



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

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

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# CALL FOR PAPERS & CONFERENCES

## **Panel: Activities, Positionality, and Futures of Youth in the Maghreb**

Abstract Deadline: February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

In diverse literatures, youth is an important and thoroughly discussed framework for research but also a highly debated and fluctuating term. Policy-makers often narrowly conceive of youth as a period of life based on a set age range. In contrast, most scholars define youth as a socially constructed and contextual term, referring to individuals who are no longer children and have not yet reached adulthood. While some research focuses on youth as a liminal life-stage where young people gain the social and economic resources to transition to adulthood, other studies emphasize how young people practice youth as a distinct socio-cultural category. Both approaches can provide useful frameworks to further knowledge about youth as a life-stage, especially when considering its contextual construction.

In many areas of the world, state, market, and social institutions have largely failed to provide adequate opportunities and resources for youth. Youth in the Middle East and North Africa are in a precarious situation due to the current “youth bulge,” where as much as 40% of the population are under the age of 30 years old (Herrera and Bayat 2010). Some scholars argue that longer periods of education, delayed entry into the labor force, and later marriages demonstrate a prolonged transition to adulthood in this region (White 2012). This delayed transition has been described as ‘waithood’, which works to construct young people as passive subjects in the face of a changing world (Assaad and Ramadan 2008). However, this panel demonstrates how young people have actively pursued alternative means of social, economic, and political participation in society through diverse choices, including migration, activism, extremism, and artistic endeavors.

As the “youth bulge” contributes to instability in opportunities and careers, how do young people consider their aspirations and futures in these societies? This panel will investigate the ways in which young people experience and practice the life-stage of youth in the Maghreb. Specifically, we focus on the diverse activities and labor in which youth engage, their future aspirations, and how they conceive of their positionality within society. This works to demonstrate the breadth of youth responses to their precarious societal position, particularly in the context of blurring urban/rural boundaries, challenges to gender norms, increasingly informal labor markets, and transnational cultural flows. By concentrating on how young people practice the life period of youth, we aim to bring together multiple scholarly approaches that analyze youth reaction and experiences in the Maghreb.

For this panel at the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) annual meeting (New Orleans, LA, USA from November 14th to 17th, 2020), we are looking for 2 individuals interested in youth in the Maghreb region who are looking at narratives of futures, aspirations, opportunities, livelihoods, or hobbies for contemporary youth in the region. We encourage contributions focusing on different elements of the practice of the life stage of youth, as described above. Any disciplinary approach is

welcome. Submitted abstracts must be 300-400 words and must demonstrate relation to the overall theme, have a clear thesis, describe methodology and data, and convey conclusions from research.

If interested in presenting on this panel, submit abstracts by February 10th, 2019 at 5:00 pm EST. If interested in the topic but wish to be a discussant or be a panel chair, please submit a statement of 300-400 words about your interest in adding to this discussion. For all types of submissions, please include a short (1 to 2 line bio).

Submit all to abstracts and statements to [egoul001@ucr.edu](mailto:egoul001@ucr.edu) and [dcb88@georgetown.edu](mailto:dcb88@georgetown.edu)

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### **3rd INTERNATIONAL KURDISH STUDIES CONFERENCE: Shifting Dynamics of the Kurdistan Question in a Changing Middle East**

Middlesex University, London, on 25 - 26 June 2019

Abstract Deadline: March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

This interdisciplinary conference aims to bring together researchers from a range of disciplines working on Kurdish history, politics, culture, gender, minority rights and diaspora to examine the ongoing political, social and cultural developments in the lives of the Kurds and Kurdistan.

The conference is organised by the Department of Politics and Law, Middlesex University, Minority Rights Group International and The Centre for Kurdish Progress.

We would very much appreciate it if you could circulate this call for abstracts to your colleagues and friends who may be interested in participating in the conference.

We also welcome proposals for sessions and are open to suggestions as to what format these take, including panel discussions, roundtables and workshops or book launches.

If you have any questions about submitting abstracts or the conference in general, please do not hesitate to contact us at [KurdishStudies@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:KurdishStudies@mdx.ac.uk).

For more information, please see below

We look forward to receiving your abstracts and welcoming you to Middlesex University.

On behalf of the organising committee,

Dr Janroj Yilmaz Keles, Middlesex University, London

Dr Naif Bezwan, University of Innsbruck, Austria, and UCL, London

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#### **3RD INTERNATIONAL KURDISH STUDIES CONFERENCE**

##### **Shifting Dynamics of the Kurdistan Question in a Changing Middle East**

Over 35 million Kurds live under the national jurisdictions of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria where the Kurdish identity, culture, linguistic rights, homeland and own political representation are contested and contained in most cases by the force of arms. Consequently, the combination of authoritarian state ideologies, the systematic and recurrent use of state violence in these countries has led to the rise of Kurdish opposition. In turn, the ruling states have further used the Kurdish resistance as a

pretext to reinforce draconian policies of negation, assimilation and elimination of Kurdish national aspirations.

The 20th century has marked the most repressive state policies against the Kurdish quest for self-determination. At the turn of the 21st century, however, various political developments suggest a shift for the Kurds. The regime change in Iraq in 2003, the ongoing civil war in Syria and the emergence of ISIS were among the watershed events that have not only changed the balance of power in the Middle East but also the perception and position of the Kurds in the global political system.

The establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Kurdistan-Iraq, the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria and the rise of pro-Kurdish political parties in Kurdistan-Turkey have given rise to the political visibility of the Kurds in international politics. The old borders and boundaries that separated the Kurds are becoming increasingly ineffective. These crucial developments have deepened the sovereignty crisis of the oppressive regional states. Simultaneously with this emerging new political geography and visibility of the Kurds, the number of scholarly studies on the “Kurdish Question” and “Kurdistan Question” has rapidly increased in recent years. The “Kurdistan Question” is growing into an international political issue that needs a global response to find a peaceful settlement in the region.

Keynote Speaker

Prof Abbas Vali, Emeritus Professor of Sociology

Call for Abstracts

This interdisciplinary conference aims to bring together researchers from a range of disciplines working on Kurdish history, politics, culture, gender, minority rights and diaspora to examine the ongoing political, social and cultural developments in the lives of the Kurds and Kurdistan. In this context, we seek a broad range of contributions from disciplines of sociology, politics, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, gender studies, cultural studies, history, economics, law, international relations and migration studies.

Researchers are kindly encouraged to contribute to and help shape the conference through submissions of their research abstracts. We also welcome proposals for sessions and are open to suggestions as to what format these take, including panel discussions, roundtables and workshops or book launches. The conference will provide an excellent venue for academics, researchers, students, professionals and policymakers.

How to submit

Please submit your abstract of maximum 350 words to [KurdishStudies@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:KurdishStudies@mdx.ac.uk). Please suggest up to 5 keywords, indicate your institutional affiliation and the stage of your fieldwork, if its relevant.

For more information: [KurdishStudies@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:KurdishStudies@mdx.ac.uk)

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## **Workshop: Post-2011 Arab Diaspora and Home-Making in Berlin**

Werkstatt Der Kulturen Berlin

Mar 12 at 9 AM – Mar 17 at 10:30

Deadline for Applications: February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Call for Applications (CfA) for artists and BA, MA students and researchers in social sciences, humanities and arts )

The Arab revolutions were set in motion by hopes and dreams for a better home. However, defeat, repression, war, and economic perils forced people to leave their hopes, dreams and homes behind, and try to survive elsewhere. This current wave of migration - another in a long history of human movement fleeing repression and war - raises one more time the question of what is home among the newly forming diaspora. Home cannot be just defined as a space where one is secure and comfortable. Home is also a feeling, a sensory experience of familiar smells and sounds. Home is often constructed as a collective memory. Through the movement of migrants, home is deconstructed, questioned and recreated.

In this interactive workshop, we seek to examine the various ways leaving home can represent a disruption in one's life but also possibilities for new connections and practices for home-making. We aim to investigate home-making practices among post-2011 diaspora in Berlin.

Through a collaboration between scholars and artists, we aim to collectively understand and discuss the politics, dreams and emotions engendered in the journey of leaving home, and in the negotiations in host societies for home-making. The workshop aims at creating a space for expressing artistically the reflections on home and post-2011 migrations to reach a wider public.

The main questions we ask:

Why is the concept of Home important in understanding post-2011 migrant experiences?

How can we define Home in all its entanglements? Is it a space, a time, a feeling, a political concept?

How do dreams and aspirations about a 'new home' take shape? How are they expressed?

How can we understand the processes of home-making? Are they attempts of isolation or a necessary byproduct of migration that is imbued with nostalgia and romanticization?

## WHO CAN APPLY?

Artists and BA, MA students and researchers in social sciences, humanities and arts who are interested in the recent waves of migration, eager to reflect on the concept of home and to share their knowledge and expertise in relation to the topic.

## HOW TO APPLY?

Fill the following form by 10 February 2019.

Link to the form: <https://goo.gl/forms/fuSVUYjTg4URx6VY2>

If you have any inquiries, please send to [info@mayadinaltahrir.org](mailto:info@mayadinaltahrir.org)

## WORKSHOP STRUCTURE:

The first three days will include workshops, lectures, and roundtables offered by artists and scholars such as Yassin Al Haj Saleh and Samuli Schielke.

In the last two days, participants are encouraged to create artistic productions reflecting the discussions that took place throughout the workshop. Three art mentors, Hanaa Al Dagham (Visual Artist), Roba Road (Storytelling Trainer) and Ahmed Iskander (Podcast Trainer) will be present to work with the participants to create a performance, podcasts and art installations. But other artistic productions are welcomed based on participants' expertise.

The last day will be a public event where the participants will have the chance to display their artistic productions.

## WHO ARE WE?

We are two Egyptian academics residing currently in Berlin; interested in decolonizing academia through building an alternative research agenda based on our own realities and our own priorities.

The workshop is organized in a cooperation between Mayadin Al Tahrir and Europe in the Middle East – The Middle East in Europe (EUME), a research program at the Forum Transregionale Studien.

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## ORGANIZATIONS

Mayadin Al Tahrir

Mayadin Al-Tahrir e.V. is a German-Egyptian, non-profit association based in Berlin and created in 2011. It aims to promote political awareness and cultural activities in Egypt, as well as among the Egyptian diaspora in Berlin.

#### EUME

EUME is a research program at the Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien. EUME seeks to rethink key concepts and premises that link and divide Europe and the Middle East. EUME builds upon the previous work of the Working Group Modernity and Islam (1996-2006), the idea of “learning communities”, and the principle of “research with, rather than research on”. So far more than 200 scholars have been EUME fellows.

*More information [here](#)*

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## **TALKS & OTHER EVENTS**

### **Women's Rights Research Seminar - From Kurdistan to Europe: Kurdish Literary, Artistic and Cultural Activism by Kurdish Women Intellectuals**

Wednesday, 20 February 2019 - 2:00pm

Board Room, Kirdar Building, Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford

Speaker(s):

Dr Özlem Belçim Galip (Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellow, The School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford)

Chair:

Dr Soraya Tremayne (Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology (ISCA))

About the seminar:

A movement is observable that sees Kurdish migrant women moving from oppression within a traditional, patriarchal society; ethnic oppression; and being stuck between secularism and Islam, to exhibiting a liberated agency that challenges the monolithic perspectives of social power. The aesthetic and intellectual production of Kurdish migrant women, which leads to the empowerment of women and advancement of gender equality in the Kurdish diaspora, has not been the subject of any notable research yet. By going beyond stereotypical portrayals of Kurdish women either reflected as a victim of honour-based violence or someone who suffers war or violent conflict in any Kurdish region, my presentation titled “From Kurdistan to Europe: Kurdish Literary, Artistic and Cultural Activism by Kurdish Women Intellectuals” examines the activism of Kurdish migrant women in selected host European countries (France, Belgium, Sweden, Germany and the UK) in terms of



artistic, literary and cultural practices in both the language(s) of the host countries and women's native Kurdish languages. The goal of this presentation is first to reveal the changing dynamics within Kurdish migrant women's mobilization along with their cultural engagements in the selected European states, secondly to examine the integration policies of the selected European countries within a comparative approach, and thirdly to investigate transnational networking and dynamics between Kurdish migrant women (labour migrants/refugees) in Europe, the agents of cultural production in their home countries (Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey) and other European countries.

*More information [here](#)*

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## **Struggles for Justice during the Arab Uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia**

Friday, 22 February 2019 - 5:00pm

Investcorp Auditorium, Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford

Speaker(s):

Heba Morayef (Amnesty International)

Chair:

Eugene Rogan (St Antony's College)

Series: Middle East Centre Friday Seminar Series

About the speaker:

Heba Morayef is Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Regional Director. Prior to that she was Associate Director of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights in Cairo as Associate Director where she was responsible for the organization's advocacy strategy and criminal justice work. She worked with International Crisis Group as their Senior Egypt Analyst 2014-2015 until the authorities shut down the group's Cairo office. Heba was Human Rights Watch's Egypt director in Cairo from 2008-2014, where she led the organization's research and advocacy work on Egypt during the Arab Spring and the subsequent coup. She was also HRW's Libya researcher from 2008-2011 during which she led two field missions to Libya in 2009. Heba worked at Amnesty International's International Secretariat from 2006-2008 covering Tunisia and Libya as North Africa Campaigner. Before that she worked for Article 19 in London and at UNDP's Human Rights Capacity Building Project in Cairo. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science with a specialisation in Public International Law from the American University in Cairo and an LLM in Public International Law from the London School of Economics and Political Science. She was named as one of Foreign Policy's 2013 Global Thinkers, Forbes' 12 Women to Watch for 2014 and was a Time 100 nominee for 2013. Her op-eds have appeared in Foreign Policy, the Times, the International Herald Tribune.

*More information [here](#)*

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## **Documenting Syria: Filmmaking, Video Activism and Revolution**

Tuesday 12 February | 18:00–19:30 | Research Centres Meeting Suite, Pankhurst House, LSE, London  
Joshka Wessels, Lund University

Wessels launches her book, a history of Syrian documentary cinema and the story of how filmmaking and grassroots media activism emerged, developed and documented life and society in Syria, prior to and after the start of the Revolution. It also traces the defining role the Syrian cinema masters of the 1970s and onwards played in avant-garde filmmaking and political dissent against authoritarianism.

*More information* [here](#)

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## **The Return of the Military: Hybridity, Duality, and Political Activism**

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019

6:30 PM

Wolfson Theatre, New Academic Building, LSE, London

The national armed forces of Arab states have been undergoing a radical transformation. New fluid coalitions of armed state and non-state actors engage in complex patterns of coexistence and contestation, set within a wider context of geopolitical rivalry between their external backers. Renowned Middle East scholar Yezid Sayigh examines the re-emergence of militaries as central political actors.

*More information* [here](#)

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## **Hezbollah and the Syrian Regime: A Shaky Alliance**

Talk by Mohanad Hage Ali

Thursday, February 7, 2019

5:00pm-7:00pm Anthropology Building 303

Emory University

Mohanad Hage Ali is a researcher and Director of Communications at Carnegie Middle East Center. He was a Managing Editor of NOW Arabic website, and a political editor/reporter at al-Hayat newspaper in Beirut and London, where his work focused mostly on Iraq and militant Islam.

Mohanad teaches politics and journalism at the Lebanese American University (LAU), and has an Msc and a PhD in Comparative Politics from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

His book, Nationalism, Transnationalism and Political Islam: Hizbullah's Institutional Identity was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2017.

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## RECENT & FORTHCOMING BOOKS

### **Contested Spaces in Contemporary Turkey: Environmental, Urban and Secular Politics**

Editor(s): Fatma Müge Göçek

I.B. Tauris 2018

The most significant political development of the post-Cold War era was, arguably, the diffusion of neoliberalism across the globe. Yet behind the illusion of abundance and development, the 'rule of the market' can be violent and destructive, exploiting the environment, dismissing cultural or historical conservation and ignoring individual rights. This book now examines the emergence and consequences of neoliberalism in Turkey. Of particular importance to the study are the contested spaces - those sites of struggle and protest - where the impact of this economic system is challenged or negotiated. The contributors look beyond the neoliberal cities of the West - Istanbul and Ankara - to take into account the rest of the country and the groups that are most negatively affected: such as the Kurds, women and migrants. Chapters consider the complexity of neoliberalism in Turkey, where the power of the market, the agenda of the state, and significantly, the country's past, are shown to have shaped current economic practices and policies.

Contested Spaces in Contemporary Turkey sheds new light on the societal processes that are re-shaping modern Turkey, a subject which is of increasing importance considering Erdogan's new model for an Islam-based state and in the aftermath of the July 2016 military coup attempt. It is at the cutting edge of research on urban history and social space and will be a significant resource for scholars of Turkish Studies and Kurdish Studies.

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### **Blogging from Egypt: Digital Literature, 2005-2016**

Teresa Pepe

Edinburgh Studies in Modern Arabic Literature

January 2019

Explores blogs as a new form of literature emerging in Egypt during the rise of political protests. Six years before the Egyptian revolution of January 2011, many young Egyptians had resorted to blogging as a means of self-expression and literary creativity. This resulted in the emergence of a new literary genre: the autofictional blog. Such blogs are explored here as forms of digital literature, combining literary analysis and interviews with the authors.

The blogs analysed give readers a glimpse into the daily lives, feelings and aspirations of the Egyptian youth who have pushed the country towards a cultural and political revolution. The narratives are also indicative of significant aesthetic and political developments taking place in Arabic literature and culture.

#### Key Features

A pioneering study of Arabic digital literature

Investigates blogs as the latest form of autobiographical writing in Arabic literature

Sets out an innovative methodology for studying literary texts distributed on social media, opening new avenues for research

Based on the study of forty blogs written from Egypt, six of which are analysed as detailed case studies

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## **JOURNAL ARTICLES & OTHER ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS**

### **Cross-Class and Cross-Ideological Convergences over Time: Insights from the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutionary Uprisings**

Gianni Del Panta

Government and Opposition

17 January 2019

The 2010–11 Arab uprisings continue to prompt a great deal of discussion. By focusing specifically on Tunisia and Egypt, this article aims to present a more dynamic account of revolutionary moments in these countries. It does so in two ways. First, the changing nature of structures and mechanisms of authoritarian domination over time is explored. Second, the convergences of different social classes and political forces during the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt are not treated as unique and static occurrences. By showing how the two revolutionary networks gradually emerged and enlarged, a truer picture is thus provided. By doing so, this article aims to contribute to a more nuanced interpretation of the two revolutionary outbursts and to the development of the fourth generation of revolutionary studies.

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### **Site of Resistance or Apparatus of Acquiescence? Tactics at the Bakery**

José Ciro Martínez

Middle East Law and Governance

Volume 10, Issue 2, 2018

This article explores the importance and impact of a set of actions through which bakers manipulate laws and regulations that seek to organize and regulate how they do business. It builds on eighteen months of fieldwork conducted in Jordan, twelve of which were spent working in three different bakeries in the capital, Amman. Moving away from the idea that public policies are simply imposed, the article looks in detail at the social relations through which they are enacted. By honing in on the bakery, and examining arrangements between bakery owners, workers, consumers and ministerial employees, it illuminates modes of political agency that escape conventional binaries of domination/resistance, state/society and legality/illegality. I argue against seeing these practices as easily categorized forms of resistance or frivolous acts of corruption. Nor are they simply reinforcements of hegemonic control. Instead, ‘tactics’ at the bakery subvert the order of things to serve other ends. Foregrounding them in this analysis seeks not only to challenge views of power relations as strictly binary but to elucidate some of the ways in which citizens inhabit and engage with the neoliberal and authoritarian logics that pervade everyday life in Jordan.

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## NEWS PIECES & COMMENTARY

### **Morocco to Start Capping Fuel Prices by Mid-March, Minister Says**

Souhail Karam, Bloomberg News

(Bloomberg) -- Morocco will start intervening to limit fuel prices from March as the margins of fuel distributors such as Vivo Energy and Total Maroc come under scrutiny following nationwide protests last year.

“The capping mechanism is coming,” General Affairs and Public Governance Minister Lahcen Daoudi said in a video published on his party’s website, indicating it would be put in place between the end of February and middle of March.

The government announced a price-capping plan in 2018 after a surge in inflation to a five-year high fueled a consumer boycott of some of Morocco’s biggest firms. The protest hurt sales and caused layoffs at the country’s largest fuel distribution, dairy and mineral water companies.

The mechanism is expected to cover gasoline and the more commonly used diesel fuel, but exactly how it will operate hasn’t been detailed. Daoudi has in the past talked about setting a maximum margin for local distributors, as officials considered that an absolute cap on prices wouldn’t be sustainable against a sustained climb in global crude prices. The minister didn’t return calls seeking comment.

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## **Sudan intelligence chief orders release of protest detainees**

Al Jazeera

29 January 2019

Decision to free those arrested during protests comes as international pressure mounts over handling of demonstrations.

Sudan's intelligence chief has ordered the release of all detainees held during the weeklong protests that rocked the North African country.

Tuesday's announcement came amid increasing international criticism of Khartoum's handling of the ongoing demonstrations.

"The chief of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) issued an order to release all detainees held in recent incidents," the information ministry reported Sudan's intelligence and security chief Salah Ghosh as saying.

The protests, which began on December 19 after the government decided to triple the price of bread, have since turned into a nationwide movement calling for President Omar al-Bashir to step down.

Rights groups say NISS arrested more than 1,000 people, including protesters, opposition leaders, activists and journalists, as part of its clampdown.

Officials say 30 people have died in violence during the protests, but human rights groups have put the death toll at more than 40.

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## **Let them rust?**

Safeya Mounir

Al-Ahram Weekly

"Let it Rust", a campaign started on social networks towards the end of 2018 protesting against the high prices of cars in Egypt, went viral in early January as consumers continued to wait for a decrease in automotive prices following the full elimination of custom tariffs on European cars within the framework of the free-trade agreement with the EU that went into effect at the beginning of the year.

As soon as the campaign's page was published on Facebook, some 200,000 people joined and 1,562 posts were created within the next few days, reflecting the quick engagement of the public with the

campaign. It calls for a boycott on buying new cars to put pressure on dealers to lower their prices, even if cars in storage are left to rust.

The campaign is also demanding that official bodies apologise for their “unprofessional and immoral violations” with regard to the car market. It demands that regulations be put in place on the rights of customers and car dealers, including on fixed margins for dealerships, distributors and vendors.

The target is not to close car dealerships or to cause them financial losses, the campaign says, since it recognises the right of dealerships to trade and make profits acceptable to both parties in transactions. However, if its demands are not met, it will find other ways of putting pressure on the dealerships to ensure that customers are not exploited, including in after-sale transactions, it says.

The founder of the “Let it Rust” campaign, Mortada Al-Shazli, said that “car sales have been in a recession since July. The full effect of the campaign appeared in January with a complete halt in car sales.”

A number of imported shipments are stuck in port at Alexandria because vendors have refused to buy them from agencies, he added. Some vendors have even requested a 50 per cent cut in profits from car dealerships after the public stopped buying cars.

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## **On the Need to Shape the Arab Exile Body in Berlin**

Amro Ali

Alsharq

January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

Dislocating the Arab future from the grip of the political bankruptcy and moral morass in the Arab world might appear remote and relegated to the domain of quixotic dreams. But does it need to be that way? As communities are unsettled, resistances triggered, a chorus of voices fired up, waves of bodies set in motion for justice, and a range of emotions roused even when they no longer have an appetite, can the continued onslaught on reality not also reinvigorate political thought?

The procession of dislocation that materialized in 2011 has been viciously derailed since. Now, to coherently embark upon a regenerated starting point in this long journey of political redemption, a “we” is required: This feeds from new political ideas, collective practices and compelling narratives that are currently re-constructed and brought to life in a distantly safe city.

Berlin is where the newly-arrived Arab suddenly (but not always) recognizes that the frightful habit of glancing over the shoulder – painfully inherited from back home – gradually recedes. All the while, a new dawn slowly sets in among the meeting of peers in this new city: As such, Berlin is not just a city.

It is a political laboratory that enforces a new type of beginning, one that turns heads in the direction of matters greater than the individual; and it generates a realization that the grey blur that nauseatingly blankets the future can actually be broken up.

Following the 2011 Arab uprisings and its innumerable tragic outcomes, Berlin was strategically and politically ripe to emerge as an exile capital. For some time now, there has been a growing and conscious Arab intellectual community, the political dimensions of which to fully crystalize is what I wish to further explore.

When the storm of history breaks out a tectonic political crisis, from revolutions to wars to outright persecution, then a designated city will consequently serve as the gravitational center and refuge for intellectual exiles. This is, for example, what New York was for post-1930s Jewish intellectuals fleeing Europe, and what Paris became for Latin American intellectuals fleeing their country's dictatorships in the 1970s and 1980s.

Against those historical precedents, the Arab intellectual community in Berlin needs to understand itself better, moving away from an auto-pilot arrangement, and become actively engaged with political questions that face it. In effect, there is a dire necessity for this community to acquire a name, shape, form and a mandate of sorts. With a vigorous eye to a possible long-term outcome, this may include a school of thought, a political philosophy or even an ideational movement – all cross-fertilized through a deeper engagement with the Arab world.

This is certainly not about beckoning revolutions and uprisings, nor to relapse into the stale talk of institutional reforms. If anything, there needs to be a move away from these tired tropes of transformation – away from quantifiable power dynamics that do not address matters that go deeper, into the existential level that shores up the transnational Arab sphere. This is the very area where the stream of human life animates a language of awareness and the recurring initiative helps to expand the spaces of dignity for fellow beings. Yet, this area is currently ravaged in a torrent of moral misery and spiritual crisis.

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## **POSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **2 DAAD GSSP Scholarships for Doctoral Candidates**

Application Deadline: February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The Bamberg Graduate School of Social Sciences now invites applications for 2 DAAD GSSP Scholarships for international doctoral candidates!



The scholarships will be available for four years from October 1st, 2019 and amount to a monthly stipend of 1,200 EUR, plus insurance and other allowances according to the DAAD guidelines.

Highly qualified graduates from the fields of Sociology, Psychology, Educational Science, Political Science, Labour and Educational Economics, Demography and Statistics may apply.

We are looking for candidates with a non-German citizenship who are holding a Master's degree or equivalent in Sociology, Political Sciences, Economics, Statistics, Demography, Empirical Educational Sciences or Psychology. Candidates should propose an original dissertation project fitting thematically into at least one of our four research pillars. The two main criteria are the candidate's proven record of academic excellence on the one hand, and BAGSS' ability to ensure competent, research-led supervision on the other. We are interested in projects that fit with at least one of our School's four Pillars. Proposals cutting across two (or more) Pillars are equally welcomed. A concise overview of the topics that can be supervised by our faculty can be found [here](#).

Candidates should not have lived in Germany for more than 15 months by April 2019. Furthermore, the last final examination for the highest university degree (usually the Master's degree) should not have taken place more than six years prior to April 2019.

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

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## **Senior Research Fellowship at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, University of Oxford**

Deadline for Applications: April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, a Recognised Independent Centre of the University of Oxford, is engaged in the multi-disciplinary study of the Muslim world.

The Centre invites applications for a senior research fellowship in the study of the Islamic world. The successful candidate will be engaged in research and publication in any area of the arts, humanities or social sciences which contributes to a more informed understanding of the Islamic world – its history, economics, politics, culture, civilisation and contemporary life. This fellowship offers excellent opportunities for sustained research, to work with world-class colleagues, and an intellectually stimulating research environment, drawing on the Centre's extensive academic links both within Oxford and internationally. The fellowship is tenable from October 2019.

The successful candidate will be expected to play a full part in the academic and social life of the Centre and will undertake research and develop academic projects as part of a multidisciplinary team. They will be a full member of the Centre's Common Room. The holder of the Senior Fellowship may also be asked to take on an appropriately senior role in the oversight of the Centre's wider academic programmes and activities.

The Senior Fellowship is initially tenable for a three year renewable period, and may be extended by mutual agreement, offering a competitive salary determined by qualifications and experience in the range of £39,000 to £53,000.

Further particulars are available at [www.oxcis.ac.uk/vacancies](http://www.oxcis.ac.uk/vacancies), or from the Assistant Registrar ([gordon.brown@oxcis.ac.uk](mailto:gordon.brown@oxcis.ac.uk)), Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Marston Road Oxford OX3 0EE, to whom applications, including CV and a list of publications, should be sent to arrive no later than 15 April 2019. Applicants should arrange for three referees to write directly to the Assistant Registrar by the same date.

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

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## **Call for AGYA Membership Applications 2019**

Application Deadline: March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA), based at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) in Germany and the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT) in Egypt, is pleased to announce its Call for Membership 2019. AGYA promotes research cooperation among outstanding early-career researchers from all disciplines who are affiliated with a research institution in Germany or any Arab country. The academy supports innovative interdisciplinary projects by its members in various fields of research, science policy and education. Current AGYA members from 17 countries have realized joint projects and initiatives on topics such as Arab and German Education; Common Heritage and Common Challenges; Energy, Water and Environment; Health and Society; Innovation; and Transformation.

### **BENEFITS**

AGYA offers its members a unique opportunity to take an active part in the life of the multidisciplinary academy and supports them to implement their own ideas, visions and creative projects in the framework of Arab-German research cooperation.

AGYA membership is granted for up to 5 years followed by a lifelong membership in the alumni network of excellent researchers. Furthermore, AGYA connects its members with outstanding research institutions in Germany and the Arab countries and facilitates collaboration opportunities. Therefore, AGYA members have an exclusive access to an academic network of excellence.

AGYA provides the funding to realize innovative research projects within its working groups and in joint projects between Arab and German members.

Members meet regularly to discuss, develop and implement joint research initiatives on cutting-edge issues. Travel expenses for AGYA workshops and conferences are covered for all members.

AGYA offers a range of training opportunities to enhance the academic careers as well as the interdisciplinary and intercultural skills of its members and promotes them as ambassadors of science and culture.

#### REQUIREMENTS

Successful candidates are expected to have a proven record of research excellence in their field of specialization.

Candidates with strong potential for academic leadership will be given priority.

Membership requires active engagement. As AGYA is a working academy, successful candidates are expected to dedicate a significant amount of time to AGYA activities and the funded projects they initiate in the framework of the academy.

Commitment to realizing interdisciplinary research projects in collaboration with AGYA members and other partners is essential.

Elected members will be required to attend the annual conference of AGYA in the second half of October 2019.

#### ELIGIBILITY

Early-career researchers from any field of the Life Sciences, Natural Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences, Technical Sciences and the Arts are eligible to apply.

Applicants must be affiliated with a university or a research institution in Germany or any Arab country (Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen).

Applicants should be early career researchers. At the time of application, the candidate's doctoral degree has preferably been awarded not less than three and no longer than ten years.

Applicants must have full command of English, the working language of AGYA. No knowledge of German or Arabic is necessary.

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

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## Travel Grant Program

Deadline: April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA) is pleased to offer Travel Grant opportunities in conjunction with its [Twelfth Annual Conference](#) being held October 31 - November 2, 2019 in Washington D.C.

The Travel Grant Program is primarily for interested Ph.D. students, post-Docs, and junior faculty studying the Middle East or Africa. Grants of up to \$750 will be awarded.

This year's program is divided into two types of travel grants: the first is for scholars of the Middle East and the second is intended for scholars of Africa focused on the world of Islam, Islamism, and related issues in the continent.

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

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