



Seminar

SAÏD AMIR ARJOMAND

Guest of the Principal, SCAS.
Distinguished Service Professor of Sociology, Stony Brook University, NY

Messianism and Sociopolitical Revolution in Islam

Tuesday, 21 May, 2019, 2:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
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S W E D I S H
C O L L E G I U M
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ABOUT SAÏD AMIR ARJOMAND

Saïd Amir Arjomand was awarded his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago in 1980. He has been Distinguished Service Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook since 2004 and has served as Director of the Stony Brook Institute for Global Studies (2008–2017). He is the founder and president of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies and the editor of its interdisciplinary organ, *Journal of Persianate Studies*. He is also a consulting editor for *Encyclopaedia Iranica* and Senior Research Fellow of the Multiple Secularities Project at the Universität Leipzig. He has published extensively in humanities and social science journals and is the author of several books, including *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (1984; new ed., 2010); *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (1988); *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis* (with Edward Tiryakian, 2004), and most recently *After Khomeini: Iran under His Successors* (2009); *The Rule of Law, Islam and Constitutional Politics in Egypt and Iran* (with Nathan J. Brown, 2013); *Worlds of Difference* (with Elisa Reis, 2013); *Social Theory and Regional Studies in the Global Age* (2014); *The Arab Revolution of 2011: A Comparative Perspective* (2015); *Sociology of Shi'ite Islam: Collected Essays* (2016); and *Revolution: Structure and Meaning in World History* (2019).

During his residence at SCAS, Arjomand will be working on the Persianate conceptions of the state, sovereignty and law in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

ABSTRACT

This report on my work in progress on a second book on revolution follows a new theoretical approach to the sociology of revolution offered in *Revolution: Structure and Meaning in World History* (University of Chicago Press, 2019) with regard to the motivation to revolutionary action. This approach shifts the focus of analysis from the putatively general causes of revolutions to the specific motivation and consequences of revolutionary social action in historical and comparative perspective. Within this framework, the companion volume I am now working covers major instances of Islamicate revolutionary transformation beginning with Muhammad's constitutive revolution and the rise of Islam in seventh-century Arabia, followed by three cases of medieval and one early modern Mahdist revolutions. The presentation will briefly outline my conclusions regarding the Fatimid revolution in North Africa at the beginning of the tenth century and on the Berber revolution of Mahdi Ibn Tumart in Southwestern Maghreb in the mid-twelfth century. However, it will mainly focus on the persistence and radical transformation of the millennial motivation in contemporary revolutionary movements, notably in the Shi'ite Messianism in occupied Iraq and the Sunni reaction to it in the form of DA'ESH/ISIS.