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## Social Movements and Democratization

## Invitation

Panel Discussion with Cilja Harders, Donatella della Porta  
and Roland Roth

Friday June 24, 2011  
6 p.m., Room A 300

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In times of the Arab Spring that swept away autocratic regimes in Northern Africa, the role of social movements in processes of democratization once again comes to the fore. After decades of heavy-handed rule, citizens took the streets and forced autocrats out of office. While the urge for freedom was vibrant in the whole region, the differences between countries are remarkable. The different dynamics pose questions that partly resemble the discussion after the fall of the Iron Curtain and during the electoral Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: What are the preconditions for a successful overthrow of autocratic regimes? What made people unite despite repression? How do ideas and strategies travel from one country to another? Which role do transnational interventions play?

The discussion is  
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While Arab protesters struggle for the realization of basic civil rights, also liberal democratic regimes have been challenged by a recent wave of protests. Their common aim was to re-appropriate civil rights and to democratize democracy. From Spanish *indignados* to German opponents of a low level railway station in Stuttgart, the carriers of protest and the issues triggering claims for a re-invention of democracy vary significantly. But they raise similar questions: How will the claims for more participation change the representative institutional system and what role do and should protests have in democratic regimes?

The discussion is part of the conference 'Outcomes of social movements and protest' that marks the end of the WZB research group 'Civil society, citizenship and political mobilization in Europe'.

Panelists:

Cilja Harders, professor of political science at Free University of Berlin, head of the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Politics

Donatella della Porta, professor of sociology at the European University Institute, Florence

Roland Roth, professor for political science at Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Science

Moderator:

Bernd Pickert, foreign correspondent for *die tageszeitung*.

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