

Fault Lines of Islamism; Negotiating Progress, Participation and Patriarchy.

Summary of activities 2008.

The project started 01.01.2008 under the direction of Dr. Bjørn Olav Utvik at the IKOS, UiO, following an allotment from Foreign Ministry, Section for Peace and Reconciliation, of NOK 1 740 000,- for the realization of the project.

The team of researchers has consisted of Bjørn Olav Utvik with his project on Islamism and Gender (Egypt and Morocco), Dr. Tilde Rosmer with Islamism in Israel and Truls Hallberg-Tønnessen with Islamism between Violence and Politics (Iraq and Egypt).

In addition to this, Kai Kverme was hired as research-assistant from 01.01.2008 in a 50% position.

After announcing a grant for master-students, this was offered to Jenny Holmsen with her project Moderate Islamism in Algeria; The Gender Ideology of the Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix (MSP) and to Kai Kverme with his project Differing Visions of the State; Is Hizbullah Establishing a Parallel State in Lebanon?

The project had its first gathering in a seminar in Oslo the 16. May where the progress and plans for the rest of the year were discussed, in addition the individual projects were evaluated and discussed. The conference which the project arranged in October was also discussed.

On September the 10. Utvik and Tønnessen presented their report "Islamist Movements in the Middle East; Challenging the Autocrats" at the Forum for religion og utenrikspolitikk, Foreign Ministry. The report was handed to the Ministry in June and was very well received.

The second gathering took place in September in Cambridge, England, where Rosmer was based at the time, here Holmsen participated as well. We had invited Maria Holt from The Centre for Study of Democracy, University of Westminster and Humeira Iqtidar from King's College, Cambridge; they were presented the projects and gave very useful feed-back on these. A very useful seminar indeed, where the conference in Oslo the following month was discussed as well.

In October we arranged the conference Democratic Reform in the Middle East as Seen from the Opposition. Representatives from Islamist movements in Morocco, Egypt and Kuwait participated in addition to a representative from a Syrian Human Rights organization. Academics from a number of Norwegian institutions and establishments participated as well as many representatives from the Foreign Ministry.

The conference lasted two days, and both guests and participants were very positive of this opportunity to meet and have a dialogue on the factors the movements themselves consider to be the biggest obstacles to reform in their respective homelands.

In conjunction with the conference the project held a one day seminar with Prof. Emad Shahin of Harvard University/American University in Cairo, where the individual projects and the papers for the MESA annual meeting were discussed.

The whole project participated at the MESA(Middle East Studies Association of North America) annual meeting in Washington DC in November. We had a panel, chaired by Dr.

Utvik, where Rosmer, Tønnessen, Kverme and Utvik presented their papers based on their projects. The panel was well received, and we were offered useful comments as well as making new and useful contacts with other researchers.

Several of the participants have also done research trips in the course of the year, Utvik was in Egypt in April/May, Rosmer in Israel in June and Kverme in Lebanon in June and October/November. Holmsen has been on a shorter trip to Paris and is travelling to Algeria in December.

Three of the participants, Utvik, Tønnessen and Kverme, published articles in the Norwegian journal *Babylon* in November. Rosmer also has an agreement for publishing her material in a book edited by Prof. Khaled Hroub, University of Cambridge. We will be working on the papers from MESA with the aim of publishing them in scientific journals abroad.

Through the whole year the project has had an open and very good communication with the Foreign Ministry, Section for Peace and Reconciliation, which also participated in the planning of the October conference. This has been invaluable for the project, and the response from them has also been encouraging and very positive.