



SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POPULAR MOBILISATION IN THE MENA

Digest of Current Publications and Events

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CALL FOR PAPERS & CONFERENCES

2019 Call for Papers: 22nd Annual International Congress of the Mediterranean Studies Association

University of Crete, Rethymnon, Greece

May 29 - June 1, 2019

Deadline: February 1st, 2019

The Congress of the Mediterranean Studies Association will be held on May 29 - June 1, 2019, at the University of Crete, Rethymnon, Greece. We are now accepting proposals for individual papers, panel discussions, and complete sessions on all subjects related to the Mediterranean region and Mediterranean cultures around the world from all historical periods. The official language of the Congress is English, but we also welcome complete sessions in any Mediterranean language.

The Congress will open with a plenary session and reception on the evening of Wednesday, May 29. Over the next three days, 150-200 scholarly papers will be delivered before an international audience of scholars, academics, and experts in a wide range of fields. We are currently planning events for Congress participants that will highlight the history and unique cultural aspects of Crete.

Guidelines for Submission of Proposals

1. You may submit a proposal for an individual paper presentation, a complete session, or a round table panel on any Mediterranean topic and theme. Sessions are two hours and typically include four papers, each lasting twenty minutes, a chair, and an optional commentator. (For examples of paper, roundtable panels, and session topics, and the range of subjects, see programs from previous congresses available here on our website. Please note: increased interest in the field of Mediterranean Studies has meant a steady growth of our conference. Given the challenge of finding an ample number of rooms at the conference venue, we strongly encourage submission of 4-paper sessions. If you submit a 3-paper session, the organizers reserve the right to add a fourth paper on a related topic from the general call for papers. If your participants fail to register by the deadline, the Program Committee will replace them with other papers on a related topic.
2. Submit a 150-word abstract in English for each paper, and a one-page CV for each participant, including chairs and commentators, as well as each participant's name, institution, email, regular address, and phone number. Proposals for complete sessions or roundtables need to include the chair's name. Only ONE paper proposal per person will be accepted.
3. The deadline for submissions is February 1, 2019.
4. If you are giving your paper in a language other than English, please let us know and give us the title of your paper in that language and in English.
5. The MSA does not allow papers to be read in absentia, except in extraordinary circumstances. PLEASE NOTE: The MSA will hold paper sessions on Thursday, Friday, and

Saturday. Saturday is a full conference day, and you should not plan to travel before Sunday morning unless you are certain that your paper is not on Saturday afternoon. We will still honor special time requests for medical, religious, or other serious reasons IF REQUEST IS MADE BEFORE FEBRUARY 1, 2019, OUR PROPOSAL DEADLINE.

6. Proposals for papers and/or sessions must be submitted through the MSA website: <https://www.mediterraneanstudies.org>.
If you have questions, contact: info@mediterraneanstudies.org

Membership and Registration

All accepted participants must be 2019 members of the MSA and must also register for the congress. Early registration will be available until February 1, 2019. Late registration will be available until April 15, 2019. Please be advised that if you have not registered by April 15, 2019, your paper will not be listed in the program. Also, please NOTE that registrations are non-refundable.

Publication

After the congress, you are encouraged to submit your revised and expanded paper for publication consideration in the Association's double-blind, peer-reviewed journal, Mediterranean Studies, published by Penn State University Press.

More information [here](#)

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CALL FOR PAPERS: 'SECTARIANISM, PROXIES AND DE-SECTARIANISATION ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST'

Abstract Deadline: December 14th, 2018

10-5 on the 28th of March 2019 at Lancaster University

The Sectarianism, Proxies and De-Sectarianism project and the Richardson Institute is hosting a one-day conference in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University on the subject of sectarianism, proxies and de-sectarianisation across the Middle East.

In the recent years, the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran has taken on a central role in constructing regional security and the domestic politics of the states across the region. Efforts to understand the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran have created a nuanced literature focusing on the sectarian differences which is shaping the politics of the Middle East. The rivalry between Riyadh and Tehran facilitated the rise of sectarian tensions in Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen, Lebanon and Syria which is leading to proxy conflicts across the region. This

conference seeks to challenge these views by bringing together scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds to understand the interaction of geopolitics, identity politics, and religious conflicts. We especially welcome submissions looking at the following topics:

- Saudi-Iran rivalry
- Proxy wars and networks
- Identity politics
- Arab uprisings
- Sectarianism and de-sectarianisation
- Peace building

Researchers interested in applying are kindly invited to send an abstract of not more than 250 words along with a short bio including your name, email address, current position and institutional affiliation to Samira Nasirzadeh s.nasirzadeh@lancaster.ac.uk before the 14th of December 2018. There are a limited number of travel bursaries available, so please indicate in your submission if you would like to be considered. Notification of acceptance: 30th of January 2019.

The deadline for full paper submissions is 14th March. We hope to combine a selection of papers for publication either as a special issue or edited collection.

More information [here](#)

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Untangling Popular Power: Rhetoric, Faith, and Social Order

Middle East Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life and Columbia Global Center
Amman, Jordan, 2-3 March 2019

Paper Submission Deadline: January 15th, 2018

The Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life (IRCPL) at Columbia University in collaboration with Columbia Global Centers | Amman and co-sponsored by our partners in Europe, are organizing a conference entitled Untangling Popular Power: Rhetoric, Faith, and Social Order in the Middle East.

The conference will consider various forms of popular power in the Middle East and North Africa by examining how populism is defined, the role of modern populist movements like anti-colonial struggles or popular anti-regime uprisings, how the use of religious identity has shaped these movements, and the relationship between populist ambitions and various media platforms, from print to broadcast to digital.

As “populism” itself becomes a significant force, both rhetorically and politically, across the world and in the region, the need for interdisciplinary scholarship across the MENA region is vital. This forum aims to explore the extent to which recently emerging populisms in the contemporary Middle East are illustrative of a new historical trend, and/or the extent to which they are a continuation of the diverse strategies for the mobilization of peoples that were deployed during international anti-colonial projects and civil rights movements. It will examine the intersection of populist and religious discourses and the relationship of secular and religious activists to political and social power, as well as the implications of the different strains of emerging populism on globalization, liberal institutions, human rights, and the media.

Although “populism” is a contested term, here we use it to characterize political trends in which leaders mobilize social groups for political action through rhetoric(s) that weave together emotionally charged themes into a message of economic uplift, nationalism, the wresting of power from entrenched elites, and the protection of an authentic way of life.

The two-day conference will be held at Columbia Global Centers | Amman and aims to provide a forum for scholars, local experts, advanced doctoral students, activists and practitioners to investigate these themes and track how populism that uses religious discourse is being variously deployed across the MENA region. Following the conference, select participants will be invited to contribute a revised and extended version of their papers to an edited book volume and other online writing fora.

More information [here](#)

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TALKS & OTHER EVENTS

Islam and Ethnicity in the Kurdish Political Sphere in Turkey

Monday 17 December | 16:00–17:30 |

Research Centres Meeting Suite, Pankhurst House, London

Islam has fully returned to the Turkish and Kurdish public and political spheres, becoming an effective mean to mobilise voters and recruit supporters during the AKP period.

In this talk, Mehmet Kurt highlights two distinctive approaches to the Kurdish issue adopted by the Kurdish Hizbullah (Huda-Par) and the Kurdish movement. While the former relies on clear Islamist political agendas to transform the Kurdish society into a pan-Islamist entity, the latter pursues a secular but increasingly pluralist agenda to expand its base among the

religious Kurds. This in turn determines both groups' connection to the Kurdish political identity.

More information [here](#)

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What do 'The People' Want? Social Justice, Democracy, Religion and Migration in the Middle East

December 14th, 2018

15:30 – 18:30 GMT

6th Floor Staff Room, Chrystal Macmillan Building, 15a George Square, EH8 9LD

A conversation with Dr Andrea Teti (Politics and International Relations, University of Aberdeen)

with a comment from Dr Ewan Stein (Politics and International Relations, University of Edinburgh).

Followed by a reception.

The massive, nation-wide street protests of the 2010-11 Arab Uprisings were a demonstration of how unpopular many Middle Eastern dictatorships had become. Millions of people took to the streets chanting 'the people demand the downfall of the regime' – but beyond removing dictators, what did 'the people' actually want? Andrea Teti will address trends in attitudes, values, and behaviour across the Middle East and North Africa based on the research outcomes of the Arab Transformation Project: <https://www.arabtrans.eu>. The Arab Transformations Project involved an international research consortium of 11 partners which conducted extensive research focusing on Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq. Its aim was to help understand and evaluate political, social, and economic transformations before and after the Arab Uprisings of 2010-11.

More information [here](#)

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Book Discussion: "Educational Transitions in Post-Revolutionary: Spaces: Islam, Security, and Social Movements in Tunisia"

December 13, 2018

Tunis

Le Centre d'Études Maghrébines à Tunis (CEMAT) invites you to a book discussion by Dr. Tavis D. Jules, who will be talking about his recent book "Educational Transitions in Post-Revolutionary: Spaces Islam, Security, and Social Movements in Tunisia" on Thursday, December 13, 2018, at 2 PM.

About the speaker:

Dr. Tavis D. Jules is an Associate Professor of Cultural and Educational Policy at Loyola University Chicago, specifically focusing on Comparative and International Education and International Higher Education. He has taught a variety of graduate and undergraduate courses in the USA, Europe and Tunisia.

More information [here](#)

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The Creative Memory of the Syrian Revolution

Exhibition Opening: Thursday, December 6, 2018, 6.30 pm

Open House: Friday, Dec 7, 10 am – 6 pm & Saturday, Dec 8, 10 am – 12 pm

Beirut

Explore the multimedia exhibition and learn more about The Creative Memory's work.

The exhibition, with the support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, will be open to visitors until 8 December 2018, entrance is free of charge.

Place: Fabrika, Sassine Street, facing St George Towers, Zahar Bldg, 1st Floor.

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RECENT & FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Globalized Authoritarianism: Megaprojects, Slums, and Class Relations in Urban Morocco

Koenraad Bogaert

University of Minnesota Press, 2018

Over the past thirty years, Morocco's cities have transformed dramatically. To take just one example, Casablanca's medina is now obscured behind skyscrapers that are funded by global capital and encouraged by Morocco's monarchy, which hopes to transform this city into a regional leader of finance and commerce. Such changes have occurred throughout Morocco. Megaprojects are redesigning the cityscapes of Rabat, Tangiers, and Casablanca, turning the nation's urban centers into laboratories of capital accumulation, political dominance, and social control.

In *Globalized Authoritarianism*, Koenraad Bogaert links more abstract questions of government, globalization, and neoliberalism with concrete changes in the city. Bogaert goes deep beneath the surface of Morocco's urban prosperity to reveal how neoliberal government and the increased connectivity engendered by global capitalism transformed Morocco's leading urban spaces, opening up new sites for capital accumulation, creating enormous class divisions, and enabling new innovations in state authoritarianism. Analyzing these transformations, he argues that economic globalization does not necessarily lead to increased democratization but to authoritarianism with a different face, to a form of authoritarian government that becomes more and more a globalized affair.

Showing how Morocco's experiences have helped produce new forms of globalization, Bogaert offers a bridge between in-depth issues of Middle Eastern studies and broader questions of power, class, and capital as they continue to evolve in the twenty-first century.

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Break all the Borders

Ariel I. Ahram

Oxford University Press

March 2019

Since 2011, civil wars and state failure have wracked the Arab world, underlying the misalignment between national identity and political borders. In *Break all the Borders*, Ariel I. Ahram examines the separatist movements that aimed to remake those borders and

create new independent states. With detailed studies of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the federalists in eastern Libya, the southern resistance in Yemen, and Kurdish nationalist parties, Ahram explains how separatists captured territory and handled the tasks of rebel governance, including managing oil exports, electricity grids, and irrigation networks. Ahram emphasizes that the separatism arose not just as an opportunistic response to state collapse. Rather, separatists drew inspiration from the legacy of Woodrow Wilson and ideal of self-determination. They sought to reinstate political autonomy that had been lost during the early and mid-twentieth century. Speaking to the international community, separatist promised a more just and stable world order. In Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Libya, they served as key allies against radical Islamic groups. Yet their hopes for international recognition have gone unfulfilled. Separatism is symptomatic of the contradictions in sovereignty and statehood in the Arab world. Finding ways to integrate, instead of eliminate, separatist movements may be critical for rebuilding regional order.

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The New Middle East: What Everyone Needs to Know

James L. Gelvin

Oxford University Press

2018

In the aftermath of the collapse of the USSR, the American invasion of Iraq, and the Arab uprisings of 2010-11, a new Middle East has emerged. The Syrian civil war has displaced half the country's population, and ISIS and other jihadi groups thrive in the political vacuum there and in Iraq, setting a new standard for political violence. Meanwhile, regimes in Egypt and Bahrain have become even more repressive after the uprisings there, and Libya and Yemen have virtually ceased to exist as states.

The hallmarks of this new Middle East are rebellion and repression, proxy wars, sectarian strife, the rise of the Islamic State, and intraregional polarization. International and regional actors stoke the flames, with the United States and Russia seeking to reposition themselves in the region and Saudi Arabia and Iran vying for supremacy. In the long term, perils including climate change, food and water insecurity, and population growth, along with bad governance and stagnant economies, will determine the destiny of the region.

In *The New Middle East: What Everyone Needs to Know*[®], renowned Middle East scholar James L. Gelvin explains all these developments and more in a concise question-and-answer format. Outlining the social, political, and economic contours of the New Middle East, he

illuminates the current crisis in the region and explores how the region will continue to change in the decades to come.

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Inside Tunisia's al-Nahda: Between Politics and Preaching

Rory McCarthy

Cambridge University Press

2018

In the wake of the Arab uprisings, al-Nahda voted to transform itself into a political party that would for the first time withdraw from a preaching project built around religious, social, and cultural activism. This turn to the political was not a Tunisian exception but reflects an urgent debate within Islamist movements as they struggle to adjust to a rapidly changing political environment. This book re-orientates how we think about Islamist movements. Drawing on extensive fieldwork with grassroots activists of Tunisia's al-Nahda, Rory McCarthy focuses on the lived experience of activism to offer a challenging new perspective on one of the Middle East's most successful Islamist projects. Original evidence explains how al-Nahda survived two decades of brutal repression in prison and in social exclusion, and reveals what price the movement paid for a new strategy of pragmatism and reform during the Tunisian transition away from authoritarianism.

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JOURNAL ARTICLES & OTHER ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

'Reading the ads in al-Da'wa magazine: commercialism and Islamist activism in al-Sadat's Egypt'

Aaron Rock-Singer & Steven Brooke

British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies

2018

This article probes the return of the Muslim Brotherhood to prominence in 1970s Egypt through a systematic analysis of advertisements in the organization's flagship periodical, al-Da'wa (The Call). In every issue of the magazine, which was published between June 1976

and October 1981, entreaties to proper conduct and appeals to Islamic solidarity appeared alongside advertisements for everything from Pepsi to breakfast biscuits to automobiles. We utilize the methodological insights of social and cultural historians to the value of advertisements to cast new light on the reconstruction of the Brotherhood, its relationship with the diverse institutions comprising the Egyptian state, and on how the Muslim Brotherhood's vision of piety both reflected and challenged a changing economic reality. Moving beyond a story of the Brotherhood's return as a product of independent Islamist enterprise that had emerged due to both the Gulf oil boom and Egypt's economic liberalization programme, significant public sector advertising in al-Da'wa, especially prominent across the most valuable advertising real estate, underscores both internal divisions within the Egyptian state as well as the tangible ways that various state institutions were patrons of religious change.

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The origins of Communist Unity: anti-colonialism and revolution in Iran's tri-continental moment

Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi

British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies

2017

This article analyses the historical emergence of the Organization of Communist Unity, which coalesced out of the National Front of Iran and its Organizations abroad. In the aftermath of the MI6/CIA-orchestrated 1953 *coup d'état*, a new generation of political activists left Iran for Europe and the United States to pursue their higher education. While politically active in the Organizations of the National Front Abroad, they gradually turned to revolutionary Marxism against the backdrop of the torrential waves of decolonization and resistance to imperial military interventions undulating across the Global South. This same constellation of activists was not only fiercely anti-imperialist, but also opposed any form of dependence on the U.S.S.R. or the People's Republic of China. They would move from Europe and the United States to establish themselves in several locations across the Arab world, and pursue political activism and their advocacy of guerrilla warfare, as part of their ambition to launch a national liberation struggle against the Pahlavi regime. By examining Communist Unity's predecessors and their manifold transnational ideological, political and logistical networks with like-minded revolutionary movements inside the Middle East, this article brings to the fore hitherto under-explored South–South connections, and situates Iran's revolutionary opposition within the global moment of '1968'.

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Activism in the Middle East and North Africa in times of upheaval: social networks' actions and interactions

Frédéric Volpi & Janine A. Clark

Social Movement Studies

November 2018

We seek to better understand recent changes in social mobilization in the MENA region by analysing the formation and evolution of social networks. We propose an interactive perspective linking up contentious politics with routine governance through a dynamic articulation of repertoires of contention. At the heart of our analysis of social networks lie important questions regarding agency, strategic action and outcomes that have significance for social mobilization, social movements and politics at large. We outline how mobilization can change suddenly in the face of dramatic social and political events that transform societal interactions and adopt a bottom-up approach that highlights how micro level interactions in times of crisis produce specific logics and dynamics inside networks and shape what the networks achieve. By starting with descriptions of interactions at the grassroots level, we seek to explain macro level dynamics between networks and other players, including the state. In our approach, the role of other players becomes as important as, if not more than, structural characteristics. By adopting an interactionist orientation, we reveal the temporal dimension of strategic and non-strategic choices of these different players. In this perspective, the internal dynamics of the networks play a crucial part in determining the strategy of mobilization at the time of unrest; they also shape the possibilities for reformulating of the identity of the movement. Equally, the interactions between networks and other social and political players during episodes of contention contribute to validate or invalidate the internal choices of the networks; they also shape the impact of the networks' mobilization on the trajectory of the protests. Finally, the resonance of the networks with the behaviours and identities activated by the upheaval simultaneously empower them as players and tie their fate to a specific type of demands and needs which may be more or less transient.

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NEWS PIECES & COMMENTARY

“Let it Spoil!” Morocco’s Boycott and the Empowerment of ‘Regular’ Citizen

Mohammed Masbah
Al Jazeera

On April 20, 2018, anonymous cyber activists posted calls on social media outlets for a boycott that targeted three companies: Afriquia Gas stations; Sidi Ali bottled water, and dairy products Centrale Danone. The boycott represented a tool of pressure with the aim of dropping the high price of these products, while Moroccans have faced economic hardship in the recent years. The boycotters chose to target these three companies since they symbolize an economy dominated by large groups linked to a business and political elite, or foreign brands. [\(1\)](#) While the declared incentive of the boycott was to serve the consumer’s economic objectives (i.e. the call to decrease the price of the products), it can also be seen as a tool of political engagement [\(2\)](#). It is also a risk-free tool for social and political mobilization that allowed activists to be politically engaged and influential without risking the threat of state repression. As a result, Centrale Danone announced a drop in the price of its dairy products in Morocco September 5. However, the boycotters declined the offer and sustained the standoff.

This paper probes into Morocco’s boycott movement and the nuances of its slogan “Let it Spoil”, by building on the social movements theory (SMT) [\(3\)](#). Leading SMT scholars like Diani and McAdam have argued social movements cannot be reduced to specific forms of disobedience or revolutions, but rather are composed of decentralized and interconnected groups with varying levels of organization that are linked to each other through complex webs of exchanges, either direct or mediated. [\(4\)](#) In recent years, social theorists have focused not only on internal dynamics of these movements, such as the emergence of leaders and internal decision-making process; but, also on the political opportunity that helps activists mobilize resources to achieve the group’s goals. As we will see later, political opportunities are “consistent signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements.” [\(5\)](#) This paper also examines how social change in the Moroccan society has led to the politicization of citizens and how this can explain the boycott’s persistence, its consequences on the political spectrum, and the responses it has elicited from the boycotted companies, the government and the entire regime. At the heart of the analysis, “regular” citizens seem to be the main agents of change, and no longer as merely passive consumers.

The Social movement theory has derived mainly from the work of advocacy groups in Western contexts in the last five decades. However, Iranian-American sociologist Assef Bayat has proposed a more recent concept to analyze the new generation of social movements in the Middle East. What he has termed as 'social nonmovements' refer to how ordinary individuals in the Middle East who are not members of the elite are able to change politics through their simple daily routines that take the form of a negative protest against situations and grievances. (6) This concept contests the classical top-down politics and pushes for an alternative bottom-up mobility. As Bayat argues, "These claim-making practices are made and realized mostly through direct actions, rather than through exerting pressure on authorities to concede—something that the conventionally-organized social movements (like labor or environment movements) usually do. In a sense, the non-movements emerge as an un-articulated strategy to reduce the cost of mobilization under the repressive conditions." (7)

The Rise of a 'Shadowy' Campaign!

Despite previous calls for boycott echoed and failed in Morocco in the past, they seem to have become popular and appealing to many citizens in 2018. In the early 2000s, certain Islamist and secular groups alike called for the boycott of American and Israeli products, such as Coca Cola, McDonalds, Israeli dates, and other products. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (also known as the BDS movement) is a good model of such campaigns. However, it failed to provoke good appeal among citizens, except few groups linked to the leftist and Islamists spectrum. Therefore, the current boycott campaign seems to embody an unprecedented landmark in Morocco's contemporary political history. For the first time in the sixty-year-post-independence era, millions of Moroccans agreed to boycott specific companies and challenge certain areas of the country's political economy through the will of Moroccan net citizens and the anonymity of social media.

The ongoing boycott campaign has been more popular than any previous calls for protest. Within two weeks of its launch April 20, 2018, more than 90 percent of Moroccans were aware of the campaign and almost three quarters of citizens participated in some way. Among those who supported the campaign, 95 percent targeted Central Danone, 78 percent targeted Sidi Ali, and 52 percent targeted Afriquia, according to l'economiste. (8)

Interestingly, the boycott seems to be a youth-driven collective action as almost 93 percent of the participants, in a survey commissioned by l'economiste, between 15 and 24 were aware of the boycott campaign. 70 percent within this category actively participated in the boycott. The number falls to 31 percent for the older people (55 years old). (9) These results can be explained by the strong mobilization of the youth via various social media platforms in the same is the most affected by current politics. They are the most affected category of

citizens by unemployment, which has turned many of them into serving as the driving force in different forms of activism.

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Egypt's new political order in the making

Ashraf Hakim and Asmahan Soliman

December 4th, 2018

Mada Masr

Plans to amend Egypt's Constitution — including those that would extend President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's term in office — are underway, with changes to be introduced in the first half of 2019, according to three different sources in the president's office, the General Intelligence Service (GIS) and Parliament who have attended private meetings within various state bodies in recent months.

The amendments, said to be Sisi's first major endeavor in the coming year, will see him retain his position as Egypt's president beyond 2022, which should mark the end of his second and final term in office, according to the current Constitution.

Sisi swore an oath to respect the current constitutional term limit twice, once when he became president in June 2014, and again when he was reelected in June 2018.

Yet, in September 2015, one year after he was first elected, the president hinted at possible changes to the Constitution, saying, "The Egyptian Constitution was written with good intentions, but states aren't built solely on good intentions."

Since then, there have been widespread expectations that the Constitution will be amended with the aim of undermining the separation of powers of state institutions and, ultimately, restoring these powers, which had been bestowed to Parliament in 2014, back into the hands of president.

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The new repertoire of repression and how movements resist

SIMIN FADAEE and GEOFFREY PLEYERS

21 November 2018

Open Democracy

Within the last decade, a new repertoire of repression has emerged and consolidated at a global level. It affects all regions of the world, albeit on a different scale, bypassing the borders between liberal democracies, authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes. Social control and repression against social movements and dissent has a long history. However, in the past few years we have entered a new era characterised by the intensification of policing protest events; the development of diverse methods of surveillance and infiltration both in social movement actual and virtual mobilisations, with the help of information technology; and criminalisation of activists through enforcement of laws and regulations.

A new repertoire of repression

The recent harsh response to protesters as well as violent clashes between protesters and the police in international summits such as G8 and [G20 meetings](#) in liberal democracies has turned out not very different from the violence and the repression that affected democratic movements in the early 2010s within the authoritarian/semi-authoritarian regimes of Syria, Egypt or Turkey.

Syria was certainly the most extreme. The peaceful democratic revolution was crushed by the regime, leading to thousands of deaths and displacements which eventually left the country in the ruins of a never-ending civil war. In Egypt – the country that hosted the largest Arab revolution in 2011 – two years after the revolution, over 1000 citizens who occupied the Rab'a square in central Cairo were killed by the security forces a few weeks after the coup d'état that brought the military regime of El-Sisi to power. After a one-year long investigation, [Human Rights Watch](#) reported on the massacre with the unequivocal title: "[All according to plan](#)". After five years no one has been brought to trial for the massacre which was the result of a well-established plan and El-Sisi remains in control of the country without facing any international ban.

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Authoritarian Middle East regimes don't like academics – ask Matthew Hedges

JANNIS GRIMM

22 November 2018

Open Democracy

When the news broke in mid-October that a young British academic was held by Abu Dhabi for his research, [Matthew Hedges](#) had already been imprisoned for over five months. As early as May, Matthew had travelled to the Emirate aiming to conduct interviews for his PhD on civil-military relations in the United Arab Emirates, post-Arab spring. Despite obtaining all the required permits and meeting several officials, he had been arrested and placed in solitary confinement at an undisclosed location. Emirati authorities claimed that his research activities were but a cover for surveillance on behalf of British intelligence and charged him with espionage for a foreign state.

Amid the international outcry about the gruesome murder of journalist [Jamal Khashoggi](#) in Istanbul by a Saudi hit squad, this came as yet another shock to those who had thus far viewed the Arab Gulf as an anchor of regional stability.

For those studying the region, by contrast, Matthew's detention hardly came as a surprise. The case of the Durham PhD student exposes the extreme limits on academic freedom in the UAE, but it is not an isolated incident. Instead, it exemplifies a larger authoritarian trend in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) that has impacted students of and in the region at an alarming rate. Notably, the shrinking spaces for academic research in and on the Middle East. This trend signals a massive rollback of the auspicious research climate in the wake of the so-called "Arab Spring" of 2011.

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Yemeni women demand seat at the table as peace talks begin in Stockholm

Aaya Al-Shamahi

December 6th, 2018

Middle East Eye

A coalition of Yemeni women are demanding a seat at the negotiating table as UN-sponsored peace talks to end Yemen's war are scheduled to begin in Sweden.

Pictures released of delegates attending the talks showed only one woman present on the negotiating table from both sides of the civil war, which has been going on for nearly four years.

Kawkab Al-Thaibani, a Yemeni woman who works for the Women for Yemen network, told Middle East Eye that Yemen's women had borne the brunt of the country's war.

"Women in Yemen are paying the highest price of war. I believe that no lasting peace will happen... without women [being involved] in the peace negotiations," Thaibani said this week.

"They're facing hunger, poverty, violence, displacement and being uprooted, among many other issues.

"Women are now leading the entire household, domestically and financially alone, often for the first time, in a country where its basic delivery system is collapsing."

In March 2015, Saudi Arabia launched a military campaign in Yemen to root out Houthi rebels, who had taken over the capital, Sanaa, and deposed president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi.

The Saudi-led coalition has been accused of committing war crimes in Yemen, such as the deliberate bombing of hospitals, buses and other civilian infrastructure.

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PETITIONS AND CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY

Statement by Concerned Scholars on China's Mass Detention of Turkic Minorities

November 26, 2018

As concerned scholars who study China, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), Central Asia, and other related regions of the world, we issue this statement to highlight our concerns and to call the international community to action in relation to the mass human rights abuses and deliberate attacks on indigenous cultures presently taking place in China's XUAR. The signatories to this statement are united in viewing the present situation in this region of China as one of significant international concern. This situation must be addressed to prevent setting negative future precedents regarding the acceptability of any state's

complete repression of a segment of its population, especially on the basis of ethnicity or religion.

Continue reading [here](#)

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POSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Research Associate/Senior Research Associate in the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies

University of Bristol

Deadline: January 6th, 2018

A Research Associate/Senior Research Associate position is available in the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol. The successful applicant will join an international research team working on Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing together European and Asian Perspectives (GREASE) project, funded by the EU Horizon2020 Programme.

The successful applicant will work with Professor Modood on most aspects of the project and liaise with partners, especially in relation to mapping state-religion relations and different approaches to governance of religious diversity; assist with the consequent comparative analysis; with dialogue with stakeholders in various regions; and participation in dissemination activities.

The successful candidate will have specialist knowledge in relation to state-religion relations and/or governance of religious diversity and/or religious radicalisation/preventing radicalisation; or in some related field up to doctoral standard.

This post is available on an open-ended contract with fixed funding until 30 September 2021.

Informal enquiries are welcomed and may be made to Professor Tariq Modood t.modood@bristol.ac.uk.

Closing date for applications is midnight on Sunday 6 January 2019. Interviews are likely to take place on 17 January 2019 with an anticipation start date of 1 February 2019, or as soon as possible thereafter.

More information and application [here](#)

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Research Assistant in the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

Deadline: January 7th, 2018

The EUI has a vacancy for a Research Assistant in the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

The Research Assistant will help the Director of the Programme in the coordination and implementation of his research and educational activities. In particular, s/he will support the Director in monitoring and analysing geo-political and geo-economic developments in the MENA region, with an emphasis on the Gulf region (Saudi Arabia, other GCC countries, Iran, Iraq and Yemen). S/he will assist in designing and implementing research, educational activities and dialogue initiatives in thematic areas such as the MENA regional order, economy and conflicts, and peace-building processes. S/he will provide support in coordinating the network of partners and contacts in the region, neighbouring countries, and the EU, as well as in the production of analysis that is more broadly relevant to the Programme's activities.

Reference number: V/RA/RSC/24/2018.

More information and application [here](#)

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International Advocacy Officer – Brussels Office- Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

Deadline: January 9th, 2018

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) is seeking well-qualified applicants for the position of an International Advocacy Officer (IAO) for the Arab Regional Advocacy Program (ARAP). This position will entail performing regular, high-level advocacy directed towards EU bodies and EU member state governments in Brussels and national capitals. The position will have a particular focus on expanding CIHRS' advocacy outreach within media outlets and online, targeting global, European and Arab media. Candidates with a background and strong networks in the field of journalism, and/or with a proven record of accessing traditional and new media, are encouraged to apply.

Who we are:

CIHRS was established in 1993 as a regional NGO dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights. Its mission is to promote and protect human rights in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. CIHRS works to protect civil society, sustain and revive the human rights movement in the MENA region, and to counter anti-democratic forces that

undermine human rights at the local, regional and international levels. For more than 25 years, CIHRS has played a unique and central role in identifying and responding to the challenges and needs of this movement and helping to shape its development. CIHRS enjoys consultative status with the United Nations ECOSOC and observer status with the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights. CIHRS has received numerous awards for its work including the French Republic Award for Human Rights in December 2007, and an award from the Library of Alexandria (2010). The Director of its Egypt Office was recognized as the laureate of the 2017 Martin Ennals Award.

CIHRS's Arab Regional Advocacy Program (ARAP) is designed to increase the ability of human rights actors in the Arab region to achieve positive change by building and sustaining cooperative platforms of solidarity and action, with a specific emphasis on creating synergy between national, regional and international advocacy and influence. This is achieved through a partner based process that involves research, capacity-building, network creation and sustained, targeted advocacy initiatives. To achieve this the ARAP is currently expanding its advocacy operations in multiple locations, and regularly engages with international partners to influence advocacy targets including the United Nations, African Union, European Union, other multilateral forums, as well as in capitals in the Arab region and around the world.

Position purpose and description:

As International Advocacy Officer for the ARAP you will become a leading international campaigner on human rights in the Arab region, and work full time through both advocacy, and conducting outreach and liaison with the media to advance the human rights goals of CIHRS and its partners. This will require you to help build capacities and assist partner organizations and human rights defenders from throughout the Arab region, to achieve outcomes from international advocacy and add in-house expertise to CIHRS on how to effectively influence and engage with international media targets.

The International Advocacy Officer performs advocacy, outreach, and research duties in the context of the European Union, national capitals, the United Nations and other advocacy targets, as well as other tasks, according to the needs of the organization and its partners. The International Advocacy Officer will also focus on expanding CIHRS' outreach and impact with international media outlets and online. As the International Advocacy Officer, you will be working as part of a team of co-workers located in multiple countries. You will be working with partner organizations and human rights activists from the Arab region and around the world to carry out national, regional and global human rights advocacy campaigns and initiatives.

More information and application [here](#)

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Faculty Position in Socio-Cultural Anthropology

American University of Kuwait

Faculty Openings AY 2019-2020

Deadline: Position will remain opened till filled

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Anthropology (Position Code No. 18-701- MESA 11): The College of Arts and Sciences at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) invites applications for a faculty position in the field of socio-cultural anthropology for the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Candidates should have a Ph.D. in anthropology. The specialization is open but priority is given to, Africa, East Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. The University is seeking qualified faculty committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service. American education, teaching experience, and scholarly activities are preferred. Strong communication skills, cultural sensitivity, teamwork, and effective use of classroom media and technology are expected. Faculty rank will be determined by the candidate's degree and previous employment history. Successful candidates will teach undergraduate classes to majors and non-majors of diverse cultural backgrounds, conduct research, participate in student advising, honor office hours, and serve on faculty committees.

The American University of Kuwait is a private university in Kuwait organized on the U.S. model of undergraduate liberal arts education. The medium of instruction is English. The University is accredited by the Council for Private Universities of the Kuwait Ministry of Higher Education. AUK also has a Memorandum of Understanding with Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH. AUK admitted its first students in September 2004 and currently has approximately 2,500 students and over 120 UG faculty members.

The University is seeking qualified faculty committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service. American education, teaching experience, and scholarly activities are preferred. Strong communication skills, cultural sensitivity, teamwork, and effective use of classroom media and technology are expected. Faculty rank will be determined by the candidate's degree and previous employment history. Successful candidates will teach undergraduate classes to majors and non-majors of diverse cultural backgrounds, conduct research, participate in student advising, honor office hours, and serve on faculty committees.

AUK offers competitive compensation commensurate with qualifications and experience, as well as an attractive and comprehensive benefits package. There is no personal income tax, and US citizens may be eligible to take advantage of the IRS foreign tax exclusion.

Contracts are issued for 3 years and are renewable. For more information, see our website at www.auk.edu.kw

Application packages are to be submitted electronically to faculty@auk.edu.kw (attachments must not exceed 10 MB per e-mail).

More information and application [here](#)

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Open Rank Professorship in Humanities and Social Sciences

Hamad Bin Khalifa University, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Deadline: December 31st, 2018

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University invites applications for an Open Rank Professorship with an emphasis on Research Methods in Translation Studies, Audiovisual Translation and Accessibility, Women, Society and Development, and Digital Humanities and Societies. The successful candidate will contribute to courses, mentoring, advising, and thesis supervision. The college seeks candidates who are specialized in research methods that focus specifically on the areas above. Applicants with a doctoral degree in any of the above-named areas will be given top preference. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

Essential Requirements

- A doctorate in the humanities or social sciences.
- A publication record commensurate with the rank being applied for.
- University level teaching experience.
- Demonstrated research or teaching experience in Humanities and Social Sciences.
- Fluency in English.

Preferred Requirements

- Knowledge of Arabic will be considered an added value though not a requirement.
- Track record or demonstrated interest in research methods in Humanities and Social Sciences.
- Evidence of mentoring and thesis supervision skills.
- Evidence of building university-community relations.
- Experience of applying for grants or generating research income.

About The College of Humanities and Social Sciences:

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences was recently established with a vision to enrich society, by providing transformative educational experiences that bridge disciplinary

boundaries, and by offering the academic community opportunities to engage in innovative research and collaboration. The college achieves its mission through recruiting and retaining the finest faculty and researchers, enrolling and graduating high caliber students and promoting a supportive environment for faculty and student research and through offering the following programs:

- Master of Arts in Translation Studies (MATS)- since 2012
- Master of Arts in Audiovisual Translation (MAAT)- since 2014
- Master of Arts in Women, Society and Development (MAWSD)- launched in 2017
- Master of Arts in Digital Humanities and Societies (MADHS)- launched in 2017

About Hamad Bin Khalifa University:

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, is an emerging world-class teaching and research university that is building its foundation upon unique collaborations with best local and international institutions. Located in Education City, Doha, Qatar, HBKU enjoys close proximity with partner research institutions and faculty from Georgetown, Northwestern, Carnegie Mellon, Texas A&M, Cornell, and Virginia Commonwealth University. HBKU delivers world-class research-based undergraduate and graduate programs through its College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Islamic Studies, College of Science and Engineering, Law School, and College of Public Health. It also provides unparalleled opportunities for funding research and scholarship through its research institutes, and its Center of Executive Education delivers customized programs for the business community of Qatar and the region, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

More information and application [here](#)

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Professorship in Women, Society and Development

Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar

Deadline: December 31st, 2018

Women, Society and Development Program. This post offers an excellent career opening for scholars in gender and women studies within the broad development of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The successful candidate will ideally have excellent professional experience with a completed doctorate and will be committed to producing innovative research ideas/projects, and have a strong or developing record of publications. S/he will work closely with other degrees within the college, and work with stakeholders to ensure providing new opportunities for students' internship.

The candidate will be expected to teach graduate courses, applying a range of methodologies for teaching and assessment, contribute to all levels of curriculum development in area(s) of specialty, including the development of Women, Society and Development curriculum, course syllabi, and/or any other initiatives. S/he should be committed to project-based teaching and learning and the integration of professional practice into classroom activities, encouraging students to analyse and reflect on their understanding of specific gender and women theories. The candidate is expected to maintain an active research plan and participate in departmental and college-wide initiatives.

The successful candidate will ideally be a dynamic scholar of Middle Eastern Studies/ Women's and Gender Studies or closely related fields with a strong record of publications with international exposure. The candidate will be expected to contribute to a wide range of leadership tasks at a strategic level. S/he needs to be fluent in English, and preferably a language or languages of the region.

More information and application [here](#)

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Visiting Assistant Professor in Iranian Studies, Brown University, Providence, RI

Review of Applications: January 20th, 2018

Description

Middle East Studies at Brown University invites applications for a two-year position as **Visiting Assistant Professor in Iranian Studies**. The position is open to all disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. We especially welcome candidates who have wide knowledge of Iranian history and civilizations, thrive in an interdisciplinary environment, are interested in comparative and global perspectives, and have experience teaching and supervising undergraduates. The successful candidate will teach three classes a year and is expected to actively cultivate broad interest in Iranian Studies at Brown and to contribute to the intellectual life of the university. Additional funding for programming and research expenses will be considered.

Qualifications

The position is designed for scholars at the Assistant Professor level. Teaching experience and a record of publication and professional service are desirable. Residence in the Providence area is required for most of the duration of the appointment.

More information and application [here](#)

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