage and electoral strategies. (17) There is nothing merely cosmetic about this 'Islam of the market'. Its political expression rests on profound changes in the religious field that has become commodified since the 1990s, both in the fields of banking and finance, industry and commerce, as well as in education, preaching, and pilgrimage, even drawing inspiration from the evolution of north American Christianity. (18)

Once in power, Islamic parties face three challenges that only the AKP has succeeded (until proven otherwise) in meeting, even if its aura, as elsewhere in the region, suffered from the Gezi protests and their repression in June 2013: ensuring an economic growth that can improve the standard of living of the masses at the cost of a drastic revision of the previous model of development; keeping control of the political expression of Islam; asserting its political domination in the context of parliamentarianism, and avoiding a violent antagonism with secularist forces that had been involved in, or opponents of, previous authoritarian regimes. In Egypt and Tunisia, the Islamic parties in power have not managed to prevent the Salafists splitting away, and have not proven their economic competence. In addition, the Muslim Brotherhood has lost political momentum and Ennahda is under double pressure from the Left opposition and from those nostalgic for the old regime.

Indeed, the rise to power of Islamic parties by the ballot box does not only fit into a context of attempting to move away from authoritarianism, but also into that of a *Kulturkampf* between the religious and the secular populations. If there must be a 'pacted' democratization of a Brazilian, Argentinean or Chilean kind, this democratization will need to find a compromise between the party of God and the 'party of beer' as they say in Gafsa, as well as between democrats and supporters of the old regime. This is not a foregone conclusion, judging by the alacrity of the confrontation between Ennahda and the Left opposition in Tunisia. But nor is it necessarily a lost cause in advance, as both families on the one hand, and coalition governments and mass demonstrations events on the other, are places of mutual accommodation, particularly in Morocco. The example of Turkey, from 2002 to 2013, shows that the relation between parliamentary Islam and democracy or civil liberties is neither static nor zero-sum. It is rather progressive and contingent, since part of the liberal intelligentsia moved from critical support of the AKP government up to 2010, to a critical stance, as Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan fell back on the populism of Adnan Menderes in the 1950s. However, we must never forget that ideology and a secularized lifestyle have endorsed secular authoritarianism and produced social subordination both in Kemal's Turkey and in Iraq, Syria, Iran, Egypt and the Maghreb.

The second scenario is the 'authoritarian restoration', (19) which the region experienced in Algeria with the military coup of January 1992 and in Tunisia with the merciless repression of Islamists and democrats after a brief post-Bourguibi liberalization phase (1987-1989). It is this course that is going to triumph in Egypt, no matter what the secularist intellectuals say when they argue that the Muslim Brotherhood has been rejected by 'the People' (20) – a very asociological concept –, forgetting that, democratically speaking, street protests cannot erase the legitimacy conferred by several successive elections, even when the number of protesters is inflated at the whim of imaginary and physically implausible

estimates. Beyond the ideological aberrations, the most important issue is the determination of the army and the *fouloul* – the privileged members of the old regime – to preserve their economic ascendancy by proxy, pursuing a merciless 'strategy of tension' against the Muslim Brotherhood *with the support of Salafists of the Al-Nour party*, with the financial support of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and thanks to the pusillanimity of the United States whose regional policy only begins where that of Israel ends. (21)

All eyes are now turned to Tunisia. The interests formed around Ben Ali never gave up, and even plotted the palace revolution of 14 January 2011 in an attempt to defuse the pressure from the streets. The Nidaa Tounes party is their main mouthpiece, though this has not stopped some of the executives of the former regime joining Ennahda (together with some 'democrats', including former Communists from the Ettajdid party, Nidaa Tounes). For its part, Ennahda – or at least its government component – which initially compromised with the Salafist movement, showing it a certain paternalistic indulgence and attributing its excesses to youth and inexperience, eventually suppressed it, without nevertheless cutting off all ties with it, as various revelations about the circumstances of the political assassinations in 2013 tend to prove. In these conditions, we may well be surprised by the ease with which most observers and politicians take for granted the idea that Ennahda was responsible for these murders, although they are at a loss to explain what advantage that the Islamic party is supposed to draw from them. In a proper political analysis, one cannot dismiss out of hand the hypothesis that the Tunisian 'deep state' is arming killers to stir the wrath of secularists and destabilize the government. In addition, the inability of the Algerian army to control its border with Tunisia and stem the trafficking of gasoline, fake notes and drugs which is destabilizing it, or to curb the Islamist underground in the area of Kasserine, the Keff and Jendouba is intriguing and is bound to make you worry when you know it has never resigned itself to seeing any democratic experiment, or anything approaching it, flourish in its neighbour. It had, for

example, exerted pressure to nip in the bud the liberalization of the neo-Destour regime and the recognition of the Islamists in 1987-1989, following the coming to power of Ben Ali. (22)

The 'Arab Springs' also resulted in a third scenario, that of conservative modernization, which encourages monarchies to change everything so that 'things [will] stay as they are,' as advocated by Tancredi in *The Leopard* by Tomasi di Lampedusa. (23) This was the path that had been taken by Morocco, Oman and Jordan from the years 1980-1990, and that has also been followed with gusto by Mohammed VI and his Makhzen, in 2011, by bringing in a new constitution and accepting the electoral victory of the Party of Justice and Development to pull the rug from under the feet of the February 20 Movement. The royal status of Commander of the Faithful, a case of the 'invention of tradition' by French constitutionalists to benefit Hassan II, has thus been consummated, and with it the centralization of the state, since the fundamental charter now gives the monopoly of religious power to the monarch... (24) Naturally this does not mean that we need to take literally the desire of Tancredi and his counterparts in the region. In Morocco, for instance, the scenario of conservative modernization, far from freezing things, has opened up new opportunities for social and political changes, though it is not certain that the parties will be able to seize this opportunity to take advantage of the Constitution of 2011. (25)

But the scenario that has most impressed itself on people's minds, and which will have the most significant consequences, is that of the civil war that has engulfed Syria, after several months of peaceful protest, and even before Libya, where opposition to Gaddafi immediately armed itself in order to resist repression. Neither country has at present emerged from the nightmare, and it is unnecessary to emphasize the cruelty of this course of events. However, it is not certain that its irreversibility has been fully realized, even though the region has a long history of political pacts between radically opposing forces, as in Tunisia (1857 and 1988), Jordan (1989 and 1993), and Lebanon (1943 and 1989).

First, so-called civil wars quickly spill over the state borders they tear apart. They become international, they cause mass exoduses, they intensify arms trafficking and interstate or transnational financial flows, and they destabilize the regional balance. The case of Libya is a clear example: Tunisia and Mali continue to suffer the brunt of collateral damage from that country. The fallout from the war in Syria threatens to be even more severe, leading to an international conflict of major importance because of the involvement of Iran, Russia, Turkey and the Western countries – not to mention Saudi Arabia and Qatar – and ruining the architecture of international law by making the use of prohibited chemical weapons commonplace.

In addition, the trauma that a civil war leaves in the memory of a nation is long-term, as evidenced by its resurgence in Spain, Greece, and even Italy if we judge by the polemics aroused by the publication of the book *A Civil War* by historian Claudio Pavone in 1991. A conflict of this nature also entails exorbitant economic costs, and generates specific categories of population that the return to peace must take care of one way or another: widows and orphans, or more generally all people who have lost a loved one in often appalling conditions; war criminals and supporters of the old regime when it is finally overthrown; refugees and displaced persons, not all of whom will return and will form a diaspora whose remittances will play a role in the national economy and social relations; and, last but not least, the fighters, some of whom will demand a reward for their courage and their victory while others will pay for their defeat. Of all the scenarios of the 'Arab Springs', that of civil war is undoubtedly the one that will leave the deepest mark in the societies concerned, but also in their environment. The precedent of Afghanistan deserves to be pondered here. (26)

In all these cases, the 'Arab Springs' cannot be reduced to disembodied scenarios of a 'political sciences' type. They punctuate complex and age-old, or at least centuries-old, processes of state formation, in the tumultuous context of the progressive dismantling of the

Ottoman Empire, the establishment of colonial empires in some of its provinces and their own dislocation a few decades later, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the regional conflicts that accompanied this general shift from a world of empires to a world of nation-states. At the heart of this process of state formation lies the formation of the dominant class that becomes its supporter under the guise of nationalism or national-liberalism. The relation between this state and its ruling class on the one hand and the idea of democracy on the other is just one contingent and particular aspect of a broader domination, both in its temporality and in its contemporary organization. If we want to understand the 'Arab Springs' more fully, beyond the crazes and passions of the moment, we need to question the historicity of the situations in which they have occurred, and particularly the economy, both political and moral, of these situations.

The myth of 'Arab-Muslim exceptionalism'

With their noses to the handlebars of current affairs, journalists and researchers doped by culturalist ideology have for long waxed lyrical upon the 'exception' supposedly comprised by the 'Arab-Muslim world', deemed unable to rid itself of authoritarianism at a time when Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa were emancipating themselves in the 1980s and 1990s. (27) This was just an optical illusion, a view from afar. Most Soviet republics, starting with Russia, reconstituted a police state on the ruins of the union from which they arose, and only the prospect of accession to the European Union has prevented countries in Central and Eastern Europe – although one might question the case of Hungary – from going down the same path: only a few sub-Saharan countries have not experienced an authoritarian restoration after the great wave of protest against one-party regimes in 1989-1991, and China and Vietnam have still not, for all their reforms, organized

any elections worthy of the name; the neoliberal trappings of power of Hun Sen in Cambodia do not fool anyone, and in Latin America neither Venezuela nor, in particular, Cuba have become democratized. The assertion of an 'Arab-Muslim exceptionalism' in this field is therefore an Orientalist prejudice.

However, this thesis has the disadvantage (or the advantage, in the eyes of Western diplomats and leaders, always ready to support authoritarian regimes against Communism, the Soviet Russian influence or Islamism, as long as the latter show themselves accommodating towards Israel) that it hides the recurrence of social or political protest, of which, as we have said, the 'Arab Springs' are the legatees. (28) The last fifty years have been marked by so-called hunger or bread riots (in 1979 in Egypt, in 1981, 1984 and 1990 in Morocco, in 1984 in Tunisia, and in 1989 in Jordan), by urban riots (since the 1990s in Iran), by student movements (in 1965 in Casablanca and in 1999 in Iran), by civic mobilizations (in 2005 in Lebanon and in 2009 in Iran), by general strikes or strikes in individual sectors (in 1978 and 2008 in Tunisia, and throughout the 2000s in Egypt and Iran), by campaigns to amass signatures (in Morocco and Iran) and even by protests against the depreciation of the national currency, as in Lebanon in 1987! Are they then apathetic or fatalistic, these 'Arab-Muslims'? This remains to be seen, unless we accept that the brutal repression, with real bullets, riots and even demonstrations, that prevailed in the years 1960-1980 (the month of August 2013 showed that the Egyptian army had not lost its touch) comprises a politically illegitimate motive for demobilization that only culture or religion can explain!

The arguments of the historical sociology of politics and its desire to view non-European societies as perfectly ordinary may protect us from these corner-café ratiocinations that continue to pollute the public debate. Let us agree, first of all, that Islam does not exist from the perspective of the social sciences. (29) It is never a relevant explanatory factor. In addition, so-called Islamic societies are many and varied. Quite apart from the so-called

'Arab-Muslim world' we need to consider, in their historical specificity, the Balkans (Albania, Bosnia, Macedonia), Western Asia (Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan), Central Asia (from Uzbekistan to Kyrgyzstan), South Asia (Bangladesh, Pakistan, India), Southeast Asia (Indonesia), sub-Saharan Africa (particularly the Sahel and the Swahili coast), and also the Muslim minorities in most predominantly Christian, Confucian, Buddhist or other countries (starting with the West, China, Burma, the Philippines and Russia).

If we stick to the heartland of Islam, we are forced to recognize a political topic that has been clearly identified by researchers: the 'authoritarian situation,' (30) likely to reproduce itself over time in the guise of various regimes, be they democratic in appearance, as a system (*o sistema*, the Brazilians called it at the time of the military dictatorship). At first glance, it is permissible to distinguish between two major periods of this authoritarian situation. First came its nationalist stage, embodied with swagger by Mossadegh in Iran, Nasser in Egypt, Modibo Keita in Mali, Ben Bella and Boumedienne in Algeria, Ben Youssef, Ben Salah and – until 1969 – Bourguiba himself in Tunisia. There followed its phase of economic liberalization, initiated for example by Sadat in Egypt, Moussa Traore in Mali, Bourguiba – after 1969 – and Ben Ali in Tunisia, Chadli in Algeria, and Hashemi Rafsanjani in Iran; this liberalization led to the neoliberal moment of Islam, with Turgut Özal and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, as figureheads in Turkey and Iran, respectively. Between the nationalist and statist period on the one hand, and the neoliberal period on the other, the continuity of domination is obvious, even if its mainsprings changed: for example, the intervention of the multilateral Bretton Woods institutions and the role of multinationals 'multilateralised' the co-opting of potential counter-elites by means of the non-governmental organizations of 'international civil society'. (31)

In regard to these authoritarian situations, taken diachronically, five observations can be made, which are likely to shed light on the development of the 'Arab Springs'. First, most

of these authoritarian situations, let us repeat, crystallized during the transition from the imperial world – including the world of colonial empires – to a world of nation-states, when part of the nationalist leadership ousted its radical or religious wings, or quite simply its competitors. Among some of the most dramatic episodes in the authoritarian takeover of the nation-state are the trials of 1925-1926 in which Mustafa Kemal got rid of political survivors from the Committee of Union and Progress, which could boast of its own legitimacy in the struggle for national liberation, internal parliamentary opposition to the new republican regime and religious authorities opposed to the reforms of secularization, thanks to the crushing of the Kurdish rebellion of Sheikh Said; the suppression by Nasser, in 1954, of the Free Officers and the Muslim Brotherhood, from which he himself had sprung and which had helped him to power in 1952; the liquidation of Messalists and the marginalization of the civilian leaders of the FLN in Algeria, the destruction of the Youssefist wing of Neo-Destour by Bourguiba, the murder of Ben Youssef himself in 1961 and the arrest of Ben Salah in 1969; and the relegation of the Left and the murder of Ben Barka in Morocco.

The authoritarian situation generally reproduced the ethnic and religious type of identity into which the colonizer had locked segments of the population, sometimes to confine them within their subaltern status, sometimes to co-opt them into their system of domination. Thus the Lebanese were 'confirmed in their confessions' – to quote the eloquent formula of the constitutionalist Edmond Rabbath (32) – and Iraq took over the British classification of its citizens on an ethnic and religious basis. This was also the way in which the 'Kabyle question' arose in Algeria, or the 'Amazigh question' in Morocco, not to mention the 'Christian question' in Egypt and the Mashreq. Finally, it is this logic that the Kemalist Republic adopted in Turkey to consummate and economically complete the genocide of the Armenians in 1915 and to exchange its Greek minority for Turkish speakers from Greece, in 1923. Not only has the region not yet emerged from this engineering of identity on which

Israel too is dependent, but it is going to update it in the context of the claim of democracy or of authoritarian restoration – processes that are always conducive to issues of political native identity, (33) even in the course of civil war, as in Syria and Iraq. Note in passing that the Dayton Agreement of 1995 comprised a precedent, as it built 'peace' and 'democracy' in Bosnia by assigning identity on an ethnic and religious basis.

However, identity-based conflicts are a mathematical function of state formation of the state, like ethnicity in sub-Saharan Africa. The major event of the transition from empire to nation-state is the acceptance of the national framework, even when this is a recent and artificial creation as in the Mashreq and the Arabian Peninsula – a national framework that pan-Arabism and Islam are unable to dissolve, and of which they are, on the contrary, one of the ferments. At the same time, and at the risk of annoying the reader, we must also resign ourselves to the idea that the secular definition of this nation-state and the 'top-down' secularization of society have led to the emergence of a quasi-ethnos, that of the 'moderns' educated in European style, contemptuous of religion, or at least its demotic form, ostentatiously turning their backs on 'tradition' (and on the people), and whose ideology, preoccupation with 'distinction' and even arrogance have fuelled an authoritarian conception of reformism or revolution constitutive of the formation of a 'national' ruling class, reducing the mass of the population to a socially subaltern status, including, with few exceptions, women, who were long kept out of the educational system by the colonizers.

Thus we can see that authoritarianism arises from this precise moment of transition from empire to nation-state and that it feeds on its culturalist ideologies. On a case-by-case basis, it is easy to identify 'concrete genetic sets of relations' (34) that lead from empire to the national-authoritarian situation: for example, the line of descent between the Committee of Union and Progress and the Kemalist Republic; its legacy in Iraq, or even Syria, via the former officers of the Ottoman army; the concatenation of the conservative modernization of

the Chérifien monarchy during the Protectorate, under the leadership of Lyautey, and that led by the Istiqlal and later Hassan II, in Morocco; the re-foundation of Ottoman Caesaropapism by French colonizers who refused to extend to Algeria the regime of separation of Church and State established by law in mainland France in 1905, and renewed by the FLN following the winning of independence; the sequence of different kinds of reformism (Islamic , Ottoman, colonial and nationalist) in Tunisia; the significance of the Saint-Simonian tradition in Egypt, including in the Muslim Brotherhood; and the grip on power and the economy by the kholkoz elites of the Central Asian Republics who remained faithful to Stalinist ethno-nationalism long after the Soviet Union had collapsed. These sequences are not exclusive, as it was also thanks to this historic moment that the ideas of civil liberties and human rights spread, and nor can they be held solely responsible for the crystallization of contemporary authoritarian situations, insofar as the events of the two World Wars (of which the region was a significant theatre of operations), the imperatives of the Cold War and, more recently, of the 'war on terror', and the cultural superiority complex of the followers of secularism have also sustained them. Yet we have to admit that we cannot understand authoritarianism in the region if we abstract it from the 'concrete history' of the transition from empire to the nation-state in the twentieth century, and in particular its relationship to colonial empires.

One manifestation of this process, secondly, is the asymmetric nature of state formation. This asymmetry is first and foremost ethnic and religious in nature, as we have already noted, and in this case Islam and Arabism are not particularly different: Greece, Israel, Serbia and Bulgaria similarly relied on policies that involved the political downgrading and even the ethnic and religious purification of their minorities, a parameter case of culturalism as a major ideology of globalization of the past two centuries. But the asymmetry of state formation is also territorial, and in this respect, once again, it is indistinguishable from the paths that prevailed elsewhere. Just as Piedmont in Italy and Prussia in Germany were the

regional drivers of national unity, Tripolitania imposed itself on Cyrenaica in Libya, the Delta on the Upper Nile Valley in Egypt, Tunis and the Sahel on the inland provinces in Tunisia, and the south on the north in Mali. Most conflicts that accompany or are revived by the 'Arab Springs' are side-products of this double asymmetry: the Coptic and more generally Christian issue, the Kurdish and Berber problems, of course, and also the discontent in the hinterland in Tunisia or in Jazeera in Syria. (35) In addition, the domination that is challenged by the 'Arab Springs', with varying degrees of success, is often that of an *asabiyyah* (a faction driven by an esprit de corps, in Ibn Khaldun) formed around a man, a family or a city, rather than that a national ruling class itself, even if the former serves the interests of the latter to only a small degree, if at all: Syria is a tragic example of the degree of autonomy that can be won by such an *asabiyyah*, namely that of the Assads, against the bourgeoisie (in this case Sunni or Christian). (36)

Which brings us to a third feature of the authoritarian situations in the region. The exercise of power is here split between formal institutions, such as parliament, the sole or dominant party, or the head of state himself, and hidden or background structures which nevertheless seem to control most of the game. Ultimately, the head of state is simply a proxy for a board of directors to which he is accountable, according to a configuration very familiar to Africanists, and which we have already mentioned in connection with Egypt. (37) The cases of Algeria and Syria are paradigmatic, as revealed by the process of presidential succession. In a very different context, there is the equally well-known pre-eminence of the Makhzan in Morocco, quite unaffected by the new Constitution, the electoral victory of the PJD in 2011, and the opening up to political parties in the last period of the reign of Hassan II. As for the Islamic Republic of Iran, it is likewise subject to proceedings as private as they are competitive, despite the strength of its representative institutions, bodies which the figure of the Leader of the Revolution subsumes probably more than it transcends them. However, the

'Arab Springs' may have accentuated this duplication of authority structures: by encouraging the 'deep state' to spread deeper still, if necessary as part of a 'strategy of tension' meant to promote the authoritarian restoration; by being invested (in total secrecy) by the oil-rich monarchies whose financial resources seem limitless; and by spreading neoliberalism. Indeed, public-private partnerships and subcontracting practices in company management make it possible to produce political arrangements of this neoliberalism in the field – arrangements that are the antithesis of the 'transparency' so touted by its apologists and that can be particularly flexible springs of authoritarianism, as shown by the mining basin of Gafsa where some of the services of the national phosphate company were outsourced to benefit operators belonging to one particular tribe rather than to others, and already controlling the local agencies of the single party. (38)

So we need, fourthly, to ponder the political economy of authoritarian situations, beyond the stale and normative theme of the 'corruption' of certain 'mafias' that has lowered the tone of the public debate throughout the 'Arab Springs', particularly in Tunisia. (39) What we see, in fact, is a primitive accumulation of capital in the guise of regimes whose supporters 'straddle', directly or through their families and their *asabiyyah,* positions of power and positions of accumulation. This is a typical configuration, found in every land, and one to which Western capitalism has been no stranger – far from it. The army was the biggest beneficiary, for example in Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia and Mauritania, and even in a country like Morocco, despite the pre-eminence of the Makhzen in the economy of the country. Because, of course, monarchies themselves practise this 'straddling', when not indulging in 'mergers and acquisitions'!

One of the challenges of the 'Arab Springs', then, lies in the ability of supporters of the authoritarian situation to perpetuate their hold on the business world despite political

changes. A convenient way of doing this is by not dumping the political baggage, even if this means sacrificing a bit of ballast, as the Communist Party and the army have done in China, or by restoring an authoritarian police-type power behind the façade of a superficial multi-party system, as Vladimir Putin has done in Russia. This is the path that seems to have been preferred by the Egyptian and Algerian armies. This is also the rationale behind the 'Thermidorian situation' in Iran. (40) But the example of Turkey – as of Thailand, in South-East Asia – shows that the military institution can take advantage of neoliberalism and economically offset the political losses it incurs due to democratization: exhausted institutionally and legally by the AKP, the army – even apart from the fact that it is still a very large land and property owner, both in urban areas and on the coast – has redeployed itself industrially and financially since the 1980s with the creation of two extra-budgetary funds, the TSKMEV (Mehmetçik Foundation of Turkish Armed Forces) and the SSDF (Support Fund for the Defence Industry), established respectively in 1982 by the military regime, and in 1985 by the civilian Premier Turgut Özal, in line with the pension fund it had founded in 1961, the Institution of Mutual Assistance of the Army (OYAK), drawing on many fiscal and legal privileges, and becoming, at the intersection of the public and private sectors, one of three main holding companies in the country, together with the Koç and Sabancı groups. (41)

It therefore appears that authoritarian situations are rooted in history, they are sufficiently complex politically and institutionally for the notion of dictatorship to have no more than a merely polemical value, and their economic base goes beyond simple 'mafia-style' predation. So it will come as no surprise, in the fifth and final place, that they have a real popular base and are produced 'from below' as well as by the public policies of a supposedly omnipotent state. We certainly have no wish to minimize the extent of the repression in which this state indulges, a repression that sometimes takes on frightening dimensions. In these times when there is consternation over the use of chemical weapons by

the Assad regime against its own people, no one should forget that demonstrations, riots and rebellions have been bloodily put down with unprecedented brutality since the 1950s in most countries in the region, with Iraq, Syria and Algeria distinguishing themselves in horror, but without this deterring Western leaders making Saddam Hussein, the Assads (father and son) and the soldiers of Algiers their partners of choice over many years. It is also fashionable to condemn the repressive nature of the Islamic Republic of Iran, but the police control to which the latter submits its population is far below the panoptic surveillance of the Tunisians by the Ben Ali regime from 1987 to 2011, and even earlier by that of Bourguiba the Beloved. Finally, throughout the region, torture was (and remains) a daily reality which neither common criminals nor political opponents can evade.

However, the longevity and the resilience of authoritarian situations cannot be explained only by their systematic use of coercion, however proven this may be. These regimes also proceeded by redistribution – especially through public subsidies for basic necessities, whose reduction or elimination has always been their stumbling block, triggering serious riots – by co-optation, and by economic monitoring, control or repression that have engendered an element of 'voluntary servitude'. (42) What is called, in normative and polemical fashion, 'corruption' is nothing but a form of this co-optation, in the context of a given political *and moral* economy. However, this economy is supported by social institutions or cultural representations (religious, among others), that have kept their independence from the authoritarian state. This is indeed a civil society, i.e. a society in its relation to the state rather than being independent of it, a civil society that is absolutely *not* subsumed by the world of internationally recognized NGOs: the society, for instance, of guilds of the bazaar, *ulemas* and trade unions that have not completely managed to rein in muscular regimes such as those of Mubarak and Ben Ali regimes. The state in particular needs to deal with the order and ethos of the family, another social institution on which its influence is extremely weak

and which the Islamic Republic of Iran, even at the height of its revolutionary momentum, never managed to subdue. (43) This is why the Manichean interpretations that emphasize, for example, the irreconcilable conflict between the 'state' (*dolat*) and 'nation' (*mellat*) in Iran, or 'Mameluke' and later *beldi* rule in Tunisia, are so misleading. (44) Even the myth of the 'strong state' in Turkey is now losing its grip. This myth has always interacted with society, and has been pervaded by its components, even seeing its integrity threatened as a result, as in the second half of the 1980s. (45) Today, allegations on the entryism of the neo-brotherhood (*cemaat*) of *fethullahci* in the police and the judiciary, if not the government, is just a manifestation of this old reality. States in this region are therefore a variant of what I have called 'rhizome-states', (46) whose exchanges with societies cannot be reduced just to the way the latter resist them, in the form of riots for example, but to a whole range of 'collusive transactions' (47) or 'hegemonic transactions' (48) to which the familiar riots in 'Arab streets' may also contribute. Many monographs have shown this in detail, such as the work by Fariba Adelkhah and Asef Bayat on Iran, by Diane Singerman, Julia Elyachar and Patrick Haenni on Egypt, by Béatrice Hibou and Hamza Meddeb on Tunisia, or by Irene Bono on Morocco. (49)

The crucial problem, then, is to weigh the respective importance of agency, seen as the capacity for action of subordinate social groups in the context of the domination exerted on these groups, following the precise definition that was given by Edward Thompson (50) (a definition that has unfortunately been muddled by misuse), and the capacity proper to these groups to produce the social or the political in space/time configurations other than those of regimes or states. This is an ongoing debate in colonial studies. (51) In this regard, the frequently cited analyses of Asef Bayat on the 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary' produced at the initiative of subaltern groups, for example in the form of spontaneous settlements or informal street trading, are quite disappointing, despite the useful informative they contain. (52) They remain trapped in the simplistic vision of the 'weapons of the weak' (53) dear to

James Scott, and stuck in the restrictive category of 'agency', as well as a univocal conception of 'resistance'. The concept of 'self-understanding' or 'sense of self' (*Eigensinn*) that Alf Lüdtke proposed in his 'history of daily life' of the German working class is far more heuristic for understanding state formation in its entirety, in its complexity and ambivalence, and it gives due weight to the imaginary institution of society in the dimension of its moral economy. (54) It sheds new light not only the reproduction of the authoritarian situation over the decades, but the real issue at stake in the 'Arab Springs'. (55)

After all, we must not despair of these 'Springs', despite the gloom – or spiteful glee – now prevalent in most people's minds. It is quite possible – even likely? – that the process of authoritarian restoration, the Thermidorian remoulding of the revolutionary adventure, the conservative modernization of the monarchies and the continuation of merciless coercion will eventually lead back to *o sistema* and 'democracies without democrats'. (56) But it is unlikely that the events of the last two years have not deeply affected different societies and have not sown the seeds of further transformations, further dramatic changes. This was also the case of the Springtime of the Peoples in 1848. Its effects were felt over time, long after the smoke of the cannon that repressed it in the different countries of the Old Continent, in 1852, had cleared. In politics as in nature, the seasons come and go and are not alike. However, it is rare for swallows not to return to the lands they have once frequented.

NOTES

 (1) http://blogs.mediapart.fr/blog/jean-francois-bayart/170111/indecences-franco-tunisiennes and http://blogs.mediapart.fr/blog/jean-francois-bayart/290311/tunisie-la-partie-nest-pas-jouee

(2) Perry Anderson also compares the 'Arab Spring' to the Wars of Liberation of 1810-1825 in Latin America and the fall of regimes in the Eastern Bloc in 1989-1991: 'On the concatenation in the Arab world', *New Left Review*, 68, March-April 2011, pp. 5-15.

(3) See, ed. by Béatrice Hibou, 'Mouvements sociaux: refus de l'économisme et retour au politique', *Economia* [Rabat]*, 13, November 2011-February 2012, pp. 21-58, in particular the remarks in Maurizio Gribaudi, 'Entre ordre et justice sociale: deux conceptions de la démocratie', pp. 27-30; Béatrice Hibou, 'Le moment révolutionnaire tunisien en question: vers l'oubli du mouvement social?', Paris, CERI, May 2011 (http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/art_bh.pdf); Béatrice Hibou (with Hamza Meddeb and Mohamed Hamdi*), La Tunisie d'après le 14 Janvier et son économie politique et sociale. Les enjeux d'une reconfiguration de la politique européenne* (Copenhagen: Réseau euro-méditerranéen des droits de l'Homme, June 2011).

(4) Jean-François Bayart, *Global Subjects: a political critique of globalization*, tr. by Andrew Brown (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

(5) Olivier Carré and Gérard Michaud, *Les Frères musulmans. Egypte et Syrie (1928-1982)* (Paris: Gallimard, Julliard, 1983).

(6) Patrick Haenni, *L'Islam de marché. L'autre révolution conservatrice* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2005).

(7) On the concept of national-liberalism, see Jean-François Bayart, *Global Subjects* and *Sortir du national-libéralisme. Croquis politiques des années 2005-2012* (Paris: Karthala, 2012).

(8) For a serious discussion of the 'Arab Springs' in the terms of political sociology and economy, see, ed. by Béatrice Hibou, 'La Tunisie en révolution?', *Politique africaine*, 121, March 2011, pp. 5-67 and, ed. by Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi and Olivier Fillieule, 'Retour sur les situations révolutionnaires arabes', *Revue française de science politique*, 62 (5-6), October-December 2012, pp. 767-939. The fifth 'Rencontre européenne d'analyse des sociétés politiques' (European Meeting for the Analysis of Political Societies) in Paris, 2-3 February 2012), on 'Les Printemps arabes: mythe et fictions' ('The Arab Springs: myth and

fictions') also gave rise to some very productive discussions and is available in an audio version at http://www.fasopo.org/reasopo.htm#jr

(9) On the social movement of 2008, see Amin Allal, 'Réformes néolibérales, clientélismes et protestations en situation autoritaire. Les mouvements contestataires dans le bassin minier de Gafsa (2008)', *Politique africaine*, 117, March 2010, pp. 107-126.

(10) Nadine Picaudou, *L'Islam entre religion et idéologie. Essai sur la modernité musulmane* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010).

(11) On the distinction between 'change' and 'transformations', see Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, tr. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 183-195.

 (12) Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations' in Kurt H. Wolf (ed.), *From Karl Mannheim*, second expanded edn (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2011), pp. 351-98.

(13) On the ability of Islamic movements to meet social expectations – a theme that has been little studied – see Mohamed Tozy and Béatrice Hibou, *L'Offre islamiste de justice sociale au Maroc et en Tunisie* (Paris: Fasopo, multigr., December 2012 and November 2013). The authors show up both the ambiguity, and the contradictions, in the politico-religious literature on the subject, and the inanity of the policies pursued by the governments that emerged from the events of 2011 in both these countries.

(14) On the Moroccan *Sonderweg*, see Mohamed Tozy, *Monarchie et islam politique* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1999).

(15) Jean-François Bayart, *L'Islam républicain. Ankara, Téhéran, Dakar* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2010), ch. 3.

(16) Guy Hermet, *Aux frontières de la démocratie* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1983), p. 207.

(17) On the case of Turkey, see Ayşe Buğra, 'Poverty and citizenship: an overview of social policy environment in Republican Turkey', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 39, 2007, pp. 33-52; on the cases of Morocco and Tunisia, see Tozy and Hibou, *L'Offre islamiste de justice sociale au Maroc et en Tunisie*.

(18) See, in addition to Haenni, *L'Islam de marché*, Fariba Adelkhah, *Being modern in Iran*, tr. by Jonathan Derrick (London: Hurst & Co. in association with the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, Paris, 1999) and *Les Mille et une frontières de l'Iran. Quand les voyages forment la nation* (Paris: Karthala, 2012) [English translation forthcoming]; Gwenaël Njoto-Feillard, *L'Islam et la réinvention du capitalisme en Indonésie* (Paris: Karthala, 2012); Ayse Buğra and Osman Savaşkan, 'Politics and class: the Turkish business environment in the neoliberal age', *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 46 (2012), pp. 27-63; Irene Bono and Mohamed Wazif, *Nouvelle visibilité islamique et dynamique du capitalisme contemporain au Maroc* (Paris: Fasopo, May 2010, multigr.).

(19) I put forward this notion in regard to the strategies of re-establishment of single-party presidential regimes in sub-Saharan Africa after the great wave of democratic demands in 1989-1991, and generally under the façade of a multi-party system: see e.g. Jean-François Bayart, 'La problématique de la démocratie en Afrique noire. La Baule, et puis après?', *Politique africaine* 43, October 1991, pp. 5-20 and 'L'Afrique invisible', *Politique internationale* 70, Winter 1995-1996, pp. 287-300.

(20) See the really dismaying interview with Mahmoud Hussein [Bagat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat] in *Libération*, 16 August 2013, pp. 6-7.

(21) On the 'strategy of tension' pursued by Ahmad Shafiq, Mubarak's last Premier, and an unsuccessful candidate at the presidential elections of June 2012, from the United Arab Emirates, see Esam Al-Amin, 'The Grand Scam: spinning Egypt's military coup', *Counterpunch*, 19-21 July 2013.

(22) The powerlessness of the Algerian Army on the Tunisian border is especially curious as the same army appears to be much more effective at the same time on the Moroccan border, if we are to judge from various reports and eye-witness accounts: see e.g. Isabelle Mandraud, 'A la frontière entre l'Algérie et le Maroc, la guerre de l'essence est déclarée', *Le Monde*, 3 October 2013. In November 2013, President Moncef Marzouki referred in public to attempts at destabilization stemming from 'supporters of the old regime' and a 'veto of Arab powers that do not want the democratic transition to succeed in Tunisia' (*Le Monde*, 7 November 2013, p. 3; *Libération*, 7 November 2013, p. 7). See also Sara Daniel's investigation 'La vérité sur les prostituées d'Allah', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 7 November 2013, pp. 10-14, which reports on a whispering campaign implicating Ben Ali's supporters and the Algerian secret services.

(23) Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*, tr. by Archibald Colquhoun, revised and with new material (London: Vintage, 2007), p. 19.

(24) Mohamed Tozy, 'Des oulémas frondeurs à la bureaucratie du "croire". Les péripéties d'une restructuration annoncée du champ religieux au Maroc' in Béatrice Hibou, ed., *La Bureaucratisation néolibérale* (Paris: La Découverte, 2013), pp. 129-154.

(25) Béatrice Hibou, 'Le Mouvement du 20 février, le Makhzen et l'antipolitique. L'impensé des réformes au Maroc', available at http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/art_bh2.pdf; Mohamed Tozy, 'Islamists, technocrats and the Palace', *Journal of Democracy*, 19 (1), January 2008, pp. 34-41.

(26) See e.g. Fariba Adelkhah, ed., 'Guerre et terre en Afghanistan', *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 133, June 2013.

(27) For a critique of this perspective, see Ghassan Salamé, ed., *Democracy without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (London: Tauris, 1994).

(28) See e.g. Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi and Olivier Fillieule, eds, *Résistances et protestations dans les sociétés musulmanes* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2003).

(29) Bayart, *L'Islam républicain*.

(30) Guy Hermet, 'Dictature bourgeoise et modernisation conservatrice. Problèmes méthodologiques de l'analyse des situations autoritaires', *Revue française de science politique*, XXV (6), December 1975.

(31) Julia Elyachar, *Markets of Dispossession. NGOS, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005) and 'Finance internationale, micro-crédit et religion de la société civile en Egypte', *Critique internationale*, 13, October 2001, pp. 138-152.

(32) Quoted by Ghassan Salamé, 'Small is pluralistic: democracy as an instrument of civil peace' in Salamé, ed., *Democracy without Democrats?*, pp. 84-111 (p. 99).

(33) Jean-François Bayart, Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh, 'Autochtonie, démocratie et citoyenneté en Afrique', *Critique internationale*, 10, January 2001, pp. 53-70.

(34) Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 14.

(35) On the case of Tunisia, see http://blogs.mediapart.fr/blog/jean-francois-bayart/241011/la-tunisie-vue-de-louest-ou-le-trompe-loeil-electoral and Béatrice Hibou, with Jean-François Bayart and Hamza Meddeb, *La Révolution tunisienne vue des régions. Néolibéralisme et trajectoire de la formation asymétrique de l'Etat tunisien* (Paris: Fasopo, December 2011, multigr.)

(36) Michel Seurat demonstrated this very early on: see his posthumously published *L'Etat de barbarie* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1989).

(37) Jean-François Bayart, Béatrice Hibou, Stephen Ellis, *The Criminalisation of the State in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998) and Bayart, 'L'Afrique invisible'.

(38) Béatrice Hibou, 'Tunisie. Economie politique et morale d'un mouvement social', *Politique africaine*, 121, March 2011, pp. 5-22. See also, on the 'fourth sector' in contemporary Iran, Adelkhah, *Les Mille et une frontières de l'Iran*.

(39) Béatrice Hibou, *The Force of Obedience. The Political Economy of Repression in Tunisia*, tr. by Andrew Brown (Cambridge: Polity, 2011) and 'Le moment révolutionnaire tunisien en question' (http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/art_bh.pdf)

(40) Bayart, *L'Islam républicain*, ch. 4.

(41) Gabriela Anouck Côrte-réal Pinto, *Armée sans frontière. Redéploiement économique du pouvoir militaire dans la Turquie néolibérale* (Paris: Institut d'études politiques de Paris, 2012, multigr.).

(42) The classic work on this topic is Hibou, *The Force of Obedience*. Her more recent works have also clearly shown that there is no 'Arab exceptionalism' in this field: the Tunisian regime was based on similar mechanisms to those of the National Socialist, Fascist and Communist regimes. See in particular her *Anatomie politique de la domination* (Paris: La Découverte, 2011).

(43) Adelkhah, *Being modern in Iran* and *La Révolution sous le voile. Femmes islamiques d'Iran* (Paris: Karthala, 1991).

(44) Adelkhah, *Les Mille et une frontières de l'Iran*, and *Being modern in Iran*; M'Hamed Oualdi, *Esclaves et maîtres . Les Mamelouks des Beys de Tunis du XVIIe siècle aux années 1880* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011).

(45) Benjamin Gourisse, *L'Etat en jeu. Captation des ressources et désobjectivation de l'Etat en Turquie (1975-1980)* (Paris: Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne, 2010, multigr.: forthcoming Paris: Karthala 2013).

(46) Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa. The Politics of the Belly*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

(47) Michel Dobry, *Sociologie des crises politiques. La dynamique des mobilisations multisectorielles* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1986).

(48) Jean-François Bayart and Romain Bertrand, 'De quel "legs colonial" parle-t-on?', *Esprit*, December 2006, pp. 134-160.

(49) Adelkhah, *Being Modern in Iran* and *Les Mille et une frontières de l'Iran*; Julia Elyachar, *Markets of Dispossession*; Patrick Haenni, *L'Ordre des caïds. Conjurer la dissidence urbaine au Caire* (Paris: Karthala, 2005); Diane Singerman, *Avenues of Participation. Family, Politics, and Networks in Urban Quarters of Cairo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Asef Bayat, *Street Politics: Poor People's Movements in Iran* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Hibou, *The Force of Obedience*; Hamza Meddeb, *Courir ou mourir. Course à* el khobza *et domination au quotidien dans la Tunisie de Ben Ali* (Paris: Institut d'études politiques de Paris, 2012, multigr.) (http://www.fasopo.org/reasopo/jr/th_meddeb.pdf) and 'L'ambivalence de la "course à *el khobza*". Obéir et se révolter en Tunisie', *Politique africaine*, 121, March 2011, pp. 35-52; Irene Bono, 'Le "phénomène participatif" au Maroc à travers ses styles d'action et ses normes', *Les Etudes du CERI*, 166, June 2010 and 'L'activisme associatif comme marché du travail. Normalisation sociale et politique par les "activités génératrices de revenus" à El Hajeb', *Politique africaine*, 120, December 2010, pp. 25-44 (and all of the dossier on 'Le Maroc de Mohammed VI: mobilisations et action publique' in the same issue).

(50) Edward P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1978), p. 280.

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