



SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POPULAR MOBILISATION IN THE MENA

Digest of Current Publications and Events

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CONTENT

Call for Papers & Conferences	4
Megacities and development : Megamachines of Hope and Alienation	4
American Anthropological Association (AAA) annual meeting	5
Political Violence in Syria: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives	6
AAA Roundtable: Whither the Anthropology of the Middle East? Resistance, Resilience, and Adaptation in a New Era of Instability.....	8
Digital Media, Islamism, and Politics in the Middle East.....	9
[Reminder:] World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies. 16-22 July 2018	10
Talks & Other Events	11
Freedom of Press in Egypt – Film screening: “Tickling Giants”	11
Human Rights in Egypt and Tunisia after the Arab Spring	11
Breathing Life into the Archive: Egyptian Revolutionary History on the Theatre Stage	12
The Syrian Uprising: Domestic Origins and Early Trajectory	12
Strikes, Riots and Laughter: Egypt's 1918 Peasant Insurrection	13
Centre for Palestine Studies Annual Lecture: The Nakba in the Present.....	13
The Struggle for Borders and Borders of Struggle	14
Speaking of jihad, what do we mean by ‘religious radicalisation’?	14
Recent & Forthcoming Books	15
Palestinian Citizens of Israel: Power, Resistance and the Struggle for Space	15
Dancing in Damascus - Creativity, Resilience, and the Syrian Revolution.....	15
News Pieces & Commentary	16
'That son of a bitch': Video shows Israeli soldiers cheering after shooting Gazan	16
Seven Palestinians killed, hundreds wounded in second week of Gaza protests	16
Israel: Gaza Killings Unlawful, Calculated.....	17
Tunisia rocks taboo on LGBTQ+ rights	17
Protests over Morocco's 'death mines' rage on despite intimidation	17
Three reasons why Israel backed down, and Ahed Tamimi will walk free	18
Young Egyptians start campaign to battle sexual abuse	18
Seeds of resistance: The woman fighting occupation with agriculture	19
Gaza: Facebook is 'complicit' with Israel.....	19
Why Bahraini rights activists need international support.....	19
Amazigh awakening: Libya’s largest minority wants recognition	20
The 'enforced disappearance' of Egypt’s secular youth.....	20

Jordanians protest price hikes but in surprisingly small numbers	21
Tunisia’s Next Revolution	21
[Egypt:] 858: Archiving as a tool of resistance - On revolution, non-production and subversive documentation	21
[Iran:] ‘Girls Of Revolution Street’ Appear In Many Other Cities	22
Oman jobs protest spreads to other cities as arrests reported	22
Syrian Kurd leaders call for mass mobilisation to defend Afrin	23
A “Blue” Generation and Protests in Iran.....	23
Young Tunisians know 2011 changed nothing: the revolution goes on	23
How the Muslim Brotherhood's women activists stepped up in Egypt.....	24
Hundreds protest in Nabi Saleh to demand freedom for Tamimi women	24
Positions and Opportunities	25
Book Review Editor(s), Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies.....	25
Early Stage Researchers (PhD positions), University of Aberdeen.....	26

CALL FOR PAPERS & CONFERENCES

Megacities and development : Megamachines of Hope and Alienation

26-27 June 2018, Cairo, Egypt

Deadline: 15 May 2018

The Megacity is at the core of a world that is undergoing a severe crisis, which Immanuel Wallerstein in 1999 predicted: the demise of the capitalist world-system within the first-half of the twenty-first century. He argued that four structural and ideological contradictions of the existing system are creating a major structural crisis, from which world capitalism cannot be rescued with the kinds of policies that worked in the past:

- rising costs of labour and
- ecological entropy; structural contradictions that are pushing the system towards chaos and turmoil
- the declining role of the nation-state, accompanied by
- increasing levels of anti-systemic resistance.

Saskia Sassen points to attacks on basic-needs spending and development in the global South as showing an increasingly harsh regime of insertion. Rather than poverty alleviation and growth, the goals of development policy in the neo-liberal era become things like contract guarantees, intellectual property, rights of firms and 'neutral' legal criteria.

The idea of state failure is mobilised to attack states with limited territorial control or which fail to impose neo-liberal measures. Such states are viewed as convenient for terrorists, impediments to development, and opponents of the rule of law and economic control. In the South especially, neo-liberal restructuring has supported global accumulation but has not led to coherent patterns of internal development. The Marxist view of the nation-state as a capitalist territorialisation of space sustained by an international division of labour has proved accurate. Democracy is held hostage to structural adjustment and promises of development aid.

Policies of hierarchical integration have turbulence built in, as the isolation of the deprived can emerge from within – as delinking, localism or traditionalism – or from without – as attempts to confine the poor to the global margins or ghettos. Constant surveillance and repression of periphery (via financial and development regimes and interventions), ghettos (via zero tolerance) and migration flows (via humiliation and repression) are linked to 'fear of falling' by core states and multinationals and trying to keep the world's problems contained beyond a border.

We coordinate with colleagues working on Cairo, Manila, Bogotá and invite participants from other cities, in order to investigate megacities producing politics of alienation and hope:

- Economic and Social alienation: Everyday life in the Megacity is dominated by colossal Megamachines of production. Fear and uncertainty of unemployment, scarcity and precarity are reproduced in everyday life. The death drive of the megacity liquidates personal links and social relations, resulting in non-spontaneous relations offered up for consumption. What

kinds of affirmative socioeconomic constructions can defend against the economic and social alienation of the Megamachine?

- Ecological alienation: Human activity is ecologically unresponsive. What are the sustainable relations to ecological entities that can move megacities in co-existence rather than war with ecological becomings?
- Cultural alienation: Megacities mobilise megamachines of cosmopolitan monoculture of appropriation extracting indigenous and minority cultures for commodification. How can the cultural economies, networks and cultural imaginations in the megacity defend against monocultural megamachines reproducing cultural hierarchies?
- Technological alienation: Megamachines of surveillance, smart city grids, sharing economy hyperboles, and social media guerrilla marketing micro-manage desire in the Megacity, seeking to map the world market into hundreds of zones and niches, computer-modelling the distribution of desire and converting desires into images that can be sold, copied, and consumed. Can the aesthetics, ethics and practices of indigenous, migrant and minority voices in the Megacity amplify and act as a counterbalance? Are new tech formations, commons mobilities and platform cooperatives strong enough to battle technological alienation, repression and reproduction of random propagation megamachines of digital labour exploitation, trolling, polarisations and fake news?
- Psychological alienation: Fear, anxiety and the feeling of powerlessness induced by systemic violence is a particular feature of the Megacity. What kind of new forms of neuroses do we observe in the Megamachine? What emotional connections can enable active desire to co-exist against structures of affective reactive desire that exclude, antagonise, harm and destroy any hope for the future?

Please send max 250w abstract by the 15th of May 2018 to Athina Karatzogianni athina.k@gmail.com to participate. There are no fees to this conference.

More information [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

American Anthropological Association (AAA) annual meeting

14 – 18 November 2018, San José, CA, USA

Deadline: 11 April 2018

Title: After Neoliberalism?: Revisiting the Processes of Policy-Making

Organizers: Alexandra Szoke (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) & Ayse Seda Yuksel (University of Vienna)

In the last twenty years, a significant number of studies in anthropology have grappled with the question of how to analyze the effects of neoliberalism on social and political life. While anthropologists have contributed greatly to our understanding of neoliberal transformations in various spheres, it is evident by now that neoliberalism is under heavy attacks on many fronts.

Starting with the global economic crises, within the last decade shifts in political sentiments to the “right” and increasing authoritarian political tendencies that are apparent at a global scale have undermined the myth of “neoliberal democracies” based on individual rights, primacy of market, entrepreneurship, and the rule of free trade.

Neoliberalism has significantly reordered and rescaled policy-making processes, bringing along new actors, institutions and discourses. On the one hand, the individualization of social problems and related discourses of deservingness along with the stigmatization of certain groups have gained even deeper grounds and created new fields of dispossessions and inequalities. On the other hand, rescaling of policy-making processes have reshuffled the power dynamics between actors at different scales and opened up new possibilities for empowerment, resistance and challenge. But how resilient are these ideas and practices within the current context of political transformations? Are they also seriously challenged or do they remain relatively intact as neoliberalism faces global challenges? How are these political changes at national and global scales negotiated in local policy-making processes? While it appears that the neoliberal logic is gaining further dominance in the way universities are run or health care is being restructured in many countries, it is yet to be further investigated whether and in what ways these more recent global political shifts influence local policies of different spheres.

This panel invites authors to submit papers that examine processes of local policy making in relation to the current crises of neoliberalism and the parallel political and economic shifts. We are particularly interested in the way local policy making and implementation are embedded in the broader political and economic context as well as the conflicts and contradictions between the two. We welcome papers that address such issues through empirical research or that discuss the theoretical challenges of analysing these recent processes from an ethnographic angle.

Please send your abstracts (max. 250 words)

to seda.yuksel@univie.ac.at and alexa.szoke@gmail.com including your affiliation and contact details.

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

Political Violence in Syria: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

14-15 September 2018

Workshop at Utrecht University

Deadline: 15 April 2018

Organizers:

Dr. Uğur Ümit Üngör, Department of History, Utrecht University

Dr. Roschanack Shaery, Department of History, University of Antwerp

In 2011, the uprising in Syria rapidly escalated into a large-scale, complex, multi-dimensional civil war. As the violence became more extensive and intensive, within six years, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, the economic infrastructure and civic life devastated, Syrian territory

fragmented, with massive internal and external displacement. Local activists, civil society members, and ordinary citizens have engaged in various practices to make public the violence, varying from uploading videos, social media discussions, to more organized forms of activism like creating NGOs and carefully documenting the events. Since 2011 and in particular with the rise of ISIS, academics, policy makers, and the global media have taken keen interest in the spectacle of violence in Syria. The conflict in Syria has been framed in different ways: insurgency and counterinsurgency, sectarian and ethnic civil war, regional proxy war, and international terrorism. In much of these frameworks, the dynamic of the violence itself has either been overexposed as particularly atrocious, or under-examined as an epiphenomenon. This workshop challenges both the notion that the recent violence is an entirely novel development in Syria, and the assumption that violence is a perennial phenomenon in Syria. It rather contextualizes violence by placing it in long-standing histories and practices that predate this civil war. The current war appears to have put Syria in a state of exception, where the state is fighting to maintain its sovereignty and stop the country's disintegration. The violence has doubtlessly taken unprecedented numeric dimensions, but the structural conditions for the emergence of this violence predate the war.

This workshop is intended to look at the long standing tradition of political violence in postcolonial Syria and historicize the recent developments. It aims to bring together approaches that include pre-existing structural conditions as well as contemporary empirical studies that examine the causes, courses, and consequences of such large-scale violence in present-day Syria.

We welcome papers that focus on, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Forms and repertoires of violence;
- History and politics of the Syrian security forces;
- Theorizing ideology, ethnicity, sectarianism, paramilitarism;
- Case studies of violence: regions, cities, neighborhoods, villages, tribes, families;
- Empirical studies of political economy, demography, and geography;
- Forced displacement, internal and external;
- Perpetrators, victims, bystanders, and others.

Transport, accommodation, and meals during the workshop will be covered by the organizers. Please submit abstracts for papers (max 300 words) and a CV to: u.ungor@uu.nl and roschanack.shaery@uantwerpen.be

More information [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

AAA Roundtable: Whither the Anthropology of the Middle East? Resistance, Resilience, and Adaptation in a New Era of Instability

Deadline: 9 April 2018

Co-organizers: Kim Shively (Kutztown University) and Hikmet Kocamaner (University of North Carolina, Wilmington)

The increasing instability in the Middle East has created profound challenges to anthropologists. While Iraq has experienced increasing sectarian strife since the U.S. invasion, the fallout of the so-called Arab Spring has given rise to repressive conditions in Egypt and civil war in Syria. The 2016 military coup attempt in Turkey has given the ruling government the excuse to severely curtail freedom of expression and expand its crackdown on media and academia. Meanwhile, Yemen is in a state of civil war while parts of Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, and Sinai are under the territorial control of a Salafi jihadist terrorist organization known as the Islamic State (ISIS).

Anthropologists of the region are deeply concerned about these developments, as they affect the livelihoods and personal and familial lives of their research interlocutors. The increasing instability has also imposed substantial challenges in conducting on-the-ground ethnographic research in the region, since travel to or continued residence at research sites is becoming ever more risky, if not untenable. Even when they are able to conduct research, ethnographers face the challenge of interviewing and interacting with people who are subject to or participating in intensifying government scrutiny, surveillance, repression, and violence.

For the 2018 AAA meetings, we are seeking anthropologists of the Middle East to participate in a roundtable on the challenges of conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the region and offer insights on studying the region ethnographically in the current political climate. How can we resist challenges to democracy, human rights, and freedom of speech through our ethnographic practice and writing? How can we study controversial and potentially risky issues under these circumstances ethnographically? Are traditional ethnographic methods resilient enough to be deployed satisfactorily in conflict-ridden zones and under repressive regimes? Or should we recalibrate our ethnographic practices? Some possible topics of conversation would include:

- Conducting research with refugees, dissidents, activists, and at-risk populations
- Dealing with autocratic or repressive states during fieldwork
- Engaging in resistance and activism in the field and through scholarship
- Adaptation to the circumstances and/or finding alternative research projects
- On-going challenges of working in politically sensitive situations
- Dealing with increased surveillance in the field and thereafter
- Pushback against research topics from researchers' own governments or university administrations (e.g. how to deal with travel warnings and restrictions)
- How fear, anxiety, and stress influence the research process and its outcomes
- Self-censorship in the field and thereafter

If you are interested in participating in the roundtable, please email: 1) a brief description of your proposed topic of discussion (maximum 200 words) and 2) a 2-3 sentence bio to shively@kutztown.edu and kocamanerh@uncw.edu The deadline for submission is April 9, 2018.

[Back to top](#)

Digital Media, Islamism, and Politics in the Middle East

Basel, Switzerland, September 28-29, 2018

Deadline: 5 July 2018

An international workshop organized by MUBIT Inter-University Doctoral Cooperation in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies Basel/Zurich & Middle Eastern Studies, The Graduate School of Social Sciences (G3S), University of Basel, Switzerland

Call for Applications for the 6th Annual MUBIT Doctoral Workshop in Late- and Post-Ottoman Studies in Basel, a workshop with Assistant Professor Dr. H. Akin Ünver (Kadir Has University/Oxford University/Alan Turing Institute) & Dr. Monica Marks (Harvard University) This two-day workshop immerses students in comparative studies of Islamist politics in the Middle East and North Africa through the lens of how violent and non-violent Islamist state and non-actors, as well as their opponents, use and manipulate digital and social media to further their goals. The workshop is specifically interested in exploring themes in how the region's religious, political and social forces interact and mobilize in digital space, including their competing organizational networks and narrative claims.

As an increasingly more popular and politically-relevant topic in the region and beyond, we seek applicants whose work lie at the intersection of ICTs (information and communication technologies – such as Whatsapp, Signal, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and other web channels) and social media platforms on the one hand, and religion, politics, culture, and mobilization on the other. Those that are interested in, and work on how online and offline mobilization, behaviour and organization interact in the Middle East are particularly encouraged to apply.

Related questions that this workshop will explore include:

1. The definition of "Islamism," Islamic vs. Islamist vs. jihadist hierarchies, communication strategies, and organizational networks of influence in the digital world
2. Digital Surveillance, Censorship, Protest, Voice, and Opposition in the Middle East
3. Organized Diversion: Fake News, Trolls Bots
4. Online Radicalization and ICT Use of Extremist Groups

* In addition to the presentations and discussions by the guest lecturers, the workshop will offer the participants a one-to-one session with the lecturers, in order to create an opportunity to expand and explore specific questions related to the workshop and/or to the participant's own research. Due to limited time, approx. 20 minute, one-to-one sessions will be offered on a first come basis.

PhD students who wish to attend the workshop are asked to send an email to Dr. Selen Etingu (g.etingue@unibas.ch), with a biographical abstract explaining their research interests and projects as well as their academic background (max. 400 words, in 3rd person singular, in English). The deadline for the application is July 5, 2018. Applicants will receive an answer regarding their participation on July 15.

More information [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

[Reminder:] World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies. 16-22 July 2018

16-22 July 2018, Seville, Spain

WOCMES Seville 2018 will be held in the capital of Andalusia on 16-22 July 2018, serving as a meeting point to present, debate and share a wide range of information on the latest studies concerning the Middle East, encompassing diverse perspectives, from conflict analysis and resolution to migrations, water, the environment, culture, news media and studies on Al-Andalus.

Attendance at the Congress is thus a must for researchers, professors, students, media, professionals and other groups interested in studies concerning North Africa and the Middle East as well as other regions of the world involved in those areas. Nearly 3,000 participants from more than 70 countries are thus expected to attend what is considered the most prestigious event in its field.

In the wake of the four previous congresses – Mainz 2002 (Germany), Amman 2006 (Jordan), Barcelona 2010 (Spain) and Ankara 2014 (Turkey), WOCMES Seville 2018 will focus on the relationship between the three cultures and, given that it is the Foundation's *raison d'être*, the Andalusí legacy and the roots of the city that will host this major international gathering.

Seville, an example of coexistence between cultures, is nowadays the perfect setting to host the forum and respective debates concerning study of the Middle East, as both the city and the Andalusian community have traditionally acted as a place for understanding, interchange of ideas and intercultural dialogue.

That confers added value on this land as the host for such a unique event, an aspect which was decisive when it came to choosing the Three Cultures of the Mediterranean Foundation to organise the forum, highlighting its status as an institution which for two decades has been dedicated to the knowledge of diverse cultures as a basis for respect among peoples. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

TALKS & OTHER EVENTS

Freedom of Press in Egypt – Film screening: “Tickling Giants”

19 April 2018, 7.30 pm |

Venue: Werkstatt der Kulturen, Wissmannstr. 32, 12049 Berlin, Germany

Speaker: Taher Mokhtar (al-Nadeem Center)

Discussant: Aya Ibrahim (Amnesty International)

Film: *Tickling Giants*, by Sara Takelst, USA 2016, Documentary, 111 min, Arabic/English; German Version

Tickling Giants tells the story of Dr. Bassem Youssef, the "Egyptian Jon Stewart", who decides to leave his job as a heart surgeon and becomes during the Egyptian revolution a very popular late-night comedian with a show on his own. The movie is about how he finds creative, non-violent ways to protect free speech and fight a president who abuses his power.

With this screening, we are raising awareness on Shawkan, a photojournalist and prisoner of conscience. Shawkan was detained 2013 while documenting the violent attack on a protest camp by security forces. Since then he has been detained with 700 other people, and his trial was postponed over 40 times. While he is in a poor health condition and suffers from Hepatitis C, he is denied medical access. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

Human Rights in Egypt and Tunisia after the Arab Spring

24 April 2018, 6:00 PM

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

Speakers: Maha Azzam (Egyptian Revolutionary Council), Nicola Pratt (University of Warwick), Ian Pattel (LSE), Melek Saral (SOAS)

During the so called “Arab Spring”, the demonstrators brought human rights references to the centre of their political struggles. On the one hand, the uprisings are framed as a demand for human rights. On the other, the Arab Spring is believed to have provided a context for the re-articulation of the human rights situation in the MENA region. Seven years after the revolution, Egypt is witnessing an unprecedented rate of human rights abuses whereas Tunisia is celebrated as the only successful transitional country with a flourishing human rights record. The panel will address issues of human rights in two major “Arab Spring” countries namely Egypt and Tunisia. The speakers of the panel will highlight the current political and civil rights situation in these countries, and give an insight into future perspectives. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

Breathing Life into the Archive: Egyptian Revolutionary History on the Theatre Stage

25 April 2018, 5.00 pm - 6.30 pm

Venue: Forum Transregionale Studien, Wallotstr. 14, 14193 Berlin, Germany

Speakers: Laila Soliman (Cairo), Alia Mossallam (AUC / EUME Fellow 2017/18)

Chair: Cilja Harders (FU Berlin)

What is a revolutionary archive? From hand-scribbled protest songs in colonial police archives in London, to magazines and newspaper articles from Cairo's Azbakiyya markets, rusty LPs with tunes by rebellious divas stored in Beirut, and investigations into rape testimonies by the brave women of the village of Nazlet el shubak. In this talk Laila Soliman discusses her experience of patching together archives of the forgotten uprisings of 1917-1919, the years leading up to the iconic 1919 revolution in Egypt. How can stories be told despite archival absences, weaved out of truncated events, and characters revived out of stories seldom told? How can a theatre piece reflect on historical gaps, questioning the silence, rather than overwriting it? Through this discussion about her theatre practice Soliman highlights the experiences behind *Hawwa al-Hurreyya* (2014) and *ZigZig* (2016) - taking us on a journey from the archive to the stage. *More information* [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

The Syrian Uprising: Domestic Origins and Early Trajectory

1 May 2018, 5:30 PM

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

Speaker: Raymond Hinnebusch, University of St Andrews

Panel Discussion to mark the publication of *The Syrian Uprising: Domestic Origins and Early Trajectory* (Routledge, 2018) with the editors Raymond Hinnebusch and Omar Imady, and contributors. *The Syrian Uprising* presents a snapshot of how the Uprising developed in roughly the first two to three years (2011–2013) and addresses key questions regarding the domestic origins of the Uprising and its early trajectory. Firstly, what were the causes of the conflict, both in terms of structure (contradictions and crisis within the pre-Uprising order) and agency (choices of the actors)? Why did the Uprising not lead to democratization and instead descend into violent civil war with a sectarian dimension?

More information [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

Strikes, Riots and Laughter: Egypt's 1918 Peasant Insurrection

2 May 2018, 17:15 – 19:15

Venue: LSE; Wolfson Theatre, 54 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3LJ, United Kingdom

Speaker: Alia Mosallam, Forum Transregionale Studien

Discussant: Hazem Jamjoum, New York University

Chair: John Chalcraft, LSE

In the summer of 1918 the Ministry of Interior in Cairo was bombarded with reports of 'criminal activity' from villages across Egypt. This marked the unfolding of an important but little-known revolt in 20th Century Egypt. In this event, Alia Mosallam looks at three particular instances of subversive confrontation that took place in the lead up to the summer of 1918 on the World War I fronts in Boulogne, Rafah, and in Roda Island. She asks; how did these workers chip away at the edifice of the British/Egyptian administration that subjected them to war? How did they articulate their struggle and discontent in a way that continued to resonate so strongly for many years? *More information [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

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

2 May 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](#)

The Struggle for Borders and Borders of Struggle

8 May 2018, 5:45 PM

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

Speakers: Sharri Plonski (Queen Mary University of London and London Middle East Institute, SOAS) and Mezna Qato (Kings College, Cambridge)

Sharri Plonski in conversation with Mezna Qato to mark the publication of Dr Plonski's new book *Palestinian Citizens of Israel: Power, Resistance and the Struggle for Space* (London: SOAS Centre for Palestine Studies/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 underwrite 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](#)

Speaking of jihad, what do we mean by 'religious radicalisation'?

11 May 2018, 17.30 – 18.30

Venue: The Wolfson Theatre, LSE, 54 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 2AE

Speaker: Olivier Roy, European University Institute

We are delighted that Professor Olivier Roy (European University Institute) will present the first joint BRISMES/BRAIS Annual Lecture.

This will be followed by a drinks reception.

All welcome, but due to the high demand, tickets are required.

More information [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

RECENT & FORTHCOMING BOOKS

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

Sharri Plonski
I.B. Tauris, 2017

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](#)

Dancing in Damascus - Creativity, Resilience, and the Syrian Revolution

Miriam Cooke
Routledge, 2017

On March 17, 2011, many Syrians rose up against the authoritarian Asad regime that had ruled them with an iron fist for forty years. Initial successes were quickly quashed, and the revolution seemed to devolve into a civil war pitting the government against its citizens and extremist mercenaries. As of late 2015, almost 300,000 Syrians have been killed and over half of a total population of 23 million forced out of their homes. Nine million are internally displaced and over four million are wandering the world, many on foot or in leaky boats. Countless numbers have been disappeared. These shocking statistics and the unstoppable violence notwithstanding, the revolution goes on. The story of the attempted crushing of the revolution is known. Less well covered has been the role of artists and intellectuals in representing to the world and to their people the resilience of revolutionary resistance and defiance. How is it possible that artists, filmmakers and writers have not been cowed into numbed silence but are becoming more and more creative? How can we make sense of their insistence that despite the apocalypse engulfing the country their revolution is ongoing and that their works participate in its persistence? With smartphones, pens, voices and brushes, these artists registered their determination to keep the idea of the revolution alive. *Dancing in Damascus* traces

the first four years of the Syrian revolution and the activists' creative responses to physical and emotional violence.

[Back to top](#)

NEWS PIECES & COMMENTARY

'That son of a bitch': Video shows Israeli soldiers cheering after shooting Gazan

Mustafa Abu Sneineh

Middle East Eye, 10 April 2018

Israeli politicians have defended a video of Israeli snipers celebrating after they shoot an unarmed Palestinian near the border fence with Gaza. The video, first broadcasted by Channel 10 television late on Monday, appears to show soldiers shooting the man near the border fence of the Gaza Strip and whooping in excitement. One of the soldiers rejoices in Hebrew after the shooting saying: "Wow, what a video!... YES! That son of the bitch." The Palestinian does not appear to pose an immediate threat to the Israeli soldiers who are on the Israeli side of the fence looking through a viewfinder or binoculars. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Seven Palestinians killed, hundreds wounded in second week of Gaza protests

Middle East Eye, 6 April 2018

Protests have begun in the Gaza Strip today, one week since the beginning of the "Great March of Return" in the besieged enclave, where almost 1.3 million of the small territory's two million inhabitants are refugees, demanding their right to return to their pre-1948 homes. The six-week protest is set to end on 15 May - the 70th anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba (Catastrophe), in which more than 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced by Israeli forces in 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Israeli forces violently repressed last week's protest, which occurred on Land Day, killing 19 demonstrators and injuring more than 1,400 with live fire, rubber-coated steel bullets, and tear gas. Demonstrators were anticipating similar levels of military repression this week, a day after Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman said that "open-fire rules for the Gaza border will remain unchanged". *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Israel: Gaza Killings Unlawful, Calculated

Human Rights Watch, 3 April 2018

Senior Israeli officials who unlawfully called for use of live ammunition against Palestinian demonstrations who posed no imminent threat to life bear responsibility for the killings of 14 demonstrators in Gaza and the injuring of hundreds on March 30, 2018, Human Rights Watch said today. Both before and after the confrontations, senior officials publicly said that soldiers stationed along the barrier that separates Gaza and Israel had orders to target “instigators” and those who approach the border. However, the Israeli government presented no evidence that rock-throwing and other violence by some demonstrators seriously threatened Israeli soldiers across the border fence. The high number of deaths and injuries was the foreseeable consequence of granting soldiers leeway to use lethal force outside of life-threatening situations in violation of international norms, coupled with the longstanding culture of impunity within the Israeli army for serious abuses.

Continue reading [here](#)

[Back to top](#)

Tunisia rocks taboo on LGBTQ+ rights

Alessandra Bajec

The New Arab, 31 March 2018

Tunisian activists have taken increasingly bold steps in the last three years to open up real, public debate on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) issues. Recent moves in 2017 and at the start of this year, in particular, offer a glimmer of hope in the conservative Muslim country where same-sex relations have long been taboo. "The 2011 revolution unlocked a certain degree of freedom of expression for the gay community, alongside other minorities and subjects who were oppressed under Ben Ali's dictatorship," said Mounir Baatour, lawyer and president of Tunisian LGBT association Shams (*Sun* in Arabic). "It was clearly a gain from the revolution," he added. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Protests over Morocco's 'death mines' rage on despite intimidation

Farid El Mohammadi

Middle East Eye, 21 March 2018

Ramshackle streets, rudimentary unfinished houses, and unemployed youth killing time in the cafes, dreaming of better futures with a cigarette between their lips. Jerada is everything you would expect of the impoverished Moroccan towns of the Middle Atlas, the arid south, and the nearby Rif. The only difference is the presence of an impressive array of local and national police on every street

corner in town. "It's like being in Iraq!" Larbi said, with his booming voice and threadbare jean jacket, a red cap fitted snugly to his head. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Three reasons why Israel backed down, and Ahed Tamimi will walk free

Fadi Quran

Medium, 21 March 2018

The Israeli military was forced to give in and drop 8 of the charges against Ahed as part of a plea bargain, in which Ahed recognized in court the fact that she slapped the soldier and called for protests. In return, Ahed will get the minimum sentence of 8 months instead of spending at least 3 years in prison based on what the military prosecutor was initially seeking. Lawyers at Ofer Military Court told us we would be lucky if they offered a 2 year plea bargain. But now, Ahed will be out in July — early enough to go to her first year in college. For the next 4 months in prison, Ahed will focus on her studies and take her final year exams. Ahed's mother, Nariman, will also be released at the same time. The fact that a child will be jailed for 8 months for slapping a soldier whose troops just shot her 15 year old cousin in the face is extreme, but in the context of the 99% conviction rate in the Israeli military court system and right-wing incitement against Ahed, this compromise by the Israeli military shows they have decided to back down in the face of growing pressure to release Ahed. In fact, they were begging Ahed's lawyer, Gaby Lasky, to accept the plea bargain. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Young Egyptians start campaign to battle sexual abuse

Amira Sayed Ahmed

Al-Monitor, 18 March 2018

Egyptian students at the American University in Cairo have turned their graduation project into a campaign to fight against the sexual abuse of children, which is an underreported but widely spread social problem in Egypt. The students, who are studying at the Integrated Marketing Communications department, were asked last November to work on a social project for their graduation thesis. After many discussions, the group of seven decided to select child sexual abuse as the theme of their project. Believing that such abuse can occur within just a moment, they named their project "Lahza," Arabic for "moment." "Other colleagues decided to work on various topics such as animal abuse and the rights of the disabled. But we decided to make our mission harder by tackling a topic that is considered taboo," Alia El Goan, the co-founder of Lahza, told Al-Monitor. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Seeds of resistance: The woman fighting occupation with agriculture

Joshua Leifer

+972 Magazine, 8 March 2018

"I speak about the occupation within a global context because it does not exist in isolation from global trends," Vivien Sansour tells me. "Farmers who can produce their own food and make their own seeds represent a threat to any hegemonic power that wants to control a population. If we are autonomous, we really have a lot more space to revel, to create our own systems, to be more subversive." Vivien Sansour wears many hats. She is a writer, a photographer, a film producer, and the founder of the Palestine Heirloom Seed Library. Raised in Beit Jala, a town near Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank, Sansour has worked with farmers in Honduras, Uruguay, and Palestine on issues relating to agriculture and autonomy. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Gaza: Facebook is 'complicit' with Israel

Al-Jazeera, 5 March 2018

Dozens of Palestinian journalists have staged a demonstration outside the UN office in Gaza City to protest Facebook's practice of blocking Palestinian Facebook accounts. Demonstrators held banners saying "Facebook is complicit in [Israel's] crimes" and "Facebook favours the [Israeli] occupation." Speaking at Monday's demonstration, organized by the Journalists Support Committee, a Palestinian NGO, Salama Maarouf, a spokesman for Hamas, described the popular social media platform as "a major violator of freedom of opinion and expression. "Facebook blocked roughly 200 Palestinian accounts last year - and 100 more since the start of 2018 - on phony pretexts." *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Why Bahraini rights activists need international support

Tor Hodenfield

Middle East Eye, 4 March 2018

Last month - specifically, 14 February - marked the seventh anniversary of the peaceful protests that swept across Bahrain in 2011, calling for an end to authoritarian rule. Since the popular uprisings, however, intense and sustained state repression has left the Bahraini human rights movement increasingly challenged, amid dwindling international support. Yet another blow fell last week. Prominent activist Nabeel Rajab was sentenced to five years in prison for tweeting about the war in Yemen and allegations of torture in Bahrain's notorious Jaw Prison. Rajab, who has been a vocal human rights advocate in Bahrain and across the Gulf for several decades, emerged as leading figure and organiser during 2011 pro-democracy protests. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Amazigh awakening: Libya's largest minority wants recognition

Jamie Prentis

Al-Monitor, 2 March 2018

The Amazigh, or Berbers, Libya's largest minority group, experienced harsh treatment under Moammar Gadhafi's regime. Gadhafi's so-called cultural revolution in 1973 criminalized Amazigh traditions, prohibited the use of their native tongue, Tamazight, and declared the Amazigh to be Arabs despite their being indigenous to the land. For Gadhafi, the Amazigh represented a separatist threat to his efforts to consolidate power and proclaim Libya an Arab nation. Today, the Amazigh are thought to comprise an estimated 10% to 15% of Libya's population of 6 million. While the Amazigh are dotted around Libya, they are concentrated in the northwest, with the town of Zuwara considered to be their unofficial capital. Abdullah Kabousa, a Zuwara municipality councilor, explained during an Al-Monitor visit to Libya, "Our conflict with Gadhafi was about our culture. ... We are a part of this country." Anti-Gadhafi protesters and fighters took control of Zuwara on Feb. 23, 2011, a few weeks after the rebellion against the longtime leader erupted in Benghazi. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

The 'enforced disappearance' of Egypt's secular youth

Al-Monitor, 1 March 2018

Ahmad Tarek, 23, and his mother were at home, she said, when officers from Egypt's National Security Agency stormed into their Cairo flat Feb. 18 and abducted him. After he was taken, Tarek's mother rushed to the nearest police station to ask for his whereabouts, but authorities sent her away after claiming Tarek hadn't been abducted. Al-Monitor contacted Tarek's mother, but she declined to comment for fear of reprisal. His peers say they don't know why he would have been taken. Though he was an activist, he wasn't a prominent one. Besides working as a freelance videographer for the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) — a banned organization in Egypt — he also worked in the election campaign of lawyer Khaled Ali, a secular activist who ran for president. "Tarek's house was raided, and he got arrested without being informed of the reasons for his arrest, nor did he see an arrest warrant. His mother, even now, still doesn't understand why he was arrested," Gamal Eid, a human rights lawyer and the director of ANHRI, told Al-Monitor. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Jordanians protest price hikes but in surprisingly small numbers

Osama Al Sharif

Al-Monitor, 20 February 2018

Jordanians are taking to the streets in protest of price hikes involving hundreds of essential goods, including bread, which came into effect at the beginning of February after parliament approved a controversial 2018 state budget. But unlike 2011, when Jordanians held large demonstrations across the kingdom calling for political reforms, this time the protests are few and far between. Every week following Friday prayers, small crowds would gather in downtown Amman, Salt, Kerak, Ma'an and Madaba calling on King Abdullah to sack the government and dissolve parliament. The protests are mostly peaceful, although there were confrontations with police forces in Kerak on Feb. 8 that led to a number of arrests. But despite bitter attacks on the government's economic policies by a number of Lower House deputies, Prime Minister Hani al-Mulki survived a no-confidence motion Feb. 18 submitted by the Islamist-led Al-Islah parliamentary bloc. The outcome of the vote is expected to increase public denunciation of both the government and parliament. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Tunisia's Next Revolution

Ines Mahmoud

Jacobin, 17 February 2018

Protests are once again shaking Tunisia. A new finance law, which imposes drastic austerity measures on the country's workers, has sparked a wave of resistance. Put into effect on January 1, this legislation meets the requirements of a \$2.9-billion IMF loan by increasing prices on basic goods, reducing public sector employment, and hiking the value-added tax (VAT). The government is repressing the uprising harshly: it's already killed a protester and arrested 800 others. Seven years after the successful revolution against dictator Ben Ali, the economic inequities of his system remain. The government projects an image of Tunisian exceptionalism: it embraces Western liberal values, becoming the "modern," "progressive," and "democratic" exception within the colonially constructed image of the "Arab world." This self-presentation is designed to obscure three decades of neoliberal economic policies, undertaken to please the West. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

[Egypt:] 858: Archiving as a tool of resistance - On revolution, non-production and subversive documentation

Mada Masr, 1 February 2018

Seven years ago, a number of volunteers — some of whom would later make up the Mosireen collective — began collecting footage from the public at a tent in the center of the Tahrir sit-in during

the 2011 revolution. On January 16, 2018, Mosireen released 858 hours of this footage, time-stamped and indexed. Housed today on Pandora, an open-source tool designed to provide a home for media archives of heavily text-annotated video material, this fresh archive sits there, gazing at us, waiting for us to gaze back and think of what's next beyond recalling the moments it froze for us on screen. Intrigued, editors Leila Arman, Lina Attalah, Ahmed Mongey, Yasmine Zohdi and interns Nada Nabil and Farida Hussein from Mada sat down with Mosireen members and 858 creators, Carbon, Krypton and Plutonium*, all of whom have a practice in filmmaking and writing. We spoke about the process of curating the 858 archive, the ways in which it could breed more archives (as well as other mediums of documentation) and, ultimately, the relationship between archives, death and redemption. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

[Iran:] 'Girls Of Revolution Street' Appear In Many Other Cities

Radio Farda, 1 February 2018

Protesting mandatory hijab has reportedly spread to other large cities in Iran. Several women in Mashhad, the holy Shi'ite city, and in Esfahan and Shiraz have followed the footsteps of a woman who has become the symbol of resistance against Iran's strict dress code. On December 27, a day before the outbreak of widespread protests against poverty, unemployment, and dictatorship in Iran, an unidentified woman climbed on top of an electricity box on one of Tehran's busiest streets, Enqelab (Revolution) Avenue, removed her head scarf, and began waving it in the air. A video clip of the woman, who appears to be in her early 30s, quickly went viral, and her act became a symbol of Iranian women's resistance to the compulsory hijab. Known by the nickname of the Girl of Revolution Street, she has been praised as a courageous defender of women's rights. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Oman jobs protest spreads to other cities as arrests reported

Joe Gill

Middle East Eye, 29 January 2018

Protests over unemployment spread from Oman's capital to provincial cities Salalah and Sur on Monday with a number of arrests reported. Facing growing unrest over high unemployment among young Omanis, the government moved on Sunday to pledge job creation plans and to restrict employment of expat labour in a country where the vast majority of private sector jobs go to foreign workers. The protests, which are rare in the heavily policed Gulf state, are reminiscent of those that broke out in 2011 in Oman during the Arab Spring uprisings. A video shared by the Oman Centre for Human Rights appeared to show a number of those arrested in Salalah being transported in a police van, in the country's south. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Syrian Kurd leaders call for mass mobilisation to defend Afrin

Middle East Eye, 23 January 2018

The Kurdish-led authorities of northeast Syria called on Tuesday for mass mobilisation in defence of Syria's Afrin region against a Turkish military offensive. Turkey's air and ground offensive, now into its fourth day, is targeting US-backed Kurdish YPG fighters in Afrin, near the Turkish border. It has opened a new front in Syria's multi-sided civil war. Ankara sees the YPG as an extension of a separatist Kurdish group within its own borders which has waged a decades-long insurgency against the Turkish state. "The will of the people cannot be vanquished," the civilian administration said in a statement received by the Reuters news agency. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

A “Blue” Generation and Protests in Iran

Aghil Daghighaleh , Zakia Salime

MERIP online, 22 January 2018

On Friday, December 29, 2017, a protest suddenly broke out in the shrine city of Mashhad, one of Iran's major urban centers located in the northeast of the country. Although evidence indicates that the protests were prompted by hardliners in order to undermine President Hassan Rouhani, they rapidly spread across the country and spun out of any one faction's control. Most international mainstream media were quick to point out that these were the largest and most significant Iranian protests since the Green Movement, the youth-driven protests that emerged after the contested 2009 presidential election. The Green Movement, which was hailed as a new social movement harnessing widespread political dissatisfaction, was violently suppressed by hardliners working in tandem with formal and informal security forces. For the past two decades, Iran's internal politics have been dominated by rivalry between hardliners (who control Iran's non-elected political institutions and insist on the priority of religious authority) and reformists (who have won elections on platforms of democratic reform and accountability but have struggled to implement their policies). *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Young Tunisians know 2011 changed nothing: the revolution goes on

Ghassen Ben Khelifa, Hamza Hamouchene

The Guardian, 23 Januar 2018

In addition to 800 arrests and dozens of injuries, one man has been killed in a violent police crackdown on protests that have erupted across Tunisia. This popular movement was unleashed by the government's 2018 budget: a new round of austerity measures that will lead to higher prices for basic foods, fuel and energy, and a further undermining of crucial public services such as healthcare

and education. All of this will be an additional burden on the backs of marginalised and impoverished people. The government is not acting alone. These measures are being imposed by international financial institutions such as the IMF, which agreed a loan of \$3bn to Tunisia in 2017 on precisely these conditions. This neoliberal agenda is being pushed by Tunisia's imperial masters and backed by multinational corporations, development agencies and mainstream NGOs. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

How the Muslim Brotherhood's women activists stepped up in Egypt

Anwar Mhajne

Middle East Eye, 15 January 2018

The growing visibility of the Muslim Brotherhood's women has increasingly made them a target of state repression. Following the military coup in Egypt in July 2013, more than 50,000 members of the Muslim Brotherhood movement have been imprisoned, including the senior leadership. These vacancies have pushed women activists in the movement to play a bigger role within the organisation, building upon decades of political and organising experiences that have been enriched by the movement's short-lived experience as a political party - the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) - in Egypt in 2011-2012. Before the 2011 popular uprising as women activists were demanding greater representation within the movement's structure and hierarchy, at the same time, they were also facing the regime's repression. The women's growing visibility and activism after the popular uprising have rendered them a target by the state. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

Hundreds protest in Nabi Saleh to demand freedom for Tamimi women

Haggai Matar

+972 magazine, 13 January 2018

Roughly 300 people — Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals — marched in the West Bank village on Nabi Saleh on Saturday to demand that Israel free the Tamimi family women, 16-year-old Ahed and her mother, Nariman, as well as other members of the popular resistance committees who have been arrested over the past several weeks. In addition to the residents of Nabi Saleh, the demonstrators included Joint List head MK Ayman Odeh; Palestinian Legislative Council member Mustafa Barghouti; Mohammad Barakeh, chairman of the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel; and Luisa Morgentini, a former member of the European Parliament. Activists from the popular resistance committees of Al-Masara, Bil'in, Ni'lin, Kadum, Hebron, and other cities and towns across the West Bank also joined the protest, as did members of Anarchists Against the Wall, Combatants for Peace, and Ta'ayush. *Continue reading [here](#)*

[Back to top](#)

POSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Book Review Editor(s), Journal of Middle East Women's Studies

Deadline: 30 April 2018

JMEWS is the interdisciplinary scholarly journal of the Association of Middle East Women's Studies and publishes three issues per annual volume.

The forthcoming JMEWS editors, Sherine Hafez (University of California, Riverside), Soha Bayoumi (Harvard University) and Ellen McLarney (Duke University) are seeking applications for Editor(s) of the JMEWS Book Review section. We hope to appoint one person or a team of two who apply together, for the position of JMEWS Review Editor(s). We seek Review Editor(s) interested in a vision that includes but goes beyond soliciting reviews for individual books, including essays on cultural texts (books, films, documentaries, exhibits) and interviews, dialogues, or other fora with several people engaging one or more cultural texts.

The position requires a 4-year commitment, from 1 June 2018 - May 31 2022, and ideally the Review Editor(s) can attend the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021, where major JMEWS meetings are held. As is the case for the Co-Editors of JMEWS, the Review Editor(s) position is unpaid. Review Editor(s) interface with a JMEWS Managing Editor and the DUP Journals office, whose staff will be responsible for copy-editing and production. Scholars outside of the U.S. are encouraged and welcome to apply.

The ideal candidate(s):

- have completed a Ph.D. dissertation in any discipline focused on part or parts of the Middle East/North Africa;
- have a feminist, women's studies, gender studies, or queer scholarly orientation in their research and teaching;
- have published scholarly articles and/or book(s) in the above subfields;
- are very interested, have initiative, and propose creative ideas for this important journal section;
- are organized, responsible, excellent communicators in writing, collegial, and conscientious about deadlines;

Interested Candidates are invited to submit a 1-2 page letter of interest/proposal, a curriculum vita, and the e-mail and telephone contact information of two references by 30 April 2018 to: sherine.hafez@ucr.edu, sbayoumi@fas.harvard.edu and ellenmc@duke.edu.

Proposals should include a vision statement, specific ideas, and a brief description of relevant experience.

[Back to top](#)

Early Stage Researchers (PhD positions), University of Aberdeen

Deadline: 24 April 2018

The University of Aberdeen, in collaboration with the Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme, is delighted to offer six Early Stage Researcher positions, lasting 3 years starting in September 2018, for ground-breaking research on how political concepts are used in the world.

The University of Aberdeen, in collaboration with the Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme, is delighted to offer six Early Stage Researcher positions, lasting 3 years starting in October 2018, for ground-breaking research on how political concepts are used in the world. ESRs will complete a PhD with an inter-disciplinary supervisory team and benefit from a world-class training programme, including placements with one or more of our 23 international partners. We welcome applicants from across the social sciences and humanities, including anthropology, cultural and literary studies, education, history, legal theory and socio-legal studies, philosophy, politics, religious studies, sociology, and theology. ESRs will be employed by the University on a salary of £26,075 per annum, and will be eligible for a range of additional benefits including ample travel and research funding.

The ESRs will propose and develop their own research projects around the theme of how political concepts have been fostered historically, debated philosophically and politically, fought over by social movements, codified in law, transmitted through education and the media, and lived out in everyday life. They will register for a PhD and work under the supervision of an interdisciplinary team of supervisors. They will receive extensive training, including in engagement with non-academic audiences, which will include one or more placements with one of our 23 partners. They will also actively participate in the activities of the Centre for Citizenship, Civil Society and the Rule of Law. Successful applicants will be required to start on 1 October 2018 for a period of 3 years.

Candidates are required to meet the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Early Stage Researcher eligibility criteria. In particular, at the time of the appointment candidates must have had less than four years full-time equivalent research experience and must not have already obtained a PhD. Additionally, they must not have resided in the UK for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the appointment. Any appointment will be conditional upon satisfactory references, a 12 month probation period, the fulfilment of any conditions specified in the offer of a place on a PhD programme, and confirmation of the right to work in the UK and ability to secure a valid visa, if required, from UK Visas and Immigration.

Any appointment will be made subject to satisfactory references and a 12 month probation period.

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact Dr Trevor Stack, POLITICO Director at politico@abdn.ac.uk.

More information and application [here](#)

[Back to top](#)