MESNET-BRISMES WORKSHOP 2017

Wednesday 26 July – Thursday 27 July
Reed Hall, University of Exeter
(Streatham Campus)
The Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter is one of the foremost academic institutions in the UK offering research and taught degree programmes in a wide range of areas within the field of Arab, Middle Eastern, and Islamic Studies. We offer Arabic and Middle East languages as well as comprehensive education in the literatures and cultures of the Arab world and Middle East, the history, politics, economies, societies, and anthropology of the region and almost every aspect of Islamic studies from medieval to modern Islam. A number of dedicated research centres and links with other subject areas provide you with an opportunity to branch out into other disciplines and areas of study, as well as reinforcing the teaching you receive through cutting-edge research and engagement with current issues.

The Institute has the strongest REF2014 results of any Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies department in the UK submitted to the Area Studies Panel, and they establish Exeter as the leader in the field in terms of research quality, impact and environment. Research Centres focus on sub-regional specialist areas of interest.

The Institute attracts academic staff from around the world. Postgraduate students have a choice of a number of degrees at MA, MPhil or PhD level. All undergraduate students spend one year abroad at a language centre in an Arab country.

The Institute has its own dedicated building, completed in 2001 to a distinctive architectural style evocative of the region studied. The building includes a postgraduate study centre, a state-of-the-art language laboratory and computing facilities for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The British Academy is the UK's national body for the humanities and social sciences – the study of peoples, cultures and societies, past, present and future. The Academy has three principal roles: as an independent Fellowship of world-leading scholars and researchers; a Funding Body that supports new research, nationally and internationally; and a Forum for debate and engagement – a voice that champions the humanities and social sciences.

We thank the British Academy for sponsoring this Workshop.

The British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (popularly known as BRISMES) was established in 1973 to encourage and promote the study of the Middle East in the United Kingdom. We are the UK's premier Middle East Studies association. The Society brings together teachers, researchers, students, diplomats, journalists and others who deal professionally with the Middle East.

At the national level the Society pursues a concerted strategy by impressing on national, governmental and university bodies the importance of safeguarding and expanding Middle Eastern studies. Its links overseas make the Society the foremost channel through which scholars outside Britain may create co-operative links with UK-based researchers.

BRISMES publishes the British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies which members receive as part of the membership package. The Society also organises public lectures, and the Annual Conference attracts speakers and delegates from all over the world and is often the largest gathering of Middle Eastern scholars in the UK.
Wednesday 26 July

9.30-10am Registration

10-10.15am Welcome and Introduction, Dr Christina Phillips (MESNET), Mrs Louise Haysey (BRISMES)

10.15-10.45am Middle Eastern Studies Then and Now, Interview with Professor Dionisius Agius

10.45am-12.15pm Panel 1: Counter Narratives, Radical Movements, and Theologies of Revolution

Ferdinand Arslanian, University of St. Andrews
‘The Non-Radical Radicals: Exploring the Position of the Syrian Left from the Syrian Uprising’

Borja W. Gonzalez Fernandez, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
‘Semper Rebellis: the Maronite Church and the Theology of Revolution’

Jona Fras, University of Edinburgh
‘Linguistic Dissent on Jordanian Radio: Implicature and Stance as Ambiguous Subversion’

Tasneem Sharkawi, University of Lancaster
‘Re-narrating Sovereignty: An Ethnographic Exploration of Transnational Activism of Syrian Forced Migrants in Europe’

12.15-12.45pm ‘Getting Published: An Academic’s Perspective’, Professor Ian Netton

12.45-1.45pm Lunch

1.45-3.15pm Panel 2: Channels of Hegemony, Subversion and Dissent in Literature and on the Internet

Annie Webster, SOAS
‘Documenting Death: Cataloguing Bodies in Contemporary Iraqi Literature’

Egem Atik, Ozyegin University
‘Resistance Between the Lines: Eavesdropping and Peeping in Fatma Aliye’s Enin (Groan)’

Desiree Shayer-Mcleod, LSE
‘Voice of Dissent/Voice of Hegemony: Narratives of Nonviolence from the Western Sahara’

Engy Moussa, University of Cambridge
‘Cyber Dissidence Post-2011 Uprisings: Roots and Implications of Ongoing Decline’

3.15-3.30pm Tea and coffee

3.30-4pm ‘Recruiting Early-Career Academics: Head of Department’s Perspective’, Professor Christine Allison

4-5.15pm Panel 3: Gender and Political Activism

Erin Tumulty, Queens University, Belfast
‘Symbolic Representation: Hamas’ Female Candidates of the 2006 Legislative Election’

Jennifer Philippa Eggert, University of Warwick
‘Explaining Female Political Violence: The Case of Female Fighters in the Lebanese Civil War’

Angela Gissi, University College Dublin
‘Political Awareness as a Survival Strategy: Syrian Women from Authoritarianism to Exile in Lebanon’

DINNER The Turf, Exeter Canal (Coach from Holland Hall, then Pennsylvania Hall at 18.15)
Day 2

Thursday 27 July

10.00-10.30am
‘How to survive in Middle Eastern studies’, Professor Paul Starkey, University of Durham

10.30am-12.30pm
Panel 4: Dispossession, Citizenship, Alternative Networks and the Arab Spring

Sarah Takafori, University of Manchester
‘Sanctioning Iran: International Relations Discourse and Affective Resistance’

Zoe Jordan, Oxford Brookes
‘Host Families and Urban Refugees: Alternative Discourses of Belonging and Citizenship for Forced Migrants in Urban Amman’

Mo Afshary, University of Kent
‘Towards a Prefigurative-Juridical Reimagining of the Concept of ‘Revolution’: The Praxis of Egyptian Activist Lawyers since the 2011 Revolution’

Giuseppe Acconcia, Bocconi University
‘The Uprisings in Egypt: Popular Committees and Independent Trade Unions’

12.30-1pm
‘Impact and Research Relevance’, Professor Jonathon Githens-Mazer

1-2pm
Lunch

2-2.30pm
‘Getting Published: Publisher Perspective’, Mr Jon de Peyer, Hurst & Co. Publishers, Ltd.

2.30-4pm
Panel 5: Decolonising Knowledge, Counter Narratives & Contentious Space (Israel/Palestine)

Rosanna Sirignano, University of Heidelberg
‘From Ethnography to Folklore Movement: Hilma Granqvist and Palestinian Cultural Activism’

Yara Hawari, University of Exeter
‘Unsettling Knowledge Production and Creating Spaces for Decolonisation in Palestine’

Silvia Truini, University of Exeter
‘In Activism: A Quiet Fight for the Right to Time’

Roman Vater, University of Oxford
‘National Alternatives to Zionism: the Case of the Young Hebrews, 1939-1976’

4pm
Closing Remarks & Tea and coffee
Tasneem Sharkawi, University of Lancaster
'Re-narrating Sovereignty: An Ethnographic Exploration of Transnational Activism of Syrian Forced Migrants in Europe'

Six years since the outbreak of uprisings in Syria and the forced migration that ensued as a result of the armed conflict, Syrian activism has a strong presence in several European capitals. Many young Syrian forced migrants in Europe are actively involved in organizing and mobilizing against the Syrian government. This paper draws on an ethnographic account of a group of young Syrians in Germany, exploring their networked activities with groups of Syrian activists based inside Syria, as both groups engage in acts of resistance directed against the Syrian regime. I focus on a case of collective action on the part of political prisoners detained in Hama Central Prison in Syria. In May 2016, detainees orchestrated a wide-scale protest and hunger strike after hearing that their fellow inmates are to be transferred to Sednaya military prison. Following a performative approach to critical citizenship studies (Isin, 2009; 2012; Isin & Saward, 2013), the paper explores intersections between activism, citizenship and narratives of sovereignty. I look at how Berlin-based Syrian activists who were in touch with some of the inmates used inside information contest the official narrative of the incident by the Syrian state to generate regional and international interest in and sympathy for the political prisoners. I argue that this collective action by detainees in abject conditions and refugees in precarious situations can be understood as an act of citizenship in which new political subjectivities and political spaces were constituted. Through in-depth interviews, participant observations, social media artifacts, and archival research, I assemble a narrative of this case to examine the ways their extra-territorial activism engaged with and interrogated traditional notions of sovereignty. Findings underline the relationships of solidarity between Syrians inside and outside and the political relationships and political networks formed in this incident which connected the struggle of the political prisoners to with the ongoing national struggle.

Ferdinand Arslanian, University of St. Andrews
'The Non-Radical Radicals: Exploring the Position of the Syrian Left from the Syrian Uprising'

The stance of the Syrian Left from the Syrian uprising has been met with unease from within the circles of Syria’s mainstream opposition being deemed as too soft on the Syrian regime. This paper will seek to investigate the moderate and accommodating stance of a political movement perceived as emblematic to radical politics. It will argue that as a marginalised, fractured and outdated political movement, the Syrian Left faced a predicament of dealing with a situation as complex as that of the Syrian uprising; as despite its highly repressive and crony capitalist nature, the Syrian regime shared with the Syrian Left similar ideological roots and the same archetype enemy of Western Imperialism. Whereas the demonstrative case of the brutal civil war in neighboring Iraq in the aftermath of the US invasion further intensified this predicament.

More specifically, this paper will address the trajectory of the National Coordination Bureau (the traditional Left opposition), the Front for Change and Liberation (the loyal opposition) and left-wing factions and personal embedded within the grassroots protest movement throughout the course of the uprising and argue that each political bloc attempted to resolve a trilemma of achieving regime change while avoiding both the internationalisation and militarisation of the uprising. Accordingly, the Front for Change and Liberation considered internationalisation to be the greatest threat and lowered its criteria for regime change whereas the National Coordination Bureau gradually endorsed non-military internationalisation as a means for pressuring the Syrian regime to democratisation. On the other hand, the grassroots leftist groups relaxed the condition of pacifism and endorsed militarisation while rejecting any compromise on regime change and international involvement.

Borja W. Gonzalez Fernandez, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
'Semper Rebellis: the Maronite Church and the Theology of Revolution'

Ever since her establishment in the upper, inaccessible ranges of Mount Lebanon, at some undefined point around the 9th century, the Maronite Church has developed a self-referential identity, with strong apocalyptic undertones, as the self-reliant outpost of orthodox Christianity against a background of heresy (the non-Chalcedonian Churches), schism (the Melkite Churches of Antioch and Constantinople) and impiety (Islam). A true theology of revolution whereby the small community of goatherds and peasants, as Kamal Salibi once described her, would constitute herself in the evangelical pusillus grex, the true remnant of Christendom against an ocean of infidels.

Naturally, such a self-perception would translate to a permanent attitude of defiance against the established powers, exemplified already in the 15th century by the anti-Islamic undertones present in the work of the theologian and bishop Gabriel ibn al-Qila‘i, and reinforced by the influence of the Western missionaries that, from the Council of Trent (1545-1563) onward transferred to the Levant the triumphalist spirit of Counter-Reformation Catholicism. Strengthened in their exceptionalism by the missionary preaching and by their growing exposure to the West, the Maronites entered the path of modernity and took full advantage thereof to press for the realization of their long-term political goals—namely, independence in their Mountain. Through a series of revolts, spanning over fifty years (1805-1858), and preceded by a long and complex process of internal renewal, the Church managed to eventually establish herself as the dominant institution in Mount Lebanon.

It is not, however, the purpose of this paper to explore the historical development of Maronite identity in itself, but to analyze how this self-perception influenced the position of the Church and community in the post-independence era. Thus, it will be argued that the Islama-Christian understanding embodied by the 1943 National Pact did not replace the original Maronite identity, but merely submerged it under a new, Arabized State identity which pushed the Maronite rank and file to an attitude of permanent opposition to the institutions of the new Republic, in a repetition of the community’s historical role. Moreover, this paper will also defend that the essentials of Maronitism, as a political theology of resistance and opposition, remain at the bottom of the community’s spirit, emerging
in all those cases where her very survival as a distinctive ethno-religious group are at stake, such as happened during the Civil War and, more recently, during long years of Syrian occupation over the Bilad al-Arz.

**Jona Fras, University of Edinburgh**

*Linguistic Dissent on Jordanian Radio: Implicature and Stance as Ambiguous Subversion*

This paper examines the mobilisation of linguistic ideologies as a form of dissent from dominant discourses of identity in contemporary Middle Eastern media. As part of my broader doctoral research on non-government Jordanian radio today, it takes a linguistic anthropological perspective focused on the notion of indexicality: the non-referential meanings that are invoked contingently in language use, and thus articulate links to broader social and cultural ideologies, including stereotypes of identity categories such as gender and geographic origins.

I examine two case studies in which speakers problematise and reframe such stereotypes. The first involves the indexical mechanism of implicature, whereby a talk show caller mounts a challenge to dominant discourses of urban linguistic refinement through the ironic use of a ‘sanitised’ pronunciation of a local Jordanian dish (ča’āčīl / ka’ākīl). The second, from a programme in honour of a Jordanian pilot executed by the Islamic State (IS) in Syria, exhibits the performance of an evaluative stance towards Jordanian military activity as a form of patriotic nationalism, through the use of the [g] pronunciation of the sound /q/ (qāf) by a female broadcaster – a usage that defies gendered linguistic norms Jordanian radio, which require female speakers to use the [ʔ] (glottal stop) pronunciation instead.

While these contingent uses of implicature and stance form challenges to certain dominant discourses, they are nevertheless ambiguous in that they draw on other problematic ideologies, including localist linguistic ‘authenticity’ and patriotic Jordanian nationalism. Thus, while details of language use provide important potential for dissent, this paper also problematises this potential – asking whether (1) subversive linguistic practices always need to draw on other dominant discourses in order to be meaningful, and (2) whether such references necessarily make dissent compromised or illegitimate.

**PANEL 2 Channels of hegemony, subversion and dissent in Literature and Internet**

**Annie Webster, SOAS**

*Documenting Death: Cataloguing Bodies in Contemporary Iraqi Literature*

This paper explores two recent novels by authors from Iraq – Sinan Antoon’s *The Corpse Washer* (first published in Arabic in 2010) and Muhsin al-Ramli’s *The President’s Gardens* (first in Arabic in 2012) – in which characters document the grotesque features of dead bodies while preparing them for burial. Jawad in *The Corpse Washer* and Ibrahim in *The President’s Gardens* catalogue the mutilated, tortured, and fragmented bodies they receive as a corpse washer and gravedigger respectively. Both write down the features of these bodies in secret notebooks, systematically listing the causes of death in graphic detail out of concern for corpses whose deaths have been otherwise undocumented.

The first part of this paper will argue that, while cataloguing might not seem to be a radical action, in these novels the act of documenting the dead is a radical act of dissent. Both novels depict characters illicitly recording the numbers and deformed features of the dead killed as a result of the political violence permeating Baghdad in the twenty-first century. The second part will argue that, by containing these catalogues within their own novels, Antoon and al-Ramli are themselves dissenting literary voices. Their novels expose the real bodily destruction incurred through the Iraq War and, in contrast to the other modes of representation – for example the incomplete body counts collated during the conflict – emphasise Iraqi deaths as real ontological losses. As both novels are now available in translation to English-language readers, they not only confront the neglect of these deaths by Iraq’s own political system, but also by the international community.
Fatma Aliye, the first female Ottoman novelist to publish more than one novel, addressed issues such as the importance of the economic independence of women and questioned the relationship between women and tradition in her work. However, in the late 19th-early 20th century Ottoman society, a married Muslim woman from an elite family could not overtly criticize problems such as male dominance and suppression of women, even in fiction. Therefore, in order to catch glimpses of resistance towards the limitations in her society, one needs to read between the lines in Fatma Aliye’s novels. In my presentation, I offer a close reading of her last novel, *Enin* (1910), where the characters constantly eavesdrop or spy on one another, especially due to the homosocial division of men and women. The information they secretly gather by eavesdropping or spying always leads them to false assumptions and results in pain, distress, or grief. This suggests that the author implicitly criticizes the norms and restrictions in the Ottoman society, including women’s segregation and arranged marriages, which forces individuals to act covertly. Additionally, eavesdropping and peeping enables the author to allude to the idea of female empowerment as it is the female characters of the novel, without exception, who manage to keep their integrity when faced with the adverse consequences of peeping and eavesdropping in contrast to male characters who suffer as a result of them. A close reading of Fatma Aliye’s work may broaden our vision of women’s position in the late Ottoman society, as Fatma Aliye was one of the few authors of her time period who portrayed women from a female perspective.

Desiree Shayer-Mcleod, LSE

‘Voice of Dissent/Voice of Hegemony: Narratives of Nonviolence from the Western Sahara’

New forms of digital and social media have often been viewed as a democratising force in which citizens gain equal access to the production and consumption of mediated content online. However, access to these new media is structured by pre-existing power relations and as such can contribute to the maintenance of prior hegemonies. These conflicting trends are particularly evident within the Sahrawi independence movement, in which access to social media by Sahrawi refugees is severely constrained by the environmental and infrastructural challenges of the refugee camps. While increasing access to social media is amplifying Sahrawi voices vis-à-vis Morocco and allowing the ruling Polisario party to promote its cause more effectively on the international stage, it has simultaneously reinforced Polisario domination of Sahrawi politics. This paper seeks to examine the ways in which the politics of access shapes the development of online narratives of Sahrawi nonviolence. Based on fieldwork conducted in the Sahrawi refugee camps near Tindouf, Algeria between May 2016 and June 2017 as well as participation in online Sahrawi and activist communities, this paper will argue that in a context of limited access social media becomes an elite-driven marketing tool with divergent impacts in the domestic and international sphere, simultaneously challenging and sustaining established structures of power.

Engy Moussa, University of Cambridge

‘Cyber Dissidence Post-2011 Uprisings: Roots and Implications of Ongoing Decline’

For decades, the repression and abusive treatment of local populations prevailed across the Arab region. The 2011 Egyptian uprising, fueled by the online activity of the middle-class educated youth, came to challenge this entrenched reality. Thriving for prosperity and dignity, young Egyptians established extensive online networks on social media, where they diffused awareness about human rights’ violations, accentuated a deep public discontent, and effectively mobilized significant number of people to challenge the brute power of the regime. Nevertheless, six years later, the Egyptian scenery—political, social and economic—appears in much worse shape than pre-2011. Multiple factors currently undermine significant social mobilization, including social and political polarization, a highly fractioned and dismantled opposition movement, and a tightly monitored civil society. An often-overlooked factor however is the profound change that affected cyber dissidence in the aftermath of 2011, and particularly after July 2013. Hence, this essay attempts to investigate how the online opposition network evolved in the aftermath of the uprising and what prevents it today from reproducing the early 2011 scenario. Using social network analysis, this study uses ‘network centrality’ to highlight two profound structural changes that affected the cyber dissidence network and effectively dismantled its mobilizing capacity. On the one hand, the essay revisits the significance of central actors and online leadership, arguing that the current absence of key entities within the online opposition network or their dismantling have hugely compromised post-2011 cyber dissidence. On the other hand, the article highlights the enhanced online presence of state agencies and affiliates on social media outlets, in the form of new hubs or parallel networks, and how this intervention impacted the centrality and effectiveness of cyber dissidence network.
Erin Tumulty, Queens University, Belfast

‘Symbolic Representation: Hamas’ Female Candidates of the 2006 Legislative Election’

Hamas as a prescribed terrorist organisation sent shockwaves into the international community when they were democratically elected in the 2006 legislative election. However, the role in which Palestinian women played to secure this success, as elected officials, has been overshadowed in both election coverage and academia. This research utilises the framework of Pitkin’s (1967) theory of Symbolic Representation and applies it specifically to Hamas’ female candidates. This research explores the candidate selection processes of Hamas in relation to their female candidates. It looks at the symbolic characteristics of the democratically elected women to understand the mass voter support among Palestinian women for these candidates who had no political experience prior. This research will refer to in-depth interviews and focus groups with members of the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian female voters and Palestinian women’s centres located in the West Bank and East Jerusalem to determine Hamas’ female candidates Symbolic Representation. In conclusion this research will determine if Symbolic Representation was the key factor determining the success of Hamas’ female candidates in the 2006 legislative election and how this can shape our understanding of female political representation, Islamic political parties and their success in recent years.

Jennifer Philippa Eggert, University of Warwick

‘Explaining Female Political Violence: The Case of Female Fighters in the Lebanese Civil War’

What role do women play in armed conflict and political violence? Much of the literature and, indeed, many practitioners working on the topic, let alone the wider public, focus on the roles of women as victims of violent conflict or as (potential) actors for peaceful change. Despite these widespread gender stereotypes, women have been actively involved in violent movements all over the world. Indeed, the number of women assuming violent roles both in state militaries and in non-state armed organisations is on the rise. This research project focuses on the role of female fighters in non-state armed groups. It looks at the question of why some non-state armed organisations (“militias”) involved in the Lebanese civil war (1975 – 1990) employed female combatants whereas others did not. Comparing a number of different militias and taking into account individual motivations, organisational characteristics, security pressures and societal aspects, this paper discusses the factors that led to the inclusion of female fighters.

The findings of this paper are based on several months of fieldwork in Lebanon in 2015/16 during which interviews with 69 former male and female fighters, party members, researchers, journalists and NGO representatives were conducted.

Angela Gissi, University College Dublin

‘Political Awareness as a Survival Strategy: Syrian Women from Authoritarianism to Exile in Lebanon’

The Arab uprisings have seen women’s participation in demonstrations and their mobilization for justice and political reforms. Such a phenomenon has rekindled academic interest in Arab women’s political activism and their involvement in grassroots organizations for socio-political and economic change. Despite these recent breakthroughs in the study of Arab women’s political agency, the experience of ‘the political’ among non-politically-active women continues to remain underexplored. This paper seeks to redress such oversights by focusing on an examination of Syrian women’s political awareness in three main contexts: 1) authoritarianism in pre-war Syria under the leadership of the Assad regime; 2) political unrest and warfare since the outbreak of the Syrian uprising in 2011; 3) exile in multi-sectarian and consociational Lebanon. Based on the analysis of the interviews that I conducted in 2014 with 70 Syrian refugee women in Lebanon, as part of my PhD research project, I argue that political awareness plays an important role in Syrian women’s elaboration of survival strategies in highly politicized contexts. By casting a critical eye on well-established conceptualizations of the terms ‘political’, ‘political awareness’ and ‘survival strategies’, this novel paradigm allows me to visualize women’s politicization beyond overt manifestations of activism and/or hidden forms of opposition to overarching powers. In fact, I contend that women’s politicization also emerges from women’s attempts to shun state politics and other oppressive forces by strategizing their knowledge of ‘the political’.
Sarah Takafori, University of Manchester
'*Sanctioning Iran: International Relations Discourse and Affective Resistance*

In what language do I need to say to you that I do not want nuclear energy, at the expense of my youth and my life...I have given in to the pain, I will die of this pain because I have no money to go to a doctor...I am telling you about all this misery to tell you that there are people who are alive but have many, many times wished for death. (Javad Zarif July 2014)

Western political discourses around sanctions on Iran have, mostly, if not entirely, remained confined to the scope and efficacy of their international implantation, and to the question of whether or to what extent Iran has the right to produce uranium. Within this framework, the affective implications of the exercise of sanctions on Iranian bodies and lives have been largely absent. In stark contrast, the emotionally charged articulations of Iranians, as in the above quotation, shed a light on ordinary, injured but hitherto neglected bodies, subjected to what has become known as ‘smart’ sanctions, a term which bears the presumption that prohibitory measures deployed and imposed on one’s country are thoughtfully considered and selectively ‘targeted’.

Drawing on feminist theories of affect, I try to map how Iranians resist the normative framings of Iran as a threatening object and a non-proximate collective body, which has ‘deviated’ and so is unworthy of ‘our’ trust or empathy. In the above statement what is striking is not only the attempt at articulating the pain which one endures through evoking the accumulation of affect - of Iranians’ frustration, anger and despair circulating on Facebook - but more significantly the demand for a degree of compassion and empathy which is withheld in dominant political discourses. Iranians on social media, however, generate an embodied discourse which questions the non-grievability of Iranian lives and their absence within the politics of sanctions on Iran.

Zoe Jordan, Oxford Brookes
'*Host Families and Urban Refugees: Alternative Discourses of Belonging and Citizenship for Forced Migrants in Urban Amman*

Seventy-eight per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan live in urban areas, along with refugees from forty-four other countries. Their presence outside of camps challenges existing notions of identity and belonging, provoking heated debate about who belongs in the community, and how this belonging is performed. Juxtaposed against these processes is the hospitality shown by host families, who provide a home for refugees during displacement and provide a vital social and economic link to the wider community. Despite their prevalence and importance, hosting arrangements have received little attention (Davies 2012; CARE International 2016; Shryock 2004). Exploring the role of hosting relationships in negotiating how refugees belong, this research challenges dominant discourses of citizenship and belonging, proposing a reconsideration of how we understand these processes for forced migrants in urban areas.

Within refugee discourse, belonging is often equated with integration and legal citizenship (Antonsich 2010). Yet the de facto integration of many forced migrants, especially those in long-term displacement, shows that integration is possible outside of formal legal channels, and that practices of citizenship are more important than the procedural elements. Alternative understandings of citizenship, based on the everyday interactions taking place, provide greater insight into the dynamic processes of identity construction and belonging (Shachar, 2009). These processes are explored through the relationship between refugees and their hosts in urban Amman. Host families play an essential role in connecting refugees to different sites of citizenship and as a conduit between different hidden and public spaces of citizenship; helping refugees to negotiate the multiple and informal boundaries of these spaces. Using multiple sites and scales of citizenship highlights the importance of the host family for refugees in facilitating connection and participation in the real and everyday web of relations and human interaction that make up citizenship.

Mo Afshary, University of Kent
'*Towards a Prefigurative-Juridical Reimagining of the Concept of ‘Revolution’: The Praxis of Egyptian Activist Lawyers since the 2011 Revolution*

Since the 2011 Revolution, Egypt has been going through turbulent times as successive governments unleashed an extraordinary level of crackdown—often ‘legally sanctioned’—on the protagonists of the revolution while disregarding their demands for change. Within this increasingly repressive context, Egyptian activist lawyers – lawyers actively involved in supporting and defending political activists and others involved in the ongoing revolutionary struggle – have come to occupy a unique place as one of a few remaining organised groups to support the revolution. Drawing on interviews with, and observations of, several Egyptian activist lawyers during the past three years, the paper aims to examine the particular ways in which they imagine ‘revolution’ and envision the contours of an ideal society, as well as the ways in which they act upon those visions in the here-and-now, striving to actualise them, prefiguratively, while situated within an imperfect, oppressive political order. It will be argued that, due to their particular approach to lawyering for revolution, enquiring into the prefigurative praxis of Egyptian activist lawyers, and its underlying conception of ‘revolution’, reveals an interesting set of perceptions and practices which provide a potent perspective for studying the ongoing revolutionary struggle in Egypt.
Giuseppe Acconcia, Bocconi University

'The Uprisings in Egypt: Popular Committees and Independent Trade Unions’

By adopting Social Movement Theories (SMT) as a basic framework to analyse the 2011 uprisings in the Middle East, this paper will disentangle the role of alternative networks and other forms of political conflict in reference to the Egyptian case in mobilizing and forming a potential revolutionary movement.

This paper aims to test the hypothesis of how during the Egyptian 2011 uprisings the encounter in public spaces of more organized political oppositionists with other anti-regime elements demobilised the social movements associated with the so-called “Arab Spring”. Through participatory methods, the research hypothesis will be tested with reference to field work research involving Popular Committees and independent trade unions in two areas of Cairo and Mahalla al-Kubra. Driving factors for the differential impact of state repression and Political Islam on mobilization will be identified through the analysis of the two in-depth case studies and, in a comparative perspective, with similar forms of political conflict in other Middle Eastern countries. Semi-structured interviews and participatory research will be used in order to conduct the analysis.

In this paper will be argued that during the 2011 uprisings in Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood monopolized the space of dissent preventing the formation of common identities among the protesters. Especially social actors in the ‘Egyptian Street’ (e.g. independent trade unions and Popular Committees) and other opposition groups (Liberals, Socialists, Leftists, anarchists) did not find any place within the post-uprisings government and finally have been demobilised by the politics and political discourse of a pseudo Neo-Nasserism, implemented by the regime after the 2013 military coup.

The case studies will show the effects of political mobilization and military repression on Egyptian civil society, especially at the levels of workers’ movements and Popular Committees. I will try to verify if this derived from a low ideological and structural integration between Islamists and Leftist political groups or from other reasons (state-society relations, army control over economy, youth disengagement, etc.).

The final sections of the research broadens the perspective and addresses the implications of the findings on the workings of Popular Committees in other contexts in the Middle East and on the more general question raised in terms of democratization; more specifically, it will be discussed to what extent the effectiveness of Political Islam in activating the social proto-movement might be replaced by more organized oppositional forces oriented towards social and workers’ rights.

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Rosanna Sirignano, University of Heidelberg

'From Ethnography to Folklore Movement: Hilma Granqvist and Palestinian Cultural Activism’

In the thirties, the anthropologist Hilma Granqvist (1890-1972) conducted fieldwork in Artas (West Bank), producing five monographs which are valuable resourceful materials for socio-anthropological research on the Muslim societies. The dynamics that this work created in the context of contemporary Artas is in the centre of my inquiry in this paper. In particular, it focuses on the impact of Granqvist’s work on the Palestinian Folklore Movement, providing a critical reflection on the way Granqvist became an epitome of subversion against dominant forms of power and discourse. In 1993, inspired by Granqvist’s work, Musa Sanad founded the Artas Folklore Centre aiming at preserving Palestinian heritage, promoting alternative tourism and sustainable development. Since then, the centre has been supported by some of the most important members of the Palestinian Folklore Movement, like Sharif Kanaana, who stressed the crucial role of Granqvist’s work for the formation of the Palestinian national identity. Unlike other anthropologists at her time, Granqvist gave voices to the women, letting them explain the reasons of their customs and tradition. Moreover, she openly challenged the dominant discourse about Palestine too often viewed through “biblical lenses”. It has been stated that for these reasons she never had an academic career, being a dissident female voice in an academic world dominated by men. By means of some examples I will show how Palestinian agents in the contemporary context have re-configured meaning of Granqvist’s work produced in the early twentieth century. I argue that Granqvist’s conception did not break completely with the biblical narrative that dominated the political and academic discourses of the time. However, as objects with potentiality of being owned and re-owned in different cultural settings, this material now functions as a means of resistance against the dominant discourse and their early function has been subverted in their relation to new historical actors.

Yara Hawari, University of Exeter

‘Unsettling Knowledge Production and Creating Spaces for Decolonisation in Palestine’

In 2004, during his infamous siege, a defiant Yasser Arafat famously stated “We are not Red Indians”. With this statement, Arafat highlighted not only the limited understanding of the struggles of the Indigenous people of America, but also the serious connotations of fragility and failure that come with the label of ‘Indigenous.’ These connotations have hindered Palestinian and non-Palestinian scholars in accepting Indigenous as a concept, whilst many of them have readily accepted the settler colonial paradigm. Yet much of the settler colonial literature provides inadequate spaces for decolonisation because of its focus on structure and its limited understanding of the way Indigenous agency and resistance can shape the political process in settler colonies. In contrast, Palestinian
activists and their allies have been more receptive to the Indigeneity paradigm, regarding it as an empowering tool in the struggle against continuous dispossession and loss.

This paper will highlight the importance of situating Palestine studies under the field of Indigenous studies in the endeavour of decolonising knowledge production. Furthermore, it will present Palestinian imaginings of decolonisation, drawing upon emerging spaces of resistance that attempt to redress the settler colonial power structures.

**Silvia Truini, University of Exeter**

*In Activism: A Quiet Fight for the Right to Time*

In East Jerusalem, the City of David archaeological park lies in the middle of the densely populated Palestinian village of Silwan. The City of David features in Critical Heritage Studies literature as case in point for the political deployment of archaeology and heritage making. Built on the archaeological site of Bronze and Iron Age Jerusalem, the park is managed and continuously expanded by a religious right-wing settler association (EL’AD) which also forcefully established a Jewish residential nucleus therein. Through guided tours and leisure activities, EL’AD disseminates a narrative that bridges an imagined exclusively Jewish past with a messianic future in which there is no place for ethno-cultural diversity. The present, instead, is marked by the tremendous impact of the settlement and the archaeological park on the Palestinian community: pervasive surveillance, limitation of freedom of movement and disruption of economy. Palestinian dissent towards the deployment of archaeology and heritage to their detriment is necessarily reshaped by a balance of economic and political power that leans disproportionately in favour of the settlers, and a surveillance so tight that prevents and systematically represses all forms of active protest.

My presentation surveys the responses of the Palestinian residents to the domination over the time and space of Silwan enforced through EL’AD’s heritage making, as they emerge from the preliminary finds of my PhD research fieldwork. Whereas the relevant literature focusses on space, I contend that instead time and temporality are an equally relevant point of contention. I propose a different understanding of how the Palestinian community structures its dissenting practices that combine openly confrontational actions in areas outside Silwan — such as the cemeteries around the Jerusalem Old City Walls — with a comparatively more compliant behaviour and a performed disinterest for the remains of the ancient past in their place of residence.

**Roman Vater, University of Oxford**

*National Alternatives to Zionism: the Case of the Young Hebrews, 1939-1976*

This presentation will explore a particular aspect of a home-grown opposition to Zionism among Hebrew Israelis. With the consolidation of a separate national identity in the pre-state Yishuv (a process whose pinnacle can be dated to the 1930s-1940s), an attitude of denigration and even rejection of Zionism became relatively widespread among the Hebrews. The most radical and articulate ideology that offered a complete national alternative to Zionism in the name of an indigenous Hebrew nationalism was the Young Hebrews’ ideology, popularly known as “Canaanism”. The talk will present the main tenets and principles of Hebrew “Canaanite” nationalism in relation both to Zionism and Arab nationalism. It will explore in particular the historiographic base of “Canaanism”, arguing that divergence in the vision of the past between “Canaanism” and Zionism (as well as Pan-Arabism) is the key element that permits us to perceive the principal incompatibility between Jewish and Hebrew nationalism in the political sphere.