Participants:

The CEDEJ Presents:
Revols and Transitions in the Arab World: Towards a New Urban Agenda?

International conference

7th – 8th – 9th of November 2012
French Institute of Egypt (IFE)
1, Madrasset El Huquq El Frinsiya St., Mounira Cairo, Egypt
Foreword

The 2011 popular uprisings in the Arab world widely affected large and medium cities of the regions, at same time as they deeply involved urban societies. The elections that followed in some countries (notably Tunisia and Egypt) could have a decisive impact on the ways of governing urban areas. The year 2011 put into question urban action from the past, as it was led by collapsed or disrupted regimes, and of the future. At the beginning of a necessarily long process, we still do not know what result this “Revolution” will have. Nonetheless, it is already possible to assert that a new urban development model will present many challenges.

This international colloquium aims to discuss the urban dimension of the great changes in the Arab world, from the origins of the 2011 revolutionary episodes to the present experiences of democratization, along with phases of political transition and socio-economic crisis in which states are still entangled. Our objective is to (re)consider processes of urbanisation and urban practices, by the yardstick of the political, economic and social issues relevant in the region since the beginning of the decade. Researchers in social sciences and experts on Maghreb, Middle-East and Arabian Peninsula will compare their different points of view. Thus, this colloquium aims to contribute to the revitalization of urban studies in the Arab world, increasingly more aligned to economic and political analysis.

Five topics structure will be debated throughout the conference:

1. The urban dimensions of revolts

2011 was a major and unseen break year for many Arab states. The extent and intensity of mobilizations expressed a desire of radical political change. Most of these protest movements start from medium and outlying cities (Tunisia, Libya, Syria). Beyond the coercive politics led by regimes, some of them having collapsed when the others are still in place, these movements seem to reveal the unequal development of territories, between as well as in the different cities. Do these revolts reflect the exhaustion of development models mostly based on the capture of land rent by businessmen close to the political leaders? Do they reveal the frustration of populations disappointed by the official strategies of development (economic, social, “human”, etc)? These strategies had indeed mixed results on the daily life. In the Egyptian case particularly, privatizing part of the urban services and public goods has been clearly harmful. This axis will be composed of contributions studying the urban dimensions of Arab revolutions. Thus, going back to the “pre-revolutionary” mobilizations, concerning issues such as housing and basic urban services access, notably in “informal” areas, seems to be essential.

2. Living in cities in revolt and transition

Revolts themselves have been territorialized. They highlighted several cities that were very discrete before, on the political maps of the Arab world and in the scientific literature about the region: Sidi Bouzid in Tunisia, Benghazi in Libya, Dera and Homs in Syria, Taeez in Yemen, Sohar in Oman, etc.
Central squares and emblematic places from the local urbanity will be bearing the stigma of these revolts for a long time: Tahrir square in Cairo, which remains the active heart of the unfinished Egyptian revolution; Change square (Taghir) in Sana’a, so-called by the protesters, few kilometers away from the Liberation square (Tahrir), occupied by Saleh’s men before the great demonstrations of February 2011; or Pearl square in Manama, destroyed by the Bahrain army to prevent demonstrators from making it the hot-spot of resistance activities. These places and territories hit the headlines. Strategies to bypass, control and take over them are worth studying.

The aim is also to present in situ analysis of cities in revolt and/or in transition, with contributions based on ethnographic surveys about ways of living, working and travelling in such situations. Specific explanations will be presented about the major changes within the framework of decreasing political control, weakened state, undermining police authority, etc. For instance, revolts had direct and obvious consequences on urban morphologies, even in places where no riot occurred. In some towns, property speculation has never been so dynamic. On average, three floors have been added to buildings in some outlying districts of Cairo. Investors took advantage of the fall of Mubarak regime to get round the town-planning regulations, making no secret of it.

3. Details and questions about public urban action

Many questions can be tackled here:

The great urban and tourist projects involving the former powers: did the “Arab spring” stop (temporarily or permanently?) some of the urban projects negotiated between the former authoritarian powers and multinational firms, for instance the Cairo 2050 Master Plan, or the tourist and commercial projects funded by Emirates companies in Syria, of which the execution is now very uncertain? As for the former urban and territorial governance: are the administrative division and political responsibilities put into question? If change is actually demanded, by what means (what are the new kinds of discourses and how centralization is now criticized?)? In the field of housing, are the shortcomings of urban policies highlighted? How could we assess public action in that matter (new towns, informal districts, regulations)? A desire to break with the past can be seen. How is it expressed today?

4. Elections and new political powers: the urban agenda in question

What was the urban dimension of political programmes or electoral discourses formulated by the different parties during the 2011 elections? Islamist breakthrough in Tunisia and Egypt could be partly explained by their long presence and action in popular districts neglected by former regimes. Will the Islamists be able to develop punctual actions, such as new specific services, in line with a global town planning? Who will
be their interlocutors in that matter? What role will play the other political forces?
Will the new governments and parliamentary chambers have to follow a new urban agenda? What are the new scopes to place on this agenda?
Discontentment from the informal districts cannot be ignored anymore by disrupted regimes or transitional powers. Is there any tangible sign of change?
Are we moving towards new administrative divisions and devolution to local authorities, especially to major regional cities? Indeed hyper-centralism is characteristic of authoritarian governments. This resulted in considerable confusion between governorates and municipalities. However, new authorities have just been nationally elected and established. Will it lead to new methods of local governance, promoting proximity and limiting spatial fragmentation?

5. Rethinking sustainable urban development: proposals from civil society and silent partners

In 2011, there was also an evolution of the strategies developed by operators in charge of foreign aid to Arab nations. How do the multilateral and bilateral partners change their development and financing strategy, while a new political geography is taking shape in the region?
Can we really talk about a wider range of possibilities for the civil society? After the outbreak of revolts,

what where the structured or most visible groups? What are the new issues in debate and projects under discussion? Who is bringing them?
Are the associations and NGOs establishing new priorities?

Organisation:
Organized by the Pole "City and Sustainable Development" of the CEDEJ (http://www.cedej-eg.org/), this colloquium is also part of two ongoing research programs:

- Sustainable City in the South Mediterranean (MeRsi project), co-funded by the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (Academic Agency of French-speaking countries)- Middle East Office and the CEDEJ;

- SYSREMO: Global Geographies : Towards a regional system in the Middle East, funded by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche (National Agency for Research), France (ESO-Rennes).

Organizers:
Dr Pierre-Arnaud BARTHEL (Associate Professor in Urbanism, Université Paris-Est – LATTES-CNRS)
Dr Roman STADNICKI (Head of the ‘Urbanism and Sustainable Development’ center at the CEDEJ, MAEE-CNRS Cairo)
Dr Leïla VIGNAL (Associate professor in geography; chair at the CNRS/Université Rennes-2)
09:00-10:00 – Registration

10:00-11:00 – Introduction and Speeches
Speech by H.E. Nicolas Galley, Ambassador of France (to be confirmed)
Speech by B. Rougier, director of the CEDEJ
Introduction to the conference: P.-A. Barthel (LATTIS-IFU), R. Stadnicki (CEDEJ), L. Vignal (Rennes 2)

11:00-13:00 – Introduction Session: The Urban Dimensions of Revolts
Chair: Bernard Rougier, Director of the CEDEJ

Youssef Courbage – Demographic, Urban and Democratic Transitions in the Arab World
Demographer, Emeritus Research Director, INED, Paris

Robert Bianchi – Urban Politics in Egypt and Tunisia
Visiting Research Professor, Middle East Institute, The National University of Singapore

Kareem Ibrahim & Diane Singerman – Urban Egypt: On the Road from the Revolution to the State
Kareem Ibrahim – Architect and Urban Planner; Co-Founder of Takween ICD
Diane Singerman – Associate Professor, Department of Government, School of Public Affairs, American University of Cairo

Agnès Deboulet & Bénédicte Florin – Pre-Revolutionary Mobilizations in Cairo: when Dwellers of Popular Neighbourhoods Demonstrate
Agnès Deboulet – Professor of Sociology and Urbanism, University of Paris 8
Bénédicte Florin – Associate Professor in Geography, University of Tours

Ala Al-Harmaneh – Claim Your City, Claim Your Country: Rethinking the Urban in the Arab Revolts
Assistant Professor, Institute for Geography, University of Mainz. Senior Researcher, Center for Research on the Arab World (CERAW)

13:00-14:30 – Lunch: Restaurant of the IFE

14:30-16:30 – Session 1: Living through Revolt and Transition: the case of Egypt
Chair: Mohamed Elshahed, PhD Candidate, New York University’s Middle East Department; founder of the blog cairoobserver.com

Paul Amar – New Logics of Popular Sovereignty and Urban Subaltern Alternatives to the Egyptian ‘Thug State’
Associate Professor, University of California Santa Barbara

Marwa Dabaieh – Tahrir as a Memory, a Place and a Meaning
Conservation Architect; Researcher, Lund University (Sweden)
Program
Wednesday 7th

Marta Pappalardo – Revolution and Globalization: a Reading of the Political Mobilization through Urban Strategies in Downtown Cairo
PhD Candidate in Urban Sociology, University of Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense

Enrique Klaus – Graffiti and Urban Revolt in Cairo: Artistic, Mnemonic and Protesting Practices of the City
Assistant Professor, Sciences-Po Rabat; Post-Doctoral Researcher at Centre Jacques-Berque

Beth Stryker & Omar Nagati – Archiving a City in Flux: Cairo’s Evolving Urbanism Pre- and Post-Revolution
Beth Stryker – Independent Curator, Beirut, New York and Chicago
Omar Nagati – PhD Candidate at the Department of Architecture, Berkely; Visiting Instructor at the Department of Architecture, Cairo University

16:30-17:00 – Coffee Break

17:00-19:00 – Session 2: Living through Revolt and Transition: Other Examples from the Arab World
Chair: Hend Farouh, Housing and Building Research Center, Egypt

Farah Al-Nakib – Popular Participation in Politics and Planning: Locating Kuwait Amid Uprisings and Urbanizations
Assistant Professor, American University of Kuwait, Director of the Center for Gulf Studies

Caecilia Pieri – The Replication of ‘Green Zones’ in Baghdad: an Impossible ‘Iraqi Spring’
Head of the Urban Observatory within the Institut Français du Proche Orient (Ifpo), Beirut

Ward Vloeberghs - Claiming the Spring from Beirut: Examining the Future’s Discursive and Spatial Practices
Assistant Professor at the Ecole de Gouvernance et d’Economie de Rabat, Morocco; Deputy Director CERAM

Johannes Frische – ‘Quiet Encroachment’ and Everyday Resistance: Informal Politics of Urban Youth in Tunisia
PhD Candidate at the Research Training Group Critical Junctures of Globalization, University of Leipzig

‘Revolts and Transitions in the Arab World: Towards a New Urban Agenda?’
CEDEJ – November 7-9 2012
Program
Thursday 8th

09:30-11:00 – Session 3: Details and Questions On Public Urban Action (Part I)
Chair: Diane Singerman, American University in Cairo

Pascale Philifert – Morocco 2011/2012: Persistence of Past Urban Policies or New Historical Sequence for Urban Action?
Professor at University of Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense

Besma Loukil – Public Space and Policy of the ‘Ancien Régime’ in Tunisia
PhD Candidate in Landscape Architecture, University AGROPARISTECH ENSP Versailles-Marseille and ISA/University of Sousse

Irène Salenson – Urban Development in Palestine since the Fayyad Era (2007-present): Tension Between Localism and Globalization
Doctor in Geography and Urbanism; Independent Researcher

Aziz Iraki – The February 20th Movement: Changes in Policy Regulation and Elites Ensuring Intermediation in the so-called ‘Unhealthy’ Neighborhoods?
Professor at the Institut National d’Aménagement et d’Urbanisme

11:00-11:30 – Coffee Break

11:30-13:00 – Session 4: Details and Questions On Public Urban Action (Part II)
Chair: Agnès Deboulet, Université Paris 8

Valérie Clerc – Syrian Urban Action Under Revolts, Evolutions and Permanence of Urban Politics in Damascus
Researcher, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement; Associate Researcher Institut Français du Proche-Orient (Ifpo)

Researcher, University of Lyon-CNRS, “Environment, City and Society”

Xavier Godard - Urban Transport Systems: Some Major Stakes in the Context of Revolts and Transition in Arab Countries
Emeritus Research Director at the Inrets (Institut National de Recherche sur les Transports et leur Sécurité, now Ifsttar)

Claude de Miras & Aziz Iraki – Arab Spring, Urban Public Action and Intermediation in Morocco: Governance of Essential Services and Intermediation in the Face of Social Movements

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CEDEJ – November 7-9 2012
Program
Thursday 8th

Aziz Iraki – Professor at the Institut National
d’Aménagement et d’Urbanisme; Architect
Claude de Miras – Economist; Research Director at the
Research Institute for Development (LPED)

13:00-14:30 – Lunch: Restaurant of the IFE

14:30-16:30 – Session 5: Elections and New
Political Powers: the Urban Agenda in
Question
Chair: Youssef Courbage, INED

Heba Safey Eldeen - Toward a New Developmental
Agenda for the Urban Poor: the Case of Ezbet Harb, Giza
Associate Professor, Architecture, American University of
Cairo

Mohammed Hellal – Urban Reactions of Local Actors of
the Town of Monastir (Tunisian Sahel), in the Context of
the After Revolution of January 14th 2011
Assistant Professor at the University of Carthage; PhD
Candidate in Geography at the University of Tours

Mahfod Twati & Didier Boutet – Libya in Search of a
Territorial Agenda
Didier Boutet – Researcher-Professor, University of Tours

Twati Mahfod – Doctor in Public Law, University of Tours;
Researcher-Professor, University of Al-Assmariyya (Libya)

Ali Bennasr – Tunisia: the City and the Elections
Professor of Geography, Sfax University (Tunisia)

16:30-17:00 – Coffee Break

17:00-19:00 – Forum 1: Cairo in Movements
Chair: David Sims – independent consultant

Sahar Attia - The Vision and Strategy of Greater Cairo
Region: post Revolution Concerns
Professor of Architecture & Urban Design, Cairo University

Randa A. Mahmoud & Ahmed Sami - From Cairo 2050 to
Egypt 2052: Developing Greater Cairo Region or Moving
Away from It?
Assistant Professors at the Dept. of Planning & Urban
Design of Ain Shams University (Cairo)

Omar Nagati - Minding the Formal-Informal Gap: the
Battle of Ard Al-Liwa Park Project
PhD Candidate, Architecture, University of California at
Berkeley; visiting Instructor at Cairo University

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Hend Farouh & Reda Haggag – The Dilemma of Sustainable Planning and New Communities in Egypt
Dr. Hend Farouh - Housing & Building National Research Center (HBRC), Egypt
Dr. Mohamed Reda Haggag, PhD, Faculty of Regional & Urban Planning, Cairo University

Nabeel El-Hady – architect and professor of Architecture at Cairo University
Omar Nagati – PhD Candidate, Architecture, University of California at Berkeley; visiting Instructor at Cairo University

Omnia Khalil – Egyptian Urban Action (Film Projection)
Architect, University of Cairo; Associate researcher at American University in Cairo

20:00 – Dinner at ‘Taboula’ Restaurant (Garden City)

Program
Friday 9th

10:30-12:30 – Session 6: Rethinking Sustainable Urban Development: Proposals from Civil Society and Silent Partners
Chair: Ala Al-Harmaneh, Institute of Geography, University of Mainz

Arthur Quesnay – Towards a Reconstruction of Libya’s Political Space around Urban Areas?
PhD Candidate in International Relations, University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne; IFPO

Françoise Clément & Ahmed Salah – NGOs in Refounding Sustainable Urban Development in Libya
Françoise Clément – Associate Researcher, CEDEJ (1995-2011)
Ahmed Salah – Independent researcher; member of the NGO ‘Acted’

Sami Yassine Turki - Evolution of Cities and Territories in Tunisia: Parties’ Electoral Program and Civil Society’s Proposals
Engineer and Urbanist; Head of Department of Urbanism at ISTEUB

Taoufik Megdiche – Local Actors in Face of the Revolution: the Case of Sfax (Tunisia)
SYFACTE, Department of Geography, University of Sfax (Tunisia)
Program
Friday 9th

Hind Khedira & Jérémie Molho – Preservation and Valorisation of the Archaeological Site of Carthage (Tunisia): a Post-Revolutionary Agenda?
Members of NGO ‘Urbanistes du Monde’

12:30-14:30 – Lunch: Restaurant of the IFE

14:30-16:30 – Forum 2: Actors/NGO/experts: open discussions and propositions for a better urban future in Egypt?
Chairman of the Session: Sarah Ben Nefissa, Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD)
Invited Participants:
Dina Shehayeb
Professor at the Housing & Building Research Center; principal of her private consulting firm Shehayeb CONSULT
Yahia Shawkat
Right to Housing Initiative
Waleed Mansour
Heinrich Böll Foundation
Manal Al-Tibi
Egyptian Center for Housing Rights
Mohamed Nada
UN-Habitat
Kareem Ibrahim
Takween

Yahia Shawkat – ‘Local Governance and the Right to Housing’ (Film Projection)