

University of Southern Denmark, 24 November 2011:  
*Mediterranean Perspectives*

Recent developments.  
Conclusions & closing remarks.  
Summing up 2011 – what happened  
and where will it take the Middle East?

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Literature:

- Haugbølle, R. & Cavatorta, F. (2011) 'Vive la grande famille des médias tunisiens'. Media reform, authoritarian resilience and societal responses in Tunisia. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 2011, 1–16, iFirst Article
- Echagüe, Ana, Michou, H. & Mikail, B. 2011. Europe and the Arab Uprisings: EU Vision versus Member State Action. *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 329–335.
- (see joint communication by the European Commission: *A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean*: [http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/docs/com2011\\_200\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/docs/com2011_200_en.pdf))



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Outline:

- Catching up from last seminar: Algeria and the ENP; EU's partnership programme and the perspectives in North Africa; Morocco as regime – "the divine king" and "the enemies (of democracy) within"
- Assessment of Mediterranean Perspectives
- Recent developments:
  - MENA – Tunisia as case
  - The EU – visions and practice
- Conclusions & closing remarks
- Summing up 2011 – what happened and where will it take the Middle East?



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### Recent developments. MENA – Tunisia as case

- "a number of significant developments and changes had occurred in the 2000s, which seem to have set the stage for the fall of Ben Ali" (p. 2)
- ...so what about the transition paradigm...? First of all: it should never be interpreted as an inevitable path to democracy...
- The launch of new (private) media captures both authoritarian upgrading and unexpected social responses – creating new arenas of debates not controlled by the regime!
- We experience two phases: first a creation of a new media landscape in Tunisia and then...beyond authoritarian upgrading: secondly the creation of a new, vibrant media complex, involving "unexpected pressures from society"
- So the conclusion seem to be that we see autonomous dynamics develop, resulting from bottom-up tendencies...
- ...pushing "the boundaries of what is permissible until the moment was right for more radical change..." (p. 14)

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### Recent developments. The EU – visions and practice

- The situation in the Middle East is now much more complex, with a combination of states in "democratic turmoil" and authoritarian states
- The EU actions has been "too little and too slow", once again demonstrating a differentiated practice from the large EU member states
- The Joint Communication of 8 March seeks to deal with it – and is "inclusive, reformative and humble" and the EU recognizes the need for a differentiated approach – a 'one size fits all' policy does not work
- The new *mantra* is "incentivization" and the new ideas in the Partnership are: ...the creation of an Association Area, the creation of a Civil Society Neighbourhood Facility, mobility partnerships (dealing with immigration), exchange programmes and finally: Free Trade (as "promised" back in the Barcelona days...)
- And then: once again the good point is made – and demonstrated – that the large EU member states are pursuing individual interests:
- ...whereas France under Sarkozy has become more pragmatic, Spain is emerging as a new, more active state, pushing for national interests.
- Conclusion: "What is required is more collective political will..." (p. 335)

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### Conclusions & closing remarks

- Changing agendas in the Mediterranean Region and the Middle East. The European Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) – its history and perspectives
- The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) – new perspectives on European foreign and security policy. Discourses on EU security and the Mediterranean
- The 2008 Mediterranean Union. A re-launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership or new perspectives for Euro-Arab Relations?
- The authoritarian regimes of the Middle East and the Arab Spring
- Democracy in the Middle East vs. authoritarian resilience: Theoretical discussions and policy implications
- The EU, Jordan and Lebanon – case studies
- Turkey and the EU – the bumpy road towards membership of the EU
- AKP and the EU: towards a new Turkish foreign policy profile
- The EU, the US – NATO and the Gulf
- Migration, security and the Mediterranean cooperation
- The EU, the Maghreb and the Arab Spring
- Recent developments. Conclusions & closing remarks.

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Summing up 2011 – what happened and where will it take the Middle East?

- The year 2011 witnessed a hitherto unseen spread of public unrest in several states in the Middle East and North Africa, which seemed to defy the established image of unshakeable authoritarianism attributed to the region
- In several Arab states, the former dictators fell and left an unclear and chaotic political situation, which was followed by instability and uncertainty
- The so-called Arab Spring, however, was not only a question of breaking with authoritarian resilience
- It also represented new, interesting tendencies, which we (maybe) will see unfold in the years to come – creating a new, repoliticized Middle East, characterized by political participation on a hitherto unseen level, democracy, economic growth etc. etc.
- ...or a negative scenario – a chaotic, problematic Middle East, where we see civil wars, warlord-regimes and return to authoritarianism...

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