

Non-governmental public action in the Middle East: historical perspectives

Investigator: Anne Alexander, SOAS, University of London

Aims and objectives of the research

This project:

- Investigates leadership in non-governmental public action in Iraq, Egypt and Syria by analysing the anti-colonial movements which emerged in all three countries after World War Two.
- Analyses how non-governmental public action was shaped by Western military intervention, violence by state and non-state actors, and the military-led revolutions of 1952 in Egypt and 1958 in Iraq.
- Explores how this history shapes contemporary activism in Iraq, Egypt and Syria.

Key research questions and methods

This project asks:

- What does leadership mean in the context of non-governmental public action?
- Who are the leaders?
- How are they accountable to their constituencies?
- What factors shape the choices leaders make?

The research uses:

- Archival sources
- Contemporary media
- Memoirs
- In-depth interviews

Relation to the programme

This project will

- Contribute to the development of theory by proposing new approaches to understanding the role of leadership in shaping non-governmental public action.
- Disseminate new empirical data on the organisational structure, social composition and ideologies of non-governmental actors in Iraq, Egypt and Syria gathered through interviews and archival work.
- Encourage networking and discussion between academic researchers and non-governmental actors engaged in the production of 'insider' accounts of non-governmental public action in the Middle East.

Relevance to user groups

My research explores themes which are relevant to a range of potential beneficiaries including policy-makers (the impact of Western intervention); funding bodies supporting capacity building and leadership training (the



**Non-Governmental
Public Action
Programme**



dynamics of leadership) and practitioners (alternative perspectives on the history of non-governmental public action).

Contact details

Anne Alexander, Department of Politics and International Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG

Email: aa107@soas.ac.uk