Public Lecture

Women’s Movements in the Post-«Arab Spring» North Africa

Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies | ICFG
Global Studies | GS

Dozierende: Prof. Dr. Fatima Sadiqi
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Abstract

Unexpected and transformative uprisings broke off in North Africa and quickly spread to the Middle East and the rest of the world in 2010-11. Spontaneous, leaderless, youth-driven, and backed by social media, these uprisings called for karamah (dignity) and democracy. Various analyses of this unique phenomenon attempted to capture its meanings. However, significant as they are, these analyses do not highlight, let alone center, the role of women before, during, and after the uprisings and focus only on their “remarkable” and “spectacular” presence during the uprisings. Hence, for example, Dabbashi’s characterization of the uprisings as “delayed defiance” (a sort of rebellion against both domestic tyranny and globalized disempowerment) and “end of postcolonialism,” seem to be sexless and ungendered, thus assumingly male. More than that, as the events unfolded in the four or so years that followed the uprisings and allowed the Islamists to co-opt the revolutions, women’s recognition in the spaces of authority shrank and their voices were muted in the ensuing geopolitics. It is as if women made the stories of the revolution but did not own them. Yet women in the region continue to be vocal and the debates on their rights continues to fill in the public spheres. The lecture highlights the unrecognized centrality of women’s movements in the post-revolutions debates between conservatives and modernists.