SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POPULAR MOBILISATION IN THE MENA

Digest of Current Publications and Events

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08.07.2016

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CALLS FOR PAPERS & CONFERENCES

South-South: Intellectual History across Middle East and South Asia, 1857- 1948

October 20-21, 2016
Columbia University, New York, NY
Deadline for abstracts: 15 July 2016

Keynote Speakers: Kavita Datla (Associate Professor of History, Mt. Holoyoke) and Umar Ryad (Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, Universiteit Utrecht)

Despite historiographical overtures to the global, and spirited polemics decrying area studies' analytical limits, something called South Asia and another thing called the Middle East persistently structure—and stricture—scholarly inquiry in the academy and beyond. Accounts of Indian or Arab intellectual production in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries often confine themselves to non-European confrontations with European epistemologies, capital, and guns. With the critiques of Orientalism, modernization theory, and Westernization having complicated triumphalist narratives of this encounter, serious attention to south-south intellectual histories remains rare. Early modernists are often the most cogent critics of the modernist scholars' Eurocentrism, tracing connections between the Middle East, South Asia, and elsewhere that bypass Europe. Yet Europe's hegemony in the modern world's political economy and imagination did not preclude profound inter-connections between the non- European world. In fact, the conditions of global European capital made new engagements between the colonized and peripheral world necessary.

This workshop highlights the content and conditions of South Asian and Middle Eastern thought in tandem. Reading a European archive alongside one in languages like Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Ottoman, cities like Beirut, Calcutta, Delhi, Mecca, Cairo, and Bombay and educational spaces like Aligarh Muslim University, Nadwat al-ʿUlama, Osmania University, Cairo University, the American University of Beirut and the Oxford Majlis, exposes new historical networks and challenge existing modes of analysis.

The workshop aims to raise a set of interdisciplinary historical, historiographical and theoretical questions: What kinds of significant geographies are produced, traversed and imagined in the nineteenth century and after between the Middle East and South Asia? Does the presence of a shared Islamicate past adequately explain Indian and Arab Muslim affiliations? How are the Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian and Hindu intellectual communities part of this Islamicate? How is modernist thought or critiques of secularism or theories of anti-colonialism related in this unwritten history of Asian intellectual interaction? What role did political economy of colonialism play in restructuring the conditions of the early modern's "connected histories"? What new networks of intellectual exchange and new patterns of racialization emerged? How do we historically recuperate these South-South histories without succumbing to the follies of the post-colonial states?

Submission of Abstracts

The workshop will bring together early career scholars—graduate students and pre-Tenured faculty—across discipline to participate in this two day intensive workshop. We encourage applications from outside Europe and US. We invite abstracts of 300 words and brief scholarly biography to southsouthworkshop (at) gmail.com **no later than 15 July 2016**. Acceptance notifications will be sent by 15 August 2016. We encourage faculty to seek funding from their institutions; limited travel subsidies and accommodation will be provided to graduate presenters. We will make all efforts to especially fund scholars from outside US and EU.
The workshop is sponsored by the Center for International History, and the Department of History.

Organizers**:** Roy Bar Sadeh (Graduate Student, History, Columbia University) and Esmat Elhalaby (Graduate Student, History, Rice University)

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Social Justice in the Arab World since 2010: Changing conditions, mobilizations, and policies

February 2-3, 2017
AUB in Beirut, Lebanon
Submission Deadline: July 31, 2016

For a joint conference organized by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut (AUB), and the Mamdouha S. Bobst Center for Peace and Justice at Princeton University. In this call for papers for our February 2-3, 2017 conference at AUB in Beirut, Lebanon, we seek to assess social movement changes and emerging social justice policies, or the lack thereof, in the Arab world since 2010 – at both the national and local policy levels. We are particularly interested in examining local dynamics to learn about changes in people's everyday living conditions since 2010, how people organize and mobilize to express their grievances and seek to promote policy changes, and whether any measurable or meaningful changes in state policies related to social justice demands have occurred.

We seek proposals from researchers working throughout the Arab world who can clarify developments in areas that include the evolution of social inequalities; organized and informal social and political protest movements; citizen grievances and social justice demands; new forms of organization and activism; roles of trade unions and professional associations; reform of state institutions; decentralization and the role of local authorities; changes in people's living conditions since 2010.

We are interested in proposals within the following broad themes, which will be refined into more focused panels at the conference:

- Measurable or self-perceived changes for better or for worse in people's life conditions since 2010, in both material well-being (income, housing, health care, jobs, etc.) and political-social rights (freedom of expression, right to protest, etc.);

- Public opinion/polling evidence for social justice demands;
- Grass-roots and local mobilizations, civil society activism for social justice, and corresponding local power dynamics and accountability;
- Policy-making changes, if any, at local or national levels, including legal protection mechanisms that impact people's lives (rule of law, human rights);
- Political economy trends, informality, coping, remittances, welfare;
- Any other subjects related to the quest for social justice since 2010.

Submissions should include the author's C.V. and the abstract. Abstracts should be no more than 400 words, noting the main theme and conclusions of the paper, its methodology, and the fieldwork it is based on. Abstracts and conference presentations will be accepted in English or Arabic. The conference will include simultaneous interpretation in Arabic and English. All travel expenses will be covered by the conference organizers, including round-trip economy fare tickets and room/board in Beirut. We especially welcome proposals from social scientists, and from researchers from the Arab world.

Please send proposals to Leila Kabalan (**lk49@aub.edu**) by July 31, 2016.

TALKS & OTHER EVENTS

Constructing Masculinities in the Middle East

9-11 July 2016
University of Edinfurgh
50 George Square, Edinburgh

As part of the Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World, the Research Network on Male Bodies and Masculinities in the Middle East are presenting a symposium on 9-11 July 2016 at the University of Edinburgh entitled 'Constructing Masculinities in the Middle East'.
This will bring together researchers from across a range of disciplines to discuss the constructions of masculinities in the Middle East. As part of the programme, films related to the theme of the symposium will be screened.

Saturday 9th of July

12:00pm-1:00pm	Registration and Lunch	
1:00pm-3:00pm	Introduction and opening word by the organisers Panel 1:	Chairs: Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz and Dr Ines Aščerić-Todd

	‘The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities’	Dr Amanullah De Sondy, University College Cork
	‘Modern Arabic Literature and the Divorce from Ideology: the Reinventing of Masculinities and Femininities in Zakariyya Tamir’	Alessandro Columbu, PhD candidate at University of Edinburgh
	‘Constructions of Masculinity in the Shahnameh’	Dr Azin Haghighi, University of Edinburgh

Sunday 10th of July

	Panel 2:	Chair: Dr Azin Haghighi
	‘Shooting the Isolation and Marginality of Masculinities in Iran’	Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz, University of Edinburgh
10:00am – 12:00pm	‘Islamic Masculinities: the Representation of Chechen Masculinity in Contemporary Russian Film, Fiction and Television’	Erick Vlaeminck, PhD candidate at University of Edinburgh
	‘Violent Entrepreneurs in Pahlavi-Iran: Sociological Reflections on Violence and Masculinity’	Olmo Goelz, PhD candidate at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Lunch	
	Panel 3:	Chair: Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz
	'Training Boys to be Men in Turn-of-the-Twentieth-Century Egyptian Conduct Literature'	Prof Marilyn Booth, University of Oxford
1:00pm – 3:00pm	‘Women Writing Men in Modern Syrian Literature’	Lovisa Berg, PhD candidate at University of Edinburgh
	‘Critical Masculinities in the Arabic Novel since 1990: from Crisis to New Paradigms’	Dr Alessandro Buontempo, "G. d'Annunzio" University of Chieti-Pescara

Monday 11th of July

‘Dreaming of a Nightmare in Tehran: The Fright of Real Desires in Ahmadzadeh’s Atomic Heart Mother (Madar-e qalb atomi)’	Farshid Kazemi, PhD candidate at University of Edinburgh
Closing discussion	Chair: Dr Ines Aščerić-Todd

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Seminar: Democratic responses and political pressures for change-

Barcelona, 14-15 July
Johns Hopkins University - Universitat Pompeu Fabra Public Policy Center
Universitat Pompeu Fabra – Ciutadella campus, Barcelona

This two-day seminar focuses on patterns of contestation, protest, alternative forms of political participation, and how each of these have had an impact upon contemporary policymaking in political economy. This is part of the ESRC Seminar Series: *Understanding the post-crisis landscape: assessing change in economic management, welfare, work and democracy.* The seminar focuses on a range of questions related to the relationship between democratic participation, protest, and political economy outcomes. How are changing forms of protest re-defining the contemporary political economy? To what extent are we witnessing new political actors created through the activity of anti-austerity protest? How have policymakers responded to new forms of protest and dissent in the current age of austerity and anti-austerity?

Entry is free and welcome to all, but please register beforehand:
email Sam Warner: SJW160@student.bham.ac.uk

Thursday 14 July

9.45am Introduction, Professor Vicenç Navarro, Director, JHU-UPF Public Policy Center
10.15 What hope for democracy in the crisis stage of neoliberal capitalism?
11.45 Against austerity: understanding the wave of anti-austerity protest
Cristina Flesher Fominaya (University of Aberdeen)
Pierre Lapin (Boycott Workfare)
Kelly Rogers (National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts, NCAFC)
Anti-austerities: the Student Movement and the Struggle Against Library Closures
Onder Sevimli (Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey)
The Medium and the Message: The Dynamics, Politics and Future of Gezi as Event

14.15 The struggle for social reproduction
4.00 Studying resistance
5.30 Panel: reflections on strategies and experiments for change

Friday 15 July
10.00 Communicating grassroots struggles
11.00 Comparing housing movements
13.30 Theorising resistance and the role of the party
4.15 Linking protest to policy and politicians?
5.15 Closing discussion: how to influence, who to influence, should we be aiming to influence?
6.00 END

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The Middle East and North Africa Today: Crises, Mobilities and Paths to the Future

Summer School 25 July - 29 July 2016
Location : Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Lisbon, Portugal

The recent events in North Africa and Middle East have produced an impact that has widely transcended the local or regional scale, unveiling other historical fault-lines in the Mediterranean and beyond. This makes the comprehension of the ongoing processes of paramount importance for a deeper understanding of how the problems faced by the societies of the area represent common challenges for a shared future. Nonetheless, most analysis have been carried out under perspectives that emphasize the political and geostrategic stakes for Europe and the Global North, leaving aside the experience of people and their effort to survive and build a better future. This summer school aims to further a deep view over the region with a specific attention to people's experience, imaginaries, forms of organization and motivations. The objective is to provide an understanding of the current social and political dynamics through a community-centered perspective, able to highlight the ways in which people negotiate forms of coherence and meaning, ethical plausibility and imaginaries of the future. This approach allows to connect the ongoing political and historical processes with the strategies pursued by people through their aspirations and attempts of personal and social reproduction.

Main Topics: Activism and Generation/Gender and Mobility/Religion and Ethical Imagination/Conflict and Future

The course is chaired by a group of scholars that include Ruba Salih (SOAS, London), Nadje Al-Ali (SOAS, London), Samuli Schielke (ZMO, Berlin), Bruno Cardoso Reis (ICS, Lisbon), Francesco Vacchiano (ICS, Lisbon), Aurora Sottimano (BU, Cairo), Paola Gandolfi (University of Bergamo), Daniela Swarowski.

Registration Fee: 180 Euros; 130 Euros (Early-Bird rate until 31 May); 90 Euros ICS-ULisboa partner programme

Organisers: Instituto de Ciências Sociais with the support of the LMEI, ZMO-Berlin and CEI-IUL Lisbon
Contact email: posgraduacao@ics.ulisboa.pt

More information & registration here
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RECENT & FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Parties, Movements, and Democracy in the Developing World

Nancy Bermeo, Deborah J. Yashar (Eds)
November 2016 – Cambridge University Press

This volume analyzes regime politics in the developing world. By focusing on the civilian, collective actors that forge democracy and sustain it, this book moves beyond materialist arguments focusing on GDP, poverty, and inequality. With case material from four continents, this volume emphasizes the decisive role played by parties and movements in forging democracy against the odds. These pivotal collectivities are consistently the key civilian collectivities that successfully mobilized for democracy, that helped forge enduring democratic institutions, and that shaped the quality of the democracies that emerged; they are the ones tasked with mobilizing along a range of social cleavages, confronting seemingly inhospitable conditions, and coordinating the process of regime change. While the presence of parties and movements alone is not sufficient to explain democracy, their absence is detrimental to enduring democratic regimes. Thus, this volume refocuses our attention on parties and movements as critical mechanisms of regime change.

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Hizbullah and the Politics of Remembrance - Writing the Lebanese Nation

Bashir Saade
October 2016 – Cambridge University Press

Born out of the Israeli occupation of the South of Lebanon, the political armed group Hizbullah is a powerful player within both Lebanon and the wider Middle East. Understanding how Hizbullah has, since the 1980s, developed its own reading of the nature of the Lebanese state, national identity and historical narrative is central to grasping the political trajectory of the country. By examining the ideological production of Hizbullah, especially its underground newspaper Al Ahd, Bashir Saade offers an account of the intellectual continuity between the early phases of Hizbullah's emergence onto the political stage and its present day organization. Saade argues here that this early intellectual activity, involving an elaborate understanding of the past and history had a long lasting impact on later cultural production, one in which the notion and practice of Resistance has been central in developing national imaginaries.

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Arabic Thought beyond the Liberal Age - Towards an Intellectual History of the Nahda

Jens Hanssen, Max Weiss (Eds)
October 2016 – Cambridge University Press

What is the relationship between thought and practice in the domains of language, literature and politics? Is thought the only standard by which to measure intellectual history? How did Arab intellectuals change and affect political, social, cultural and economic developments from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries? This volume offers a fundamental overhaul and revival of modern Arab intellectual history. Using Hourani's Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939 (Cambridge, 1962) as a starting point, it reassesses Arabic cultural production and political thought in the light of current scholarship and extends the analysis beyond Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and the outbreak of World War II. The chapters offer a mixture of broad-stroke history on the construction of 'the Muslim world', and the emergence of the rule of law and constitutionalism in the Ottoman empire, as well as case studies on individual Arab intellectuals that illuminate the transformation of modern Arabic thought.

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Dictators and their Secret Police - Coercive Institutions and State Violence

Sheena Chestnut Greitens
July 2016 – Cambridge University Press

How do dictators stay in power? When, and how, do they use repression to do so? Dictators and their Secret Police explores the role of the coercive apparatus under authoritarian rule in Asia - how these secret organizations originated, how they operated, and how their violence affected ordinary citizens. Greitens argues that autocrats face a coercive dilemma: whether to create internal security forces designed to manage popular mobilization, or defend against potential coup. Violence against civilians, she suggests, is a byproduct of their attempt to resolve this dilemma. Drawing on a wealth of new historical evidence, this book challenges conventional wisdom on dictatorship: what autocrats are threatened by, how they respond, and how this affects the lives and security of the millions under their rule. It offers an unprecedented view into the use of surveillance, coercion, and violence, and sheds new light on the institutional and social foundations of authoritarian power.

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The Price of a Vote in the Middle East - Clientelism and Communal Politics in Lebanon and Yemen

Daniel Corstange
July 2016 – Cambridge University Press

Clientelism and ethnic favoritism appear to go hand in hand in many diverse societies in the developing world. But, while some ethnic communities receive generous material rewards for their political support, others receive very modest payoffs. The Price of a Vote in the Middle East examines this key - and often overlooked - component of clientelism. The author draws on elite interviews and original survey data collected during his years of field research in Lebanon and Yemen; two Arab countries in which political constituencies follow sectarian, regional, and tribal divisions. He demonstrates that voters in internally-competitive communal groups receive more, and better, payoffs for their political support than voters trapped in uncompetitive groups dominated by a single, hegemonic leader. Ultimately, politicians provide services when compelled by competitive pressures to do so, whereas leaders sheltered from competition can, and do, take their supporters for granted.

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Islamic Populism in Indonesia and the Middle East

Vedi R. Hadiz
2016 – Cambridge University Press

In a novel approach to the field of Islamic politics, this provocative new study compares the evolution of Islamic populism in Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, to the Middle East. Utilising approaches from historical sociology and political economy, Vedi R. Hadiz argues that competing strands of Islamic politics can be understood as the product of contemporary struggles over power, material resources and the result of conflict across a variety of social and historical contexts. Drawing from detailed case studies across the Middle East and Southeast Asia, the book engages with broader theoretical questions about political change in the context of socio-economic transformations and presents an innovative, comparative framework to shed new light on the diverse trajectories of Islamic politics in the modern world.

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OTHER PUBLICATIONS

The Neopatrimonial State and the Arab Spring

Adib Nehme
AUB Policy INstitute

We put forward the following theory: The current protest mobilization is the beginning of a social transformation process in the Arab countries. It can be considered tantamount to a new historical phase that is as important as the Arab Renaissance Era (the last decades of the Nineteenth Century and the beginning of the Twentieth Century) and the post-World War Two phase during which independent national states were built. This new phase can lay the foundations for a second Arab renaissance project that bears many resemblances to the first renaissance, while taking into consideration all the structural changes brought about by globalization in all societies (both economically and in every other way). This does not entail overlooking the complications and setbacks affecting the path of transformation and the possibility that developments could move backwards in terms of politics and civilization, leading to opposite results. That possibility exists, since it is both a historical and potential possibility. Similarly, the possibility that a new renaissance project may spring up also exists, and we must not discount it from our expectations and plans for the future, or from planning our immediate actions that aim to achieve it. *Continue reading here*

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Erdoğan silences the opposition

Selahattin Demirtaş
LeMonde Diplomatique, July 2016

The leader of the Peoples Democratic Party protests the Turkish presidents offensive against that party in an ever-growing authoritarianism that also targets journalists and academics. Turkish politics took another step towards the abyss on 20 May when the immunity of several dozen MPs was retroactively lifted by a temporary amendment to the constitution. The article adopted by the parliament is itself in violation of the constitution, and contrary to the universal principles of law and democracy. The amendment, tabled at the behest of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, mainly targeted the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) parliamentary group of 59 MPs, who embody the most dynamic opposition in the Turkish parliament; 417 allegations have been filed against 53 HDP MPs for their speeches at public gatherings — they are indicted solely because they have exercised their rights to freedom of thought and speech. Erdoğan has thus taken one more step in his attempt to exclude the HDP from parliament and from democratic politics. *Continue reading here*

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Video: What remains of the Gezi movement in Turkey?

France 24, 27 May 2016

Three years ago, the city of Istanbul reached boiling point. Plans to destroy Gezi Park, one of the last green spaces in the city, and turn it into a shopping complex, triggered a popular revolt. The protests, which were initially environmental, turned into large anti-government demonstrations. Unprepared, the authorities responded with force. Our reporter returned to Istanbul to find out what remains of the Gezi movement as President Erdogan strengthens his grip on power. *Watch here*

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On the Concatenation in the Arab World

Perry Anderson
New Left Review, 68, March-April 2011

The Arab revolt of 2011 belongs to a rare class of historical events: a concatenation of political upheavals, one detonating the other, across an entire region of the world. There have been only three prior instances—the Hispanic American Wars of Liberation that began in 1810 and ended in 1825; the European revolutions of 1848–49; and the fall of the regimes in the Soviet bloc, 1989–91. Each of these was historically specific to its time and place, as the chain of explosions in the Arab world will be. None lasted less than two years. Since the match was first lit in Tunisia this December, with the flames spreading to Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya, Oman, Jordan, Syria, no more than three months have passed; any prediction of its outcomes would be premature. The most radical of the trio of earlier upheavals ended in complete defeat by 1852. The other two triumphed, though the fruits of victory were often bitter: certainly, far from the hopes of a Bolívar or a Bohley. The ultimate fate of the Arab revolt could resemble either pattern. But it is just as likely to be *sui generis*. *Continue reading here*

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Month of protests force concessions from Nusra in north Syria

Alex MacDonald
Middle East Eye, 12 April 2016

A month-long protest against the Nusra Front in the northern Syrian city of Maarat al-Numan has won concessions from the militant group as locals continue to push for the return of the Free Syrian Army. According to analysts on Twitter, the al-Qaeda affiliate has now released a number of prisoners belonging to the FSA Division 13 brigade, following pressure from locals.
Tensions between the various rebel groups have been highlighted by a UN-brokered ceasefire that does not include Nusra or the Islamic State (IS) group. Since the shaky ceasefire began in late March,

anti-government protestors have broken out across Syria, but smaller pockets of anti-Nusra resistance have also sprung up largely in the north where the militants were once largely tolerated by opponents of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. *Continue reading here*

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On-going Protests in Syria Are Being Ignored Across the World

Riad Alarian
Muftah, 2 April 2016

On March 15, 2011, the first mass protest calling for regime change took place in Syria. Protestors called for a free Syria, chanted slogans of unity, and praised God as they marched through the streets of Damascus. From there, many other protests followed, with each new demonstration generating great interest and support across the world for the unyielding spirit that would come to define the Syrian uprising. Even with hundreds of thousands of Syrians dead and many millions displaced since 2011, mass protests calling for regime change (and, more recently, challenging ISIS and Jabhat Al-Nusra) continue unabated—a testament to the Syrian people's incredible resilience. Nevertheless, with each passing year, coverage of these protests has diminished. *Continue reading here*

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'There's always an Intifada inside the prisons'

Patrick Strickland
AlJazeera, 22 April 2016

Anger is building up among Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, with several inmates on long-running hunger strikes in a number of prisons and clashes erupting in the Nafha jail in southern Israel. Rights groups have warned that the health of a hunger-striking jailed Palestinian has plummeted as his fast hits 51 days. Sami Janazrah, 43, launched his hunger strike on March 3 to protest against being held in solitary confinement and administrative detention, a practice in which Israel jails Palestinians on "secret evidence" without charges or trial. Janazrah, who is a married father of three from the al-Fuwwar refugee camp in Hebron, is reportedly suffering from low blood pressure and arrhythmia, causing seizures and fainting spells. Meanwhile, his weight has sunk to 52 kilogrammes. *Continue reading here*

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Lessons in Resistance from the Palestinian Village of Nabi Saleh

Zachary Faircloth
Muftah, 27 April 2016

Nabi Saleh is a Palestinian village facing one of the more imposing structures of the Israeli occupation. Opposite the town, the Israeli settlement of Halamish is perched upon a hill that once served as fertile farmland for local residents. Cookie-cutter apartment buildings, military structures, and even a swimming pool now dot the hill across from the village, where Palestinian mothers scoop used dishwater into buckets for reuse because of frequent shortages caused by Israel's water policies. Though the families of Nabi Saleh can still name the specific ancestors who once harvested parts of the hill, their stories often fall on deaf ears; neither the residents of the settlement nor the Israeli occupation's sprawling legal apparatus is particularly interested in their memories. *Continue reading here*

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Iraq: Sadr supporters in mass protest for political reform

BBC, 26 April 2016

Hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets of Iraq's capital, Baghdad, in protest at a months-long political crisis and lack of reform. Supporters of the Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr marched towards the Green Zone, where the government is based. He wants Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to press ahead with a plan to replace ministers appointed on the basis of political affiliation with technocrats. Powerful parties in parliament have so far refused to approve the reshuffle. Systemic political patronage has aided corruption in Iraq, depleting the government's resources as it struggles to cope with declining oil revenue and the cost of the war against the jihadist group Islamic State (IS). *Continue reading here*

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We Are Ridha Yahyaoui"-Kasserine and Tunisia's Ongoing Revolution

Bryan Burges
12 April 2016

As the Islamic State and the ongoing humanitarian crisis resulting from the Syrian Civil War continue to hold the Western world's attention, recent protests in the Tunisian Governorate of Kasserine reveal underlying discontent in a country championed as the only "functioning democracy" to emerge from the Arab Spring. On January 16, almost exactly five years after Mohamed Bouazizi lit himself on fire in Ben Arous, Tunisia and set in motion the protests that would become known as the Arab Spring, Ridha Yahyaoui committed suicide by climbing an electrical pole to protest the Tunisian

government's corruption and failure to combat unemployment. Yahyaoui, one of the many unemployed college graduates in Kasserine, had found out that his name was arbitrarily removed from the list of unemployed applicants for Civil Service positions, his last hope for finding a job. He then climbed an electrical pole, and was electrocuted, with protests erupting later that day. *Continue reading here*

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Protests, strike shut down Tunisian town over Libya's halt of border trade

Tunisian security forces use tear gas on hundreds of people protesting against border closure in southern town of Ben Guerdane. A town in southern Tunisia went on strike again Wednesday, days after clashes broke out with police over an earlier strike. Residents are protesting against a decision by Libyan authorities to halt cross-border trade, on which its economy depends. Tunisian officials said security forces used tear gas on hundreds of people protesting against the border closure in Ben Guerdane. "Around 1,000 people rallied outside local government offices and set tyres ablaze in protest against a Libyan decision to close the Ras Jedir border crossing," Interior Ministry spokesman Yasser Mesbah said. Ras Jedir is the main frontier between western Libya and southeastern Tunisia, a region whose economy is largely dependent on cross-border trade, both legitimate and illicit. *Continue reading here*

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Repression on the rise in Algeria as peaceful protesters face imprisonment

Amnesty International, 18 May 2016

The Algerian authorities must end their relentless efforts to silence peaceful protesters, said Amnesty International ahead of the start of the trial tomorrow of four protesters from the southern city of Ouargla who are facing up to a year in prison for taking part in protests against unemployment in Algeria's oil capital, Hassi Messaoud. Prominent activist Tahar Belabes, a member of the National Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Unemployed (CNDDC), and three other CNDDC members have been charged with taking part in "unarmed gatherings" in 2015. If convicted, all four men could face up to a year in jail. "Imprisoning Tahar Belabes and his colleagues simply for taking part in peaceful protests would be an outrageous attack on the right to freedom of expression and assembly. Their only 'crime' appears to be that they stood up for the rights of the unemployed. They should not even be on trial – let alone facing a possible prison term. The charges against them should be dropped immediately," said Magdalena Mughrabi, Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Amnesty International. *Continue reading here*

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Understanding the latest developments in Egypt's protests

Tamer Waguih
Mada Amsr, 16 May 2016

Two contrasting views surfaced immediately after the calls for protests on April 25 that were sparked by the Egyptian government's transfer of sovereign control over the Red Sea islands Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia. We heard sarcasm on the day of the protest from supporters of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, with statements like this one made on state television and satellite TV channels owned by businessmen loyal to the administration: "The low-life druggies called for demonstrations and no one showed up." In the other camp, among the revolutionaries there was a different tone expressed on youth forums and social media: "In spite of everything, we have won. We have exposed their fear. We forced them to chase us from street to street." It is worth mentioning here that the April 25 protests that took place in Giza and Cairo were violently dispersed by the police, who used teargas and chased protesters through side streets. Hundreds were arrested. The police also cordoned off the protest's meeting points and arrested dozens of young people from their homes and cafes in raids and round-ups that took place in the lead-up to April 25. This poses the question, was April 25 a victory or a defeat for the pro-democracy groups? *Continue reading here*

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Egypt police suppress protests against Sisi government

Guardian, 25 April 2016

Security forces in Egypt have used teargas to disperse small protests against the president, Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, witnesses have said, deterring what opposition groups had expected to be a day of large demonstrations against his rule. This month, thousands of Egyptians angered by Sisi's transfer of two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia called for his government to fall in the largest demonstration since the former military general took office in 2014. On Monday, riot police backed by armoured vehicles were positioned in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the focus of Egypt's 2011 uprising, and at a suburban square where at least 600 Muslim Brotherhood supporters were killed in August 2013 in anticipation of protests. Security forces moved swiftly, dispersing a march in the Dokki neighbourhood with teargas as it started, a witness said. Videos and pictures posted on social media also showed that teargas was used at a small protest in the Imbaba district. Jets and helicopters circled over Cairo. *Continue reading here*

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Amid Israeli Independence Day Celebrations Thousands Of Arabs Rally to mark Nakbah Day

Popular Resistance, 12 May 2016

The event, held near a Negev Bedouin town, is attended by Israeli Arab lawmakers, community leaders and thousands of people displaced from their original villages by the War of Independence. Thousands of Arab Israelis marked Nakba Day on Wednesday with a march near the Negev Bedouin town of Rahat, the main event of which was a mass vow to preserve Bedouin lands and not to concede the "right of return." Nabka Day, which commemorates the flight or expulsion of more than 700,000 Arabs during Israel's War of Independence in 1947-49, is usually observed on Israeli Independence Day as well as its official date of May 15. The right of return refers to the Palestinian demand that both the original Palestinian refugees and all their descendants be allowed to resettle in Israel. *Continue reading here*

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POSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Visiting Research Fellowships 2017 ZMO and the BGSMCS [Berlin]

We are interested in attracting outstanding postdoctoral researchers who are engaged in research projects relevant to the research profiles at ZMO and BGSMCS [Free University Berlin]. Applicants should send their applications directly to their institution of preference – either BGSMCS or ZMO.

Both institutions expect fellows to participate in their academic life, and to give one presentation on their research project. Applicants to ZMO are asked to state with which of the institute's four research groups in its current research programme "Muslim Worlds – World of Islam?" they would wish to be affiliated during their stay (please indicate one clear preference). Information on the groups and research programme is available from the institute's website.

The call is open to senior researchers and recent postdocs in the humanities and the social sciences. They are invited to apply for a monthly stipend (2500 EUR, covering all expenses including travel and accommodation) and a period of stay that should not exceed two months. Slots are available throughout the year with the exception of July and August. We therefore ask applicants to state their preferred month(s) of stay while indicating alternative dates. We particularly encourage applications by candidates from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Scholars currently residing in Berlin are not eligible to apply. Decisions are expected by November 2016. Applications should be sent by email only, and include:

• Application form

• A brief cover letter (1 page) indicating clearly for which institution you are applying and, if you are applying to ZMO, your preferred research group affiliation
• Description of a research project to be worked upon during visit (max. 3 pages)
• CV, including complete list of publications
• PhD certificate (or proof of submission)

Deadline: August 14, 2016
Please email the finalized application, attached as one single pdf-file in the above listed sequence, to zmo@zmo.de or office@bgsmcs.fu-berlin

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Request for Proposals: Mobility, Displacement, and Forced Migration in the Middle East

The Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS) at Georgetown University – Qatar announces a major research initiative to enhance our understanding of *Mobility, Displacement, and Forced Migration in the Middle East.*

The Middle East has historically served as a locus of displacement, both voluntary and forced. The high numbers of the forcibly displaced in the Middle East raise fundamental questions concerning the political organization of power and authority in the region. In the field of political science there is a growing awareness that the creation of internally displaced and refugee populations is more than just merely symptomatic of identity politics or a result of interstate conflicts. The Middle East is currently facing one of its most critical migration challenges, and the region has become the simultaneous producer and host to the world's largest population of displaced people. As a result of the past several years of ongoing conflict, particularly in Syria, Libya, and Iraq, there have been sharp increases in the numbers of the internally displaced, forced migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers. This seemingly unending flow of forced migrants has caused disruptions to economic, political, and social stability in a number of countries. The current flight of Syrian refugees to Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Turkey illustrates how easily conditions can disintegrate, so that a country like Syria that historically served as a sanctuary for and provided protection to those fleeing persecution or declining economic prospects is now producing millions of refugees and displaced populations of its own. The region also demonstrates how countries can simultaneously serve as host states for migrants and refugees while also contributing a large a diaspora of their own citizens either to other countries within the region or else around the world, as we can see is the cases of Lebanon and Iran. The purpose of this research initiative is to gain a fuller understanding of the forms, causes, dimensions, patterns, and effects of migration, both voluntary and forced.

The maximum amount per grant award is US $25,000 to be used over the course of a one-year research progression based on fieldwork in one or more countries in the Middle East. Proposal

submissions are due **September 15, 2016**. For inquiries and grant application submissions, please contact cirsgrants@georgetown.edu.

More information here

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