



Middle East
Centre



LSE Middle East Centre
Annual Report 2012-2013

The photographs used in this report were part of the Conversation21/image exhibition organised by the LSE Middle East Centre in November 2012. The artists have given the LSE MEC the right to use and reproduce the images for not-for-profit purposes. The artists reserve all copyrights of their artworks.

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Black Angel, Amira Al-Sharif, Sana'a, Yemen, 2008

The year at a glance

With the Centre's public-facing activities well-established and recognised, the past year was dedicated to expanding our research and securing new funding opportunities. A number of new fellows joined the MEC to add to the existing pool of scholars producing original research at the Centre. When Dania Akkad left the MEC in March, the structure changed to provide better support to new research projects. Ribale Sleiman Haidar's job now focused on projects and finding new funding while Sara Masry, who joined the MEC as Administrator in June 2013, is now responsible for delivering the Centre's core administration and running the events programme.

The highlight of the year was winning a research grant from Oxfam GB to conduct research on women's political participation across the Arab region. Led by Dr Aitemad Muhanna-Matar, in partnership with local researchers in 5 different countries (Egypt, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Tunisia and Yemen), this project will generate significant output by late 2013.

Smaller funding opportunities also arose this year, giving us the chance to diversify and expand our work. Funding received from the LSE Annual Fund was put to great use to organise a major arts festival, Conversation21. The festival brought young people from the Middle East to the centre stage through film, photography and music giving them the chance to get their voices heard in London. The images used in this report are taken from the photography exhibition.

Another successful funding application to the RCUK Global Uncertainties Programme allowed us to organise a full-day conference on Syria, 18 months on. With more than 300 participants and a panel of leading international scholars and prominent Syrian actors, questions of politics, economics, identity, sectarianism and ideology were addressed and debated.

The Centre's programme of academic collaboration with Arab universities is well underway, with all the projects having made significant progress. The call for applications for the next round has been advertised and at least four new research projects will be up and running by early 2014. The Centre's first flagship publication *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World* is currently in production and will be published this November by Cambridge University Press. In addition, we are launching a papers series to publish original research by Centre staff and fellows. We already have a few papers in the pipeline which will be launched at the start of the new academic year.



Escapism, Yuli Gorodinsky, Tel Aviv, Israel, 2012

About the Middle East Centre

The LSE Middle East Centre builds on LSE's long engagement with the Middle East and provides a central hub for the wide range of research on the region carried out at LSE. The Centre works to develop rigorous research and teaching on the societies, economies, politics, and international relations of the Middle East and North Africa. LSE is one of the world's leading social science institutions and comprises departments covering all branches of the social sciences. The Middle East Centre taps into this expertise to promote both public understanding and innovative interdisciplinary research on the region, with foci on history, political economy, society and international relations. The Middle East Centre was established with support from the Aman Trust and the Emirates Foundation.

The Middle East Centre engages in methodologically rigorous research and scholarship. The scrupulous preservation of the Centre's academic independence helps ensure research excellence. In keeping with the tradition of other centres at the LSE, the MEC builds on research excellence and innovation to provide those outside the academic community with solid research on contemporary social, political and economic processes and problems in the region.

Objectives

- Promoting open and critical debate about the politics, societies and economics of the Middle East
- Fostering research and training among LSE and visiting scholars and students
- Providing a rich research environment for the development of new scholars
- Establishing and cultivating ties with Middle Eastern institutions
- Stimulating collaboration with scholars in other international institutions
- Disseminating knowledge about the Middle East through Centre lectures, web resources, and publications; and through LSE, community and media activities

Funding

In 2012–2013, the Centre's work has been generously supported by:

- The Emirates Foundation
- The Aman Trust
- Oxfam GB
- Research Councils UK Global Uncertainties Programme
- Scholar Rescue Fund, Institute of International Education
- LSE Scholars at Risk
- Council for Assisting Refugee Academics
- LSE Annual Fund





Yearning for Tranquillity, Hani Macki, Muscat, Oman, 2010

People

Centre Staff



Professor Fawaz Gerges, Centre Director

Fawaz A. Gerges, the inaugural director of the MEC, is a Professor of Middle Eastern Politics and International Relations at LSE. He also holds the Emirates Chair of Contemporary Middle East Studies. Fawaz earned a doctorate from Oxford University and an MSc from LSE. His most recent books are *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World* (Cambridge University Press, November 2013), and *Obama and the Middle East: The End of America's Moment?* (Palgrave Macmillan, September 2013).



Robert Lowe, Centre Manager

Robert Lowe has managed the Centre since it opened in 2010. He was previously Manager and Research Fellow, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House. His publications include Co-editor, *The Kurdish Policy Imperative* (Chatham House, 2010); *Kurdish Nationalism in Syria*, in M. Ahmed and M. Gunter (eds.), *The Evolution of Kurdish Nationalism* (Mazda, 2007); and Co-editor, *Aid, Diplomacy and Facts on the Ground: The Case of Palestine* (Chatham House, 2005).



Dania Akkad, Communications and Events Coordinator

Dania Akkad is a Syrian-American originally from California. She joined the Middle East Centre in 2010 after completing her Master's in Middle East Studies at SOAS and working as a journalist in Syria. In March 2013, Dania left LSE and joined Alfanar, the Arab world's first venture philanthropy organisation, as their Communications & Outreach officer.



Ribale Sleiman Haidar, Centre Coordinator

Originally from Beirut, Ribale Sleiman Haidar moved to London in 2009 to pursue her Master's in Design for Development at Kingston University London. She joined the MEC in August 2011 after working for Climate Week, Britain's largest climate change campaign.



Sara Masry, Centre Administrator

Sara Masry joined the Middle East Centre in June 2013 after completing her Master's in International Studies and Diplomacy and her Bachelor's degree in Politics at SOAS. Prior to joining the MEC, Sara worked for the MENA Programme at Chatham House.



Dr Aitemad Muhanna-Matar, Research Fellow

Aitemad Muhanna-Matar first joined the MEC in November 2012 as a Visiting Fellow to pursue her post-doctoral research on gender, religion and sustainable human development in the Gaza Strip. Since February 2013, Aitemad has been leading the centre's research on 'Women's Political Participation across the Arab region', funded by Oxfam GB.

Dr Saker Elnour, Post-doctoral Researcher

Saker Elnour joined the Centre in May 2013 as a researcher on the project, 'The Palimpsest of Agrarian Change'. The post is based at the American University of Beirut; the partner institution in this research. Saker gained his PhD from the University of Paris Ouest Nanterre La Defense for a thesis on poverty in rural Egypt.

Visiting Fellows

Professor Saad Jawad, Senior Visiting Fellow

Saad Jawad is a prominent Iraqi political scientist who taught at the University of Baghdad for more than 30 years. His interests include Iraqi Kurds, the war in Iraq and its effect on the Middle East and the regional influence of Iraq's neighbours. He is working on a paper on the Iraqi constitution which will be published by the MEC in late 2013.

Dr Kamil Mahdi, Senior Visiting Fellow

Kamil Mahdi is an economist specialising in agriculture, Iraq and the political economy of oil-exporting countries. He is a former Senior Lecturer in the Economics of the Middle East at the University of Exeter.

Dr Duha Al Kuwari, Visiting Fellow

Duha Al Kuwari's interests lie in the financial economy of Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, particularly the GCC stock exchanges and the private sector. Her current research focuses on the impact of foreign investment on the stock exchanges and economies of the GCC states. Duha is currently on sabbatical from Qatar University.

Dr Virginia Bodolica, Visiting Fellow

Virginia Bodolica is Associate Professor of Management at the Department of Management, American University of Sharjah. Prior to joining AUS, she has taught strategic human resources, compensation management and corporate governance, assumed consulting roles in private and public organisations and delivered customised executive programmes for a number of international companies.

Dr Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, Visiting Fellow

Kristian Coates Ulrichsen researches Gulf politics and foreign policies at the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University in Houston. He is also an Associate Fellow on the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House and an affiliate faculty at the Jackson School of International Studies

at the University of Washington. His next book, entitled *The First World War in the Middle East*, will be published by Hurst in 2014.

Dr Malihe Maghazei, Visiting Fellow

Originally from Iran, Malihe Maghazei is an historian of the Middle East with focus on gender. Her research interests include gender and Islam, intellectual movements in Iran and modern Iranian history. She is currently researching the new intellectuals in Iran through music, film and literature.

Dr Nadia Mounajjed, Visiting Fellow

Nadia Mounajjed's research explores body theory, the politics of space, visual culture in the Middle East and the Arab Gulf, with a particular emphasis on Syria and the UAE. Between 2007 and 2012, Nadia worked as Assistant Professor of Architecture and Design at the American University of Sharjah, while serving as the research advisor to the Sharjah Art Foundation.

Dr Amer Moustafa, Visiting Fellow

Amer Moustafa is Assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture, Art and Design, American University of Sharjah. He has professional, research, practice and teaching experience in architecture, urban design and planning. His current teaching and research interest focuses on urbanism, city and urban design, the socio-political dimensions of design, and urban transformation and identity in a globalising world.

Dr Marco Pinfari, Visiting Fellow

Marco Pinfari is Assistant Professor of International Relations at the American University in Cairo. His work focuses on regional cooperation in the Middle East and on the analysis of democratisation processes in the region. Prior to moving to Cairo, Marco held postdoctoral fellowships at LSE between 2010 and 2012.

Dr Martin Spraggon-Hernandez, Visiting Fellow

Martin Spraggon-Hernandez is Associate Professor of Management at the Department of Management, American University of Sharjah. He earned his PhD in Strategic Management from HEC Montreal, Canada. Martin conducts research in the field of strategic management, knowledge and innovation management, new hi-tech ventures, international business and corporate governance.

Dr Karen Young, Visiting Fellow

Karen Young is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Studies, American University of Sharjah. Her major research interests are based in international relations, comparative politics and political economy. She is currently working on a book on the political economy of the UAE and has written a paper for the MEC on GCC foreign policy.

“ *My time as a Visiting Fellow at the LSE MEC was so productive and pleasant. The MEC is a dynamic environment, well-managed and perfect for making connections with scholars in other disciplines engaging the region. I found it to be a supportive place to work, write and think. I am so grateful for the fellowship that allowed me to be there.* – Dr Karen Young ”



في سماء موطني (In the Sky of my Country), Lara Haddad, Damascus, Syria, 2012

Constitution and Governance

The governance of the Centre is assured by its director assisted by a Management Group of other specialists from LSE, a wider Research Group of LSE staff, and beyond that the Advisory Board of the Centre. This tiered structure ensures the autonomy of academic decision-making with regard to funders and UK and international political concerns.

Management Group

The MEC Management Group is responsible for the oversight and development of the Centre's research agenda under the direction of the MEC Director. The Management Group provides advice on research strategy, general management and resource issues arising across the Centre, and progress on individual research themes and funded projects.

Members

- Dr John Chalcraft, Reader in the History and Politics of Empire/Imperialism, LSE
- Professor Fawaz Gerges, Director, Middle East Centre, LSE
- Dr Steffen Hertog, Lecturer in Comparative Politics, LSE
- Dr Kirsten Schulze, Lecturer in International History, LSE
- Dr Hakan Seckinelgin, Senior Lecturer in International Social Policy, LSE

Research Group

The MEC Research Group is drawn from LSE and external faculty members with relevant research interests. The Research Group has an advisory role in respect of the MEC's research themes, priorities and its general intellectual direction.

Members

- Professor Madawi Al-Rasheed, Professor of Anthropology of Religion, King's College London
- Dr Roham Alvandi, Lecturer in International History, LSE
- Dr Amnon Aran, Lecturer in International Politics, City University
- Dr Federica Bicchi, Lecturer in International Relations of Europe, LSE
- Dr Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, Visiting Fellow, Middle East Centre, LSE
- Dr Katerina Dalacoura, Lecturer in International Relations, LSE
- Dr Toby Dodge, Deputy Director of LSE IDEAS and Reader in International Relations, LSE
- Professor Fawaz Gerges, Director, Middle East Centre, LSE
- Dr Saad Jawad, Senior Visiting Fellow, Middle East Centre, LSE
- Professor Mary Kaldor, Professor of Global Governance, LSE
- Dr Kamil Mahdi, Senior Visiting Fellow, Middle East Centre, LSE
- Dr Michael Mason, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Geography, LSE

- Professor Martha Mundy, Professor of Anthropology, LSE
- Professor Sevket Pamuk, Chair in Contemporary Turkish Studies, LSE
- Professor Yezid Sayigh, Senior Associate, Carnegie Middle East Center
- Dr Zhand Shakibi, Lecturer in Comparative Politics, LSE
- Professor Amal Shlash, Bayt Al-Hikma, Baghdad
- Professor Charles Tripp, Professor of Politics, SOAS

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board provides independent, external and income-orientated advice to the Middle East Centre. The Board's role is purely advisory.

Members

- Professor Lisa Anderson, President, American University in Cairo
- Masood Ahmed, Director, Middle East and Central Asia, IMF
- Mohammad A.J. Al Fahim, Honorary Chairman, Al Fahim Group
- Dr Bassem Awadallah, Secretary General, Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Hind Bahwan, Chairperson, Bahwan Cyber Technologies
- Dr Maleeha Lodhi
- Azmi Mikati, Chief Executive Officer, M1 Group
- Arif Naqvi, Founder and Group Chief Executive Officer, Abraaj Capital
- Zaki Nusseibeh, Adviser, Presidential Court, UAE
- Ferit F. Sahenk, Chairman, Dogus Group
- Dr Nasser Saidi, Chief Economist, Dubai International Financial Centre
- Professor Avi Shlaim, Professor of International Relations, St Antony's College, University of Oxford





After Work, Hassan Maash, Karbala, Iraq, 2012

Events

Lecture Series

The MEC's public events series is one of the leading Middle East-focused events series in the UK. MEC events are held at least once a week during the school terms and provide specialist multi-disciplinary insights into the Middle East and North Africa. The events have global reach and a long lifespan through podcasts and transcripts available on the MEC website and blog.

Monday 8 October 2012

Football, Music and Bandits of Honour: A History of Algeria in Six Objects

Professor Martin Evans, University of Sussex

Monday 15 October 2012

Freethinking, Secularism and the Arab Spring

Professor Aziz Al-Azmeh, Central European University

Monday 22 October 2012

Violence and Democratic Perspectives in Syria

Dr Haytham Manna, Syrian National Coordination Body for Democratic Change

Thursday 25 October 2012

The Arab Spring

Jeremy Bowen, BBC

Sunday 28 October 2012

MENA Film Festival 2012 at LSE Screenings

Hany Beshr, Al Jazeera

Monday 12 November 2012

Sheikhs, Politicians and Revolutionaries: The Political Sociology of Salafism in the Wake of the Arab Spring

Dr Stéphane Lacroix, Sciences Po

Monday 19 November 2012

Competing Economic Visions in the Arab Uprisings: Navigating without Roadmaps

Dr Nasser Saidi, Dubai International Financial Centre

Monday 26 November 2012

Syria: From Rebellion to Civil War

Nir Rosen

Wednesday 5 December 2012

Iran's Nuclear Programme: A Surge into Modernity

Dr David Patrikarakos

Thursday 6 December 2012

Algeria and Post-colonialism

Dr Jonathan Hill, King's College London

Wednesday 16 January 2013

BRISMES Annual Lecture - Islam and the Politics of Resistance: the Case of Women in Iran

Baroness Haleh Afshar OBE

Monday 21 January 2013

Iraq - From War to a New Authoritarianism

Dr Toby Dodge, LSE

Tuesday 22 January 2013

Revolutionary Riffs: Youth in the Arab Uprisings

Nur Laiq, Arab Youth Project, International Peace Institute

Wednesday 23 January 2013

Is Jordan Immune to the Arab Spring Uprisings?

Dr Tariq Tell

Monday 28 January 2013

Colonial Control in Algeria: the French Security and Intelligence Services between the Two World Wars

Dr Rabah Aissaoui, University of Leicester

Monday 4 February 2013

Rethinking Diffusion: 1989, the Colour Revolutions, and the Arab Uprisings

Professor Valerie Bunce, Cornell University

Friday 8 February 2013

Phyllis Bennis: In Conversation with Fawaz

Gerges

Phyllis Bennis, New Internationalism Project, IPS

Monday 18 February 2013

In the Eye of the Storm: The History of Lebanon

Revisited

Professor Fawwaz Traboulsi, American University of Beirut

Wednesday 20 February 2013

Whither the Arab Spring?

Professor Fawwaz Traboulsi, American University of Beirut

Thursday 21 February 2013

The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World

Professor Fawaz Gerges, LSE

Monday 4 March 2013

Revolution as Gambling: Egypt Under the Muslim Brotherhood

Dr Hazem Kandil, Cambridge University

Monday 11 March 2013

Energy Security and Shifting Global Power

Professor Roland Dannreuther, University of Westminster

Monday 18 March 2013

The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran

Professor Ali Ansari, University of St Andrews

Thursday 21 March 2013

Book Launch: The Politics of Business in the Middle East After the Arab Spring

Dr Steffen Hertog, LSE; Dr Giacomo Luciani, Sciences Po; Dr Marc Valeri, University of Exeter; and Dr Khalid Almezaini, Qatar University

Friday 3 May 2013

The Kurds and the Conflict in Syria

Saleh Muslim Mohamed, Democratic Union Party

Wednesday 8 May 2013

The Gaza Kitchen: Documenting a culinary heritage and a food system under stress

Laila El-Haddad; Maggie Schmitt

Monday 13 May 2013

A New Middle East: Palestine, Peoples and Borders

Dr Ahmad Khalidi, University of Oxford

Wednesday 15 May 2013

The Gulf states and the Arab Uprisings: Popular Protests, Counter-revolution, and the Sectarian Gulf

Dr Toby Matthiesen, LSE Kuwait Programme

Thursday 23 May 2013

Palestinian-Israeli Economic Relations: Repudiating the Paris Protocol?

Professor Ephraim Kleiman, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Wednesday 12 June 2013

Reopening Turkey's Kurdish Opening

Professor Michael Gunter, Tennessee Tech University; Dr Zeynep Kaya, LSE

Wednesday 26 June 2013

The Thistle and the Drone

Ambassador Akbar Ahmed

Friday 28 June 2013

Middle East and North Africa Regional Economic Developments and Outlook

Massood Ahmed, International Monetary Fund

Research Seminars

Wednesday 13 March 2013

Visual Culture(s) in the Gulf: An Introduction

Dr Nadia Mounajjed, LSE

Dr Nadia Mounajjed provided an opportunity to discuss current research related to visual culture in the Gulf region. Dr Mounajjed examined the relatively nascent state of this discipline in the Gulf, its relationship to educational structures and to the socio-cultural context.

Monday 3 June 2013

Iran's New Intellectualism: Trends in Contemporary Conscious Music

Dr Malihe Maghazei, LSE

Dr Maghazei discussed the formation of a multi-genre conscious music in Iran in recent years. Dr Maghazei used the concept of conscious music to show how music is used to challenge the dominant socio-cultural and political structures and discourses.

Conferences

Thursday 20 September 2012

Inside Syria: 18 Months On

After two years of conflict, Syria has descended into a civil war which has been challenging to interpret. The main goal of 'Inside Syria: 18 Months On' was to examine the Syrian conflict from the inside out, to learn what was happening on the ground in terms of warring factions, rival ideologies and competing visions of the country. The conference aimed to delineate and understand the social and political features of the regime and the various opposition forces including Islamist, mainstream and liberal groups. Leading international scholars and prominent Syrian actors addressed questions of politics, economics, identity, sectarianism and ideology.

Speakers included Burhan Ghalioun, Thomas Pierret, Suheir Atassi and Jihad Yazigi.

This conference was generously supported by the RCUK Global Uncertainties Programme and the Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster.

Friday 28 September 2012

Egypt in the Arab Spring: Perspectives from Economics and Democratisation Studies

This was the first of two one-day graduate workshops as part of the collaborative project with the Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS), Cairo University.

The workshop discussed the causes and immediate implications of the Egyptian revolution in the context of the Arab Spring from an economic / political economy and democratisation perspective. It was structured in two sections; each section introduced by a paper by one of the members of the steering committee of the collaborative project and included presentations from young scholars from UK universities and FEPS, Cairo University.

Friday 26 April 2013

A Panel Discussion on Palestine

Karma Nabulsi (University of Oxford), Rosemary Hollis (City University), Ilan Pappé (Exeter University) and Peter Kosminsky (Director of 'The Promise') spoke at a lively panel discussion in April. This event was chaired by Jon Snow of Channel 4 News and attracted over 300 participants. The speakers discussed aspects of the current situation in Palestine, including: Palestinian domestic politics, Israel's position, the international dimension of the impasse and the insights into the conflict provided by film-making.



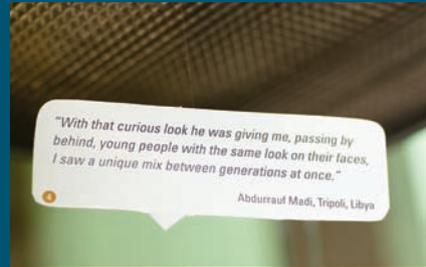
We Live in a Paradoxical Society, Ali Nadjian and Ramyar Manouchehrzadeh, Tehran, Iran, 2011

Conversation21: young voices from the Middle East

In November 2012, the MEC organised Conversation21, a series of events over two weeks providing snapshots of the lives of young people across the Middle East today. The project was generously supported by the LSE Annual Fund. While the recent focus on the region has been on popular uprisings, dictatorial downfalls and talking heads, the everyday experiences of young people often gets lost or diluted in the broader narrative of political change. With a photography exhibition, a film night and concert featuring the work of young artists, this festival aimed at opening up a conversation between 20 and 30-somethings in 20 Middle Eastern cities and those in London.

Conversation21/image

In partnership with LSE Arts, the MEC organised Conversation21/image, a photography exhibition featuring the work of young photographers from across the Middle East and North Africa. We tracked down 20 and 30-something photographers from 20 different cities across the region and asked them to send us a snapshot of what life is like for young people like them in their city today. Along with videos and stories from the photographers accompanying their images, the exhibition also offered viewers a chance to interact with the photographers directly as well as others via social media, hashtag #LSE21.



Conversation21/motion

On Friday 23 November, the LSE MEC hosted Future Shorts Festival for a special screening of electric and eclectic short films featuring everyday life in the Middle East. A school lesson in Iran gone horribly wrong, a relationship on the ice in Cairo, a migrant worker in Israel unable to express his love to his wife – these stories, some music videos and more, followed by a discussion with visual culture expert Dr Nadia Mounajjed and filmmaker May Abdalla, finalist for a Rory Peck Award for her film «Children of the Revolution», the audience's thoughts and questions. Films included: Two and Two, Paint the Way, Do it Again, Cock Fight, Collision, Cairo Café Regular and Tolya.

Conversation21/sound

On Thursday 29 November, Tamer Abu Ghazaleh and Youssra El Hawary brought the LSE Student Union to life with a night of modern, alternative music from the Middle East.

An accordion and a wall: that's how Youssra El Hawary came to world-wide attention in 2012 with her video and song, 'Al Soor' – 'The Wall' – which has been called a biting political commentary about life in Egypt and was based on a poem by her friend, caricaturist Walid Taher. She was recently named one of the top 50 people shaping culture in the Middle East.

Following Youssra was Tamer Abu Ghazaleh and his band. After releasing Mir'ah (Mirror), his first album in 2008, which was a collection of songs written during a turbulent period of demonstrations in Ramallah where he was living, Tamer has gone on to play with a variety of collectives including Kazamada and Alif Ensemble.

LSE Middle East Centre **LSE** Annual Fund

TAMER ABU GHAZALEH

YOUSSRA EL HAWARY

live in concert
Thursday 29 November 2012 at 19.30
The Quad, Student Union, East Building, LSE

Free admission - One free drink for first 100 people

lse.ac.uk/conversation21



**IS OUR
RESISTANCE**

BEIRUT HEART PROJECT



Love is our Resistance, Dima Rebeiz, Beirut, Lebanon, 2012

Research

Women’s Political Participation across the Arab region: Mapping of existing and new emerging forces in the region

In January 2013, the MEC received a major research grant from Oxfam GB to conduct research on ‘Women’s Political Participation across the Arab region: Mapping of existing and new emerging forces in the region’. Starting in February 2013 and running for 8 months, the project covers five countries: Egypt, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Tunisia and Yemen.

The aim of this research is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how recent developments in the Arab region have altered the political context through mapping the new landscape in the region and examining the influence of these changes on the concept and practice of women’s rights and participation in politics.

Through the study of five different countries, this research seeks to gain a deep understanding and analysis of the process of change and its complexity in each of them, reflecting on the actual experiences of different political players during the transition period, especially the performance of women’s organisations and coalitions in relation to national, regional and international agencies.

Research Team

Principal Investigator

Dr Aitemad Muhanna-Matar, Middle East Centre, LSE

oPt Team

Local partner: Filastiniyat
Local researcher: Maisa Shquir

Egypt Team

Local partner: Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University
Local researcher: Dr Amal Hamada

Morocco Team

Local partner: Centre des Droits des Gens / Maroc
Local researcher: Dr Hanane Darhour

Yemen Team

Local partner: Etar Foundation for Social Development
Local researcher: Wameedh Shakir

Tunisia Team

Local partner: Association Femmes Tunisiennes
Local researcher: Dr Aitemad Muhanna-Matar

“ *This research is extremely important in terms of timing and political significance. I am appreciative of the opportunity to participate in this project and pleased to have met LSE staff, other national researchers and Arab and International experts in the field. This has been a unique learning experience where we were made to feel not only as a team but also as one big family.*

– Wameedh Shakir

”

LSE Academic Collaboration with Arab Universities Programme

With support from the Emirates Foundation, the MEC has established a funding programme to support academic collaboration and knowledge transfer between LSE and Arab universities. The projects involve collaborative research or academic capacity building.

Aims of the funding programme

- To promote high calibre research by scholars at LSE and Arab universities
- To support academic excellence at Arab universities
- To strengthen academic collaboration and knowledge transfer between LSE and Arab universities

Five collaboration proposals were awarded funding to start in the year 2011/12, these are:

- Contemporary Challenges Resulting from the Demographic Profile of GCC States: Labour Markets, Migration and National Identity (Government Department and United Arab Emirates University)
- LSE Academic Collaboration with American University of Sharjah (Middle East Centre and American University of Sharjah)
- Transboundary Climate Security: Climate Vulnerability and Human Security in the Jordan River Basin (Geography Department and Birzeit University)
- The Palimpsest of Agrarian Change (Anthropology Department and American University of Beirut)
- Egypt in the Arab Spring: Multidisciplinary Research Perspectives (Middle East Centre and Cairo University)

With projects well under way, here are updates on the progress of some:

The Palimpsest of Agrarian Change

Food insecurity and ‘land grabs’ are very much in the news for the Middle East as for neighbouring regions such as Africa. The historical layers that lie behind the conflicts over the capacity to produce food and access to land remain, however, remarkably poorly documented.

This project takes comparative case studies from a single small area, southern and eastern Lebanon. The aim of the project is to explore the relation between secure, long-term access to land for farming households and their capacity to contribute to local, regional and national ‘food security’. The general problem tackled is whether different forms of landholding – notably big landlords versus small farmer owners – were factors in the evolution of different long-term patterns of land-use from the mid-19th century to today. This issue is rarely studied in a systematic manner, let alone for the Middle East, and by a multi-disciplinary team.

The research group, led by project directors Dr Martha Mundy of LSE and Dr Rami Zurayk of AUB, has in the past year been joined by Cynthia Gharios and Dr Saker Elnour.

Transboundary Climate Security: Climate Vulnerability and Human Security in the Jordan River Basin

This research addresses climate vulnerable rural communities within the national territories of the watershed of the Jordan River (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory), which is perhaps the most physically and politically stressed river basin in the world, critically applying a human security approach. The project is led by Dr Michael Mason of LSE and Dr Ziad Mimi of Birzeit University, with Dr Mark Zeitoun of the University of East Anglia as the Project Consultant.

The aim of the research is to develop improved policy responses for climate risk management within the Jordan River Basin through a better understanding of the linkages between climate change, adaptation and human security. The study will examine three core aspects of climate change in the region – climate vulnerability, adaptation to climate change and capacity-building for climate resilience.

LSE Academic Collaboration with the American University of Sharjah

One of the central goals of the LSE Middle East Centre is to develop strong working relations with academic institutions in the Middle East. AUS has strong expertise in the field of Middle East Studies. Building on connections established in the autumn of 2011, this programme helped foster collaborative academic links between the two institutions. As part of the academic collaboration programme, four faculty members from AUS were hosted at the Middle East Centre in the summer of 2013.

Virginia Bodolica

Virginia's research at the MEC focused on the exploration of corporate governance configurations in the specific context of family businesses located in the member states of the GCC. This is a pressing topic of research considering the large number of family-owned enterprises in the region and the importance of corporate governance arrangements for boosting their performance and corporate success.

Amer Moustafa

While at LSE, Amer worked on his research project 'Enigmatic Dubai: A Fiefdom's Ascendance into a World of Globalisation'. This research aims to develop a coherent and methodical narrative that will enhance understanding of Dubai while making sense of the physical and urban formation of the city in the framework of its political-economics context.

Martin Spraggon-Hernandez

During his time at the centre, Martin worked on his research project 'An examination of the relationship between corporate boards, firm performance and code of ethics adoption in the GCC'. This research aims to fill the gap in the corporate governance and business ethics literatures by undertaking an empirical study in a unique and largely underexplored market of publicly-listed GCC companies to contribute to the continued effort of contextualisation of research in the field.

Karen Young

Karen is currently working on a book manuscript under contract with Palgrave entitled *Between the Majlis and the Market: The Political Economy of the United Arab Emirates (Finance, Energy and Security)*. Her research looks specifically at the political economy of the Arab Gulf states, with a focus on the development of finance, energy and security policy in the United Arab Emirates.

Egypt in the Arab Spring: Multidisciplinary Research Perspectives

This project promotes high calibre academic exchange between LSE and the Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS) at Cairo University, the oldest and biggest faculty of its kind in an Arab public university.

As part of the project, two conferences were organised in London and Cairo focusing on Egypt and the Arab Spring. The first conference was held at LSE and aimed at discussing the causes and immediate implications of the Egyptian revolution in the context of the Arab Spring from an economic / political economy and democratisation perspective. During the second conference in Cairo, the Egyptian revolution was analysed from the perspective of modern history and international relations. PhD candidates and young researchers from UK universities and Cairo University presented their papers and findings on the topic.

Challenging the Status Quo: The Formation of a New Wave of Intellectuals in Iran

Dr Malihe Maghazei, Visiting Fellow at the MEC is currently leading research surrounding the promising and diverse population of Iranian youths who have adopted critical and pragmatic perspectives towards social, cultural and political issues in their society. Dr Maghazei's research focuses on the lives, works, and ideas incorporated within this new trend of intellectuals, who did not play a part in the 1979 revolution but are experiencing its consequences. The research will be published by the MEC in a series of papers.

The Economy of Qatar and the GCC

During her fellowship at the MEC, Dr Duha Al-Kuwari has been working on two research papers:

Mission Impossible? Genuine Economic Development in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries

This paper discusses the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as one of the most important regional entities worldwide. This organisation provides a framework for stability regarding world oil and gas supplies and facilitates great wealth from oil and gas exports. However, after 30 years of promises from the GCC countries, the question remains of how oil and gas wealth impact actual economic development, particularly in non-oil economies and private sectors. To address this question, this study highlights the existence of economic development in GCC states based on three aspects: current demographic structure, economic growth and diversification, and the role of private sector development.

Does Foreign Ownership Matter? An Investigation into the Impact of Foreign Investors on Firm Valuation in the Emerging Stock Exchanges of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Countries: The Case of the Qatar Exchange

This paper investigates whether foreign investors improve the valuation of financial firms listed on the Qatar Exchange as a case study among the stock exchanges of GCC states. The data analysis yielded significant results indicating that foreign investors affect and add value to the firms listed on the Qatar Exchange, especially when these investors are institutions and large shareholders.





Liberté au bout de la nuit, Wassim Ghozlani, Tunis, Tunisia, 2011

Emirates PhD Support for Middle East Studies Award

The Centre runs an awards programme for LSE PhD students researching the Middle East. These awards, based on need and merit, provide support for students who are in the final stages of their doctoral degree.

Award Winners 2012-2013

Samer Abdelnour

Reintegrating Fighters in the Blue Nile, Sudan:

From Globalisation to Institutional Embeddedness

In his thesis, Samer questions what happens to global models (i.e. peace-building, development) when they interact and become embedded with local institutions, using the context of the Blue Nile region of Sudan.

Karabekir Akkoyunlu

The Rise and Fall of the Hybrid Regimes: The Cases of

Kemalist Turkey and Khomeinist Iran

The basic premise of Karabekir's research is that the Turkish Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran were consolidated and legitimised as hybrid regimes – i.e. embodying both democratic institutions that represent popular sovereignty and institutions of guardianship that put limits on this sovereignty in the name of Kemalism and Khomeinism. He argues that by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, both Turkey and Iran have effectively lost their hybrid character, although in somewhat contrasting fashion.

Ulas Karakoc

A Reinterpretation of the Macroeconomic History of Egypt and Turkey in the Interwar Period

In his research, Ulas explores the striking contrast between Turkey and Egypt's macroeconomic history in the interwar period, aiming to show the degree of the diverging economic paths and to suggest an explanation for the divergence.

Hadi Makarem

The Limitations of Neoliberal Reconstruction in Postwar

Lebanon: A Study of why Solidere's Reconstruction of

Downtown Beirut Failed to Reconcile and Reintegrate

Lebanese Society

Using the example of Solidere's post-war reconstruction of Downtown Beirut, Hadi explores how reconstruction policies to do with open markets, privatisation and fiscal restraint can incur detrimental consequences on a post-civil war society.

Manal Massalha

Tales of a Resilient 'Hotel' City: Umm-el-Fahem

between Village and City. Absence of Urbanism among

the Palestinians in Israel, and its Impact on their Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural Development

Investigating the relationship between the political, spatial and the social in Umm-el-Fahem, the second largest Palestinian city in Israel, Manal's thesis argues that the deliberate destruction of Palestinian cities did not end in 1948, but rather carries on in the form of withholding those cities from development into functioning urban centres beyond a simple agglomeration of houses whose growth is mostly due to birth rate and whose function is limited to serve rudimentary domesticated needs.

Lisa Sezer

Anatolian Capital – The New Business Elites in Turkey

Using Turkey as a case study, Lisa’s research aims to make a contribution to the literature and policy-debates on state-business relations in late-developing countries. She explores the nature of the links between social forces, associations and the state in the context of business associations empowering the moderate Islamic movement in Turkey.

Mohamed Zaki

Uncertain (In)Visibility: Exploring Questions of Class, Sociality and Performance among Gay Cairenes

In his research, Mohamed explores, interrogates and analyses issues of subjectivity, temporality, relatedness and class among young, gay-identified men in Cairo. He aims to build on ethnographic research into the various contemporary ‘gay scenes’ developing in the region while unpacking the complexities to be found in this intricate network of social relatedness and rich cultural formations.

“ I am deeply thankful to the Middle East Centre and the Emirates Foundation for the scholarship that was awarded to me this final year of my studies at the LSE. As an international student with a heavily ethnographic topic focusing on Lebanon, the award assisted me in my fieldwork. Being in the field for many months at a time, you do not realise how expensive such an expedition can be. Through the scholarship, I was able to meet ends when it came to travel costs, renting costs, as well as other unexpected expenditures. Without it, I wouldn’t have reached the stage where I am at today, and therefore, I am greatly appreciative. – Hadi Makarem ”



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الله أكبر
مؤمنين وإنا إلى ربنا
الابتر والتقوى
فرنا هذا

الجوال
ALJAWA



Outreach

Website

Throughout the year, the MEC website continued to develop and improve to answer the growing needs of the Centre. While it continues to provide a comprehensive, reliable and attractive source of information on the Centre's goals, governance, people and events, a greater emphasis is now being put on publicising and promoting the research originating from the centre. On average, there were 5,774 visits per month, of which 3,267 were by unique visitors (56%). A visitor would usually consult around 2 pages, which brought the page views to 11,837 per month.



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5,774 visits
11,837 page views
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Newsletter



The MEC sends out a newsletter at least once a week in term time, featuring details of upcoming events, research and publications as well as job opportunities. Nearly 3,000 people receive the MEC mailing list. 54.6% of our mailing list members

are in the UK, 10.6% are in the US and 34.8% are in the rest of the world. The average open rate of the newsletter is 33.08 per cent. This is double the projected open rate for other non-profit and academic institutions (16.7 per cent) according to email marketing benchmarks.

Social Media

The MEC is highly visible on popular social media sites and uses these platforms to highlight research and publications from Centre fellows, LSE academics and students, to feed live information from lectures, and to connect with other Middle East-focused institutions and organisations. Over the past year, the number of Facebook 'Likes' has almost doubled from 500 to 965, while our number of Twitter followers reached 4,500.



4,500
Twitter followers

Blog

The Middle East Centre Blog offers original social science research on the Middle East as well as transcripts from events, commentary, interviews and photo essays from LSE academics, students, speakers at MEC events and occasional external specialists and correspondents from the region.



of Hadi Makarem's blog post
Downtown Beirut: Between Amnesia and Nostalgia

Since it was posted in October 2012, the blog post *Downtown Beirut: Between Amnesia and Nostalgia* by LSE PhD Candidate Hadi Makarem received 1,146 views, while University of London's Kit Weaver's *Glimpse into Yemen* received 1,113 views since August 2012.

Events Attendance

In total, around 3,000 people attended the 41 events organised by the MEC in 2012–2013. Some smaller seminars were restricted to around 25 attendees while other bigger conferences attracted more than 400 participants. In addition to events attendance, the reach of our lectures extends further through our live Tweeting, downloadable transcripts, online podcasts and web archives.



Forthcoming Publications

The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World

The LSE Middle East Centre will be releasing its first major publication in November 2013, edited by Fawaz Gerges and published by Cambridge University Press. Featuring 21 chapters, this will be one of the first critically comprehensive books written by leading scholars to examine the meanings and effects of the Arab popular uprisings on local, regional and international politics. The authors will reflect on the comparative causes and drivers behind the Arab uprisings and the prospects of political transition and pluralistic transformation and consolidation in the region.

The contributors provide a mature set of 'big picture' perspectives of these seminal events from the multi-disciplinary perspective of the social sciences. The book crosses the line between Comparative Politics and International Relations and also includes cross-disciplinary perspectives from history, anthropology and sociology.

Contributors include: Lisa Anderson, Juan Cole, Charles Tripp, Sami Zubaida, Roger Owen, Sadik Al Azm, Madawi Al-Rasheed and Avi Shlaim.

Middle East Centre Papers Series

The MEC is launching its papers series through which original research by MEC staff and fellows will be published. The following papers will be published in 2013-2014:

The Iraqi Constitution by Professor Saad Jawad

This paper will examine the political implications and impact of the 2005 Iraqi constitution by providing an analysis of Iraq's constitutional history as well as a study of the process that culminated in the drafting of the new constitution.

The Evolving Nature of Gulf Arab State Interventionism by Dr Karen Young

In a dramatic change of foreign policy, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have emerged as activist states in their interest and willingness to intervene both militarily and financially in the politics of neighbouring Arab states. We can trace this policy shift through the simultaneous yet separate evolution of domestic, regional and international politics. The result is a moment of financial and military interventionism unprecedented in Arab Gulf politics.

The New Intellectuals in Iran: Trends in Contemporary Conscious Music by Dr Malihe Maghazei

This paper discusses the formation of a multi-genre conscious music in Iran in recent years. It uses the concept of conscious music to show how music is used to challenge the dominant socio-cultural and political structures and discourses and present a whole new worldview.



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