



# **SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POPULAR MOBILISATION IN THE MENA**

## **Digest of Current Publications and Events**

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## CONTENT

<b>Featured Ressource: Mosireen Video Archieve “858” on Egypt .....</b>	<b>4</b>
[Introductory Article:] How to Save the Memories of the Egyptian Revolution .....	4
<b>Call for Papers &amp; Conferences .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Who’s Who: Contested Identities and Conflicting Alliances in the Shadow of the Arab Uprisings ....	4
Authoritarianism and Democratic Decline in the Age of Sectarianism and Populism .....	6
No country for anthropologists? Contemporary ethnographic research in the Middle East .....	7
IRiS International Conference 2018 - Racial Displacements: Peripheries, Camps, Resistance .....	9
On Incarceration, Surveillance, and Policing .....	10
Diaspora Dilemmas: Political Participation in Contested Environments .....	12
Social Visibility, Affect & Epistemics of Protest in Morocco and Tunisia since 2011 .....	13
<b>Talks &amp; Other Events .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Kurdish Women Fighters: A Path Out of Patriarchy? .....	16
Grounded Struggles: Land, Dispossession, and Freedom .....	16
War Is Coming: Between Past and Future Violence in Lebanon .....	17
Women and the Struggle for Democracy in Iran.....	17
Law and Revolution: Legitimacy and Constitutionalism After the Arab Spring .....	17
Revolutionary Social Contracts and Long-Term Legacies: Comparing Former and Current Revolutionaries in Dhufar and Western Sahara .....	18
Palestinian Citizens of Israel: Power, Resistance and the Struggle for Space .....	18
Philippine Migration to the Middle East and Migrant International Activism .....	19
Centre for Palestine Studies Annual Lecture: The Nakba in the Present.....	19
Revolution without Revolutionaries: A book discussion with Asef Bayat.....	20
<b>Recent &amp; Forthcoming Books .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Women and Equality in Iran: Law, Society and Activism .....	20
Networks of Power in Palestine: Family, Society and Politics Since the Nineteenth Century .....	21
Palestinian Citizens of Israel: Power, Resistance and the Struggle for Space .....	21
Revolts and the Military in the Arab Spring: Popular Uprisings and the Politics of Repressions.....	22
The Revolutionary Guards in Iranian Politics - Elites and Shifting Relations.....	22
<b>Journal Articles &amp; other Academic Publications .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Effervescent Egypt: Venues of Mobilization and the Interrupted Legacy of 2011 .....	23
Challenging Spatial and Economic Order: The Rise of the Street Vendors Movement .....	23
Establishing a Niche for Urban Rights: Activism, Urbanism, and the City.....	24
Between Professional Ethos and Revolutionary Action: The Tahrir Doctors Society .....	24

The Rab'a al-Adawiya Sit-In from Inside: Strategic Choices and Trade- Offs between Security and Counter Messaging.....	25
Failing to Effectively Unionize: The Independent Union of Transport Workers and the Crisis of Legitimate Representation .....	25
<b>News Pieces &amp; Commentary .....</b>	<b>26</b>
The return of 'class and social justice' in Iran and Tunisia .....	26
'Revolution without Revolutionaries:' Making sense of the Arab Spring - A conversation with Asef Bayat.....	27
Tehran hijab protest: Iranian police arrest 29 women .....	27
Iran's mass protests beyond class boundaries.....	27
How Rouhani's neoliberal policies provoked unrest in Iran .....	28
The Great British Empire Debate .....	28
Whither Iran? A 21-year-old Reform Movement on the Brink of Success.....	29
Egypt marks seventh anniversary of Arab Spring uprising.....	29
Remembering against the tide: Giulio Regeni and the transnational horizons of memory .....	30
Alain Badiou on the Egyptian revolution: questions of the movement and its vision [video].....	30
Gaza under commercial strike amid worsening conditions .....	30
<b>Petitions and Calls for Solidarity .....</b>	<b>31</b>
[Palestine:] Help free my daughter – Ahed Tamimi.....	31
<b>Positions and Opportunities .....</b>	<b>31</b>
CBRL Visiting Research Fellowships, CBRL Kenyon Institute, CBRL British Institute in Amman.....	31
Post-doctoral Fellowship in Middle East Studies, University of Southern California.....	32
Professorship in Social and cultural history of Islam and Islamic world .....	33

## FEATURED RESSOURCE: MOSIREEN VIDEO ARCHIEVE “858” ON EGYPT

### **[Introductory Article:] How to Save the Memories of the Egyptian Revolution**

Amir-Hussein Radjy

The Atlantic, 25 January 2018

Egypt’s 2011 revolution was remarkable for its self-awareness. The power to photograph, film, and broadcast protests across the Internet in real time seemed to prove the emancipatory power of technology. At Tahrir Square, an independent media group formed by a handful of young activists called Mosireen collected videos recorded by smartphone-wielding protesters that documented police abuses. Mosireen hoped to use the crowd-sourced videos as evidence against President Hosni Mubarak’s brutal security forces in court. But those trials never came to pass: Egyptian courts cleared Mubarak and some of his top aides of any responsibility for the shooting of demonstrators in the revolution’s first days. The state’s narrative—if the erasure of the revolution’s history can be called a narrative—has lurched between farce and tragedy. In January 2011, as anti-regime protesters filled Tahrir Square, state television broadcast images of empty streets. After the 2013 coup, prosecutors used Mosireen’s videos, available on its YouTube channel, against protesters in court. Earlier this year, Egypt’s government struck all reference to the 2011 and 2013 uprisings from school textbooks. *Continue reading [here](#)*

Access the archive [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## CALL FOR PAPERS & CONFERENCES

### **Who’s Who: Contested Identities and Conflicting Alliances in the Shadow of the Arab Uprisings**

interdisciplinary graduate conference, sponsored by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and held at the University of Cambridge on 26 April 2018.

Deadline: 26 February 2018

The conference aims to scrutinize mainstream narratives and to critically approach the changes and continuities shaping the Arab World since the late 2010 uprisings. It provides PhD students and early-career scholars concerned with the contemporary Arab region with an opportunity to disseminate their research and to connect with fellow researchers.

As the region features a wide array of major and unfolding phenomena—various crises, as in Yemen, Libya, and Syria, and many unforeseen changes, as in Saudi Arabia’s domestic politics—we encourage participants to critically reflect and empirically analyse the roots, manifestations, and effects of these events. Of particular interest is the study of how these events connect and overlap within larger networks of alliances and power struggles that are redefining the balance of power across the Arab region since the uprisings.

The conference seeks to address, but is not limited to, the following topics related to the contentious legacy of the Arab uprisings:

- Conflicting alliances and competition for regional leadership
- Small states and low-profile actors: their role in shaping and directing regional developments
- Soft power and status-seeking politics
- Revival of state nationalism
- Cultural changes and reconstruction of national identities and citizenship
- Religion and politics: their relationship and its impact on such issues as women’s rights and education programmes, among others

#### Structure of the Conference

Every speaker will have 15 minutes to present their paper. They will then receive feedback from a senior scholar followed by a Q&A session with the audience.

The conference also features an interactive workshop, delivered by leading scholars and publishing experts, that explores the different publishing venues available for junior scholars to disseminate their work to academic and non-academic audiences alike.

#### Participation

Participation in the conference is free. Those wishing to participate need to submit an abstract (250 words) by 26 February 2018 by filling an online form on: <http://bit.ly/whoswhoconf>. Papers will be selected on the basis of quality, originality, engagement with the conference’s theme, and fit with other papers being presented at the conference. Those offering papers will be notified by 5 March at the latest whether their submission has been accepted. A waiting list may be established, depending on the level of interest. Full papers are due by 12 April 2018.

Speakers are eligible for a small contribution towards travel costs.

Conference Conveners: Engy Moussa, Babak Mohammadzadeh, and Karim El Taki

*More information* [here](#)

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

# Authoritarianism and Democratic Decline in the Age of Sectarianism and Populism

26 April 2018, Renaissance Hotel, Washington, DC

Deadline: 25 February 2018

These are dark days for democracy in Muslim-majority societies. Almost everywhere, despotic and authoritarian governments are firmly in control while democratic movements and civil societies are repressed. These authoritarian regimes are primarily in conflict with their own societies, but also with each other. The rivalry between the Islamic Republic of Iran (and its allies) versus the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (and its allies) stands out. This has fueled sectarian conflict across the Islamic world, producing greater instability and new levels of violence.

The policies of the Trump Administration have exacerbated these trends. The embrace of autocratic regimes continues a long pattern of Western policy toward the Arab-Islamic world that mistakenly seeks stability in political authoritarianism instead of representative democracy. The primary beneficiaries of this state of affairs are radical extremist groups who, amid this chaos, are able to gain new recruits. The prognosis for the future looks grim.

The nineteenth annual conference of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID) will, therefore, be devoted to exploring the complexities of this highly important topic in the context of diverse Muslim-majority societies. Paper proposals are invited from prospective participants on the following four broad themes.

Possible topics are not restricted to the ones below, but proposals must establish their relevance in general to the conference theme.

- Islam and democracy in an age of authoritarian resilience.
- Sectarian conflict and the prospects for de-Sectarianizing the Arab-Islamic world.
- U.S. policy and the debate on authoritarianism vs. democracy.
- After ISIS, what is next for the Arab-Islamic world?

Paper proposals (no more than 400 words) are due by February 25, 2018 and should be sent to: Gina Jannone. Authors of accepted proposals will be notified by March 4, 2018 and final papers must be submitted by April 15, 2018.

Selected speakers must cover their own travel and accommodations to participate in the conference, and pay the conference registration fee by April 1, 2018. Travel grants of \$500 are available for selected speakers and panelists coming from outside North America.

Co-Sponsored by the Center for Middle East Studies at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver.

*More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

# **No country for anthropologists? Contemporary ethnographic research in the Middle East**

2-3 November 2018, University of Zurich Institute of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies

Deadline: 1 May 2018

Convenors: Mustafa Akcinar, Aymon Kreil, Shirin Naef, Emanuel Schaeublin

Many parts of the contemporary Middle East are confronted with war, sectarianism, transnational interferences, uprisings, and a comeback of authoritarian regimes. This brings about various difficulties for ethnographic research as a practice of knowledge production based on the immersion of researchers in given social contexts and the subsequent writing up and publishing of texts:

Restrictions of access limit the possibility to carry out fieldwork. Local and transnational researchers have troubles accessing communities in different places. The risks of living there for 12 to 18 months (which is required for ethnographic fieldwork) include political instability and different forms of state repression. They are not easy to assess and can have far-reaching consequences for personal lives.

Writing is equally affected by these developments. Many settings leave little place for non-partisan standpoints, as narratives on the situation become arenas for competing claims of legitimacy. State and non-state institutions are often suspicious of forms of discourse that evade their control and hegemony. At the same time, political protestors may expect researchers to act as their spokespersons. This creates subtle or more direct kinds of pressures to write about certain topics rather than others or to exercise self-censorship.

The 'destabilization' of countries in recent years was followed by an increase of military presence and the division of territory into securitized ('green') and less secure 'zones'. In such times, contextualized and nuanced accounts of the situation of different communities – which go beyond the narrow sphere of 'policy analysis' – are more important than ever. In theory, this is what ethnography at its best should provide.

The international conference No country for anthropologists? Contemporary ethnographic research in the Middle East explores the obstacles to do ethnography in the Middle East and takes them as the starting point for reflecting upon the role of anthropology with a view to the Middle East of today. To tackle the issue, the conference will revolve around four main axes, addressing the interrelated questions of:

1. The possibility of ethnographic research for local and foreign researchers . This axis aims at discussing the impediments and incentives to research in the region, including discourses framing the perception of researchers ('information war', fears of transnational interferences, citizen activism, etc.); the institutional settings of research (conditions of funding, research grants, etc.); the threats to researchers and the attempts to co-opt them politically; the impossibility to access certain places and communities due to various forms of risks; and the relation between local and foreign researchers.

2. The positionality of researchers and their interlocutors . This axis seeks first to reflect upon forms of guiding researchers' attention, different kinds of institutional pressure, and the role interlocutors in the context of inquiry ascribe to researchers. How do these aspects affect fieldwork practice? In parallel to this line of questioning, the aim is to critically consider the relation between researchers and their interlocutors, the agendas they possibly have when communicating with each other, and their different kinds of vulnerability.

3. The shaping of alternative methods of inquiry . This axis explores possibilities to circumvent the impediments to ethnographic modes of inquiry. This involves interrogating the anthropological understanding of fieldwork as a site for long-term 'participant observation.' Possible alternative methods include the use of digital sources as ethnographic material, the reliance on micro-situations to make a fragmentary portrait of a situation, reckoning with the incompleteness of ethnographic accounts, or collaborative approaches blurring the roles of 'author' and 'interlocutor'. In this axis both the limits and potentialities of such alternative methods of inquiry will be discussed.

4. The practice of ethnographic writing . The restrictions and concerns mentioned above directly affect the practice of ethnographic writing. In contexts of violence, it is often difficult to avoid taking sides, and hesitating to do so can appear as a sign of cowardice or betrayal. The need to advocate for oppressed groups has its flipside when research becomes part of discourses asserting moral truths or exclusively reproduces the narratives of certain interlocutors purporting to represent oppressed groups. Moreover, writing about certain themes can increase the vulnerability of local communities or entail legal consequences for people and institutions involved in transferring money to contested areas. This axis addresses issues related to writing ethnography, such as self-censorship, the nature of topics that researchers do not mention in texts, techniques of anonymization in writing, and the afterlife of ethnographic texts. Based on these discussions, we seek to reconsider the critical power of ethnographic writing and the ethical challenges it gives rise to.

Participants are invited to discuss these issues on the basis of concrete case studies. We welcome contributions from all theoretical directions and regional areas of interest. Contributors should send an abstract of maximum 250 words and a short CV by 1 May 2018 to Emanuel Schaeublin ( [emanuel.schaeublin@uzh.ch](mailto:emanuel.schaeublin@uzh.ch) ). Applicants will be notified by 15 May 2018 of the decision. Subsequently, participants will be asked to provide their draft paper (max. 6000 words) by 15 September 2018. It will then be circulated among the participants.

*More information [here](#)*

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



# IRiS International Conference 2018 - Racial Displacements: Peripheries, Camps, Resistance

18 and 19 June 2018

Deadline: 31 January 2018

In 2015 the number of forcibly displaced people across the world was the highest since World War II (UNHCR Global Trends 2016). As global inequalities are largely the sedimentation of colonialism, several mechanisms and expressions of displacement still occur alongside racial lines. The conference offers a forum where scholars can initiate a dialogue to illuminate the logics of displacement and banishment that operate across both global and urban peripheries conjointly.

Through the lens of racial displacements, we aim to trace a line linking global and urban peripheries, investigating the proliferation of different forms of encampments as well as their metamorphosing into cities, while reflecting on the partitioning and securitization of the urban space.

Racial displacements also produce emerging forms of resistance such as, for example, the Standing Rock's fight against the Dakota pipeline in the US, and the micropolitics of resistance of foreign construction workers in Dubai.

Finally, racial displacements also refer to the displacement of race and racial thinking, from colonies to the postcolony and the so-called post-racial. The conference is the closing event of Dr Giovanni Picker's Marie-Skłodowska Curie Fellowship project entitled "Camp-bivalence".

## Keynote Speakers

Professor Mary Pattillo (Northwestern University)

Professor AbdouMaliq Simone (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity)

Plenary Session: *Racism, the city and the state @25*

Professor Michael Keith (University of Oxford) in conversation with other scholars on his and Malcolm Cross' edited volume *Racism, the city and the state* [Routledge], on the occasion of its 25th birthday.

We welcome theoretical, empirical and methodological papers addressing the theme of Racial Displacements in any Social Sciences and Humanities discipline. Sub-themes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Race critical theories and displacement;
- Distinctions between forced and unforced racial displacements;
- Displacement and the racialized/racializing "production of space";
- Intersectionality and displacements;
- Racial capitalism and displacement;
- Displacing, disguising, denying race;
- Citizenship, displacement and the racial contract;
- Slums, camps, favelas, townships as forms of racial displacement;
- Mass incarceration;
- Racial neoliberalism and displacement;

- Walls, walled states and racial sovereignty;
- Sanctuary and anti-racist cities;
- Resistance to racial displacements;
- Microhistorical and longue durée perspectives on racial displacements;
- Colonialism as driver of racial displacement;
- Racial displacements and Urban Studies;
- Financial "crises" and racial displacements;
- Evictions from a global and comparative perspective;
- Poverty, planning race and displacement;
- Plantations, reserves, camps;
- Camps and the racial(ized) "state of exception";
- The methods of investigating racial displacements globally.

Abstracts should be sent to [racialdisplacements@gmail.com](mailto:racialdisplacements@gmail.com) by January 31, 2018.

Paper submissions should include an abstract (max 300 words), email address and affiliation of the author(s) if available. Panel submissions should include the names, email addresses and affiliations (whenever possible) of three speakers and a chairperson, an overview abstract (max 300 words) and an abstract for each associated paper (max 300 words). It also should include the email address of one contact person.

Fees: £100/80 concession (£60 one day only) to be paid upon registration. Fees include conference material, one lunch per day and coffee breaks. A number of fee waiver grants will be available.

Presentation Format: The selected papers will be grouped by themes in parallel sessions. Each presentation will last 20 minutes and followed by 10 minutes discussion.

Conference Publications: An edited book and/or journal special issue will be planned after the conference.

More information [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **On Incarceration, Surveillance, and Policing**

Deadline: 18 February 2018

We are pleased to invite submissions for the seventh issue of *Kohl: a Journal for Body and Gender Research*, slated for publication in June 2018. Young activists, independent researchers, graduate students and fresh graduates are particularly encouraged to apply. We also welcome submissions from seminal contributors in the field.

Prisons are often framed as correctional institutions, and the criminal justice system as one of protection. In framing criminalization as both protective and preventive, not only do states limit protection to the legal apparatus, but they do so in exchange of resources, silence, cooperation, and

behavior that does not challenge their status quo. The creation of sexual citizenships that are coopted in surveillance and policing mechanisms contributes in the construction of a national imaginary that rests on binaries of exclusion/inclusion, as illustrated by governmental crackdowns, the most recent of which being on Egyptian queers. In this sense, surveillance and policing are not confined to incarceration or the justice system alone; they are also normalized as necessary to maintain social and institutional norms, and eventually trickle down to peer to peer surveillance. Both in the online and offline worlds, policing and surveillance respectively act as a disciplinary tool and a mechanism of intimidation and control.

For this issue of *Kohl*, we are looking to understand systems of criminal justice as massive machines for mental and physical isolation, including incarceration, policing, and surveillance from a feminist lens, and expose the effects of liberal reformist politics when it comes to incarceration, and the ways in which such reforms create a system where punishment is more entrenched. We are looking for papers that reclaim agency and bodily integrity and explore the ways in which bodies, movement, sexualities, and genders, among others, are controlled and commodified. We are also interested in critiques of the hegemonic state discourses, as well as those of mainstream allyship, for their disposal of bodies deemed unfit for nationhood, citizenship, and institutions, as well as notions of a virtuous morality on the one hand, and a vulgarization of sex as radical on the other.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Can we speak of a prison industrial complex in the regions of North Africa, Middle East, and South West Asia?
- Critiques of criminalization and feminist alternatives to systems of punishment: can we speak of transformative justice?
- The distinctions and intersections between policing, surveillance, and systems of control
- Policing the body: torture, forced or criminalized abortions, and forced sterilizations
- Governmental crackdowns, sexual conformity, and the new wave of detention of Egyptian queers
- Multidimensional and non-individualistic approaches to solidarity in response to incarceration and repression: alternatives to the stereotypical imagery of genders and sexual representations and the resistance/domination binary
- Social, digital, institutional, and peer to peer surveillance and policing
- Policing and surveillance as punishments: clandestine work, domestic work, sex work, migrants, and refugees
- Human trafficking and the commodification of bodies in trade
- Sexual, economic, and racial privileges in avoiding “systems of justice”
- Breaking the law: non-conforming sexualities and expressions, bodies of dissent, and their implications on fragile/sexual citizenship, healthcare, and neoliberal economies
- Disability discourses in the context of war and displacement

The deadline for submissions is February 18, 2018.

To submit a paper, please send your blinded piece to [kohljournal@gmail.com](mailto:kohljournal@gmail.com) as a .doc or .docx file, with “Submission Issue 7” as the subject of your e-mail.

We accept work in progress, provided full drafts are submitted. If accepted for inclusion, please note that your paper will be translated to a second language by our team.

More information [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **Diaspora Dilemmas: Political Participation in Contested Environments**

13 April 2018, King's College, London

Deadline: 15 March 2018

This workshop is organized with the assistance of the Leverhulme Foundation Research Grant, to take place at King's College London, on April 13, 2018, with the convenors: Dr Gillian Kennedy, Leverhulme Research Fellow at the Department of Middle Eastern Studies, King's College London, and Dr Branislav Radeljic, Reader in International Relations at the Department of Social Sciences and Social Work, University of East London.

Diasporas are one of the most prominent manifestations of increased globalization, with migration flows from conflict ridden countries forming much of the basis of new migrant communities in the West. With this, the impact of diasporas as political actors participating in host countries is changing the nature of immigrant politicisation, alongside transnational political engagement with home countries also seen increasingly as a feature of post-conflict political contestation. Diaspora communities through the use of social media are more deeply connected to their home countries than previous generations, seeking both to challenge existing state structures in their home nations via political protest in their host country. Understanding the changing methods and ideas affecting collective diaspora participation is imperative to the scholarly field of international relations as the lines between the nation-state and transnational identity have become blurred in recent decades, therefore this topic is of significant public policy concern for both scholars and non-academic practitioners.

The aim of this workshop has multiple scholarly objectives: firstly, to examine the comparative dimension of diaspora political participation across a range of post-conflict scenarios from Asia to the Balkans and the Middle East, with a focus on examining voting patterns and electoral participation; secondly, to analyse diasporas' effectiveness as a political actor on the supranational stage; and finally, to seek answers for the political integration of diaspora communities on host state politics and consequential interstate relations.

Some of the questions this workshop would like to address are:

- Why do some diaspora communities unify in the face of conflict while others fragment?
- Why do diaspora communities engage with supranational institutions such as the International Criminal Court and the European Court of Justice, instead of seeking redress from national sovereigns?

- How do diaspora groups participate in politics in their home states' transnationally and what are their objectives?
- Can diasporas affect foreign policy prescriptions in host countries towards home states and how does this affect inter-state relations?

We are looking for papers from various regions and are open to scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds alongside non-academic practitioners from diverse professional backgrounds. The workshop is open to postgraduate research students working in a relevant research capacity. The workshop will take place over 1 day with participants expected to discuss their papers in detail with other participants. Please submit a paper abstract of 250 words and a short biography to [gillian.kennedy@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:gillian.kennedy@kcl.ac.uk) and [B.Radeljic@uel.ac.uk](mailto:B.Radeljic@uel.ac.uk) by March 15, 2018.

More information [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **Social Visibility, Affect & Epistemics of Protest in Morocco and Tunisia since 2011**

Deadline: 10 February 2018

“The Maghreb in Transition” is an interdisciplinary research partnership between the Ludwigs-Maximilians University of Munich and eight partner universities in Morocco and Tunisia, namely Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University (Fez), Hassan II University (Casablanca), the National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (INSEA) (Rabat), Al Akhawayn University (Ifrane), Mohamed V University (Rabat), the University of Sousse, the University of La Manouba (Tunis), and the University of Carthage (Tunis). This multilateral cooperation is sponsored by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) as part of the German-Arab Transformation Partnership. In February 2018, “The Maghreb in Transition” recruits twelve highly motivated research fellows (Ph.D. students and Postdoctoral researchers) into its project “Social Visibility, Affect & Epistemics of Protest in Morocco and Tunisia since 2011”.

The project examines the politics of contestation and everyday resistance in Morocco and Tunisia since 2011 from three interrelated perspectives:

### 1. Regimes of Visibility & Aesthetics of Resistance

This first analytical focus starts from the premise that the (semi-)authoritarian state (Ottaway 2013) and state-affiliated media have enacted particular regimes of visibility during and after the 2011 uprisings. These regimes (re-)produce and sanction the boundaries of (il-)legitimate political action on a spatial and symbolic level. Subaltern actors, on the other hand, draw on a hybrid stock of creative practices, aesthetic forms, and disruptive techniques of protest and everyday resistance that negotiate and challenge these hegemonic boundaries, thereby seeking to display their own accounts of social (in-)justice, political freedom and human rights to a local, national and global audience.

From these ongoing “wars of position” and “maneuver” (Gramsci) a number of descriptive and analytical questions arise:

- What are the hegemonic regimes of visibility that the post-2011 state has established?
- What are the aesthetic forms and creative practices that subaltern actors deploy to render their dissidence, protest, and resistance visible?
- In which geopolitical networks and traditions of sovereignty and resistance are these hegemonic regimes and contentious practices rooted?
- Through which networks and media do these regimes and traditions of contention circulate across regional, socio-political, and historical boundaries?
- How are these practices and traditions adopted and reconfigured in the process?

## 2. Contentious Emotions: The Politics of Affect in Morocco & Tunisia

Anger (*ghaḍab*), frustration (*iḥbāt*), contempt (*hogra*) are the key terms of this strand. Affect and emotion played an instrumental role in triggering the 2011 protests. Although the highly emotional charge of the latter was striking, the political significance and function of these emotions have remained largely understudied. Drawing on theories and approaches of the affective turn, the project focuses on the specific repertoire of affect that has come into effect during and after the protests in 2011. It tackles, but is not restricted to, the following questions:

- What are the emotions that (have) protruded before, during and after the social uprisings in Morocco and Tunisia in 2011?
- Where can we possibly embed the historical grammar and temporal tradition of these emotive practices?
- What are the courses of action in which these emotive and affective traditions have **been** reshaped and refashioned?
- In which material forms and media practices have these emotions been manifested and rendered visible?
- On which visual, linguistic and bodily vocabulary do these emotive practices draw?
- How is political affect inscribed in- and onto the individual body?

## 3. Contentious Knowledge: Epistemes of Resistance & the Pluralization of Knowledge after 2011

The past and ongoing protests in the Arab world and their massive, social and political ramifications have put into question the idea of an “Arab Exceptionalism” and its underlying essentialist perception of the region as a frozen political and social entity that is unable of democratic change. The rise of the “Arab street” in 2011 has brought to the forefront other vernaculars and voices that aim at producing a different kind of – at times “tacit” or “embodied” – knowledge on democracy, social justice, good governance and human rights. Against the backdrop of this crisis and pluralization of knowledge both in and on the region, the project invites research proposals that investigate, among others, the following questions:

- Where could knowledge – its various disciplines, its formal and informal institutions, its practitioners (academics, religious scholars, intellectuals, etc.) – be situated in relation to hegemonic centers of power and their subaltern margins prior to 2011?
- Has this situatedness been subject to change since 2011?
- To what extent have everyday resistance, subversion and protest since 2011 given rise to different voices and vernaculars of outspoken, tacit and embodied forms of knowledge on the Muslim woman, good governance, the state, and other discursive entities that were crucial to the uprisings?
- Who are the main actors, and what are the central paradigms of this contentious knowledge?

- What are the media and the (in-)tangible, (non-)linguistic, iconographic and bodily forms in and through which this contentious knowledge does circulate?
- And how can more traditional sites of knowledge production (including academy) engage and interact with this contentious knowledge?

Besides providing an original research proposal, abstracts need to address the following three issues:

#### *1. Publication: Beyond an Academic Audience*

Research projects naturally get promulgated in different shapes and formats. This project fosters and encourages a plural understanding of the act of publication that includes, but goes beyond traditional forms of academic publishing (i.e. a written text, an article, a book chapter, etc). Hence, candidates are enthused to think beyond textual forms and to use other media and forms of dissemination to present their research results, including photos, videos, blogs, vlogs, posters, installations, performances, political and social projects etc. The choice of these means should reflect the targeted audience (on this, see 3. below). The publication strategy should be addressed in the abstract.

#### *2. Collaborative Research: Interdisciplinarity & Multilateralism*

Candidates are required to conduct their research in close collaboration with other candidates (and vice-versa) from different nationalities and research disciplines. Research teams can be formed during or after the kick-off workshop.

#### *3. Citizen Science & Participatory Action Research*

Knowledge matters – taking inspiration from concepts and approaches from Action Anthropology, Participatory Action Research, and Citizen Science, the project invites research proposals that seek close cooperation with civil society actors. This cooperation should permeate the entire research process: the identification of a relevant research topic, the formulation of a research question, the collection of data, analysis and the publication of results (see 1. above). Planned cooperation partners must be named in the abstract.

#### Requirements

- *either* enrolled as a Ph.D. student at a German, Moroccan or Tunisian University *or* completed dissertation in the last four years.
- good oral and written skills in Arabic, English or French; knowledge of German is an asset.
- good team worker with the ability to operate in an interdisciplinary environment.
- ready to participate in five to six workshops in Germany, Morocco, and Tunisia.

#### Benefits

- to participate in several sessions of academic training (research methodology, teaching) in Germany, Morocco, and Tunisia.
- to become part of a vibrant and transnational network of scholars in Germany, Morocco, and Tunisia.
- to gain experience in establishing and working in an international and interdisciplinary environment.
- to conduct and publish a research project that matters.
- cover of project-related expenses (travel and accommodation); no scholarships or grants are available.

#### Application Modalities

Applications are open to MA and Ph.D. students and Postdoctoral candidates enrolled at a German, Moroccan or Tunisian university. Candidates are asked to submit a CV and an abstract. Suitable candidates are invited for an interview at the end of February 2018.

Please send your application in English or French until February 10, 2018, to Dr. Ramzi Ben Amara (ramzibenamara@googlemail.com), Dr. Moulay Driss El Maarouf (elmaaroufmoulaydriss@gmail.com) and Dr. des. Amir Hamid (amir.hamid@lmu.de).

More information [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## TALKS & OTHER EVENTS

### **Kurdish Women Fighters: A Path Out of Patriarchy?**

7 February 2018, 18:00 – 19:30

Venue: LSE, Room 9.04, 9th Floor, Tower 1, 1 Clement's Inn, London WC2A 2AZ

Speaker: Güneş Murat Tezcür, University of Central Florida

Over the last three decades, tens of thousands of women have joined the ranks of the PKK and its affiliated organisations. What factors explain their violent mobilisation despite life-threatening risks? Building on a unique dataset of more than 9,000 militant bios and in-depth interviews with the families of militants, Güneş Murat Tezcür argues that gender inequality directly influences women's decisions to take up arms, believing that doing so provides them with a path out of patriarchal gender relations. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

### **Grounded Struggles: Land, Dispossession, and Freedom**

9 February 2017

New York City, US

Please join us for a series of films and discussions on grassroots struggles for land, dignity, the means of subsistence, and self-determination in Brazil, Morocco, Tunisia, Haiti and the U.S. In the face of (neo)colonial/(neo)imperial interventions, increased state repression and intensified capital expansion, these grounded struggles shed light on the mechanisms of dispossession as well as cartographies of resistance, solidarity, and transnational connections. By forging alternative modes of development that are not predicated on extraction, surplus, or disposability, these movements



expand the horizons of how we might imagine and practice new forms of value and social relations to challenge the structures and logics of racial capitalism. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **War Is Coming: Between Past and Future Violence in Lebanon**

3 February 2018 6:00-8:00 pm

Venue: K1.28, King's College, Strand Campus, London, UK

Speaker: Sami Hermez

In *War Is Coming*, Sami Hermez argues that the country's political leaders have enabled the continuation of violence and examines how people live between these periods of conflict. What do everyday conversations, practices, and experiences look like during these moments? How do people attempt to find a measure of certainty or stability in such times? Hermez's ethnographic study of everyday life in Lebanon between the volatile years of 2006 and 2009 tackles these questions and reveals how people engage in practices of recollecting past war while anticipating future turmoil. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **Women and the Struggle for Democracy in Iran**

21 February 2018 - 2:00pm

Venue: Board Room, Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford, UK

Speaker: Mariam Memarsadeghi (Tavaana)

*More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **Law and Revolution: Legitimacy and Constitutionalism After the Arab Spring**

21 February 2018, 6:00 PM

Venue: Paul Webley Wing (Senate House), Wolfson Theatre, SOAS, London, UK

Speaker: Nimer Sultany

Book Launch for *Law and Revolution: Legitimacy and Constitutionalism After the Arab Spring* (Oxford University Press 2017) by Nimer Sultany

*More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **Revolutionary Social Contracts and Long-Term Legacies: Comparing Former and Current Revolutionaries in Dhufar and Western Sahara**

27 February 2018 6:00-8:00pm

Venue: Nash Lecture Theatre (K2.31), King's College, London, UK

Speaker: Dr Alice Wilson, University of Sussex

Revolutions attempt to forge new social, political and economic relations including new social contracts. Whilst many studies examine the outcomes of such projects in the years immediately after revolutionaries capture state power, we know less about the lasting legacies of revolutionary social contracts in other circumstances, such as defeated revolutions and revolutions which only partially capture state power. This paper examines how revolutionary social contracts create long-term legacies in challenging political conditions of military defeat and protracted exile. Former, now defeated, revolutionaries in Dhufar, southern Oman, and current exiled revolutionaries from Western Sahara, each sought in early activism to promote new social contracts based on social egalitarianism and weakened tribal authority. Ethnographic fieldwork with both groups reveals long-term legacies of these revolutionary social contracts. In Dhufar, some defeated veterans and family members use kinship practices and everyday socialising to reproduce revolutionary values of social egalitarianism; these findings suggest how there can be an “afterlife” of revolution even after military defeat. For exiled Sahrawi revolutionaries, over time tribes have re-emerged in often contested roles; while Sahrawis’ revolutionary social contract has modified over time to allow greater public recognition for tribes, a revolutionary moral contract has nevertheless proved enduring. Both cases underscore the long-term legacies in diverse political settings of revolutionary social contracts - effects yet to be seen for the more recent revolutions of the Arab Spring. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **Palestinian Citizens of Israel: Power, Resistance and the Struggle for Space**

27 February 2018, 5:45 PM

Venue: SOAS, Russell Square: College Buildings, Khalili Lecture Theatre, London, UK

Speaker: Sharri Plonski, SOAS

This lecture by Sharri Plonski marks the publication of her book, *Palestinian Citizens of Israel: Power, Resistance and the Struggle for Space* (I.B. Tauris, 2018). *Palestinian Citizens of Israel* is an investigation into the Palestinian communities living inside the Jewish state, and their attempts to disrupt, resist and reshape the physical and symbolic borders that discipline their lives. Through extensive fieldwork and over a hundred interviews, Sharri Plonski conducts a comparative analysis of three contemporary cases, in which Palestinian citizens struggle for land and space in Israel: a popular struggle for housing rights in Jaffa; resistance to Jewish settlement interventions (and the policies that under-write them) in the central Galilee; and the campaign to recognise Bedouin land rights in the Naqab desert. Engaging with critical theories of space, borders and resistance, her research explores that which is both ‘ordinary and extraordinary’ about Palestinian-citizen resistance in Israel, through the different spaces it navigates and transforms. Plonski’s examination of

Palestinian activism and transgression offers valuable insight into the structures and reaches of power within the Israeli state, but also its limits. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **Philippine Migration to the Middle East and Migrant International Activism**

6 March 2018, 18:30 – 20:00 GMT

Venue: LSE, Room 9.04, 9th Floor, Tower 2, Mobil Court, London WC2A 2AZ

Speaker: Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, University of California, Davis

This seminar forms part of the Social Movements and Popular Mobilisation in the MENA Research Network. Robyn Magalit Rodriguez examines Filipino migrants' international activism, focusing on their participation in the International Migrants Alliance (IMA), an alliance of 120 grassroots migrant organizations from more than 30 countries. She looks at how, through the IMA, migrant activists have been able to draw attention to issues facing Filipino migrants in the Middle East, shape international laws protecting them, and challenge dominant state and civil society narratives around temporary labour migration regimes, instead treating them as a form of "modern-day slavery." *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **Centre for Palestine Studies Annual Lecture: The Nakba in the Present**

8 March 2018, 6:30 PM

Venue: Brunei Gallery, Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS, London, UK

Speaker: Elias Khoury

In this year 2018 marked by two competing 70th anniversaries – that of the creation of the state of Israel and that of the Palestinian Nakba – the CPS Annual Lecture will be delivered by Lebanese writer, novelist, university professor and prominent public intellectual Elias Khoury.

In his lecture, Elias Khoury will discuss the following themes:

- 1) The Nakba as ethnic cleansing, and how it has been depicted in Israeli and Palestinian Literatures;
- 2) The Nakba as a settler-colonial process that is still ongoing;
- 3) The error in comparing the Nakba to the Holocaust, and Edward Said's concept of 'the victims of the victims';
- 4) The Nakba as an open book.

Elias Khoury has published 13 novels, translated into 15 languages. He has taught in several universities, including Columbia University and New York University (NYU), and is the editor of the Arabic equivalent of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*. His novel *Bab Al Shams (Gate of the Sun)* was praised by Edward Said and made into a film. In The Guardian, Maya Jaggi commented: 'a character dreams of writing a "book without a beginning or end... an epic of the Palestinian people" ... Khoury's monumental novel is in a sense that groundbreaking book'. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **Revolution without Revolutionaries: A book discussion with Asef Bayat**

19 March 2018, 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Venue: Elliott School for International Affairs, Linder Family Commons, Room 602, Washington DC

Speaker: Asef Bayat

Asef Bayat will discuss his new book, *Revolution without Revolutionaries: Making Sense of the Arab Spring*, (Stanford University Press, 2017) with POMEPS on Monday, March 19, 2018 at the Elliott School for International Affairs, Linder Family Commons, Room 602. Setting the 2011 uprisings side by side with the revolutions of the 1970s, particularly the Iranian Revolution, this book reveals a profound global shift in the nature of protest: as acceptance of neoliberal policy has spread, radical revolutionary impulses have diminished. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

## **RECENT & FORTHCOMING BOOKS**

### **Women and Equality in Iran: Law, Society and Activism**

Leila Alikarami

June 2018 – I.B. Tauris

Iran's continued retention of discriminatory laws stands in stark contrast to the advances Iranian women have made in other spheres since the Revolution in 1979. Leila Alikarami here aims to determine the extent to which the actions of women's rights activists have led to a significant change in their legal status. She argues that while Iranian women have not yet obtained legal equality, the gender bias of the Iranian legal system has been successfully challenged and has lost its legitimacy. More pertinently, the social context has become more prepared to accommodate legal rights for women. Highlighting the key challenges that proponents of gender equality face in the Muslim context, Alikarami attempts to ascertain the causes of Iran's failure to ratify the CEDAW and questions whether and to what extent interpretations of Islamic principles prevent Iran from doing so. Applying feminist legal theory to contemporary Iran, Alikarami's approach re-evaluates the underlying principles that have shaped the struggle for equal rights between the sexes.

[Back to top](#)

## **Networks of Power in Palestine: Family, Society and Politics Since the Nineteenth Century**

Leila Alikarami

January 2018 – I.B. Tauris

Informal networks are an elusive and hidden factor in every society. In the Middle East, the Arab Spring recently highlighted their power and scope from Iraq to Morocco, exposing how family and clan networks wield influence behind institutional facades. While many studies of Middle Eastern societies solely analyse formal structures and official governing bodies, this book illuminates longstanding informal social systems by examining the sociopolitical history of the Palestinian highlands, known from 1950 as the West Bank. By studying family-based networks in cities like Jerusalem, Nablus and Hebron, Harel Chorev-Halewa shows how their influence has receded more slowly and less dramatically in recent generations than is commonly believed. He also connects individual elite families to the broader landscape of informal networks, comprising inter-familial alliances, collective economic systems, Sufi orders and customary law - all of which make up the unseen 'familial order.' Unfolding chronologically, this book spans a period of immense change from the Late Ottoman period to the present day, asking: How did Palestinian informal networks adapt to new realities? Why and how did they endure? And what does this say about modern Palestinian national politics in particular, and Arab societies in general? Offering an original and innovative look at informal networks in Palestine, this study is of crucial importance to scholars of Middle East studies, Palestine studies, political science and anthropology

[Back to top](#)

## **Palestinian Citizens of Israel: Power, Resistance and the Struggle for Space**

Sharri Plonski

2017 – I.B. Tauris

The contest to maintain and reclaim space is firmly tied to the identity and culture of a displaced population. *Palestinian Citizens of Israel* is a study of Palestinian communities living inside the Jewish state and their attempts to disrupt and reshape the physical and abstract boundaries that contain them. Through extensive fieldwork and numerous interviews, Sharri Plonski conducts a comparative analysis of resistance movements anchored in three key sites of the Palestinian experience: the defence of housing rights in Jaffa; the protest against settlement in the Galilee region; and the campaign for Bedouin land rights in the Naqab desert. Her research investigates the dialectical relationship between power and resistance as it relates to socio-spatial segregation and the struggle for national recognition. Plonski's examination of Palestinian activism and transgression offers valuable insight into the structures and reaches of power from within the Israeli state. This book will be of interest to students and scholars of both Middle East Studies and Palestinian-Israeli politics.

[Back to top](#)

## **Revolts and the Military in the Arab Spring: Popular Uprisings and the Politics of Repressions**

Sean Burns

2017 – I.B. Tauris

Through detailed exploration of events in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Syria and Yemen, Sean Burns here breaks down the concept of professionalism within the armed forces into its component parts and demonstrates how variation in military structures determines their behaviour. In so doing, and by emphasising historical context and drawing on a wide range of political science theory, Burns sheds fresh light onto the ways in which military structure affects the potential for democratic transition or the course of civil war. With this book he presented a wide-ranging study of the Middle East which provides key tools to understanding the opportunities for democratisation, both during the Arab Spring and beyond, and which is therefore essential reading for anyone working on the Middle East, popular uprisings and the politics of repression.

[Back to top](#)

## **The Revolutionary Guards in Iranian Politics - Elites and Shifting Relations**

Bayram Sinkaya

2016 – Routledge

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has been dubbed the 'kingmaker' in recent studies of Iranian politics, precipitating heated debates surrounding the potential militarization of the Iranian regime and giving rise to paradoxical understandings of the IRGC; whether as a military institution entering politics, or a political institution with a military history. *Revolutionary Guards in Iranian Politics* offers a way out of this paradox by showing that the IRGC is not a recently politicized institution, but has instead been highly politicized since its inception. It identifies the ways in which the IRGC relates to national political dynamics, examines the factors contributing to this relationship, and its implications on Iranian politics from the revolution up to the present day. The book examines the three decades following the revolution, uncovering the reasons behind the rise of the Revolutionary Guards and tracking the organization's evolving relationship with politics. Establishing a theoretical framework from revolution and civil-military relations theories, this book provides new perspectives on the relationship between the IRGC and Iranian politics.

[Back to top](#)

## JOURNAL ARTICLES & OTHER ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

### **Effervescent Egypt: Venues of Mobilization and the Interrupted Legacy of 2011**

Arab Reform Initiative, January 2018

The studies, published in two volumes in Arabic and one in English, and titled *Effervescent Egypt: Venues of Mobilization and the Interrupted Legacy of 2011*, offer a rare and broad snapshot of an ephemeral moment in Egypt, when autonomous mobilization, organizational experimentation, and the demand for rights and equality were generalized across the enlarged public sphere. Based on extensive field research, including hundreds of interviews, ethnographic methods, and participant observation, as well as action-research dialogues between activists and researchers, the publication provides an exceptionally rich picture of Egyptian civil society between 2011 and early 2014. The papers present a wide array of movements ranging from the organizing efforts of street vendors to the Tahrir Doctors Society, from anti-sexual harassment to urban rights and workers movements. The opportunities that opened post-2011 were interrupted following the arrival of President al-Sisi and ensuing shrinking space for fundamental freedoms and public mobilization. Although this moment of opportunity was short-lived, the studies provide timely insight for social and political actors in Egypt and further afield, with reflections on what worked and what didn't, as well as new strategies for the achievement of rights, including cause lawyering and strategic litigation. *Download [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

### **Challenging Spatial and Economic Order: The Rise of the Street Vendors Movement**

Amr Adly

*Effervescent Egypt: Venues of Mobilization and the Interrupted Legacy of 2011*, Arab Reform Initiative, January 2018, pp. 17-31

During the tumultuous political crisis of November 2012, when then-President Mohammad Morsi granted himself extraordinary powers in a bid to pass a new constitution, a presidential decree was issued that increased penalties for street vendors working without official permission or causing traffic congestion in streets and public squares. Decree No. 105 went largely unnoticed by observers engaged in commentary and analyses of the controversy surrounding the new constitution, but some knowledgeable in the rights of street vendors – specifically those working in the legal field – expressed surprise at the issuance and timing of the decree by the executive.<sup>1</sup> For others, however, the decree was understood as merely another element in the Muslim Brotherhood's broader attempts to construct a new political authority in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising. Rebuilding state authority after a popular revolution doesn't primarily require imposing a new constitutional order on political opponents to maintain control of the state apparatus; rather, it requires the re-

establishment of state domination over the daily lives of citizens after the loss of control by police and authorities. In this way, seeking to remove transgressions and side appearances in the squares and streets of Cairo and other major cities represented the restoration of state order, with new rules to end what many citizens saw as utter chaos after the revolution.

[Back to top](#)

## **Establishing a Niche for Urban Rights: Activism, Urbanism, and the City**

Aya Nassar

Effervescent Egypt: Venues of Mobilization and the Interrupted Legacy of 2011, Arab Reform Initiative, January 2018, pp. 32-53

The 2011 Egyptian Revolution has brought «urban» metaphors to the fore. Despite extreme efforts in the literature to shake off the urban stigma, the «spatiality of politics» remains entrenched as a central narrative of the 2011 revolution. Arguments both for and against this urban dominance are possible, and both demand attention. Stereotypical images of Tahrir Square accompany academic arguments that have always been attractive,<sup>1</sup> and have revived questions of space and place as a political issue, as well as of the city as a place that politics is practiced through, not against.<sup>2</sup> For example, neither Alain Badiou nor David Harvey hesitated to point to this image to attest to their favoured theoretical definitions of “the new event” or “rebellious cities.”<sup>3</sup> This set the scene by flirting with the urban narrative of January 2011 and taking on questions of urban mobility in the Arab Spring. Invoking Henri Lefebvre’s language of urban revolution also became plausible and familiar,<sup>4</sup> and it became possible to talk about urban injustice as a root cause of the events of 2011.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, 2011 and the period following were golden years for “the city” and its priority in academic discourse.

[Back to top](#)

## **Between Professional Ethos and Revolutionary Action: The Tahrir Doctors Society**

Habiba Mohsen

Effervescent Egypt: Venues of Mobilization and the Interrupted Legacy of 2011, Arab Reform Initiative, January 2018, pp. 54-71

The Tahrir Doctors Society emerged as a direct result of the political mobility and openness accompanying the beginning of the January 2011 revolution. Arising spontaneously as a response to the urgent need for medical care to protestors on Tahrir Square, the group of previously unconnected doctors quickly grew in organizational and strategic terms, becoming increasingly complex in its range of activities but also depth of claims. While the group’s early focus was on the provision of relief activities and first-aid in crisis situations, it quickly adopted a more legal approach, using advocacy work to promote the right to health and physical integrity, and to improve the



conditions of the health system in Egypt more broadly. In this way, while the group was initially formed in the light of professional ethos, it came to adopt a more revolutionary outlook, promoting the rights-based discourse of the 2011 uprising. Indeed, throughout 2011, the Society steadily increased its organizational formalization, range of activities, and coordination/networking with other groups representing a mixture of professional medical associations and youth revolutionary groups. Yet, following the largely failed Doctor's Strike in October 2011, the group entered into a phase of isolation and decline, exacerbated by the political context of the Morsi presidency and ensuing deep polarization of Egyptian society.

[Back to top](#)

## **The Rab'a al-Adawiya Sit-In from Inside: Strategic Choices and Trade-Offs between Security and Counter Messaging**

Sherif Mohy El Deen

Effervescent Egypt: Venues of Mobilization and the Interrupted Legacy of 2011, Arab Reform Initiative, January 2018, pp. 72-83

Over a period of 48 days, during the long summer of 2013, Egypt witnessed the longest popular sit-in since the outbreak of the 2011 uprising, centred on Rab'a al-Adawiya square in Cairo's Nasr City. Launched on 28 June 2013 by Muslim Brotherhood supporters of then-President Mohamed Morsi, the sit-in began as a precautionary action against the mass protest demanding Morsi's resignation and early elections that was to be held two days later. For those initially mobilized at the sit-in, claims focused on the issue of "legitimacy": the Rab'a al-Adawiya protestors reiterated the importance of having the legitimately elected president complete his four-year term (of which only one year had thus far been served). Less than a week later, following the 03 July military coup and forced removal of Morsi from office, the sit-in began rapidly gathering strength. Over the course of the next several weeks, tens of thousands of protestors would gather on Rab'a square daily, many remaining on the vast encampment overnight. The sit-in's macabre denouement came on 14 August, as security forces violently dispersed protestors in what would become the worst massacre in modern Egyptian history.

[Back to top](#)

## **Failing to Effectively Unionize: The Independent Union of Transport Workers and the Crisis of Legitimate Representation**

Fatma Ramadan

Effervescent Egypt: Venues of Mobilization and the Interrupted Legacy of 2011, Arab Reform Initiative, January 2018, pp. 84-97

In Egypt, the strikes of the Public Transport Authority (Authority), like transit strikes everywhere, have always been much more disruptive than those of factory workers or government offices. Transit

strikes impact large sections of the Egyptian population, and imply not only a suspension of work at the Authority, but also at least the partial suspension of work at places whose employees rely on public transport. Given this, Authority workers have a higher chance of success in seeing their demands met, especially when strike leaders coordinate successfully and prevent their efforts from falling apart and/or their worker base from drifting away. As such, it is natural for workers to seek organizing assistance from unions, which can become a permanent tool for coordination and for connecting with workers in different locations, and which can also shield workers against arbitrary treatment either by the Authority's administration or the police force. Yet, prior to the establishment of independent unions, the only syndicates allowed were those under the government union. Authority workers concluded that it was impossible to work through this union or even attempt to reform it in a manner that could represent workers and their demands.

[Back to top](#)

## NEWS PIECES & COMMENTARY

### **The return of 'class and social justice' in Iran and Tunisia**

Alphan Telek

openDemocracy, 4 February 2018

Recent social explosions in Iran and Tunisia make us wonder whether 'social justice' demands and 'class' politics have made a comeback. The importance of both Iran and Tunisia derive from the representative and vanguard roles they played in triggering the emergence of the global social movements, which exploded in 2009 and spread to the rest of the world. These occupation movements all around the world between 2011 and 2013 began in 2009 with the Green Movement in Iran, reappearing in a stronger form in Tunisia one year later. The ripple effects of those upheavals impacted in remote parts of the world including the US. All those movements raised new questions for us, creating a new vocabulary and new perspectives – questions such as, 'how the fusion of plutocracy and the political caste could be prevented from imposing excessive power on us?' and 'how we can form an alternative to the current social, political and economic system'. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## **'Revolution without Revolutionaries:' Making sense of the Arab Spring - A conversation with Asef Bayat**

Heba Khalil

Mada Masr, 3 February 2018

The summer of 2017 saw the release of *Revolution without Revolutionaries* by Asef Bayat, an author read by some during the Tahrir Square sit-in back in 2011. Precluded by another work, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change in the Middle East*, this latest book explores how time and space affected the nature and outcome of the Arab Spring. In this conversation, sociologist Heba Khalil engages Asef Bayat on several of his main points. We publish their conversation as we remember the January 25, 2011 revolution. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## **Tehran hijab protest: Iranian police arrest 29 women**

Saeed Kamali Dehghan

The Guardian, 2 February 2018

Police in Iran's capital have arrested 29 women accused of being "deceived" into joining protests against a law that makes wearing the hijab compulsory. Women across the country have been protesting by climbing onto telecom boxes, taking off their headscarves and waving them aloft on sticks. Although women in Iran have fought against the hijab for nearly four decades, the new wave of protests has grabbed more attention and sparked a debate rarely seen before over personal freedoms. One recent image taken from Mashhad shows a religious woman, in full chador, standing on a telecoms box holding up a headscarf, in solidarity with women who - unlike her - don't want to wear it. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## **Iran's mass protests beyond class boundaries**

Ehsan Abdoh-Tabrizi

openDemocracy, 1 February 2018

Iran's recent protests have done more than bloodying the regimes' nose. Most significantly, the protests stripped another layer of the regime's already thin legitimacy, particularly amongst a constituency traditionally *presumed* to be the Islamic Republic's backbone: low-income social strata and rural regions. But the protesters' motivations are not exclusively economic and class-based. Despite the Islamic Republic's longstanding resilience in surviving political crisis, the recent mass protests were a bad omen for the regime. It's leadership, characteristically, blamed the protests on foreign agents. Security forces rounded up thousands of protesters, presumed ringleaders and potential agent provocateurs. There have been about 30 confirmed fatalities with the suspicious

deaths of some detainees. However, the announcement of General Jafari, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp (I.R.G.C) about “the end of the new sedition” was as hollow as George Bush’s “mission accomplished”. Few believe that this will be the end of the affaire, but rather the beginning of a new phase in the conflict between nation and state in Iran. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## **How Rouhani’s neoliberal policies provoked unrest in Iran**

Mehdy Shaddel

openDemocracy, 1 February 2018

When US president Jimmy Carter described Iran as an ‘island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world’ on new year’s eve, 1977, not even the most ardent spokespeople for the unfolding revolution had the slightest idea Shah Mohammadreza Pahlavi’s regime was to last less than fourteen months. Similarly, and quite ironically, when the Iranian vice president Eshaq Jahangiri, deliberately echoing Carter, went on record as stating that ‘Iran is an island of stability in the insecure Middle East’ in an address in March 2017, nobody was expecting nationwide unrest to rock the country only ten months later. But the unexpected has now happened, leaving media commentators and Middle East experts struggling to come up with explanations. One of the most recurring explanations given for this fleeting bout of anti-government demonstrations is economic grievances, especially among the unemployed, suburban youth. But while many analysts, both within Iran and without, have pointed to economic disaffection as the major stimulus for the current upheavals, others have expressed doubts, going so far as to identify ‘rising expectations’ as the underlying cause of unrest rather than declining economic prosperity. During a televised cabinet meeting, President Rouhani himself scapegoated the state-run TV by accusing it of downplaying the government’s economic achievements and, consequently, helping to foment socio-economic discontent. His reformist supporters, who took to the streets themselves in 2009 to contest election results, have reiterated the people’s right to peacefully protest and called on all sides to eschew violence.

*Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## **The Great British Empire Debate**

Kenan Malik

The New York Review of Books, 26 January 2018

The sun may have long ago set on the British Empire (or on all but a few tattered shreds of it), but it never seems to set on the debate about the merits of empire. The latest controversy began when the *Third World Quarterly*, an academic journal known for its radical stance, published a paper by Bruce Gilley, an associate professor of political science at Portland State University in Oregon, called “The Case for Colonialism.” Fifteen of the thirty-four members on the journal’s editorial board resigned in

protest, while a petition, with more than 10,000 signatories, called for the paper to be retracted. It was eventually withdrawn after the editor “received serious and credible threats of personal violence.” Then, in November, Nigel Biggar, regius professor of theology at Oxford University, wrote an article in the London *Times* defending Gilley. Biggar saw Gilley’s “balanced reappraisal of the colonial past” as “courageous,” and called for “us British to moderate our post-imperial guilt.”  
*Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## **Whither Iran? A 21-year-old Reform Movement on the Brink of Success**

Patricia Sohn

E-International Relations, 26 January 2018

It has been widely noted now in the Western media that Iran has experienced at least two major reformist movements with groundswells of grassroots support from the street up. One of these protests is very current, happening in recent weeks just before and after the new year. Before that, major national reformist protests emerged in a disputed election in 2009. The 2009 protests came on the heels of the ultra-conservative backlash against the first reformist movement of recent decades, which gets less attention in our press – that of the landslide victory of moderate cleric, Mohammad Khatami in 1997. That election experienced an unprecedented 80% voter turnout (ok, precisely 79.92%, but that is close enough for me to round up). And moderate Khatami won 69.1% of the vote. It was a landslide, and it inaugurated eight years of some degree of reformist power in Iran, albeit curbed by more conservative clerics within the political system. We in the West largely ignored it. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## **Egypt marks seventh anniversary of Arab Spring uprising**

Al-Jazeera English, 25 January 2018

Egyptian authorities have closed off routes leading to Cairo's Tahrir Square as the country marks seven years since a revolution toppled former President Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule. Thousands of Egyptians took to the streets to mark the anniversary in previous years and to protest against current President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's rule, but these demonstrations were quickly silenced by Egypt's security services, resulting in civilian deaths. The January 25 uprising that lasted for 18 days in 2011, called for democracy and an end to police brutality. According to Amnesty International, more than 840 people were killed during the protests that took place during the revolution. "The day of Mubarak's stepdown, I lost my voice," Ali Khafagi, who participated in the uprising, told Al Jazeera. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## **Remembering against the tide: Giulio Regeni and the transnational horizons of memory**

Franco Palazzi, Michela Pusterla  
openDemocracy, 24 January 2018

On January 25th, 2016 Giulio Regeni, a young Italian graduate student at Cambridge, was kidnapped by local security forces, who later tortured and killed him. Right after, a transnational campaign asking for truth and justice was launched by Regeni's fellows at Cambridge, his family, and the Italian Section of Amnesty International, while Rome and Cairo attorneys began their investigations – which are now stuck in the mud: two years later, the call for truth and justice has yet to be answered.

*Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## **Alain Badiou on the Egyptian revolution: questions of the movement and its vision [video]**

Linda Herrera  
openDemocracy, 24 January 2018

The seven-year anniversary of the 25 January Egyptian Revolution, an event that captured global attention and inspired countless movements, provides an opportune moment to reflect on the state of politics today. French philosopher Alain Badiou was among the first major intellectual figures to theorize the Egyptian and Tunisian uprisings and articulate their historical significance in his book, *The Rebirth of History: Times of Riots and Uprisings* (Verso, 2012). Badiou bore witness to the unfolding of May 1968 in France, an event to which he maintains fidelity. Badiou acknowledges that with Egypt, movement based politics entered a new phase in the historical process. It remains to be seen if and how the event of the Egyptian revolution can reveal clues and unlock ideas about the changing nature of politics and organization, the meaning of revolution, and notions of failure and success. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## **Gaza under commercial strike amid worsening conditions**

Al-Jazeera English, 22 January 2018

A general strike has been called for by the private sector in the Gaza Strip to protest worsening living conditions amid the ongoing blockade, which is threatening to collapse the enclave's economy. In a statement published last week, the Gaza Businessmen Association (Arabic) announced that the strike in commercial and economic institutions would start from 8am (06:00 GMT) and last for six hours on Monday. "This urgent appeal comes as a last resort, after the catastrophic economic and living

conditions of the Gaza Strip reached the point of zero," the statement said. The statement pointed out the economy has reached an "unprecedented level of decline". "Most notably, the unemployment rate is at 46 percent, the rates of poverty have exceeded 65 percent, and the rate of food insecurity for households in the Gaza Strip has reached 50 percent." *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## PETITIONS AND CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY

### **[Palestine:] Help free my daughter – Ahed Tamimi**

My 16-year-old daughter was dragged out of her bed in the dead of night and arrested. Even though she is just a child, the military refused to release her. She could spend years in jail. I have dedicated my life to civil resistance in Palestine. That's why the Israeli army is holding my baby -- they want to crush my spirit. All I want is to hold my daughter again. I have dedicated my life to civil resistance. That's why the army is holding my baby -- they want to crush our spirit. But I have been a member of Avaaz for eight years -- I have seen the power of this community if we all stand together against injustice. My little girl's case goes to court on 31 January -- but Israel's military courts convict 99% of Palestinians, even if they are kids. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

## POSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### **CBRL Visiting Research Fellowships, CBRL Kenyon Institute, CBRL British Institute in Amman**

Deadline: 15 February 2018

CBRL offers Visiting Research Fellowships tenable at the CBRL Kenyon Institute, CBRL British Institute in Amman and Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute (CAARI), see the guidance document for further details. Accommodation is included plus a research expenses allowance. Non-stipendary Honorary Fellowships are also available.

Visiting Research Fellowships: To enable established scholars in university posts (Senior Visiting Fellowships), and early career postdoctoral candidates within three years of the award of PhD (Visiting Fellowships) to spend time in the Levant region to conduct primary research, develop contacts, give lectures, and write up project results/publications derived from a thesis/research. The number of fellowships awarded annually varies.

Applicants for Senior Visiting Fellowships must be employed at a UK university, and applicants for a Visiting Fellowship must be ordinarily resident in the UK.

CBRL Honorary Fellowships: Honorary Fellows are appointed to enhance the academic standing of the CBRL through the conduct and publication of research of high quality within the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Honorary Fellows are expected to play an active role in the life of CBRL's overseas institutes, through participation in the academic life of these establishments. Project Affiliation is required. Applications may be made for Honorary Fellowships at any time of the year.

*More information and application [here](#)*

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

## **Post-doctoral Fellowship in Middle East Studies, University of Southern California**

Deadline: 1 March 2018

The Department of Middle East Studies at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles invites applications for a one-year post-doctoral fellowship in Middle East Studies. Researchers with training in Environmental Studies, anthropology, political economy, urban studies, and geography are particularly welcome to apply. This fellowship is renewable for up to three years contingent upon administrative approval.

In addition to research, the successful candidate is expected to teach 3 courses per academic year and to participate in the intellectual life of the department and other units on campus. S/he will receive a stipend of \$65,000 plus benefits. Applicants must have received their Ph.D. within the last five years or at the latest by August 15, 2018, the start date of the position. In addition to the letter of application, applicants should include their curriculum vitae, a writing sample, three recommendation letters, and sample syllabi. Applications are due March 1, 2018.

USC is an equal-opportunity educator and employer, proudly pluralistic and firmly committed to providing equal opportunity for outstanding persons of every race, gender, creed and background. The University particularly encourages women, members of underrepresented groups, veterans, and individuals with disabilities to apply. USC will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. Further information is available by contacting Renee Almassizadeh (almassiz@usc.edu) or Ramzi Rouighi (rouighi@usc.edu).

*More information and application [here](#)*

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



## **Professorship in Social and cultural history of Islam and Islamic world**

Deadline : 08 March 2018

The University of Lausanne is a higher teaching and research institution composed of seven faculties where approximately 14,300 students and nearly 3,900 collaborators, professors, and researchers work and study. Ideally situated along the lake of Geneva, near Lausanne's city center, its campus brings together over 120 nationalities.

The Faculty of Theology and Sciences of Religions (FTSR - <https://www.unil.ch/ftsr> ) of the University of Lausanne (UNIL) invites applications for a position as: Full Professor or Assistant Professor (Tenure-track to Associate Professor) in Social and cultural history of Islam and Islamic worlds

Starting date: 1st August 2018 or convenient date  
Contact Length: depending on the position  
Rate of activity: 100 %  
Workplace: FTSR, Lausanne (Dorigny)

### Your responsibilities

- teaching of bachelor level (introduction to Islam) and master level in the curriculum "sciences of religions" (currently field "Socio-anthropology and history of Islams")
- supervision of PhD students and participation in post-graduate formation and continuing education courses
- active participation to the activities of the Institute for history and anthropology of religions (IHAR), and eventually lead the institute
- active participation in the administrative tasks of the Faculty and of UNIL
- dialogue with society in relation to the field of the position

Although courses are to be conducted primarily in French, English instruction during the first two years is possible.

The successful applicant will have a PhD in History, History of the religions or a title considered to be equivalent, should be able to demonstrate solid skills in the following areas:

- thorough knowledge of at least one language in the concerned field studies
- excellent scholarly publications in the concerned field studies
- experience in teaching in the concerned field studies
- excellent integration within international scholarly networks
- capacity to initiate and manage a research project
- ability to interact with specialists from other religious traditions
- openness to comparison and interdisciplinary
- interest in gender issues

Contact for further information

Further information may be obtained from Maritza.Erb@unil.ch (Administratrice de la FTSR).

The application must include: letter of motivation, curriculum vitae, date and title of the PhD, list of publications, copy of the relevant diplomas, name and contact informations of three referees (please attach letters of reference), and the five most significant publications.

Only applications through this website will be taken into account.

*More information and application [here](#)*

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