



Workshop: Aesthetics, Rituals, and Narratives in Islamic Mobilization

Date: 24th October 2024

Venue: The Middle East Centre, University of Oxford, Woodstock Rd, Oxford OX2 6JF (UK)

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For over four decades, the Middle East has witnessed the (re)emergence of Islamic mobilization—a multifaceted phenomenon that involves diverse groups advocating for visibility, political legitimacy, and resonance in response to social and political grievances. When analysing Islamic narratives of resistance, it is imperative not to underestimate the importance of aesthetic, ritualistic, and entertainment characteristics. These elements play a pivotal role in capturing people's attention and motivating them to participate in collective actions.

In this workshop, we will investigate how art, rituals, performances, music, and symbolic meanings contribute to creating a cohesive narrative that shapes various forms of Islamic mobilization across the Middle East. We invite abstracts that explore aesthetics, rituals, and narratives within the context of Islamic movements in the Middle East. Submissions may address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

1. The Aesthetic of Armed Resistance:

- Analysing the expressive dimension of Islamic militant activism, focusing on the interplay between symbolic meanings, visual representations, and emotions in influencing militant groups to challenge their antagonists.
- Examining the contribution of art, slogans, graffiti, and music in shaping narratives of armed resistance.

2. Rituals and Islamic Mobilisation:



- Investigating the incorporation of religious festivals, communal rituals, and traditions in Islamic mobilization.
- Examining the role of rituals in the identity formation of Islamic movements.

3. Narratives in Action:

- Investigate how activists construct narratives about memories of past struggles and current experiences of grievances to foster or resist political changes.
- Examine the role of oral histories, art, literature, and cultural expressions as essential components of collective action frames, elucidating how activists express their grievances.

4. Digital Storytelling:

- Exploring the role of digital platforms in enabling Islamic groups to share the experiences of activism through multimedia representations.
- Analysing the impact of digital activism on mobilization by unfolding the relationship between online campaigns and aesthetics of protest in the digital era.

How to Apply:

Applicants must submit an abstract of 400-words, a 100-words biography, and a two-page CV to info_workshop_mena2024@area.ox.ac.uk by **22 March 2024**.

Please note that we will be selecting only 15 abstracts for presentation. Notification of acceptance will be sent by April 2024. Papers to be submitted after the notification of acceptance will be 4000-words for work in progress and 8000-words for full articles.

Partial funding is available to support accommodation in Oxford for participants, with priority given to individuals with limited institutional support. If you require funding for accommodation, please indicate your request in your submission.

Conveners: Dr Antonella Acinapura (Antonella.acinapura@area.ox.ac.uk) and Dr Kenichi Tani (kenichi.tani@area.ox.ac.uk)