



The New Arabs: How the Wired and Global Youth of the Middle East Is Transforming It

Juan Cole

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The renowned blogger and Middle East expert Juan Cole illuminates the role of today's Arab youth; who they are, what they want, and how they will affect world politics.

Beginning in January 2011, the revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests, riots, and civil wars that comprised what many call "the Arab Spring" shook the world. These upheavals were spearheaded by youth movements, and yet the crucial role they played is relatively unknown. Middle East expert Juan Cole is here to share their stories.

For three decades, Cole has sought to put the relationship of the West and the Muslim world in historical context. In *The New Arabs* he outlines the history that led to the dramatic changes in the region, and explores how a new generation of men and women are using innovative notions of personal rights to challenge the authoritarianism, corruption, and stagnation that had afflicted their societies.

Not all big cohorts of teenagers and twenty-somethings necessarily produce movements centered on their identity as youth, with a generational set of organizations, symbols, and demands rooted at least partially in the distinctive problems besetting people of their age. The Arab Millennials did. And, in a provocative and optimistic argument about the future of the Arab world, *The New Arabs* shows just how they did it.

The New Arabs: How the Wired and Global Youth of the Middle East Is Transforming It Details

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Mills College Library says

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Argum says

I won a copy of this book from Goodreads FirstReads program.

This book was a little dry and a little too detailed. The organizing scheme mostly included multiple countries in each chapter trying to hit a thematic note. The revolutions were very horizontal so many many people were involved. The mixing of countries and the level of detail combined to make it hard to follow at times. Many interviewees were listed by a name along with describing participants making for just too many people to keep track off. At times Juan Cole could have done a bit more editing of the story to make it more readable for a popular audience.

If you are already well versed in the events, I think this is an interesting treatment drawing the disparate events into a cohesive story. If not, I think it is a bit too deep for a casual reader.

Douglas says

If you read this, you're going to learn everything you could want to know about the mindset of the youth involved in the government uprisings in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya. You're going to learn how democracy might just eventually take hold. And you're going to read a lot of facts. Plenty of facts. And quite a bit of data to support those facts.

Everything's tied together nicely, but it's hard to get over the fact that this story's sort of already been told. In fact, much of the story was told on Twitter live as it happened. And it's still searchable by hashtags. #arabspring #facts #figures

This read like a PhD dissertation and was honesty a bit of a slog.

I think it could've been better if perhaps the story was told through one or two central characters instead of a hodgepodge of actors and bit players.

Thanks to Goodreads and Simon & Schuster for the reading copy.

Danielle says

I generally enjoyed this book (I read it for my political science class). However, it has so much information that it was very overwhelming, and I think the book could have been better with a reorganization. I couldn't keep the facts and stories I had learned straight, though I think having read it as part of a class actually made it easier. In the end, I'm glad that Cole is advocating for the importance of youth and his optimism towards the Middle East.

Fred Kohn says

Alhamdulillah! I am finally finished with this very important, very informative, and very difficult book. "Finally", not because it was too long or anything like that, but because I needed to put it down every few pages to refocus my glazing over eyes and attention. The "problem" is that we in the U.S.(well, at least me) imagine that we know what is going on in this part of the world, when in fact we know next to nothing. I began this book hardly recognizing any of the individuals or political organizations mentioned, and ended with a far better understanding of who they are and the roles they play.

I do have a bone or two to pick with the author. The subtitle of this book led me to believe that it would have something to do with the Middle East. Instead, the Middle East was basically ignored and the focus was on Egypt and Tunisia. There was an extensive chapter on Libya, but many important countries such as Algeria, Syria, Yemen, and Iran were mentioned only in passing in the conclusion! I was also not thrilled with the organization. The chapter on Libya was very nice because one could follow the trends chronologically from beginning to end. But Egypt and Tunisia, the main foci of the book, were not treated that way. Instead the author jumped back and forth between them, which was confusing, to say the least.

Tina says

Cole's take on the Arab Spring revolutions of Libya, Tunisia and Egypt was refreshing for me because it offered the perspective of the activists who were actually behind the uprisings. I felt I was able to understand more fully the motivations and sentiments of these youth movements than from my previous exposure by Western news media sources. It was nice to get out of the U.S.-centric mindset. The book is a bit dense, more scholarly than narrative, and at times I found it very hard to really focus, getting overwhelmed by the relentless stream of reporting. I definitely feel way more informed about the Arab Spring than before reading this book, so in that Cole succeeded. For a more detailed review, check out <http://www.iwantmichikosjob.com/?p=110>.

Naomi says

A terrific piece of reporting and analysis.

Roxanne says

This book is a long read. To put it shortly it says the new young Arabs are demanding democracy and no more dictators. They want bread, liberty, and social justice.

Sreeraag Mohan says

We have made this revolution. Our families were used to keeping quiet. We didn't keep quiet. We went out to get our dream.

On 17 December 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire after a long tryst with frustration and hopelessness - frustrated at being extorted indiscriminately, hopelessness with the bleak future that greeted him in an oppressed regime that was run akin to a cartel and denied basic human rights to many. His martyrdom brought to the surface the dormant resentment among the Arab population, leading to a revolutionary wave across the Arab World. But unlike the many revolutions that had preceded it, this wave was different. For the first time, the world witnessed how intransigent regimes can be toppled by leaderless democratic crowds, brought together by social media, that stand firm and courageously refuse to go home until their demands for change are met.

Juan Cole, noted American academic and commentator on Middle East and South Asian politics, keenly examines the causes and the characters behind these uprisings. Cole focuses on three countries in particular: Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, presenting an outstanding report on the changes these effected. Cole also presents a myriad of characters, which at times makes for complex reading, but each one of them have their unique story to tell.

Though Cole himself acknowledges that the revolution is far from over, the author, in his concluding statements, notes that the ideals that arose from the streets of Tunis and Tahrir Square have influenced protests and revolutions across the world; there will never be another republican monarchy in the Arab World, the millennials have brought about enough change to ensure that does not happen.

Fredrick Danysh says

The young Arabs of the Millennial Generation are more into technological innovations than their ancestors and are using it to make major changes in the Middle East. This work is an examination of that social movement.

The Tick says

Despite the title, the book focused a lot more on what actually happned during the Arab Spring than on, well, how the youth is actually transforming it. I wish there had been more social and cultural analysis rather than recent history.

Jeremy says

An examination of the Arab Spring as it occurred in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, three countries that overthrew

their governments during that period with very different outcomes. Cole had a lot more information about what happened in Tunisia and Egypt than in Libya, but it still made for an interesting comparison. The big limitation of the book is that all three stories aren't necessarily over yet--something that Cole himself acknowledges. In fact, despite the unambiguously negative (IMHO) outcomes in Egypt and Libya, Cole is optimistic that the current generation of young Arab activists who overturned the dictatorships in those three countries are not done yet. I don't share his optimism, but I guess only time will tell.
