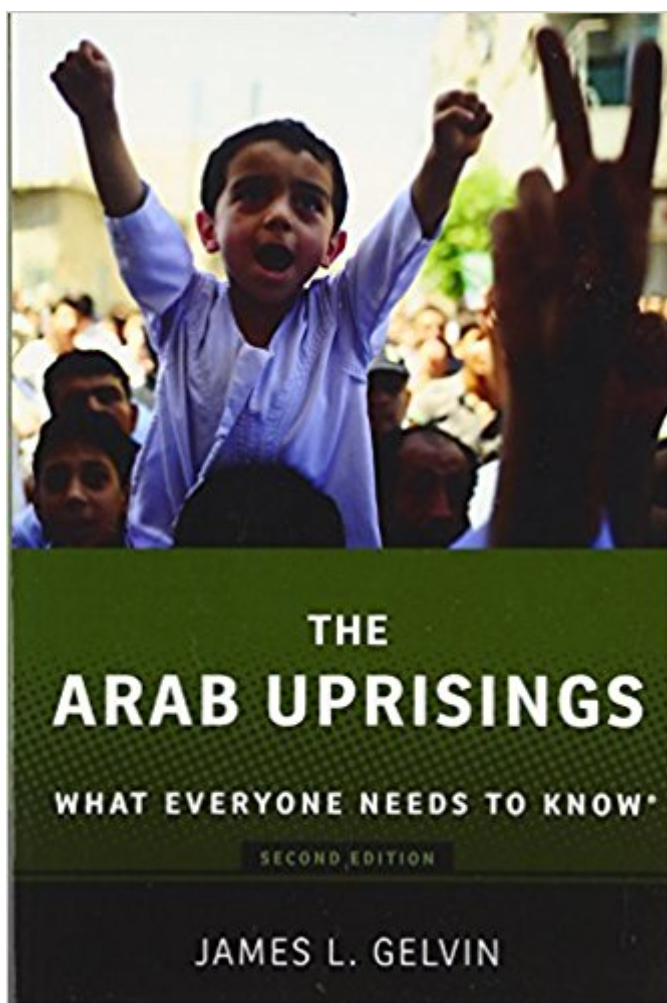


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The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs To Know®



Synopsis

Employing an engaging question-and-answer format, *The Arab Uprisings* explores the revolutionary protests that have rocked the Arab world since late 2010. In this updated and revised second edition, James L. Gelvin explores the varied paths taken by the uprisings and assesses their historical and global significance. Gelvin begins with an overview-What were the conditions in the Arab world that led to the uprisings? Where did the demands for human and democratic rights and social and economic justice come from?-before turning to specific countries in the region. He examines how the long history of state-building in Tunisia and Egypt ultimately determined the paths taken by uprisings there. He explains why the weakness of state institutions in Libya and Yemen led to violence and chaos. He explores the commonalities of the "coup-proofed" states Bahrain and Syria and the tragic course of their uprisings. In the final chapter, he discusses the implications of the uprisings. What do they mean for the United States, al-Qaeda, and the balance of power in the region? What do they say about the viability of the Arab state system? What effects have they had on the Israel-Palestine conflict? What conclusions might we draw from the uprisings so far? When will we know their historical meaning?

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Customer Reviews

"A remarkably readable, informative, slim volume...Of particular worth is James Gelvin's ability to

show how the protests are interlinked, yet also independent of each other. Brief forays into the Palestinian/Israeli conflict and the current state of al-Qaeda are also illuminating...an excellent primer for the general reader." --Publishers Weekly "This impressive achievement brings together a vast amount of information in a lucid manner. Highly recommended." --Library Journal "A solid primer on the Arab Spring...[Gelvin's] background on the Arab world will certainly help non-experts better understand the region...A useful attempt to understand a still-unfolding story." --Kirkus Reviews "Highly recommended...Gelvin's claim to provide "what everyone needs to know" does not unduly exaggerate the usefulness of the book for students and other nonspecialists. Even specialists in contemporary Arab affairs will benefit in some ways, notably by using it as a model in their own teaching and general writings." --CHOICE "James Gelvin has throughout his career explained to us the role of popular demonstrations and symbolic action in the modern Middle East. There could be few more expert guides for the public to the remarkable Arab uprisings of 2011. Gelvin avoids easy answers for the hard one, and never prefers simple theory to complex realities." --Juan Cole, Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History, University of Michigan

James L. Gelvin is Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the author of *The Modern Middle East: A History* and *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War*.

I'm a Middle East studies major and have had to read a number of books on the Arab Spring for political science, Middle East studies, and history courses. This book is by far the best of the books on the Arab Spring. As a matter of fact, I read both editions, and while the weakness of the first is that it was written less than a year after the outbreak of the uprisings, the second edition loses none of the first's ability to explain complex ideas understandably while updating the first and shifting the focus so that it is more in line with current events and popular concerns (for example, there was no ISIS when Gelvin wrote the first edition in 2012). Gelvin is a historian, and the historical background of the region plays an important part in his story. He explains how history influenced the uprisings in a number of countries, such as Egypt and Tunisia, where two centuries of state-building ensured the regime would not be toppled by a single blow; Yemen and Libya, which are "weak states" without strong institutions or long histories and where regimes simply shattered, leading to violence and protracted war; Syria and Bahrain, where regimes were "coup-proofed" so that one part of the regime could not turn on another and where the regime as a whole would go down fighting, defeat the opposition, or reach a permanent impasse with it. He traces how human rights and democracy

became part of the vocabulary of political activists and their thirty year struggle to realize them. In his conclusion, he discusses the lesser known uprisings (in the monarchies, Iraq, Palestine), the question of whether the US and al-Qaeda are gaining or losing influence in the region, and the role of regional actors--ISIS, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Like the first edition, the second is written in a question and answer format which makes it easy to read in parts, put down, then pick up again (I read it in one day). Gelvin's writing is aimed at the general reader, so doesn't have that university-textbook feel. And it is witty (Question: "Was Qaddafi crazy, or crazy like a fox?"; "What are the five biggest myths about the Egyptian uprising?"). Highly recommended.

In this book, Gelvin explores the causes, trajectories, significance and likely consequences of the events that began in December 2010, when rioting broke out in Tunisia after a street vendor set himself on fire to protest the police's confiscation of the fruit and vegetables he was selling. The unrest ultimately led to the resignation of the country's president on Jan. 16, 2011. Pro-democracy movements swept through the Middle East and North Africa, engulfing Egypt, then Bahrain, Morocco, Syria, Yemen, Libya and other states. Although no one could have predicted the shape and depth of the uprisings, Gelvin delineates in the book four distinct ways in which these rebellions unfolded, each rooted in the particular histories and structures of the nations involved. Gelvin contends that Tunisia's and Egypt's long histories of state-building -- unique in the Arab world -- made it possible in those countries for an autonomous military to move against long-ruling autocrats. Thus, the "street phase" of the uprisings was speedy and relatively peaceful. Conversely, in Yemen and Libya, with their short histories as unified states, feeble institutions and weak sense of national identity, the regimes fragmented, resulting in protracted and violent uprisings -- and a greater potential for revolutionary change than in Tunisia and Egypt. In Algeria, Syria and Bahrain, the ruling elites are so strongly bonded that institutions cannot splinter, nor can one part of the regime turn against another, as the army did in Tunisia and Egypt, Gelvin argues. "Ruling elites in these states know they must all hang together or they will all hang separately," he says. "So these regimes are going to either be completely replaced or remain intact." Finally, there are the seven monarchies in the region besides Bahrain, where so far, protests demanding the reform of the system, rather than its replacement, have not yet evolved into uprisings. Gelvin, who has written extensively on the history of the modern Middle East, said writing a history of contemporary events in the region presents a unique set of challenges because the "story is still unfolding, and the true impact of this phenomenon won't be known for years, if ever." Written with the eye toward the non-specialist, "The Arab Uprisings" features a quick-hit, question-and-answer format which, unlike

many books by academics, is presented in a clear, easy-to-understand manner. And at less than 160 pages, it is a relatively quick read. New to this edition are updates the situation in individual countries affected by the uprisings; shifts the emphasis from the initial upheaval itself to the spinning out of the revolutionary process; and Gelvin reconsiders the possible historical significance of the uprisings. For anyone wishing to understand the dramatic events in the Middle East, "The Arab Uprisings" is the place to turn.

A great primer to form a thorough understanding for further study and interpretation of current conflicts. If this were a course I would name it "Arab Conflict 101: Motivations, Roots and Religious Underpinnings".

I was thrilled with the context of this book, enjoyed the condition with the book

Great price, better than college book stores.

Bought as a gift.

Brilliant in all sense of the word.

Great information and very true.

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