

Gramsci in the Middle East and North Africa Conference

9-10 May 2022 | London School of Economics

We live in a time of global crisis marked by uprisings, revolutions and an urgent need to imagine different futures, not least in the Middle East and North Africa. In thinking about our contemporary moment in historical context, Antonio Gramsci has emerged as a popular theorist in work focused on resistance, revolution, popular movements, capitalism, political economy, memory, temporality, transnationalism and internationalism.

Scholars in the Middle East and North Africa have long thought with Gramsci, and in the wake of 2011, there is a significant revival in Gramscian perspectives in Middle East Studies. This conference aims to build on this growing interest. We hope to explore, especially through empirically grounded research, how Gramsci's work can help us make sense of a moment marked by a significant expansion in resistance and uprising.

Monday 9 May 2022

09.30–11.00 **Welcome and Keynote 1 (Room 2.04)**
"The same light beam passing through different prisms, gives refractions of different light..."
Antonio Gramsci, from Sardinia to the intellectual and political debate in the Arab World
 Patrizia Manduchi, GramsciLab-University of Cagliari
 Chair: Brecht De Smet, Ghent University

11.00–12.30 **Panel 1A – Ideology, the State, Social Media and the Molecular (Room 2.04)**
 Chair: Shakuntala Banaji, Department of Media and Communications, LSE

Natural (S)election: Boycotting Hegemony in Iraq
 Su Hyeon Cho, University of Oxford

Resistance and transformation as *molecular* processes
 Alessandra Marchi, GramsciLab-University of Cagliari

Shaped not silenced: Evaluating the Egyptian regime's use of online information controls in the case of Mohamed Ali and the September 2019 protests
 Bronwen Mehta, University of Warwick

Lebanon's post-war "integral state"
 Bassel Salloukh, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

11.00–12.30 **Panel 1B – Culture, Education, and Common Sense (Room 2.10)**
 Chair: Omar Al-Ghazzi, Department of Media and Communications, LSE

Folklore in theory and practice: Implications of Gramsci's theory of spontaneous philosophy
 Kyle Anderson, SUNY Old Westbury

Gramsci in action: Cultural hegemony and the case of Arab-Israeli schools
 Francesco Paolo Colucci, Milan Bicocca University

Social(ist) self-understanding: A contribution to dialogue between Gramsci and German-Scandinavian critical psychology
 Sohrab Rezvani, University of Manchester

13.30–15.00	Panel 2A – Theorising from the Margins (Room 2.04) Chair: Fran Tonkiss, Department of Sociology, LSE
	Four phases of popular mobilisation John Chalcraft, London School of Economics
	Subaltern or marginal? A Gramscian approach to accumulation, exclusion, and resistance in the Middle East Brecht De Smet, Ghent University
	Doing research in the context of <i>stati carabinieri</i>: Positionality and methodology ten years after 2011 Benoît Challand, New School for Social Research & Ester Sigillò, University of Bologna
	The absence of dialectical Gramsci in Iranian Studies: Towards a historical-geographical reading of Gramsci's philosophy of praxis Aidin Torkameh, York University, Toronto & Arash Torkameh, Kharazmi University, Iran
13.30–15.00	Panel 2B – Workers, Alliances, and Crises (Room 2.10) Chair: Paul Apostilidis, Department of Government, LSE
	Studying Revolutions through Antonio Gramsci's Historical Bloc: Insights from Tunisia, Egypt, and Algeria Gianni Del Panta, Scuola Normale Superiore, Firenze
	Spatio-temporal dimensions of hegemony and resistance in neoliberal Jordan Matthew T. Lacouture, University of Chicago
	The factory councils in Iran Ida Nikou, SUNY, Stony Brook University
	Class Struggle, Everyday Violence, and Khomeinist Hegemony in 1979 Iran Abbas Shahrabi Farahani, Independent Researcher
15.30–17.00	Keynote 2 (Room 2.04) On finding a meaningful story to tell: Thinking about counterhegemonic story-telling with Gramsci Alia Mosallam, EUME, Transregional Forum, Berlin Chair: Sara Salem, Department of Sociology, LSE

Tuesday 10 May 2022

09.30–11.00	Panel 3A – Organic Intellectuals and Hegemonic Apparatuses (Room 2.04) Chair: Brecht De Smet, University of Ghent
	A professor in power: the social role of Burhan Ghalionun in the Syrian Uprising Adélie Chevé, Geneva Graduate Institute
	Gramsci and civic activism in post-revolutionary Egypt Gennaro Gervasio, Univeristà Roma Tre & Andrea Teti, University of Aberdeen
	Class, geography and organisation in the 2011 Syrian revolution Robin Jones, University of California Santa Cruz
	Subalternity, hegemony and the “periphery”: Subaltern groups and Sudan's 2018-19 uprising Shahenda Suliman, Researcher
09.30–11.00	Panel 3B – Art and Hegemony (Room 2.10) Chair: Sara Salem, Department of Sociology, LSE
	<i>"I prefer to know where the line is. If I know where it is, I can choose to cross it or not"</i> - An exploration of censorship and art practices in Amman Hanna Al-Taher, University of Kassel
	The parallel Palestinian city and the conundrum of resistance Hashem Abushama, University of Oxford
	The politics of diasporic art: The reproduction and resistance of Canadian art-space Mel Mikhail, York University, Toronto & Bahar Orang, University of Toronto
11.30–13.00	Panel 4A – Islamism (Room 2.04) Chair: Lukas Slothuus, LSE
	Beyond “compliance” and “resistance”: A Gramscian approach to women’s participation in Salafi movements Iman Dawood, London School of Economics
	Muharram rituals and affective hegemony in Iran Houman Oliaei, Brandeis University & Mohammad Mirzaei, University of Kurdistan, Iran
	Islamic Gramscian intellectuals: <i>‘Ulama</i>, new religious intellectuals and the dynamics of political modernity Massimo Ramaioli, Al-Akhawayn University in Ifrane (AUI), Morocco
11.30–13.00	Panel 4B – Bodies and Counterhegemony (Room 2.10) Chair: Sumi Madhok, Department of Gender Studies, LSE
	Arabic-speaking feminists as organic intellectuals: examining the last decade through Gramsci’s lens of hegemony and resistance Islam Al-Khatib, Goldsmiths, University of London

	A Gramscian analysis of counter-hegemonic struggles in contemporary Turkey Birgan Gokmenoglu, London School of Economics
	Hegemony as a ground for political inclusion: insights from Afghan disabled veterans in Iran Ahmad Moradi, Freie Universität Berlin
	Breaking heterosexual hegemony: gender, sexuality and resistance in contemporary Middle Eastern uprisings Justin Ostrowski, University of Arizona
	A subaltern approach to everyday life of women in Iranian Kurdistan's illicit trade Peyman Zinati, University of Exeter
14.00–15.30	Panel 5A – State, Capital and Civil Society in Palestine (Room 2.04) Chair: Michael Mason, LSE Middle East Centre
	Gramscian civil society and Palestinian political organising in Jordan Leen Alfatafta, George Washington University
	Gramsci and Foucault in historic Palestine: the “Middle East Peace Process” as a (post)colonial dispositif of power and the production of the hegemonic narrative and order Itxaso Domínguez de Olazábal, Carlos III University of Madrid
	Is the Palestinian Authority hegemonic? Musa Hamideh & Justin Holmes, University of Illinois
	Common sense and residual moral economy in Palestine Paul Kohlbry, Brown University
14.00–15.30	Panel 5B – Gramsci, Said and Postcolonialism (Room 2.10) Chair: John Chalcraft, Department of Government, LSE
	Crisis of authority and active subversion in the Arab region today Hisham Bustani, University of Westminster
	Gramsci in Palestine: Reflections on theorising counterhegemony through the praxis of the single democratic state intellectual in Palestine/Israel Cherine Hussein, Institute of International Relations in Prague
	Said as a reader of Gramsci: Contrapuntal thought and the philosophy of praxis Robert P. Jackson, Manchester Metropolitan University
	Gramsci in the Maghrib, a Mediterranean arena Florian Keller, Graduate School Global Intellectual History, Berlin
	Flour sacks and freedom fighters: The traces of colonial subjects in Tunisian popular politics Joshua Rigg, School of Oriental and African Studies
16.30–18.00	Keynote 3 (Room 2.04) A Long War of Position: Palestine, BDS, and Besieging the Siege Sunaina Maira, University of California, Davis Chair: John Chalcraft, Department of Government, LSE

Speakers' Bios

Islam Al-Khatib is a Palestinian feminist pursuing an MA in Gender, Media and Culture at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is Wiki Gender's Community Manager. Her writings focus on materialist feminism(s), hegemony, ecologies and grief. She recently wrote a booklet on the manifestations of the Anthropocene in the Middle East and North Africa for the Mafahim series and a guidebook on Arab political feminist economy.

Hanna Al-Taher is a doctoral research fellow at the University of Kassel and researcher/lecturer in political theory and the history of ideas at TU Dresden. Hanna is a political scientist with ethnographic inclinations, researching and writing on imaginations of the state, gendered citizenship, performativity, Middle East politics, and possible worlds who does not like borders, distrusts hierarchies, and holds decolonial feminist knowledge creation close to heart.

Hashem Abushama is a doctoral candidate in human geography at the University of Oxford's School of Geography and the Environment. His research interests lie at the intersection between urban geographies, cultural studies, and settler colonial studies. He has published articles in the *Jerusalem Quarterly* journal, *Refuge* journal, and *Jadaliyya*.

Kyle J. Anderson is an Assistant Professor at SUNY Old Westbury in Long Island, New York. He is the author of *The Egyptian Labor Corps: Race, Space, and Place in The First World War* (University of Texas Press, 2021) and of articles in *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *History Compass*, and *The New Arab*. He is interested in questions about political identity and rural Egypt during the British colonial period.

Hisham Bustani is a Jordanian author of fiction poetry and essays, and an independent researcher. Much of his literature revolves around issues related to social and political change, particularly the dystopian experience of post-colonial modernity in the Arab world. His research and commentary has been published in Arabic, translated, and cited in academic papers and books. His latest scholarly publication is a two-volume book entitled *(Dys)Functional Politics: The Limits of Politics of the Postcolonial Arab Region* (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 2021, in Arabic). He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Westminster.

John Chalcraft is Professor of Middle East History and Politics in the Department of Government at the LSE. He graduated with a starred first in history (M.A. Hons) from Gonville and Caius college Cambridge in 1992. He then did post-graduate work at Harvard, Oxford and New York University, from where he received his doctorate with distinction in the modern history of the Middle East in January 2001. He held a Research Fellowship at Caius college (1999-2000) and was a Lecturer in Modern Middle Eastern History in the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at Edinburgh University from 2000-05.

Benoit Challand is an Associate Professor in the Sociology Department of the New School for Social Research (New York). Challand is the author of the monographs: *Palestinian Civil Society. Foreign Donors and the Power to Promote and Exclude* (Routledge, 2009) and *Representation and Violence in the Arab Uprisings* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). This second monograph compares questions of violence and citizenship in Tunisia and Yemen.

Adélie Chevéé's work, ethnographic and qualitative, has focused on three broad issues: the relationship between media and national identity; the politics of knowledge and representation; and the dynamics of contentious politics, horizontalism and popular protest. Chevéé's current research focuses on expertise politics in Europe and the Middle East and 'truth' discourses.

Su Hyeon Cho is a DPhil student at the University of Oxford with keen interests in language, politics, and food of the Middle East from anthropological perspectives. Her doctoral research project looks into the gastropolitics of a highly-ritualised porridge called *Hrisi* among the Arab Alawi population in the southernmost Turkish province Hatay. The pandemic brought the current doctoral project to an abrupt halt, leading her to a rather unlikely relocation to Baghdad where she tasted a bowl of Iraqi *Hrisi* during *Muharram*, followed up on the chaotic parliamentary election in October, and fell in love with Al Basheer Show. Iraqi political gossip is her favourite pastime nowadays.

Francesco Paolo Colucci is Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Milano Bicocca. Colucci studies the concept of common sense based on the ideas of the French Illuminists and Antonio Gramsci. From 2009 to 2019 he coordinated research in Israeli Arab schools aimed at reducing early school leaving.

Iman Dawood has recently completed a PhD in Political Science from the Department of Government at the London School of Economics (LSE). Her research adopts and adapts Gramscian theory to explore the Salafi movement in London between 1980-2020. She pays particular attention to the movement's emergence, organizational and gender dynamics, relationship with/to other Islamic movements, evolution, participants' lived realities, as well as impact on the broader Muslim community in London.

Brecht De Smet is a senior postdoctoral researcher at the Middle East and North Africa Research Group at Ghent University, where in 2012 he completed his PhD. Brecht's research interests entail prefigurative and hegemonic class politics, marginalization, and political economy in Egypt, the MENA region, and beyond. He has published articles, opinion pieces, and two books on the politics of revolution and counter-revolution in Egypt (2016). He is now working on the 'Understanding political change from the Margins: Social and Environmental Justice in Morocco and Tunisia' project sponsored by the Belgian Fund for Scientific Research.

Gianni Del Panta is postdoctoral research fellow at Scuola Normale Superiore in Firenze, Italy. His main research interests focus on political regimes, revolutions, mobilizations from below and the labour movement. He has published in journals such as *Democratization*, *Government and Opposition*, and *Contemporary Politics*.

Abbas Shahrabi Farahani is a researcher looking at how state apparatus, state imaginary, and Islamic sovereignty have been formed in response to the proliferation of social struggles in the years after the 1979 revolution in Iran. Farahani's dream project is to study the emergence of (Islamist) sovereign violence in Iran, mainly in its relation to the everyday struggles and lives of the subaltern. Farahani holds an MA in Sociology from the University of Tehran, and a BA in Social Sciences Research from Kharazmi University.

Gennaro Gervasio is Associate Professor in History of the Muslim Countries in Roma Tre's Department of Humanities. Previously, he was Director of the Centre for Middle East and North African Studies at Sydney's Macquarie University and has taught and researched in Cairo at the British University in Egypt (BUE). His research interests include the history of Marxist thought and politics in the Arab world, and civic activism and protest movements in the Arab World, especially Egypt. He recently co-edited a special issue on *Gramsci and the Uprisings in North Africa* (2021).

Birgan Gokmenoglu is a political ethnographer whose research interests include power and resistance, contentious politics, (de)democratisation, and time and temporality. She holds a PhD in Political Sociology from the LSE, and is currently Visiting Fellow at LSE Sociology.

Justin Holmes is a sociology doctoral student at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign studying under Professor Asef Bayat. His primary sub-fields are political sociology and contentious politics, political economy, and development. He holds a BA with honors in History and a M. Phil with distinction in Conflict Resolution from Trinity College Dublin. His prior research has taken place in northern Uganda concerning transitional justice and in Jerusalem focusing on collective punishment. Animating Justin's endeavors is both a theoretical and practical commitment to emancipatory horizons which attend to contradiction, exploitation, and dispossession.

Cherine Hussein is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of International Relations in Prague and holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of Sussex. Her research focuses on the politics of social transformation in the Arab World, with a particular interest in the writings of Antonio Gramsci and Edward Said; the ways in which collective agency and counterhegemony are theorized; and the role of intellectuals in building movements of resistance. She was previously the Deputy Director of the CBRL's Kenyon Institute in East Jerusalem, and is the author of [*The Re-Emergence of the Single State Solution in Palestine/Israel: Countering an Illusion*](#) (London, Routledge: March 2015).

Robert P. Jackson is Senior Lecturer in Politics at Manchester Metropolitan University (UK), where he teaches the history of modern political thought. He is co-editor of *Revisiting Gramsci's Notebooks* (Brill/Haymarket, 2020) and co-organised the workshop *Decolonising Critical Thought* (MMU, May 2021). He has published on the 'mummification of culture', theories of violence, personality, subalternity, and reification, and is currently working on contrapuntal reading, Said, Gramsci, and Lukács.

Robin Jones is a second-year PhD student in the History of Consciousness program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He is interested in the relationship between the trajectories of 20th century Marxism and the global wave of uprisings that began around 2011. More specifically, he has conducted research on dissident communist movements in Syria during the 1970s and their relevance to the 2011 Syrian revolution. Returning to debates within leftist currents that attempted to forge an alternative to bureaucratized official Communism, he seeks to consider their salience to questions of organization faced by participants in contemporary uprisings.

Florian Keller is a PhD Research Fellow at the Graduate School Global Intellectual History, Berlin. Coming from a vocational background, Keller studied Islamic Studies, History and Philosophy in Hamburg, Berlin and Beirut. In his current research project, he focuses on Contemporary Arab thought with a focus on the Maghreb, analysing the influence of Marxist thought - first and foremost by the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci - on Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan intellectuals.

Paul Kohlbry is an anthropologist of law, economy, and environment. He conducts archival research and ethnographic fieldwork in the Middle East, primarily in Israel and Palestine. His teaching and writing are concerned with the ways people repurpose the forces that marginalize and destroy them to rebuild social worlds and insurgent political projects. He received his PhD in Anthropology from Johns Hopkins University in 2019. From 2019-2021, he was the Palestinian Studies Postdoctoral Research Associate at Brown University. Currently, he is the Postdoctoral Instructor in Human Rights at the Pozen Family Center for Human Rights at the University of Chicago.

Matthew T. Lacouture is a lecturer at the University of Chicago. His research interests lie at the intersection of political economy, social mobilization, and authoritarian politics. His current research is focused on labor mobilization in Jordan, where he has conducted extensive fieldwork. Work from this project has appeared in the *International Review of Social History*, *The Middle East Report Online*, and with the Project on Middle East Political Science.

Sunaina Maira is Professor of Asian American Studies, and is affiliated with the Middle East/South Asia Studies program and with the Cultural Studies Graduate Group at the University of California, Davis. Her research and teaching focus on Asian, Arab, and Muslim American youth culture, migrant rights and refugee organizing, and transnational movements challenging militarization, imperialism, and settler colonialism.

Patrizia Manduchi is Director of the GramsciLab and Associate Professor of History of the Contemporary Arab World at the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the University of Cagliari. She has published numerous works on the topic of Islamic radicalism, such as: *The fury of Allah* (Quaderni di Orientalia Karalitana); *From pen to mouse: Dissemination tools of the concept of jihad* (curated by Franco Angeli); *This world is not a place for rewards: Life and works of Sayyid Qutb, martyr of the Muslim Brothers* (Aracne) and *Voices of dissent: Student movements, opposition politics and democratic transition in Asia and Africa* (Aracne).

Alessandra Marchi is a Research Fellow at the University of Cagliari, currently working at the GramsciLab – the Laboratory of International Gramscian. Marchi is working on a project focusing on Gramscian readings of the MENA regions. Her publications include: *Molecular Transformations: Reading the Arab Uprisings with and beyond Gramsci* (*Middle East Critique*), *A lezione da Gramsci. Democrazia, partecipazione politica, società civile in Tunisia* (Carocci) and *Gramsci nel mondo arabo* (Il Mulino) both co-edited with Patrizia Manduchi. Marchi holds a PhD in Social Anthropology at the EHESS (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales) in Paris.

Bronwen Mehta is a first year PhD student at the University of Warwick conducting research into online activism against gender violence in the MENA region. She holds an MPhil from the University of Cambridge, an MSc from SOAS, and a BSc from the LSE. She has also contributed research to the Centre of Governance and Human Rights. Outside academia, Bronwen has several years' experience writing and editing for online and print publications in Cairo.

Mel Mikhail is a PhD candidate at York University in Toronto, whose research interests include urban political economy, feminist theory, and anarcho-Marxist imaginaries.

Mohammed Mirzaei is a Musicologist and Lecturer at the University of Kurdistan, Iran. Mirzaei holds an MA and a BA in Music from University of Tehran. Mirzaei's research has

focused on modal theory as well as the relationship between musical traditions, aesthetics, and politics. In Mirzaei's recent book, *The Goranis of Ali Merdan*, Mirzaei addresses these issues by studying the life and legacy of Ali Merdan, the renowned Kurdish singer.

Ahmad Moradi is a Visiting Scholar at Freie Universität Berlin. His research interests centre on questions of revolution, militancy and care in Iran and the wider MENA region. His forthcoming book *Politics of Persuasion* explores government of revolutionary politics in urban low-income neighbourhoods, with a focus on the paramilitary organisation of the Basij. Moradi received his PhD from the University of Manchester in 2019 and has completed a postdoc at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, Paris.

Alia Mossallam is a cultural historian interested in songs that tell stories and stories that tell of popular struggles behind the better-known events that shape world history. She was previously a post-doctoral fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Berlin where she was writing a book on the visual and musical archiving practices of the builders of the Aswan High Dam and the Nubian communities displaced by it. She is also a visiting scholar at Humboldt University's Lautarchiv exploring the experiences of Egyptian, Tunisian and Algerian workers and subalterns on the fronts of World War I (and resulting revolts in their regions in 1918) through songs that capture these experiences.

Ida Nikou is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. Ida's dissertation research examines the labor movement in Iran and the erosion of labor rights in the face of neoliberal globalization. Their broader interests are animated by questions about the dynamics of power, inequality, and social change under global capitalism. Ida's research explores how people experience and make sense of the social, economic, and political transformations associated with rapidly intensifying economic precarity and social inequality.

Itxaso Domínguez de Olazábal is an Associate Professor in International Studies at Carlos III University of Madrid. She also works as the Middle East and Maghreb Coordinator at Fundación Alternativas. Her research specializes in the context of historic Palestine, with a particular focus on the evolution of Palestinian political discourses and debates, the applicability of critical indigenous studies and settler colonial theory, and the creation and continuities of transnational links between anti/de-colonial movements and narratives. She obtained her PhD in Arab and Islamic Studies from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid in late 2020 assessing the factors for the resurgence of the so-called "one-state solution" amongst contemporary Palestinians.

Bahar Orang is a clinician-scholar and psychiatrist-in-training at the University of Toronto. Her research takes up carceral studies and anticolonial political theory. She also has an active creative practice as a poet. Her first book is *Where Things Touch: A Meditation On Beauty* (Book*hug Press, 2020).

Houman Oliaei is a PhD candidate in sociocultural anthropology at Brandeis University, and a visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Kalamazoo College. Oliaei's research broadly focuses on the anthropology of the state, belonging, forced migration, and the anthropology of humanitarianism. Oliaei received a BA in Music from the University of Tehran and an MA in Anthropology from Brandeis University. Oliaei's doctoral project examines the nexus between religion, displacement, and secular humanitarianism by focusing on the lived experiences of internally displaced Yezidis who have sought refuge in the Kurdistan region in Northern Iraq in 2014.

Massimo Ramaoli is Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science at Al-Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. He holds a PhD in Political Science from Syracuse University and has served as Assistant Dean for the School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at Habib University in Karachi, Pakistan. His main research interests are political Islam, Gramscian theory, contentious politics, and International Relations theory.

Sohrab Rezvani is a PhD student at the University of Manchester. His main interest is understanding the processes of learning and education in social movements. He is the founder of the project of Social(ist) Self-Understanding (SSU), a network of cooperative psychological clinics controlled by shuras (councils) of consumers and producers.

Joshua Rigg is a Teaching Fellow at SOAS and Research Officer at the University of Essex on the project 'Arab Media and Transitions to Democracy'. He successfully defended his PhD thesis, 'A Resounding No: Contentious Politics in Tunisia, 2015-2019', in 2021. The thesis considered the tactics, discourses and practices that Tunisian social movements employed as they contested the meaning and scope of the country's transition. His interests include contentious politics and protest movements, popular political thinking, and the colonial and post-colonial history of North Africa. He has forthcoming papers in *Globalizations* and *Citizenship Studies*.

Bassel F. Salloukh is Associate Professor of Political Science and Head of the Politics and International Relations Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. His main fields of specialization include Comparative Politics (Global South and Middle East), Political Theory (Public Philosophy, and the Philosophy of Reconciliation and Interculturalism), and International Relations (Middle East IR). His current research focuses on a critique of power-sharing arrangements in post-colonial and postwar states, and the political economy of Lebanon's postwar collapse.

Ester Sigillò is a postdoctoral researcher in the ERC project BIT-ACT. The project looks at civil society and transnational anti-corruption mobilisations, and is hosted by the University of Bologna. She holds a PhD in Political Science from the Scuola Normale Superiore. Her dissertation focused on civil society in post-authoritarian Tunisia. Previously, she served as a research fellow in the ERC project TARICA, 'Political and Socio-institutional Change in North Africa: Competition of Models and Diversity of Trajectories'. After her PhD she served as a Max Weber Fellow at the European University Institute. Her current research interests include civil society's transnational activism and Islamic movements in the MENA region.

Shahenda Suliman currently works as a senior policy advisor for a medical trade union and has a background in organised labour in Sudan and the UK. She is also working as a researcher on a separate project exploring memories of incarceration amongst Sudanese Marxists during the Nimeiry era, with a focus on social relations and intellectual productions across prisons.

Andrea Teti is Associate Editor of *Middle East Critique* and co-founder and co-chair of the Critical Middle East Studies (CMES) group. Teti was formerly Scientific Lead of the *Arab Transformations* consortium (EU FP7). He publishes widely on Egyptian and Middle Eastern politics, on EU-MENA relations, and on political and IR theory, and is lead author of *The Arab Uprisings in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia* (2018) and of *Democratization Against Democracy: How EU Policy Fails the Middle East* (2020).

Aidin Torkameh is a PhD candidate in Environmental Studies at York University, Canada. Over the past ten years, he has translated Henri Lefebvre's *Dialectical Materialism*, *Rhythmanalysis*, and *The Survival of Capitalism*; and some other works into Persian. Employing Lefebvre's 'the production of space' and Gramsci's 'spatial historicism', Torkameh's dissertation examines the transformation of the Iranian state (since the 19th century) through a spatial lens. Torkameh is also the founder of *Space & Dialectics*; the first online journal on critical urban theory and human geography in Persian (www.dialecticalspace.com).

Arash Torkameh has earned his master's degree in Political Geography from Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran. Recently, he has translated *Gentrification around the World I* by Jerome Krase and Judith N. DeSena into Persian. Torkameh's research interests include Iranian revolutions and intellectuals, urbanization, hegemony, historical bloc, civil society and the state. Currently, he is working to develop a Gramscian perspective to analyze Iran's political situation under the Islamic Republic.

Peyman Zinati is an LSE Social Policy alumnus, and Al-Qasimi Doctoral Researcher at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter. His research investigates the subaltern everyday life of transgressive trade in Iranian borderlands.