

The Arab Uprisings in Comparative Perspective: Completion Report

The “Arab Uprisings in Comparative Perspective” project aims to question whether the recent social movements in the Middle East and North Africa fit with our present understanding of contentious politics and collective action. The catalytic workshop of the same name, held on February 16 at ISA’s 56th Annual Convention, brought together several preeminent scholars to present their responses to this puzzle, identify common themes and discuss the overall future of project. The following paragraphs briefly summarize the event and its outcomes.

The workshop took place from 10:30am to 5:30pm, with five papers being arranged into two panels (two papers and three papers, respectively). Each presentation spanned between 10 and 15 minutes and was subsequently discussed for 30 to 60 minutes. The topics of these works included: methodological approaches to comparing the Arab Uprisings; the role of observers how this is shaped by information communication technology (ICT); regime types and political outcomes following the uprisings; divergent regime strategies and structures of participation; and civil society organizations and constitutional change.

Unfortunately, inclement weather on the east coast prohibited three participants—including the project’s coordinator—from attending. The absence of these voices and papers from the discussion, while disappointing, was not a fatal blow to the workshop. With several adjustments to the agenda, the workshop was able to stay on-track and with relatively good effect. The work presented was high-caliber and motivated thoughtful and constructive conversations. In addition, a meaningful discussion took place concerning potential themes that could unite the papers as a single, coherent work, whilst also filling a critical gap in the scholarship.

Regarding publishing plans, there was a lively debate on whether an edited volume or a special edition of a journal would be the most appropriate medium to move forward with. The consensus appeared to be that a journal may better serve both the project and participants. A shorter time to publication ensures that the issues at stake will be modern and relevant at the time of printing. This format would also be comparatively less labor-intensive and is likely to reach a broader audience. However, a final decision on this question has not yet been made and is dependent on an extensive review and reflection process which the coordinators are currently undertaking.

Overall, despite several significant challenges, the catalytic workshop was a resounding success. The workshop coordinators are extremely grateful to the International Studies Association for their generous support and hard work organizing the 56th Annual Convention. Without these inputs, the “Arab Uprisings in Comparative Perspective” project would not have been possible. We look forward to keeping the ISA updated as this project continues to take shape and to any future opportunities to work together.

2015 ISA Research and Workshop Final Budget

Workshop Title:	<i>The Arab Uprisings in Comparative Perspective</i>
Proposal Type:	<i>Catalytic</i>
Primary Workshop Coordinator:	<i>Terrence Lyons</i>
	<i>George Mason University</i>
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Participants

Last Name	First Name	Hotel	Per diem	Total Requested
Burt	Jo-Marie	\$ 184.31	\$ 75.00	\$ 259.31
Flores	Thomas	\$ 218.73	\$ 75.00	\$ 293.73
Jamal	Amaney	\$ 356.59	\$ 75.00	\$ 431.59
Rakner	Lise	\$ 184.31	\$ 150.00	\$ 334.31
Williams	Nora	\$ 218.73	\$ 75.00	\$ 293.73
Totals		\$ 1,162.67	\$ 450.00	\$ 1,612.67

Budget & Expenses

Items	Budget Amt	Budget Details
Room Rental	\$ 200.00	As per budget guidelines
Coffee Breaks	\$ 216.00	Two coffee breaks; 16 servings per break; 16
Audio-Visual	\$ 350.00	Projector Setup (LCD projector, Screen,
Hotel*	\$ 1,162.67	5 participants; 4 at Hilton, 1 at Marriott
Lunches	\$ 341.00	11 participants @ \$31/person for boxed lunch
Internet	\$ 275.00	1 wired connection for one laptop @ \$275
Per diems	\$ 450.00	4 domestic and 1 intl (\$75 per dom; 150 per
Totals	\$ 2,994.67	

*Please verify this amount