maintaining Islam as a solution. The question remains whether this trend simply went unnoticed by the majority of the scholarly community working on the Middle East or whether it is something that emerged in the dynamics of the uprisings themselves. Either way, the phenomenon must now be analyzed. Does it mean a decline of the Islamist ideology? Will it permit an empowerment of existing liberal political movements? Of trade unionism? What does it reveal about the integration of the Middle East within global political trends?

Resistance Movements, the State, and National Identities

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The uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) were primarily centered on profound economic grievances, which protestors addressed directly to state institutions, thereby making the grievances political. As a political scientist, I ask: under what conditions does economic protest transform into political demands? How and why did this happen in the MENA region, and why now? A deep exploration of authoritarian state institutions will be necessary to understand how a young generation that graduated from public educational institutions was unable to find economic opportunities and eventually lost all trust in an inefficient and corrupt state. Workers' protests and resistance movements had started to organize in the decade before the uprisings and need to be studied as well.

Participants in the uprisings have expressed political demands without invoking specific ideologies, notably, political Islam. How will the preexisting ideological trends in the region express themselves and change? This question refers not only to political Islam—almost the only ideology that Middle East scholars have studied thus far—but also to liberalism and leftism. As political and economic ideologies, they should be approached historically, not only as secular formations but also in relationship to the religious traditions of the Middle East. Also, the "post-Islamism" hypothesis can now be tested: how will political Islam evolve, and how will Islamist movements build or maintain relations with other groups if more competitive environments develop? More particularly, what will be the relationship between the state and Islam? How will it be formulated constitutionally and legally? Beyond the post-Islamist *problématique*, electoral politics will become an interesting domain of exploration. Comparison with other democratic transitions in the world will show MENA to be less "exceptional."

Histories of nationalism have served as propaganda machines for authoritarian regimes. Arab historians and social scientists who live and work in the Middle East might have the opportunity to write about themes formerly considered taboo. How will national memory be reconfigured in cases of regime change? How will the "revolutionary" turn be written? These new articulations of memory might also accompany new contentions around the definition of national identities in the Middle East that will be worth studying.

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