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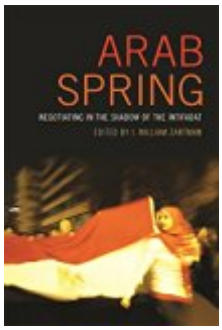


**I. William Zartman, ed.**. *Arab Spring: Negotiating in the Shadow of the Intifadat.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015. 496 pp. $32.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8203-4825-4.

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With the unfolding of the popular mobilizations in the Arab world since 2011, the slogan "the people want the downfall of the regime" most precisely captures this watershed moment and alludes to a complete rupture between "the people" and "the regime." The edited book *Arab Spring: Negotiating in the Shadow of the Intifadat*, by I. William Zartman, presents "negotiation" as a new approach to unpack the dynamics of the ongoing transition period between the "old" order and the "new" order. Zartman's analysis of the ongoing transitions of the Arab Spring centers on the process of negotiations. In his introduction, Zartman clearly states that "in the transition, there is little else beside negotiation" (p. 2). What are the patterns of such negotiation and why should an observer of the Arab Spring focus on negotiation in order to assess the failure or success of the popular uprisings?

The book presents a collection of eight case studies from Arab countries that experienced varying degrees of popular mobilization, namely Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, Morocco, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria. The case studies were written by researchers and activists who either took part in the uprisings or closely observed them. As explained in the introductory chapter written by Zartman, negotiations aim at building a "consensual constitutional formula for a New Order" between an old order and a new one (p. 1). Otherwise defined, they also act as a "pacting" (p. 9) process between incoming and outgoing leadership groups. In this way, negotiations focus on the "common outcome from conflicting positions" of different parties (p. 4). Negotiations are multilayered since they involve vertical processes between government and "uprisers" and/or horizontal processes between and among "uprisers" themselves. For parties to be actively and successfully involved in negotiations, three benchmarks are required: legitimacy, threat to use violence, and organization. Clearly, while the *intifadat* have gradually acquired legitimacy, they have struggled nevertheless to find an organizational platform, which is one of the reasons Islamist parties and groups have stood out as the most organized

structure and have succeeded in gaining power through elections. In this context, the military, which possesses the capability of physical force, has effectively imposed itself as a pivotal actor in the transition process. Of course, maintaining the negotiation processes depends on the actors who lead and manage them or set up their agenda and contours. These actors eventually define the outcomes. Yet, when uprisers do not have the required organizational capacity or the potential to use violence, the reader may be left to wonder whether negotiations are rather a tool to accommodate or co-opt mobilization more than an open and inclusive mechanism to secure the ground for building a "new" order.

The theoretical and analytical frameworks presented in this book focus on several patterns of transition regarding negotiations. First, a "short track transition" takes place when a despot is ousted quickly, such as in Egypt and Tunisia, primarily because the ruler is an ageing figure. Second, "short track reactions" occur when the uprising is put down by the government, which is legitimate and attempts to co-opt the message of the uprising and the uprisers in order to stay in power, such as in Morocco, Algeria, and Bahrain. Third, "long track transitions" ensue when the uprising turns violent due to the deployment of military forces by the regime, which ultimately transforms peaceful demonstrations into protracted violence, such as in Yemen, Libya, and Syria.

These patterns, however, are one-dimensional and cannot independently account for each and every case, and therefore do not sufficiently explain transition. As defined in the introduction, the uprising is a spontaneous mobilization that does not have a vision of what a new order should look like once the old one is gone. Moreover, since the popular mobilizations are actually ongoing, a question arises regarding the temporality of these patterns, especially when the author himself suggests that the *intafadat* are works in progress. In fact, the ousting of the ruler, or even the adoption of the constitution, is not enough to determine whether a process is short track or long track. According to the proposed patterns, once the mobilization turns into protracted violence, negotiations no longer serve as a means for securing transitions. The author explicitly disregards negotiations in the context of war, as the final objective of warring parties is to eliminate opponents. Accordingly, local negotiations in war-torn Syria and Yemen are not taken into consideration, while the focus is strictly on structural and national processes. Moreover, the so-called short track transition does not adequately describe the transition in Tunisia or in Egypt, because it reduces the transition to the downfall of the Egyptian and Tunisia presidents, respectively. Despite the acknowledgment in the book that the short track patterns include aftershocks, the analysis completely omits the phase after the adoption of the constitution or the organization of a general election, for instance. Effectively, it is hasty to conclude that countries such as Egypt or Tunisia have experienced a short track transition.

The book defines successful negotiations as depending upon the constitution, since the adoption of a new one is the ultimate goal of negotiations, as it establishes the shape of the new order. This dimension adds ambiguity to the reader's understanding of negotiations because it turns a blind eye to the implementation of the constitution or what is commonly known in Arabic as *tanzil,* or transforming the constitution into laws. The struggles undertaken by several parties and civil society groups to implement the constitution and negotiate new laws pertaining to social justice are not addressed or analyzed.

The "Lessons for Theory" are developed based on in-depth analysis of transitions in the above-mentioned Arab countries. The book looks into several aspects of what a transition, and by extension, negotiations, could look like. In Tunisia, for instance, state institutions' neutrality remained a crucial aspect in negotiating a new

and peaceful transition to a new order. In Egypt, and unlike Tunisia, the army acted as the sole authority in initiating, managing, or leading negotiations, without necessarily allowing other parties to decide on the outcomes. In Yemen the negotiations were an elite-guided process that did not reflect uprisers' emotions. In addition, negotiations are not only limited to questions related to the claims of the uprisings but also tend to touch upon some aspects imposed by the government to crush potential dissent in the name of fighting terrorism, such as in the Bahraini case.

While reading the case studies, it becomes clear that the different authors have treated each and every case separately, without necessarily following a coherent framework through which negotiations are understood. Some case studies present a general narration of the unfolding events since the outbreak of the uprisings, such as the Syrian case. While the authors of the Egyptian case define the mobilization explicitly as a revolution and question whether it can be negotiated or not, they refer to a variety of authors and thinkers that overloads the article and distracts from the main argument. The author of the Algerian case refers to the general thesis of the book, although he admits that it does not correspond to the patterns of negotiation. Two additional, non-Arab case studies are found in the book, Serbia and South Africa, without providing solid justification for this, a comparative dimension, or an attempt to borrow some lessons learned. Two cases nevertheless missing from the book are Lebanon and Jordan.

The most important contribution of the book lies in the historical accounts that each case study offers. The case studies narrate the history and trajectory of the mobilizations, from those that led to constitutional transitions to those that were put down and those that descended into bloodshed. For this reason, the book is a great source for a historical reading of the Arab Spring in eight Arab countries.

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