



SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POPULAR MOBILISATION IN THE MENA

Digest of Current Publications and Events

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CONTENT

Call for Papers & Conferences	3
Conference: Migrants: Communities, Borders, Memories and Conflicts	3
Petition: Global Middle East, ASA Section Proposal.....	4
Talks & Other Events	5
Film: Syria's Rebellious Women	5
Panel Discussion: Revolutionary Egypt: Four Years On.....	5
Talk: "Enough!": Will youth protests drive political change in Africa?	5
Talk: Conflict in Cities - Jerusalem and Belfast	6
Recent & Forthcoming Books	7
Networked Publics and Digital Contention - The Politics of Everyday Life in Tunisia	7
Other Publications	7
Frantz Fanon: The Empowerment of the Periphery.....	7
The next Intifada: A struggle against the Bantustans	8
A New Generation of Resistance.....	8
Palestinian women: Vanguard of resistance against Israeli occupation.....	9
How protesters used Arabic to subvert Western influence — long before the ‘Homeland’ graffiti ..	9
Thousands protest utility prices in Morocco's Tangier	10
Anti-colonialism, grassroots nationalism and their impacts on international relations in Egypt	10
The Syrian Kurds Are Winning!.....	11
Jadaliyya Media Roundups.....	11
Positions and Opportunities	12
Research Officer - Historical Sociology of the Middle East	12

CALL FOR PAPERS & CONFERENCES

Conference: Migrants: Communities, Borders, Memories and Conflicts

XIII Conference of the Italian Society for Middle Eastern Studies

17-19 March 2016, University of Catania, Italy

The 2016 SeSaMO conference, held on 17-19 March, 2016 in Catania, puts the spotlight on migration meant as a general phenomenon that has affected Muslim-majority societies across history and can be approached from different disciplinary perspectives. Scholars are invited to present panels and papers dealing with the conference theme from different perspectives. Interdisciplinary proposals are welcome as well as proposals focusing on distinct areas of interest in the field of Middle Eastern studies. With the aim of encouraging scientific interaction with the international scholarly community, the conference will host keynote speakers who will lecture on topics of interest for the Society and who will have the opportunity to listen to paper presentations. Working languages will be Italian, English and French.

More information [here](#)

Keynote Speakers: F. Gregory Gause, III (Texas A&M University) , Laleh Khalili (SOAS), Farhad Khosrokhavar (EHSS)

The following panels are open to contributions from scholars willing to present a paper on the subject identified by the panel's title and description. You can propose your paper abstract directly to the panel directors, asking them for the deadline for submitting your abstract. Your abstract should be 150 words.

Excerpt from the Panel list (you can download the full panel description by clicking on the title):

Cultures and practices of resilience in Kurdistan, directors: Servet Erdem, University of Oxford, servet372@gmail.com, and Francesco Marilungo, University of Exeter, fm289@exeter.ac.uk

Knowledge and Power. Discussing the **BDS and Academic Boycott** Campaigns, directors: Enrico, Bartolomei, independent researcher, bartolomeienrico@yahoo.it, and Paola Rivetti, Dublin City University, paola.rivetti@dcu.ie

Migrant protests and political mobilization in North Africa and the Mediterranean: spaces, infrastructures, and embodied experiences of migrant political agency, directors: Cristina Brovia, University of Turin and Universite' Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne, tirsinca@hotmail.com, and Elisa Pascucci, University of Tampere, Elisa.Pascucci@staff.uta.fi, and Marta Scaglioni, University of Beyrut and University of Milan-Bicocca, ScaglioniMarta@gmail.com

Migrations across the Mediterranean: Popular Uprisings, Imperial Legacies, and the Right to Move, directors: Linda Herrera, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, herreralin@gmail.com, and Peter Mayo, University of Malta, peter.mayo@um.edu.mt

[Back to top](#)

Petition: Global Middle East, ASA Section Proposal

The undersigned members of the American Sociological Association (ASA) endorse the creation of a new ASA section on the “Global Middle East.” Signing this petition is a commitment to join and pay dues to the section for at least two years.

The title of this section is intentionally oxymoronic, incorporating both a regional component and a global component. The regional component refers to the study of societies of the “Middle East” (including North Africa), while the global component refers to the study of peoples of Middle Eastern descent, as well as Muslim communities that are not necessarily of Middle Eastern descent, both within and outside of the Middle East.

This inclusive combination stems from the collaborative work of four overlapping networks of sociologists. The Middle East Sociology Working Group (<http://mideastsociology.org>), directed by Charles Kurzman at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has organized two informal gatherings each year since 2007 at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association and the Middle East Studies Association. The Sociology of Islam and Muslim Societies network (<http://sociologyofislam.org>), directed by Tuğrul Keskin of Portland State University, maintains an active listserv of more than 1,000 sociologists worldwide and has established a peer-reviewed journal, *Sociology of Islam* (published by Brill since 2013). A third network is comprised of sociologists affiliated with the multidisciplinary Arab American Studies Association; sociologist Louise Cankar is its current president. The association has organized panels on Arab Americans and the Arab world for the ASA Annual Meeting in alternating years, as determined by the ASA program committee. The association has also coordinated with scholars promoting the formation of Middle Eastern sections in the American Psychological Association (APA), and Modern Language Association (MLA), among others. A fourth network, coordinated by sociologist Rita Stephan of the U.S. Department of State, is working with several scholars and professional and community organizations in cooperation with the Census Bureau to promote and test a “Middle Eastern and North African” ethnic category for inclusion on the U.S. Decennial Census in 2020. The label “Global Middle East” was forged through an online survey and intensive discussions among members of all four networks.

More information [here](#)

[**Back to top**](#)

TALKS & OTHER EVENTS

Film: Syria's Rebellious Women

13 November 2015, 5:00-7:00 PM

SOAS, Russell Square, Khalili Lecture Theatre

Female activists who remain in rebel-held parts of Syria face numerous complex challenges. As well as facing the constant danger of bombing by the Assad government's air force, these women have to battle the conservative traditions of a male-dominated society, aggravated by a militarised environment from which many civilians have fled. More information [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

Panel Discussion: Revolutionary Egypt: Four Years On

17 November 2015, 5:30 PM

Reem Abou-El-Fadl (SOAS), Charles Tripp (SOAS), Miriyam Aouragh (Westminster), Adam Hanieh (SOAS), Nicola Pratt (Warwick) and Kerem Oktem (Graz)

SOAS, Russell Square, Khalili Lecture Theatre

Panel discussion to mark the launch of the 2015 edited volume *Revolutionary Egypt: Connecting Domestic and International Struggles*, (Routledge) taking stock and looking forward, four years since the outbreak of the January 2011 revolution (advertised in the previous Digest).

[Back to top](#)

Talk: "Enough!": Will youth protests drive political change in Africa?

18 November 2015, 6.30-8.00pm

Sheikh Zayed Theatre, New Academic Building, London School of Economics, Kingsway, at Sardinia St & Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3LJ

Speaker: Alcinda Honwana

Sheikh Zayed Theatre, New Academic Building, London School of Economics, Kingsway, at Sardinia St & Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2A 3LJ

Disaffected African young people risk their lives to try to reach Europe. Others join radical groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabab and Islamic State. Angry young unemployed South Africans were

behind xenophobic attacks there. Youths protesting their socio-economic and political marginalization have changed governments in Tunisia and Senegal.

One-third of Africans are between the ages of 10 and 24. They are better educated than their parents and have higher expectations. But they are less likely to have jobs or political influence. Young Africans are organizing in many ways, and are making their voices heard. How will they force governments to listen?

More information [here](#)

Talk: Conflict in Cities - Jerusalem and Belfast

26 November 2015, 6.00 to 7.30pm

City University London, A130, College Building, 280 St John's Street, London EC1V 4PD

Speakers: Dr Wendy Pullan, Prof Liam O'Dowd

The recent resurgence of violence on the Israeli-Palestinian front has led to speculation that a third *Intifada* is underway. Yet this latest wave of violence is distinctive in that so many of the Palestinian knife attacks on Jewish Israelis, and related security crackdowns on Arab neighborhoods, are concentrated in East Jerusalem. In this Forum we shall examine the political geography of conflict in urban settings where the population is divided and intermixed. To do so, we have invited two speakers who have been researching the subject of conflict in cities over a number of years.

Both panellists have been leading a major research project entitled *Conflict in Cities and the Contested State*, the main research sites of which are Jerusalem and Belfast, two very distinctive cities – one central to the Middle East and one firmly embedded in the West – and both at different stages of national conflict and peace-building.

To register, no charge, please contact: olivetree@city.ac.uk, www.city.ac.uk/olivetree

[**Back to top**](#)

RECENT & FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Networked Publics and Digital Contention - The Politics of Everyday Life in Tunisia

Sept 2015 – Oxford University Press
Mohamed Zayani

How is the adoption of digital media in the Arab world affecting the relationship between the state and its subjects? What new forms of online engagement and strategies of resistance have emerged from the aspirations of digitally empowered citizens? *Networked Publics and Digital Contention: The Politics of Everyday Life in Tunisia* tells the compelling story of the concurrent evolution of technology and society in the Middle East. It brings into focus the intricate relationship between Internet development, youth activism, cyber resistance, and political participation. Taking Tunisia - the birthplace of the Arab uprisings - as a case study, it offers an ethnographically nuanced and theoretically grounded analysis of the digital culture of contention that developed in an authoritarian context. It broadens the focus from narrow debates about the role that social media played in the Arab uprisings toward a fresh understanding of how changes in media affect existing power relations. Based on extensive fieldwork, in-depth interviews with Internet activists, and immersive analyses of online communication, this book redirects our attention from institutional politics to the informal politics of everyday life. An original contribution to the political sociology of Arab media, *Networked Publics and Digital Contention* provides a unique perspective on how networked Arab publics negotiate agency, reconfigure political action, and reimagine citizenship.

[Back to top](#)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Frantz Fanon: The Empowerment of the Periphery

Middle East – Topics & Arguments (META), Vol 5 (2015)

Rachid Ouaissa

The current fascination with Fanon and his ultimate relevance can be explained by the convergence of the problems of colonialism, space and the subject-formation, which outlines Fanon's oeuvre. Fanon's understanding of space as a special form of domination has come to influence the debate on periphery, both on the global and local level. Fanon analyzed everyday racism as a geopolitical

colonization, as an alienating spatial relation and treated colonization as spatial organization. This article seeks to provide a political biography of Frantz Fanon, by shedding light on how he has influenced the current debate on peripheries and further attempts to demonstrate Fanon's relevance in the era of globalization.

Keywords: Space; Alienation; Violence; Revolution; Colonialism; Globalization

Download full text [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

The next Intifada: A struggle against the Bantustans

Middle East Eye – 9 Oct 2015

By Jamal Juma

The past few days in Palestine have evoked images of the First Intifada. Burning tyres in the streets, youth wrapped in Palestinian scarves throwing stones, and Israeli military confronting them with tear gas, sound grenades and live ammunition. Entire Palestinian villages are under siege. Clashes are spreading like wild fire across Jerusalem and Palestinian areas on both sides of the Green Line.

The root causes for this rebellion are the same as ever: the Israeli regime of occupation, apartheid and colonialism makes Palestinians' lives unbearable. However, there are fundamental differences between now and then, and the actions of Israel's new settler militia will determine when, not if, a full scale Intifada will explode. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

A New Generation of Resistance

Jacobin Magazine – 19.10.2015

By Yasmine Saleh

Over the past several days, Palestinian youth in the West Bank have been exerting their political power — destroying parts of the Separation Wall surrounding the city of Abu Dis with a large hammer, rallying against the attacks on Jerusalemite Palestinians in the Old City, and clashing with Israeli soldiers at checkpoints.

The current wave of youth protest is not an anomaly in the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation and colonization. Palestinian society is a young society. Youths make up a third of the population, with fully 30 percent of people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine. In Jerusalem, 35.2 percent of the population is below the age of fifteen. And young people have been the driving force behind recent uprisings, such as the First Intifada in 1987–93 and the Second Intifada in 2000–05. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Palestinian women: Vanguard of resistance against Israeli occupation

Ahram Online - 17 Oct 2015

By Mariam Mecky

Powerful images of Palestinian women masking their faces with the traditional keffiyeh and marching in the streets, schoolgirls throwing stones at occupation forces, and female citizens arguing and tussling with Israeli forces have been going viral.

"With the Israeli atrocities and human rights violations against us, we as Palestinian women have no other choice but to resist and refuse the colonisation, occupation and humiliation, and participate in all resistance activities, whether violent or non-violent, side by side with men on the front lines," a Palestinian woman, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Ahram Online. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

How protesters used Arabic to subvert Western influence — long before the ‘Homeland’ graffiti

Washington Post – 16.10.2015

By Kevin M. Jones

The recent hacking of the popular Showtime series “Homeland” by a team of Arab graffiti artists hired to draw pro-Assad graffiti on a set depicting a Syrian refugee camp has elicited laughter and applause. The series has drawn pointed criticism for a litany of factual errors, historical absurdities and offensive political messages. In a public statement explaining their actions and motives, the graffiti artists cited many of these critiques, laying particular stress on both the show’s longstanding and inexplicable efforts to depict an alliance between al-Qaeda, Iran and Hezbollah and its recent defense of domestic surveillance in implicit allusion to Edward Snowden.

The show’s staggering inattention to the complex political and cultural realities of the Middle East rendered it an ideal target for the graffiti artists, who proceeded to plaster the set with slogans critical of the show. If “Homeland” producers were unable to differentiate between the political agendas of al-Qaeda and Hezbollah, they were equally unlikely to differentiate between pro-Assad and anti-“Homeland” graffiti scrawled across the walls of the set. Their contributions — which ranged from the satirical “Homeland is a watermelon” to the more direct “Homeland is racist” — passed unnoticed by the show’s set designers and were broadcast on Oct. 11. While the affair reveals much about the show’s blinkered conception of authenticity as a purely aesthetic vision of violence, hatred and misery in the Middle East, it also adds to the rich historical legacy of dissident art in the Arab world. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Thousands protest utility prices in Morocco's Tangier

Reuters – 1.11.2015

By Aziz El Yaakoubi

Thousands took to the streets in Morocco's northern city of Tangier late on Saturday to protest over high prices for water and electricity, in the nation's largest protest since pro-democracy marches in 2011 demanding political reforms.

Large-scale protests are rare in Morocco, where the king still holds ultimate sway. When pro-democracy unrest toppled leaders in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya in 2011, the palace managed to calm similar protests with a combination of limited reforms, spending and tougher security.

Continue reading [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

Anti-colonialism, grassroots nationalism and their impacts on international relations in Egypt

Open Democracy – 2.11.2015

By Youssef Kodsý

Anti-colonial movements are theatres of nationalism and discourses of nationality. The presence of a colonial regime assists in the formulation and articulation of a discourse regarding an imagined collective community as it provides the indigenous population with an 'other' to juxtapose itself against. With national self-consciousness awakened, anti-colonialism is born as the colonised people become cognisant of their political and economic exploitation by a party regarded as exterior to their collective community. This was the specific trajectory of the 20th century anti-colonial movements in the colonised southern Mediterranean, specifically in Egypt.

Throughout the 20th century, the colonised peoples of the Nile Valley began to imagine themselves as a consolidated collective and attempted to forge for themselves a sovereign state within specific territorial boundaries. However, the anti-colonial struggle in the land of the Nile was not a singular endeavour, but rather a prolonged process which evolved over time to recreate the national ideology fuelling the movement and correspondingly the manner in which the sovereign Egypt would relate to the Arab world. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

The Syrian Kurds Are Winning!

NYRB - December 3, 2015 Issue

by Jonathan Steele

Out of Nowhere: The Kurds of Syria in Peace and War

by Michael M. Gunter

London: Hurst, 169 pp., \$50.00 (distributed in the US by Oxford University Press)

Anyone searching for a sliver of light in the darkness of the Syrian catastrophe has no better place to go than the country's northeast. There some 2.2 million Kurds have created a quasi state that is astonishingly safe—and strangely unknown abroad. No barrel bombs are dropped by Bashar al-Assad's warplanes. No ISIS executioners enforce the wearing of the niqab. No Turkish air strikes send civilians running, as Turkish attacks on Kurdish militia bases do across the border in Iraq.

Safety is of course a relative concept. Car bombs and suicide attacks by ISIS assassins regularly take lives in this predominantly Kurdish 250-mile-wide stretch of Syria between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, but by the standards of the rest of the country it is quiet.

The 2.2 million Kurds make up a tenth of the Syrian population. During the protests of 2011—the Arab Spring—they, like their Arab counterparts in other Syrian cities, publicly demonstrated for reform in Qamishli, the region's largest city. But Assad was milder toward them than he was to other protesters elsewhere. He gave citizenship to 300,000 stateless Kurds and in July 2012 even withdrew most of his combat troops from the area on the grounds that they were needed more urgently in the Syrian heartland of Aleppo, Damascus, and the cities in between. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Jadaliyya Media Roundups

[Arabian Peninsula Media Roundup \(November 11\)](#)

[Egypt Media Roundup \(November 9\)](#)

[Egypt Media Roundup \(November 2\)](#)

[Palestine Media Roundup \(Nov 5 - 11\)](#)

[Palestine Media Roundup \(Oct 29–Nov 4\)](#)

[Syria Media Roundup \(November 11\)](#)

[Syria Media Roundup \(November 4\)](#)

[Back to top](#)

POSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Research Officer - Historical Sociology of the Middle East

LSE Middle East Centre

Duration: 24 months from January 2016 (start date may be negotiable)

Contract Type: Fixed Term, Full time

Salary: £33,450 - £40,462 (FTE)

Deadline for Applications: **30 November 2015** (23.59 UK time)

Interview Dates: Early December 2015

The Centre seeks a Research Officer to contribute to research activities on the historical sociology of the Middle East and to produce independent research. Candidates should have social sciences training, including a relevant PhD; a strong record of research and publication on the Middle East; and excellent organisation and communication skills. More information [here](#)

[***Back to top***](#)