



Article

Who frames the debate on the Arab uprisings? Analysis of Arabic, English, and French academic scholarship

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Abstract

Since 2010, there has been a proliferation of literature (newspaper articles and scholarly publications) on the recent uprisings in some Arab countries. This article focuses on the way the academic articles have perceived the Arab uprisings and the ways in which we portray them in scientific discourse, taking into account the social forces that come into play in the production of knowledge. In line with Bruno Latour, this study analyzes (1) what knowledge on the Arab uprisings is made of; (2) who produces and who frames the debate (network of authors); (3) semiotic analysis; and (4) quantitative measures of 'sociological markers,' such as discipline, language, and institutional affiliation. The study is based on a database of around 519 articles (from Web of Science, Scopus, *E-Marefa*, Cairn) dealing with the Arab uprisings from January 2011 up to now.

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Arab world, citations, network analysis, revolutions, sociology of knowledge

Introduction

This article is focused on the way the scientific literature has perceived the Arab uprisings and the ways in which they are portrayed in scientific discourse, taking into account the social forces that come into play in the production of knowledge. In line with Latour and Fabbri (1977), this study analyzes both the content of academic journal articles on the Arab revolutions, as well as who produces and who frames the debate about such scholarship through an analysis of the network of authors who are considered influential. In addition to analyzing citations, we also analyze the content and style of the articles by applying semiotic analysis, and using quantitative measures of ‘sociological markers,’ such as discipline, language, and institutional affiliation. We do not assume that academic journal articles solely shape public debate or policy debates on the Arab uprisings, but they definitely are very important.

Methodology

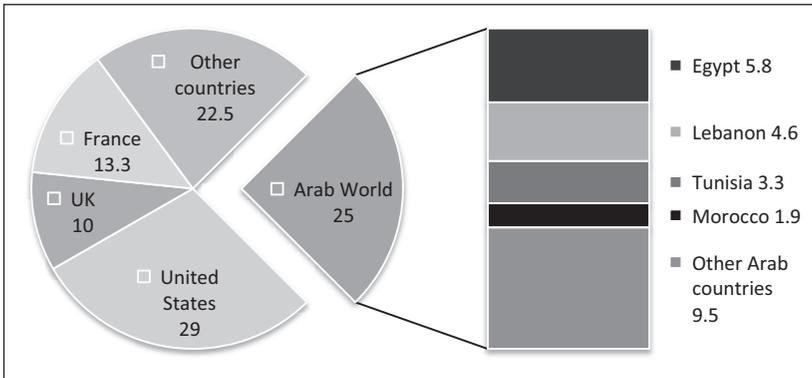
In order to yield the best results, a keyword search was conducted in Arabic, English and French for Arab Revolution; Arab Spring; Arab Uprising; Arab Awakening; Arab Upheaval, yielding 519 results (published between December 2010 and December 2012). English articles were primarily derived from Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus.¹ Arabic articles were scarcer, primarily due to the limited availability of Arabic databases: *E-Marefa*, the only Arabic database available, yielded only 15 results,² while the rest of the articles were only available in hard copy; the French articles were derived from Cairn.info.³ Table 1 indicates the relative disparity in the quantity of production between English and Arabic language articles: 14% of the sample comprise Arabic articles derived from the available (nine) peer-reviewed Arabic journals, while the majority (71%) are comprised of English articles derived from 165 peer-reviewed journals. This stark difference in the number of peer-reviewed journals within the sample size reflects the relative disparity in the overall production of knowledge in the Arab world (AW). In addition, even though the topic is ‘local,’ the numbers of articles written in French still outnumber the number of articles written in Arabic on the uprisings. There are two major limitations to this study: first, the nine Arabic journals covered by our research are the main regular journals that have regional coverage rather than a local one. Local journals are very locally cited and not accessible except locally. We do believe, however, that the sources analyzed here are quite a reliable output, despite these limitations. Second, we did not deal with other texts that are written by scholars such as blogs, newspapers, and books.

Sociological markers of the articles

This section introduces some of the main findings by quantifying the sociological markers of each article.

Table 1. Number and percentage of production by language.

	No.	%
Arabic	72	13.9
English	367	70.7
French	80	15.4
Total	519	100.0

**Figure 1.** Percentage of publication per country.

Geography of production of articles

The majority (75%) of articles on the Arab uprisings are produced outside the AW, while only 25% are produced within the region. If we remove the 20 articles included from *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, a journal published by the Center for Arab Unity Studies (CAUS), this proportion shrinks to 7.5%. As indicated in Figure 1, four countries account for 62% of the articles written from within the AW, namely Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Morocco and they are the Arab countries that usually produce most of the social science research. Notably, authors writing from the United States contribute nearly 30% of the entire sample collected in the three different languages.

Concerning the language of production, Figure 2 indicates that most articles are written in English and that articles written in Arabic from within the AW only slightly outnumber those written in English.

The findings in this section indicate two main issues: first, the majority of articles on the Arab revolutions are being produced outside the region, and second, what little knowledge is being produced from within the region is being produced in Arabic, constraining it to the local community and isolating it from potential global debates.

While there is a move toward encouraging translations, only 2% of the articles in the sample are translated from their original language. The journal of *Contemporary Arab Affairs* accounts for most of these articles, the majority of which are originally written in Arabic and translated into English. As illustrated in Figure 3, authors from Egypt,

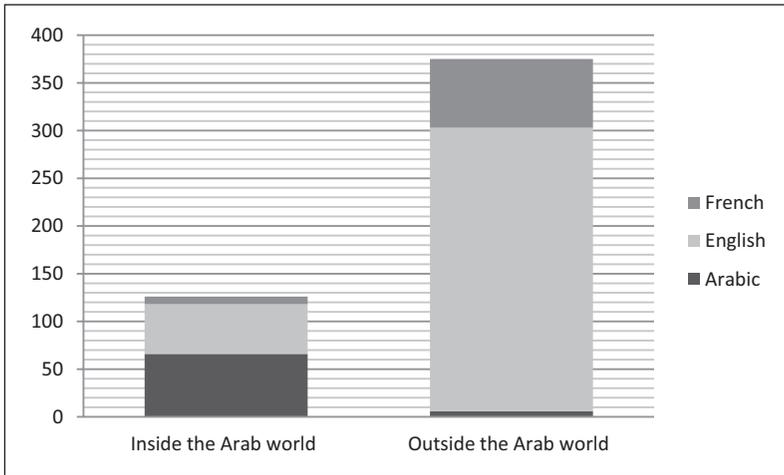


Figure 2. Language of publication by region.

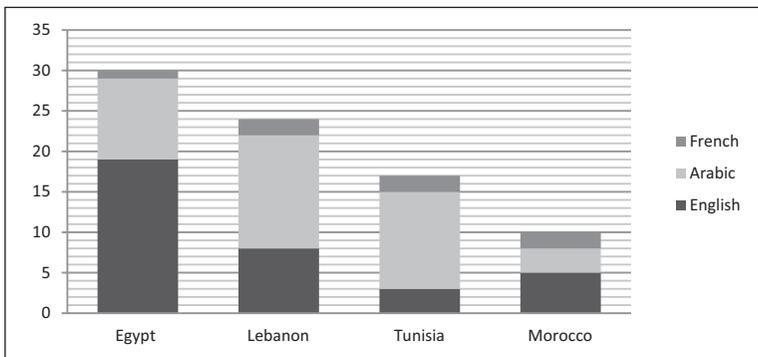


Figure 3. Language of publication among Arab countries.

Tunisia, Morocco, and Lebanon are the most frequent producers in the AW. In terms of language, those in Tunisia write mainly in Arabic, while Egypt has a frequency of two-fifths in English and three-fifths in Arabic. Lebanon produces more than the double the number of Arabic articles than those published in English, while the majority of publications in French come from Morocco.

As Figure 4 shows the majority of articles on the uprisings are being produced within universities (70%), while research centers contribute around 20%. Figure 5 indicates the distribution of institutional affiliation by language of publication. University publications slightly outnumber publications by research centers in Arabic, both of which are relatively low compared to English publications affiliated with universities.

Most strikingly, university professors produce 84% of English articles against only 54% of Arabic articles. We have shown that writing in English within Arab universities is mostly related to the university promotion system, in addition to the fact that there are

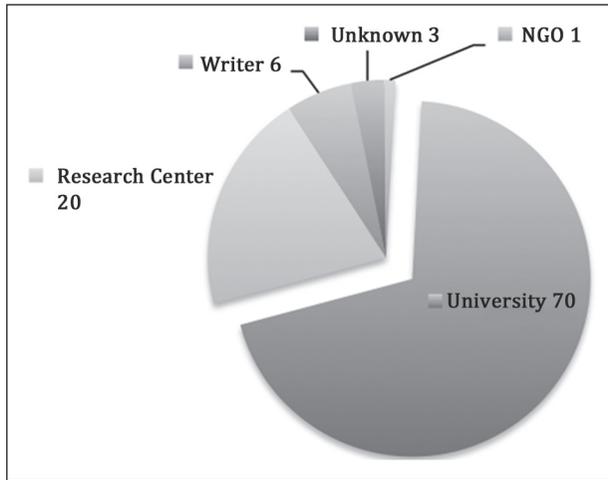


Figure 4. Institutional affiliation (percentage).

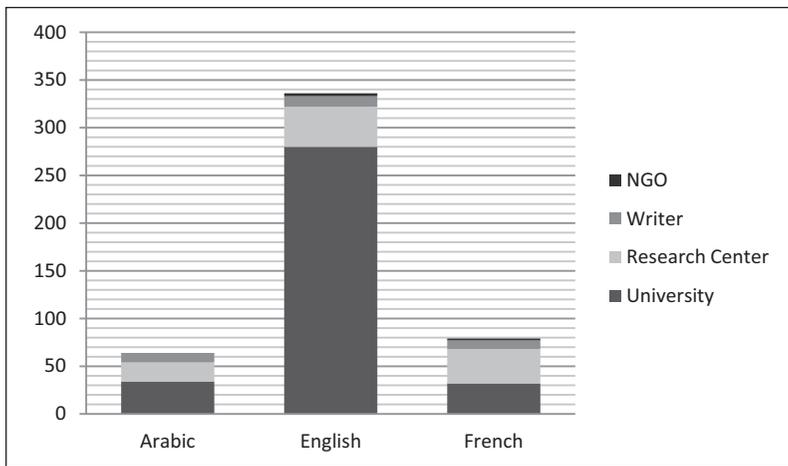


Figure 5. Institutional affiliation by language of publication.

limited Arabic outlets where one could publish (Hanafi and Arvanitis, 2014). Among the 80 authors publishing in French, 59 are affiliated to French institutions, 30 affiliated with a university (that is 50% of French institutions), and 18 with a public research organization (30% of French institutions).⁴

Authorship

At this point, the findings indicate that most of the knowledge on the Arab revolutions is being produced outside the AW (predominantly in the US), by university affiliates, who

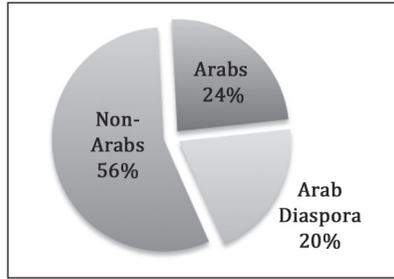


Figure 6. Percentage of publications by Arabs.

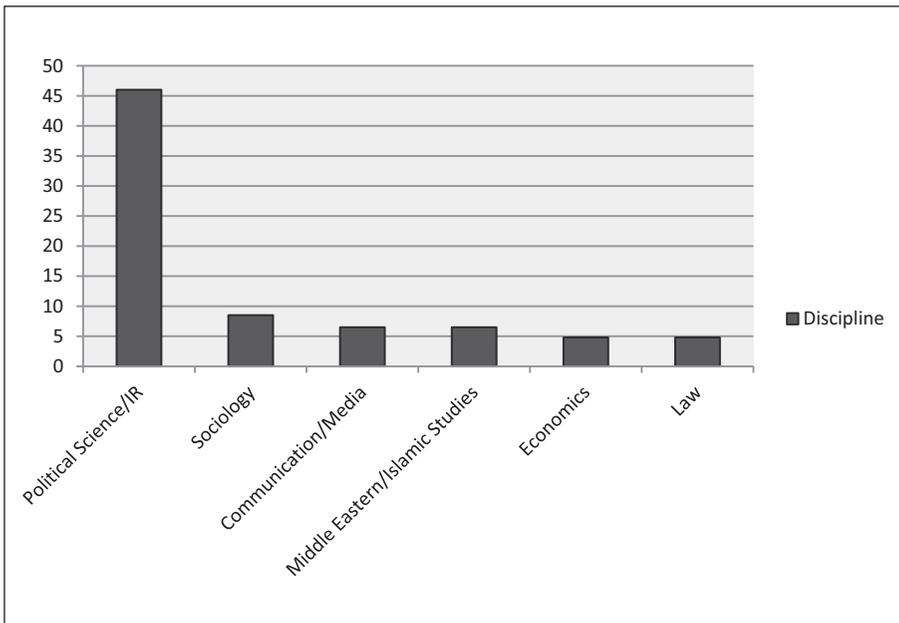


Figure 7.

are most likely to publish in English. Figure 6 indicates that 56% of articles are being produced by non-Arabs, 24% by Arabs and 20% by Arab diaspora, 57% of whom are writing from the United States.

Content as illustrated by disciplines and keywords

Figure 7 illustrates the authors' distribution by discipline. Almost half (47%) of the authors are from political science and international relations (IR). This predominance is unchallenged by any other discipline: sociology accounts for only for 8%, while

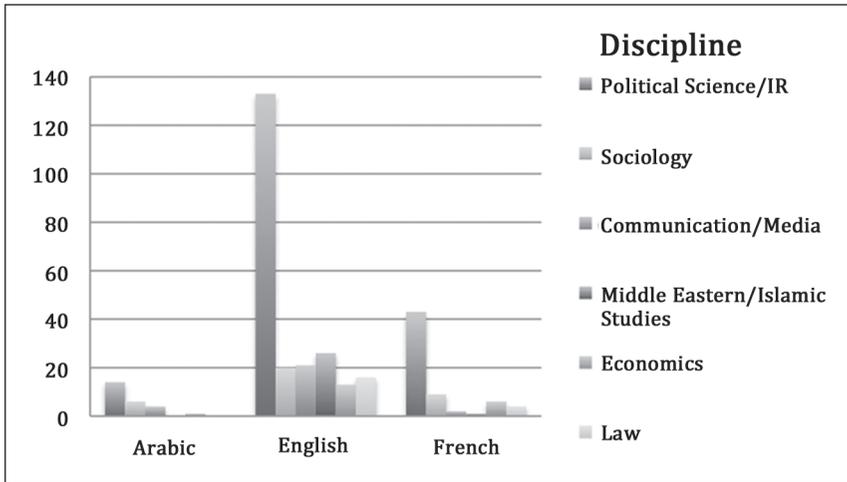


Figure 8. Distribution of disciplines by language of publication.

anthropology accounts for 2% – Middle Eastern studies (MES) account for only 6%. This does not reflect at all the disciplinary distribution of the social sciences among Arab authors (Arvanitis et al., 2010) where political science is far from being a dominant discipline.

The predominance of political sciences is the same in all languages as illustrated by Figure 8, which shows the distribution of disciplines by language of publication. In Arabic, a small disparity in the range of disciplines engaged in the topic can be observed as compared to English publications. English publications contain the largest range of disciplines and include MES, sociology, economics, media, and law. In French, political sciences, economics, law, anthropology, and geography are prevalent. These figures should be taken with caution since numbers are very small. It is interesting to note that very few mainstream economic articles were identified: most economists on the topic are rather unorthodox economists or write on institutional economics.

We distinguish between three types of articles: articles based on fieldwork, articles without fieldwork that could be either in the form of an essay (no citation at all) or in the form of a critique of existing literature. As indicated in Figure 9, the most common type of articles are critical of existing literature, while only 14% of research is based on fieldwork, predominantly in English (19% vs. 3% in Arabic and 1% in French), conducted by those who are affiliated outside of the Arab region. Of the articles written in Arabic 50% are essays, while essays constitute only 20% of the entire sample.

When researchers use fieldwork for their paper, they tend to prefer qualitative research methods (45% vs. 29%), as expected since the nature of the research topic (the Arab uprisings) makes it difficult to conduct quantitative field research based on surveys. The remaining percentage (26%) is articles that used both methods.

Most articles discuss the Arab world in general; of the remainder that does not, the majority are single-country cases that focus on Egypt and Tunisia. We use keywords to

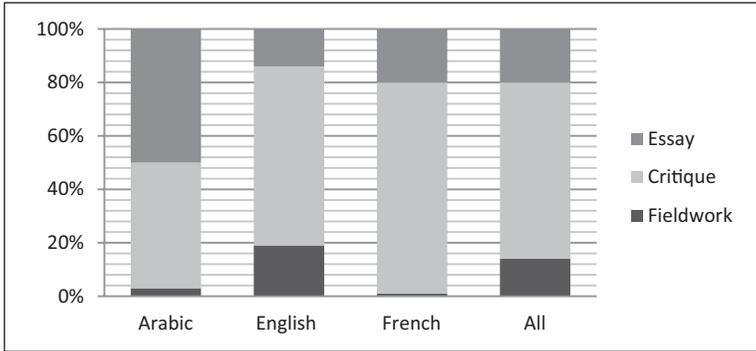


Figure 9. Type of article by language of publication.

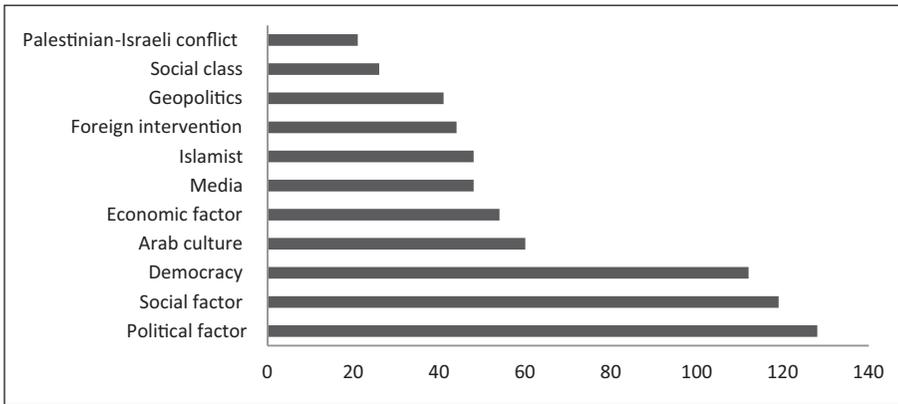


Figure 10. Frequency of keywords.

indicate the focus of the articles, such as social/political/economic factors, or general themes such as youth or class (see Figure 10). The Arab revolutions, according to our sample, are observed mainly through the lens of political factors (45% of articles), followed closely by social factors (around 40%). Islamism, Islamic culture, and/or secularism are mentioned in nearly 37% of the articles. Foreign intervention and geopolitics follow at a frequency of 35%, while economic factors account for only about 17% of the keywords – the same percentage for media and communication. Social factors and social class are around three times more likely to appear in Arabic than those written in English (23:7). Ethnicity is a theme predominantly explored in English and French articles (12 articles) and only once in Arabic. Islamism is also more predominant in articles written in English and French (39 articles) than in Arabic (6 articles).

Overall, English articles contain larger lists of references than French or Arabic: the average number of citations per article is 21 for English language, 12 for French, and 8 for Arabic. This will affect the network analysis and tend to bias a proper view of the lower cited material.

In addition, only 10% of citations are Arabic (most of which are cited in Arabic articles), while 75% of cited articles are written in English. Authors who are affiliated to the AW tend to cite more Arabic articles. Arabs writing from Lebanon and Egypt are more likely to use English articles in addition to Arabic articles, while Arabs writing from Morocco and Tunisia tend, obviously, to cite more French articles.

Network and citation analysis

Table 2 is a list of the 25 most cited authors on the topic of the Arab uprisings. Ten of these authors are American political scientists who are affiliated to think tanks. Only four sociologists are on the list, followed closely by three (technology) journalists, suggesting a remarkable shift in the legitimation of knowledge producers. Twenty-one authors are from the US, two authors are French, alongside two Arab diasporic authors. Only four theorists are among the most cited authors. They are Samuel Huntington (political science; democratization), Edward Said (literature; orientalism), Manuel Castells (sociology; social networks), and Charles Tilly (sociology; social movements). These authors are seen as pioneers in their respective fields whom most authors often cite to pay homage to, and not necessarily critique.

In order to study the collective process involved in knowledge production, we take a closer look at the references used, as well as their modalities in the next section. Concurrently, a co-citation network analysis was conducted to elucidate the dynamics between these references across different languages of publication. The resulting network is presented in Figure 11. Each node corresponds to cited authors, links correspond to closely linked authors and each circle corresponds to a cluster of names of authors that are cited simultaneously in the whole set of articles.

Before looking at the data, it is necessary to specify the metrics we used. We mapped the co-citation network of the 120 most cited authors in our dataset (Figure 11). Co-citation networks are ubiquitous in bibliometric studies (Chen, 1999; White and McCain, 1998). In such networks, nodes are linked when they are jointly cited in publication reference lists. In our case, we focus on cited authors to produce a co-citation map, a method which was first introduced by White and Griffith (1982). We only consider the authors who have been cited more than five times in total in our corpus, resulting in a network of 120 nodes. We enumerate every occurrence of pairs of cited authors to build a co-occurrence matrix from which we obtain a proximity network using a statistical semantic measure primarily introduced by Weeds (2003: 82).⁵ The Louvain community detection algorithm (Blondel et al., 2008) is then applied to the resulting proximity network to retrieve clusters of cohesive subgroups of authors that are then colored accordingly on the final map. Additionally each cluster is also assigned a tag ('English,' 'Arabic,' 'French') that represents the most frequently used languages in publications citing these authors in the cluster (chi-squared specificity score). All computation was performed under the CorText platform.⁶

In this co-citation map of the 120 most cited authors, node sizes scale with total number of citations received (from 5 to 32). Authors are colored according to the cluster they belong to. Each cluster is also associated to a tag (capital letters) indicating the most

Table 2. Most cited authors.

Name of cited author	No. of citations	Place of institution	Type of scholarship	Institutional affiliation
Samuel Huntington	33	US	T	Political science, Harvard/Columbia
Asef Bayat	22	US		Sociology/MES, University of Illinois
Edward Said	22	US	D & T	Literature, critical theory, Columbia University
Eva Bellin	20	US		Political science, democracy, Brandies University, Harvard, AUC (2007)
Lisa Anderson	20	US/Egypt		International relations. University of Colombia, President AUC, APSA
Marc Lynch	18	US		Political science and international affairs at George Washington University
Marina Ottaway	17			Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Carnegie), Foreign Affairs, Wilson Center, Political reform, taught at AUC
Steven Heydemann	17	US		Political science/public policy, Georgetown University, Special advisor on Middle East Initiatives at the US Institute of Peace
Charles Tilly	16	US	T	Sociologist, Columbia University, contentious politics
Jason Brownlee	16	US		Government and MES, University of Texas at Austin, Wilson Center
Philip N Howard	16			Sociology, communication, impact of ITCs on democracy and social inequality, University of Washington
Vincent Geisser	16	France		Researcher at French CNRS (currently based in Beirut)
Michel Camau	15	France		Political scientist in France (IREMAM) and French institute in Tunisia (IRMC)
Jack Goldstone	15	US		Political science and sociology, IR and public policy at George Mason University, US government consultant (USAID democracy program), Brookings Institution senior fellow
David D Kirkpatrick	14	US	J	Technology journalist (the Facebook effect), Forbes Technomy Media
Larry Diamond	14	US		Political science and sociology at Stanford University, democracy studies, senior fellow at Hoover Institute

(continued)

Table 2. (Continued)

Name of cited author	No. of citations	Place of institution	Type of scholarship	Institutional affiliation
Manuel Castells	14	Spain	T	Sociology, University of Southern California/Open University of Catalonia
Daniel Brumberg	13	US		Department of Government, Georgetown University, special advisor for US Institute of Peace's Muslim World Initiative
Béatrice Hibou	12	France		Researcher in Centre d'Etudes pour les Relations Internationales (CERI) (Paris)
Mehran Kamrava	12	Qatar US		Political sciences, Georgetown University, Qatar
Mona Elghobashy	12	US	D	Political science professor at Bernard College, Carnegie scholar
Ghassan Salamé	11	Paris	D	Lebanese political scientist at Science Po in Paris
Joel Beinin	11	US		History/ME history, Stanford University, director of MES at AUC (2008)
Malcolm Gladwell	11	US	J	<i>The New Yorker</i>
Thomas Carothers	11	US		Vice president of Carnegie, expert on democratization and US foreign policy
Bernard Lewis	10	US		Historian, orientalist, Princeton University, foreign policy advisor for Bush administration
Clay Shirky	10	US	J	Socio-economic effects of internet technologies

T = theoretical; J = journalism; D = diaspora.

specific language used in publications citing corresponding authors. In the map, we can see eight clusters of authors.

Cluster I: New media and the Arab uprisings

Cluster I (the circle on the bottom right corner of the diagram) constitutes a niche of tightly connected technology journalists/scholars who specialize in social media, information technology, and globalization. These authors include Clay Shirky, Evgeny Morozov, and Malcolm Gladwell. Manuel Castells contributes to this niche with his theoretical contributions on network societies and the effect of social media on contentious politics.

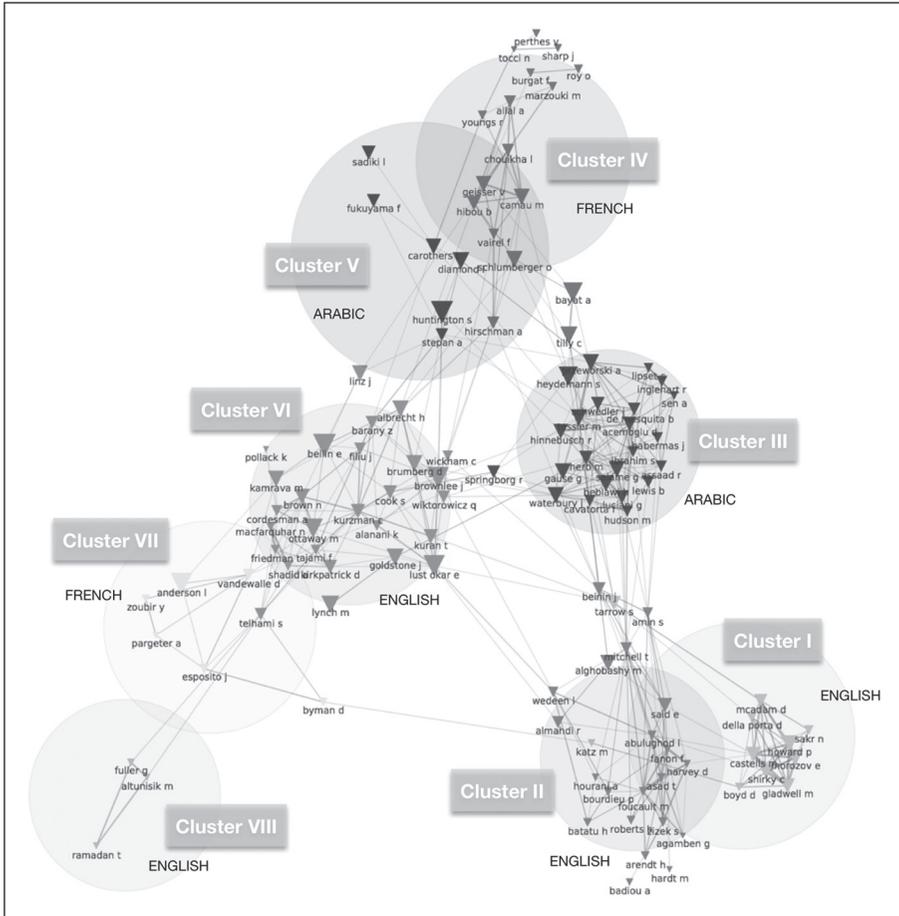


Figure II. Network analysis of cited authors (co-citation map).

Predominant arguments made by such authors include the role of the new media in the political strategies of state repression on the one hand, and social media as a new public sphere that transcends the national level on the other. Gladwell’s *The Tipping Point* (2000) is also cited as an argument for how ideas spread like viruses when referring to the Arab uprisings (Alqudsi-ghabra, 2012). Cited authors in this niche are particularly closely linked as evident in Christian Fuchs’s article, ‘Some reflections on Manuel Castells’ book *Networks of Outrage and Hope. Social Movements in the Internet Age*,’ which argues Castells’ book is situated in an intellectual discourse that focuses on the political implications of social media and that has involved Clay Shirky, Malcolm Gladwell, and Evgeny Morozov.

In addition, it is also evident that this niche is very loosely connected to Arabic language publications, indicating that much of the discussion about the impact of information technology on the Arab uprisings is only happening in English.

Cluster II: 'Radical theorists'

Closely connected to this cluster we find cluster II of venerable names of well-known theorists, mainly philosophers and historians. It contains one block of authors that are French or connected to themes that are frequent among 'French theory' authors or French-inclined authors, as well as philosophers that have been translated into Arabic and/or are also frequently mentioned worldwide (Agamben, Arendt, Badiou, Fanon, Bourdieu, Samir Amin, Zizek, etc.). It is interesting to note that the authors are discussed in English and to lesser extent French reviewed articles, but rarely in Arabic.

We also find Edward Said, one of the most cited authors. In a similar manner to which Gladwell's 'ideas as viruses' is used, Said's notion of 'travelling ideas' (1983) is used to describe the spread of revolutionary fervor in Egypt (Abdelrahman, 2011). However, it is Said's much contested *Orientalism* (1978) that is most cited in this context. In most cases, orientalism was cast in contrast to the much unanticipated events of the Arab uprisings by the West, which has long since attributed negative values to the otherness of the Orient (Erdem, 2012; Shelley, 2011). The orientalist notion of the inability of Arabs to govern themselves under democratic regimes is heavily contested, using the revolutions as evidence for political agency and self-determination. Generally, references to Said and others in this niche are set in the context of post-colonial resistance.

Cluster III: Mainly theorists often cited in Arabic

Above clusters I and II, we find in cluster III a group of political scientists, many of which are cited in Arabic articles. We find in this group Habermas and Bernard Lewis, which have become ritual references in political sciences when talking of the AW or Arab 'public space.' Lewis is cited as a reference to the 'alien-ness' of the notion of the secular in Islamic countries (Erdem, 2012) and he argues that Islamic societies and cultures are antithetical to democracy (Da'na, 2011). Lewis was under heavy attack in many Arabic articles (e.g. written by Jacques Kabbanji and Sari Hanafi) for his essentialist view of the AW. Economists are also present in this cluster (Amartya Sen, Acemoglu, etc.). They were cited by Arab authors to put emphasis on the importance of social justice as a key theme in Arab writing much more than English or French articles.

In English articles, and in a similar vein, Heydemann's arguments fall into cluster III, which includes mainstream IR arguments, mainly as a reference to factors that account for authoritarian resilience in the region (see Bellin, 2012), as well as a reference to the ways in which authoritarian regimes try to channel change within the regime in order to be able to prevail at all costs.

Ghassan Salameh is the third of the diasporic authors (after Said and Elghobashy) and is well cited and part of this cluster. He is cited in scholarship in all three languages, but mainly in Arabic and English, for his two books: one of them is edited by him and published in three languages: *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* published in the mid-1990s. Kassem (2012), as other Arab writers, reminds us that one of the major historical challenges to democracy in the AW consists of a lack of elite commitment in this region to democracy, and the impossibility of using strategic-actor models that grew out of the experiences of Latin America.

Cluster IV: French-speaking authors

Charles Tilly and Asef Bayat serve as ‘bridges’ to the upper cluster IV constituted by French-speaking authors (Hibou, Geisser, Camau, Burgat as well as the President of Tunisia, Al Marzouki). With the exception of Jean Pierre Fillu, all French-speaking authors specializing on the AW are located in this cluster. Among the 25 most cited authors, two are French.

First, Béatrice Hibou is cited 12 times, half of which are in English articles and half in French. In English she is cited as a reference to explain the Tunisian economy (Hibou et al., 2011) and the predatory nature of its ruling elite (Hibou, 2011), as well as the ways in which the state responded to economic challenges in the past (particularly concerning foreign aid), and the impact this strategy had on society. For instance, Schwarz and de Corral (2011) argue that ‘[i]n times of fiscal crisis it challenged the foundations of many states: international pressures to enact economic reform and privatization measures, and cut-off patronage networks left the state apparatus weakened and some privileged private entrepreneurs strengthened, and in some cases exceeded a particular state’s capacity to enact reforms, thus undermining its capacity even further and encouraging neopatrimonialism to become even more rampant.’ Hibou is also cited in English and French because she set the stage for denouncing the corruption of the Ben Ali regime.

Second, Vincent Geisser is a researcher at the French CNRS, currently based in Beirut, who has spent many years in Tunisia. Exclusively French authors cite his scholarship. Geisser is often cited because of his critique of French foreign policy supporting the Arab dictatorships and its stance vis-a-vis the Arab Islamists.

Cluster V: Rather a negative stance toward the AW, cited in Arabic

Close to the ‘French’ clusters lies an ‘American’ cluster (cluster V) constituted by famous authors quite frequently mentioned by Arabic-language articles, mainstream political US scientists, and thinkers. Most of these names take a similar (negative) stance toward the AW: Samuel Huntington, Francis Fukuyama, and Larry Diamond, who are referred to as prominent political scientists who propagated skepticism toward the viability of democracy in the AW.

In Faleh Abdel Jabbar’s (2012) Arabic article, Diamond is cited for his concept of gradual transformation. In English articles, Diamond is cited for his definition of liberal democracy and his justifications for Arab exceptionalism with regard to democracy (2010a). Lynch (2011) cites Diamond (2010b) in reference to claims that authoritarian regimes have become more capable of controlling and punishing dissent through the Internet. Huntington is cited most frequently in English for his ‘the third wave’ (1991) and ‘the clash of civilizations’ (1993) either as refutation or approval of his controversial assertions that (political) modernization (which is perceived by many authors as one of the demands of the uprisings) without institutional infrastructure leads to political instability. Huntington is also frequently mentioned (including much in Arabic) in order to refute his theory of the clash of civilizations, arguing that the Arab Spring is evidence of global political development and modernization, and that the ‘third democratic wave’s’ failure to reach the AW is shaped by an invalid western orientalist view of the region. He is the most central author in the small cluster of highly cited American authors, and it is

striking to see the clear-cut division of the whole network around this cluster. Huntington is rarely cited commonly with Albert O Hirschman. On the contrary, Huntington is the name that plays the role of pivot between the left and right side of the network.

It is interesting to note the absence of linkages between these two last clusters: the only author in common is Alfred Hirschman, an American liberal economist very frequently read in France and the developing countries.

Cluster VI: Mainstream IR cited in English

One of the most significant findings of this study is that almost half (40%) of the most influential authors are American political scientists, predominantly graduates of Ivy League universities, who in addition to holding academic positions in leading universities in the US, such as Georgetown or George Washington University, usually in the fields of MES, foreign policy or governance, are also research fellows at US-led think tanks such as the Wilson Center, Carnegie, and the Brookings Institution. Many of these authors also serve as foreign policy advisors to the US government. We refer to these authors as the 'central authors' (not all of them theorists), due to their evident intellectual hegemony on the topic of the Arab uprisings. They are located mainly in this cluster and in the following one. Of the most cited are Lynch, Goldstone, Bellin, Brumberg, Brownlee, Kirkpatrick, and Ottaway. These authors are closely linked and are often cited in the same articles in English. Among them, only one is cited in Arabic in the context of highlighting the weakness of the Arab uprisings.

The predominant theme in this niche is the analysis of the newly emerging political dynamics between the Arab public and authoritarian regimes; however, more focus is placed on the analysis of authoritarian responses and resilience than the dynamics of the movement. For example, Lynch (2011) and Bellin (2012) cite Brownlee (2007) as a reference to the extensive literature written on Arab authoritarianism during the past decade. Weyland (2012: 928) cites Brownlee et al. (2012), who argues 'in only one Arab country, Tunisia, did the domestic balance of power favor challengers during the transition.' Brumberg is predominantly cited for his justifications of the failure of democracy in the region, in his notion of 'liberal autocracy' (Brumberg, 1990), and his assumptions that these autocracies are unsustainable. For instance, Carothers (cited in Pace and Cavatorta, 2012) argues that '[t]he questioning of the validity of the paradigm of authoritarian resilience has meant that the theoretical assumptions of the democratization paradigm seem to have found a new lease on life after the criticism of the late 1990s and early 2000s.'

What is most notable here is the extent to which these authors are presented as leading authorities on the dynamics of the Arab uprisings, particularly in terms of the way in which the discussion of the uprisings are framed, namely in terms of challenges to democratization. One gets little sense of the internal dynamics of the revolutions and the ways in which they relate to the local populations.

Cluster VII: Mainstream IR cited in French

This cluster has few references cited in English and in French. Only two authors are frequently cited: Lisa Anderson and John Esposito. They are among the rare Americans cited

by French scholarship. Michel Camau (2012) for instance is cited to demystify the sweeping optimism of journalists and scholars regarding the homogenizing use of the ‘Arab Spring.’ In English articles, Anderson is also cited in contexts where the democratic potential of Arab countries is discussed (Blaydes and Lo, 2012; Pace and Cavatorta, 2012). Esposito is more interested in political Islam and cited for the fact that the youth is claiming democracy and thus some of them claim a form of political Islam that fits with this concept.

Cluster VIII: Turkey as a model

At the bottom left we find Cluster VIII with three names (Tarek Ramadan, Graham Fuller, Meliha Altunışık) that relate to English articles on the future of Arab regimes and whether the Turkish model led by the moderate Islamic party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), can fit the current process of democratization, and its supposed exemplarity concerning modernization and Islamic rule.

Bridges

Beyond these clusters, there are four well-cited authors that do not belong to any of these clusters and are often cited by all languages. They are interesting because they offer a sort of ‘alternative’ view without being peripheral authors. They are by order of the frequency of the citations, Bayat, Tilly, Elghobashy, and Beinín (respectively 22, 16, 12, 11).

Asef Bayat is a professor of sociology at the University of Illinois. There are two aspects that qualify Bayat as a ‘theoretically’ alternative author. First, his work is often based on deep, longstanding empirical knowledge of some ME societies (Egypt and Iran). His work on youth everyday politics, for instance, demonstrates his sensitivity to the interplay between their social conditions and the changes in the cultural scripts that influence their world vision and inspirations (see Bayat, 2013a, 2013b; Herrera and Bayat, 2010). Second, the level of complexity in his arguments reflects the complexity of the Arab uprisings and connects the political to the social and economic with historical depth. For instance, he argues that the contrasting reactions of authors of the revolution – lauding and lamenting – reflect the paradoxical reality of the Arab ‘revolutions.’ While they are appraised as ‘movements,’ which has been the predominant narrative in most knowledge produced on the Arab revolutions, their capacity to bring about ‘change’ is narrated as less than commendable, although little, according to him, has been written about how to deal with these challenges (Bayat, 2013a: 48). Bayat argues, ‘a world in need of revolutions does not mean that it has the capacity to generate them, if it lacks the means and vision necessary for a fundamental transformation’ (2013a: 49). Indeed, what happened was that ‘few Arab activists (and I would add, intellectuals or scholars) had really strategized for a revolution. ... In general, the desire was for reform, or meaningful change within the existing political arrangements’ (2013a: 58). This is evident in how little knowledge has been produced outside of the ‘normative’ ideology of reform. In other words, although many authors are positive about the revolutions, none of them discusses the issue with any truly ‘revolutionary’ approach.

In light of this, Bayat refers to the Arab revolutions as ‘refolutions,’ which he describes as ‘revolutions that aim to push for reforms in, and through, the institutions of

the existing regimes' (2013a: 53). He argues that this is occurring in light of an intellectual climate dominated by the global advance of neoliberal ideology informed by the spirit of individual self-interest and accumulation. Bayat saw, up until the 1990s, the predominance of three major ideological traditions that offered strategies for fundamental change in the AW: anti-colonial nationalism, Marxism, and Islamism (2013a: 54). His study was confirmed by other studies in the AW. What is obvious here is a significant finding: that social change in local contexts is invariably influenced by global ideological shifts. Former anti-colonial revolutionaries 'turned into administrators of the post-colonial order, they largely failed to deliver on their promises; in many instances nationalist governments devolved into autocracies, were saddled with debt, then pushed into neoliberal structural adjustment programs, if they had not already been overthrown by military coups or undermined by imperialist intrigues' (Bayat, 2013a: 55). Post-1990s saw the advent of what he calls the 'post-Islamist' trends (e.g. Tunisia's Ennahda Party), which 'aim to transcend Islamist politics by promoting a pious society and a secular state, combining religiosity with rights, to varying degrees' (2013a: 57). Bayat, like François Burgat (2010), witnessed the demise of the Arab left and the predominance of two political ideologies, neoliberal on the one hand (being the most influential international ideology) and post-Islamist on the other, both of which share the narrative of reform. In brief, the connection between politics and the social was rarely well articulated by influential figures of social science. Hanafi (2012) demonstrated that many think tanks (Freedom House, Economist Intelligence Unit, Arab Reform Initiative, etc.) investigate formal indices that prove helpful in tracking the micro-transformations of the AW, and in determining which state has undergone governance change and moved toward the rule of law; however, they fail, as Hanafi argues, to examine the potential for real political restructuring.

Among the 22 times that Bayat is cited, two are by Arabic authors. Both Ibrahim (2012) and Hanafi (2011) cited his concept of 'social non-movements' as a way of understanding the latent preparation for Arab uprisings. Along with Mohamed Bamyeh (2012), Bayat was one of the rare scholars that noticed longstanding Arab civic traditions of self-organization that are ignored by social movement organizations and scholars.

Charles Tilly is an influential sociologist on the subjects of contentious politics and social movements, and also, after Huntington and Edward Said, the most cited theorist on the topic of the Arab uprisings. Most of the citations are in English and only one in Arabic. Tilly is often cited in English articles to support the claim that 'revolutions are not distinct occurrences, in a category apart, but almost always develop out of other forms of political conflict' (Harsch, 2012: 49). Overall, Tilly is cited to support and explain the theoretical foundations behind political contention and social mobilization.

Mona El-Ghobashy is one of the three Arab diasporic authors (besides Said and Salamé) in the top 25 most cited authors list. El-Ghobashy, a political science professor at Columbia University, did extensive fieldwork on the Egyptian revolution, and is also a Carnegie scholar. Her research focuses on political mobilization in contemporary Egypt, and she has published articles in American academic journals. In this sample, she is cited in English only, 16 times in 14 articles by authors writing from outside the AW. El-Ghobashy (2011) is most cited for her great detailed description of the Egyptian protests. Pace and Cavatorta (2012) cite an earlier publication to support their claim that

Islamism is a broad field, and movements such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood have gone through considerable ideological and structural transformations. Overall, El-Ghobashy is cited as a reference to the socio-political conditions that both accompanied and preceded the Egyptian protests.

Finally, **Joel Beinin** is professor of ME history at Stanford University. He was also director of MES at the American University in Cairo (AUC) (left 2008). Beinin is significant as he is the most leftist scholar among the top 25 most cited authors. Beinin is cited 16 times in 12 English articles and 2 articles written in French. He is also the author of several articles where he discusses social class, union organization in Egypt, and the strengths and weaknesses of the workers' movement as the largest and best-mobilized leftist revolutionary coalition. Beinin is most cited as a reference to details regarding labor strikes and workers' movements in Egypt both before and after 2011 uprising.

Qualitative analysis of Arab scholarship

In this section, we highlight some features of the scholarship written in Arabic, and identify sources of its weakness in framing the debate and in reaching international audiences. As indicated above, only 25% of the articles on the Arab uprisings are produced from within the region, out of which around 50% are produced in Arabic, 45% in English, and 5% in French, with the majority of those contributing being Arabs. Although no Arab authors are present in the list of top 25 most cited authors, Samir Amin is cited 10 times, most commonly for his contributions to post-colonial analysis of the impact of capitalist imperialism in Egypt and North Africa, by both Arab and non-Arab authors alike. Most Arabs writing from within the AW in English tend to cite both Arabic and English references. In addition, around 40% of the articles are based on fieldwork, which results in an abundance of detailed descriptions in many of these articles.

However, there is very little evidence of any of these authors engaging each other in debate. In exceptional cases when authors do engage, they are not explicit in their critique. For instance, after some authors replied to Altahir Labib's editorial in *Idafat* (issue 18) in an implicit manner, *Idafat* editor Sari Hanafi asked them to criticize him or any other authors more overtly, to generate a debate. Many authors were reluctant to do so.

Of Arabs who produce articles in English 80% are affiliated to universities, both public (Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Oman, among others) and private (predominantly from AUC and AUB). The rest are either writers or affiliated to local or regional research institutions (such as CAUS). Since many of these authors base their studies on fieldwork, they tend to lay out a structured plan organized around an introduction, methodology, findings section, and a discussion and conclusion (also called 'IMRAD' structure),⁷ and tend to adhere to this American academic standard of publication. Qualitative analysis conducted on the sample of Arabic publications seems to suggest that the opposite is true: most Arab authors who publish in Arabic tend not to lay out a structured plan for the article in the introduction; a common feature has been to use numbered subheadings to indicate a thread through the article. This has implications in making it difficult for Arab authors to write for international outlets and this can reinforce their marginalization.

When theory is used, it is generally a foreign theoretical framework. This is true for both Arabic and English language publications. One hypothesis is that this is due to the

scarcity of Arabic ‘theoretical frameworks.’ Arab authors publishing in Arabic also seem to rely more heavily on media (news, Facebook pages, etc.) in their citations, as opposed to Arabs who write in English who tend to cite academic journal articles and books. In general, Arabic references are less likely to be academic references, and in many cases include blogs, newspaper articles, interviews, and other first-hand accounts. In addition, much of the fieldwork is conducted in Arabic for reasons of accessibility, which is why it is striking to find that few authors who publish in Arabic rely on fieldwork. The two cases that do include fieldwork rely on secondary statistical data to explain the situation rather than getting first-hand observations produced by local, grassroots actors.

The paradigmatic position of many Arab authors is that they use the revolutions as an indication of a legitimate struggle for social justice against oppressive autocracies. They also tend to a retrospective view of the historical socio-political conditions that led to the uprisings, usually framing the events as a necessary outcome of long-term systemic oppression. As we show in cluster III, many Arab authors place more emphasis on the importance of social justice than English or French authors.

Conclusion

The network analysis we conducted demonstrates clearly that there is an evident hierarchy between three levels of knowledge production, indicating the different levels of influence of those who will frame the debate about the Arab uprisings. At the first level, knowledge producers who have the highest level of legitimacy (and the highest citation factor) are often from US foreign policy Ivy Leaguers,⁸ who create the theoretical, informational, or/and analytical center. These authors are cited by all levels of knowledge producers and publish often in high impact factor journals. Their legitimacy comes from their status as ‘experts’ on authoritarianism in the ME, democratization, and political reform. ‘Expert’ in this context has little to do with local knowledge, since few of these producers reference local authors when studying the region. Instead, some of their expertise is confined to understanding the costs and benefits of US foreign policies in the ME, while some is critical of the longstanding US administration’s support for Arab authoritarian regimes. Titles like ‘Common interests, closer allies, how democracy in Arab states can benefit the West,’ and ‘Authoritarian learning and authoritarian resilience: Regime responses to the “Arab awakening”’ are pertinent examples of the ways in which these producers perceive the problems they are studying. In addition, their status as both academics and researchers at prominent US think tanks is particularly problematic when it comes to scientific ethos, where their research imperatives are necessarily inclined toward US private interests. The Brookings Institution, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Wilson Center, and other US think tanks are funders of political/social scientific research in the ME, a factor that has undoubtedly affected the production of knowledge. Their legitimacy is further solidified through their public appearances on international news networks like CNN, and regular publications in journals such as *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*. Unfortunately this article cannot further examine the differing influence of publication outlets.⁹

At the second level we find scholars who do not have a pronounced a level of intellectual authority. Here we are not talking about the local scholars who are sometimes

used as ‘informants’ to first level knowledge producers. Mona Abaza (2011) complains strongly that local academics have often been reduced to ‘service providers for Western “experts” who jet in and jet out.’ Rather, we are referring to scholars who are less cited in spite of the significance of their work. The best example is El-Ghobashy, who has followed the Egyptian revolutions very closely on the ground. However, what we noticed is that her writings were subsequently used as a reference to factual events that occurred during the time and not as a theoretical reference. Other authors in this category might include Arab authors writing from within the AW in English or French. We also find many French-speaking authors that belong to this level, clearly identified in the network analysis and disconnected from the American networks. As we showed in the clusters, those who bridge between different clusters, they often provide alternative voices to the mainstream analysis.

Third level producers are peripheral knowledge producers and include Arabs writing from within the region, in Arabic. As the names within the cluster showed, these voices are seldom heard on the international level, and are only referenced by second level knowledge producers. These voices privilege social justice over geopolitics (very debated by American and French scholarships). What is particularly problematic is the one-way relationship between first and third level producers, which creates the hierarchical structure of legitimacy; while third level producers cite first level producers (thus legitimizing them), first level producers do not cite third level producers, thereby delegitimizing their positions as knowledge producers at the international level. The collective nature of knowledge production is broken, and a hierarchical structure based on the legitimacy of hegemonic western-institutionalized standards of political and ideological normativity is set in place.

This hierarchy of legitimacy in knowledge is due in part to where the articles are produced. The majority of articles are indeed produced outside the AW and in English. This is primarily due to the hegemony of the English language (Hanafi and Arvanitis, 2014; Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras, 2014) in social science research, facilitated by the dominance of western academic institutions, think tanks, as well as the standards of publication in international journals, which expend little to no effort in accommodating foreign languages. Furthermore, what little knowledge is being produced within the AW is produced in Arabic and not being translated. In fact, scarcely any authors who write in English or French reference in Arabic. To a large extent, authors who write in a particular language, cite in that particular language. Houssay-Holzschuch and Milhaud (2013) find that French authors tend to quote mostly French references and this is confirmed by our work. The issue of language compartmentalization becomes significantly poignant here. Some authors see translation an opportunity for increased reflexivity (Hanafi, 2011), which might lead to new ways of conceptualizing and articulating concepts. New ways of thinking can indeed be *found* in translation, as long as translation is understood and practiced as a process that is never-ending, dialogical, and fraught with heuristic tensions (Houssay-Holzschuch and Milhaud, 2013).

The hegemony of political science is significantly problematic as well, in addition to the weakness of peripheral authors (both geographical and theoretical), which greatly impoverishes the international debate. Karim Makdisi in *Reflections on the State of IR in the Arab Region* provides an overview of influential IR journals and demonstrates that

voices and research from the Arab region are notably absent, and moreover that those IR ‘conversations’ dealing with the Arab region routinely eschew Arabic sources, let alone oppositional Arab voices.

Given Arab scholars’ lack of resources, language barriers, and poor publication record in mainstream journals, it is clear that many Arab scholars working in Arabic and within national institutions are virtually invisible internationally. The challenge today is the disengagement of social science research from its local context, which is amplified by the hegemony of neoliberal interests and concurrent narratives for change, as well as the marginalization of local knowledge by many Arab scholars who suffer from both local and global constraints on knowledge production.

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Notes

1. Fifteen references were added out of 11 different journals not included in the two platforms.
2. In the following journals: *Idafat*, *Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi*, *Majalet al-Dirasat al-Falastiniya*, *Majalat el ‘Ouloum el Siyasiya*, and *Omran*.
3. Created in September 2005 by four Belgian and French publishers, today Cairn offers the most comprehensive collection of full-text publications in the French language in the humanities and social sciences available online. See www.cairn.info.
4. Note that some authors have dual affiliations.
5. More precisely, the measure we use is called ‘difference-weighted mutual information-based co-occurrence retrieval models.’ The similarity between two authors results from the comparison of their respective profile of mutual information they share with every other author in the network.
6. CorText is the digital platform of Institut Francilien Recherche, Innovation, Société (IFRIS) which includes a direct access to network computing tools named the CorText Manager.
7. The classic IMRAD structure, as Pontille (2003) has shown, is rarely used in sociology; it is more frequent in American articles and more so when exposing formal research (modelization, mathematical and statistical analysis) and quantitative and survey analysis.
8. The universities are Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale.
9. Not only because of the lack of space but also because we consider the impact factors provide thin indicators of how influential a journal is.

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Résumé

Il y a eu depuis 2010 une prolifération de littérature (articles de presse et publications scientifiques) sur les révoltes de ces dernières années dans certains pays arabes. Cet article est consacré à la façon dont les articles scientifiques ont perçu les révoltes arabes et à la façon dont nous les décrivons dans le discours scientifique, en tenant compte des forces sociales qui entrent en jeu dans la production du savoir. Dans la lignée de Bruno Latour, cet article analyse (1) de quoi est composé le savoir sur les révoltes arabes ; (2) qui produit et délimite le débat (le réseau d'auteurs) ; (3) l'analyse sémiotique ; et (4) les mesures quantitatives de « marqueurs sociologiques » tels que la discipline, la langue et l'affiliation institutionnelle. L'étude s'appuie sur une base de données de quelque 519 articles (tirés de Web of Science, Scopus, E-Marefa, Cairn) qui traitent des révoltes arabes de janvier 2011 à aujourd'hui.

Mots-clés

Analyse des réseaux, citations, monde arabe, révolutions, sociologie de la connaissance

Resumen

Desde 2010 ha habido una proliferación de literatura (artículos periodísticos y publicaciones académicas) sobre las recientes revueltas en algunos países árabes. Este artículo se centra en la forma en que los artículos académicos han percibido las revueltas árabes y la forma en que los retratan en el discurso científico, teniendo en cuenta las fuerzas sociales que entran en juego en la producción del conocimiento. En línea con Bruno Latour, este estudio analiza (1) de qué se compone el conocimiento sobre las revueltas árabes; (2) quién produce y quién enmarca el debate (la red de autores); (3) el análisis semiótico; y (4) las medidas cuantitativas de "marcadores" sociológicos como la disciplina, el idioma y la afiliación institucional. El estudio se basa en una base de datos de alrededor de 519 artículos (incluidos en Web of Science, Scopus, E-Marefa y Cairn) que analizan los levantamientos árabes desde enero de 2011 hasta ahora.

Palabras clave

Análisis de redes, citas bibliográficas, mundo árabe, revoluciones, sociología del conocimiento