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OUR MISSION

The APSA MENA Workshops program is an initiative, made possible through a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York, to enhance scholarly networks and support political science research among early-career scholars in the Middle East and North Africa.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

Greetings! Welcome to the Fall 2018 issue of the APSA MENA Newsletter — a project emanating from the [APSA MENA](#) annual workshops.

This issue focuses on the different ways researchers are increasingly adopting theoretically critical perspectives and methodologies in studying social and political phenomena in the MENA region. Our research symposium includes six essays that offer various perspectives on critical research in the MENA region. Vivienne Matthies-Boon presents reflections on critique in academic research in the region. Waleed Hazbun and Morten Valbjørn problematize the process of knowledge production on the region by looking at scholarly identities in shaping scholarship and teaching IR of the Middle East. Nicola Pratt offers a reflection on the study of regional political events, such as the 2011 Egyptian uprisings, through popular culture. Rahaf Aldoughli examines militarism and masculinity in the process of state formation in Syria. Anwar Mahjane presents a reflection on the major development in the field of feminist studies in the study of the region. Irene Constantini and Ruth Hanau Santini discuss theoretical and methodological issues in the study of contentious politics in the region. In addition, this issue includes three other research essays. Ammar Maleki and Vahid Yucsoy offer the findings from their survey in Iran about the citizens' dissatisfaction with the Islamic Republic. Shady Mansour presents an analysis of the current dynamics in the GCC through the prism of linkage diplomacy. Jan Busse draws on a recent workshop and provides insights on revising the area studies controversy.

In this issue, we have introduced a new section entitled 'Teaching Political Science in/on the MENA Region'. This section includes two essays. Rosita Di Peri offers a reflection on the 'Understanding the Middle East' Summer School at the University of Torino. Guy Burton offers a personal reflection on teaching Middle East politics in and outside the region.

In the section 'Five Questions For...', we were delighted to interview Prof. Amany Jamal, the Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics and director of the Mamdouha S. Bobst Center for Peace and Justice, at Princeton University. She discusses her current research as well as personal insights on and motivations for studying the region.

This issue includes a list of news, announcements, and calls. Also, please visit our [webpage](#), where you can see previous issues and subscribe to our newsletter.

Sincerely,
Dr May Darwich and Dr Sarina Theys

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NOTE FROM APSA

Greetings from APSA!

Since the Spring newsletter edition, the APSA MENA team have developed and executed multiple programs and initiatives. 2018 saw growing and deepening relationships supporting PhD students and early-career scholars from the Arab MENA region.

First, we are glad to announce the creation of the MENA Politics section at APSA. This section aims to support research on the politics of the MENA region utilizing interdisciplinary methodological, theoretical and empirical tools. It seeks to fully integrate the rigorous study of the politics of the Middle East with the broader discipline of Political Science and to encourage and integrate scholars from the MENA region into the global study of Middle East politics. We encourage all readers of this newsletter to [become members](#).

The first week of the [2018 APSA MENA workshop](#) on “The Evolving Role of Political Institutions in the Arab World” took place in Rabat, Morocco from September 23-29. In attendance were 17 fellows from the 9 different Arab countries, and 6 fellows from the US, Italy, and Sweden. Fellows are now revising their research for presentation and feedback at the second workshop to be held from January 28 to February 1, 2019 in Tunisia.

APSA’s inaugural collaboration with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research ([ICPSR](#)) saw 3 MENA-based scholars participate in a 4-week program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research. The selected fellows found their experience to be very informative and useful. According to Ezzeddine Saidi, ICPSR “helped me acquire the fundamental skills of quantitative analysis to prepare a research methodology course for my MA students.” Building on this positive experience, APSA and ICPSR will sponsor 5 scholars from the region to participate in the first session of the 2019 summer program at Michigan University. Applications can be found [here](#) and the deadline is **December 25**. In addition, APSA is currently accepting applications for participation in the 2019 summer program of the Institute of Qualitative and Multi-Method Research ([IQMR](#)) taking place at Syracuse University, NY – June 17-28, 2019. The deadline for applications is **December 3** and more information can be found [here](#).

The first Research Development Group (RDG) organized in collaboration with the Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) brought 5 Arab scholars together for an intensive one-day of paper presentations and rigorous feedback from seasoned scholars in their fields of research. Among the direct outcomes of the RDG, 4 of the scholars will be presenting their research at the 2019 Arab Council for Social Science (ACSS) conference in Beirut, Lebanon. APSA will be working with the newly established MENA politics section to organize another RDG at APSA’s 2019 meeting in Washington DC.

The [departmental collaboration initiative](#) continues to seek proposals from departments of political science in the region. After a busy program in the Spring and Fall semesters, APSA is supporting new programs on the use of quantitative and qualitative software for PhD students and junior faculty at Cairo University as well as research methods workshop for MA and teaching workshop for junior faculty at the American University in Cairo. We are also in talks with a couple of other universities for other programs.

Finally, we would like to welcome Sarina Theys (2015 Alumni) who joined the editorial team alongside May Darwich (2013 Alumni). We thank them for their leadership and for organizing such a strong edition. We encourage all readers to contribute to future newsletter issues and to share their feedback on how to improve this publication.

Best to all in the coming months and stay well!

Ahmed Morsy and Andrew Stinson

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RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM:

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN MENA POLITICAL SCIENCE

CRITIQUE AS A WAY OF 'BEING' IN THE WORLD

By Vivienne Matthies-Boon (University of Amsterdam)

In this piece, I relay how critique is above all a mode of dwelling in the world, whereby we relentlessly strive towards (small) justice, and small goodness through a never-ending critique of social, political and economic constellations – and how these affect people. This means standing with people, rather than over and above them in our academic undertakings. It does however pose serious questions around the unequal distribution of vulnerability and risk amongst researchers.

أَتَطَرَّقُ في هذا المقال إلى كيف أنَّ النقد في هو شكل من أشكال التعايش مع العالم المحيط، والذي نسعى من خلاله جاهدين لتحقيق العدالة (الصغرى) وقليل من الخير، من خلال نقد لا ينتهي للتجمعات الاجتماعية والسياسية والاقتصادية وكيف من شأنها التأثير على الإنسان. وهذا يعني الوقوف في مستوى مماثل للناس وليس في مقام أعلى في مهامنا الأكاديمية. ولكن يطرح المقال أسئلة خطيرة حول التوزيع غير المتكافئ بين الباحثين.

Critique is not only a scholarly approach, but rather encompasses a way of living, a way of being or dwelling in the world. Yet, for me personally, this is way of being in the world is nevertheless rooted in Frankfurt School critical theory, which not only unites theory and practice or is engaged towards emancipation and liberation but also does so from the point of view of radical self-reflexivity and post-positivism. That is, as critical theorists we know that any claims or conclusions we reach are always fallible and subject to public deliberation. We thus do not possess ultimate truth but are participants putting forth critical interventions in a debate. Critique thus entails an attitude of humility, of radical uncertainty, in which one opens up to the suffering and pain of others in their utmost particularity and concreteness. Critique is thus an engagement with the fragility of existence in our mutually shared world and seeks not only to understand this but to transform it in cooperation with others.

This means speaking out against structural injustices, such as economic inequality and the brutal effects of impoverishment at the hands of local, national, regional and international actors. It also means speaking out against structural political violence, such as state terrorism and repression, and its funding, support and legitimization by other national and international actors – often under the guise of the discourse of 'stability and security' or 'migration control'. It entails an everlasting critique of the interplay of the great variety of power relations – political, economic, social, cultural and personal – in the MENA region and how these intersect in practices of domination and subjectification. Critique of course comprises the realisation that practices of domination are neither 'naturally' constituted nor culturally determined, but rather socially and intersubjectively constructed at a variety of different levels.

Importantly, it also means tying the macro-level structures of violence with the micro-level experiences of sense- and meaning making processes. It thus means not standing over and above the people that one studies, nor to abstract from them, but rather to stand with them. It means to engage with them in a critical, self-reflective and engaged manner of openness, with the profound chance that also oneself (and one's analytical concepts) may become transformed in this process. Critique is thus nothing less than a way of living, of ethical engagement in the world in a Levinasian but also a Paolo Freirean sense.

And yes, this may come across as hopelessly naïve and idealistic – particularly in a world so full of darkness, a world of disappearances, torture, killings and structural poverty that leaves so many struggling for life on a day by day basis. Yet, it is based on the realistic realisation that our humanity itself is contained in this fragile kernel of opening up to others. This kernel may be so easily broken, and in fact is deliberately broken by repressive regimes that seek to atomise people – thereby hampering their creative collective potential. And so, the question becomes whether we hear the screams of those who are killed, tortured and abused? Do we, for instance, see how the Egyptian state makes thousands of young people disappear? Do we see

their absences, their faces? Do we hear the silent scream of repression and stifling annihilation? Or do we close ourselves off and hide behind abstracted scholarship? This is not to say that abstracted work is not useful, for indeed this may serve the cause of humanity too. But what it means is an understanding of scholarship as a radical engagement with the concrete world — or, a specific segment of it — based on uncertainty and fragility. It means understanding scholarship as a pursuit of small goodness, small kernels of humanity in the face of so much destruction, even if only through speaking about this destruction. What critical research hence comes down to is the simple question of whether we are willing to let concrete experiences of pain, suffering and oppression transform the way in which we conduct research and view the world? Critique is hence above all an ethical undertaking of facing the dirtiness of the world, without (one tries) losing hope.¹

But this comes at a variety of different costs. Firstly, in contrast to the desires of our increasingly neoliberal Universities, it means that we do not necessarily have a predetermined research plan, but rather let our research flow from our encounters, from life, and with the uncertainty that anything would emerge at all. This mode of being is hence particularly risky for early career scholars who are in need of scholarly publications or whose tenure in fact entails abiding by a certain amount of publications per year. Radical critique may very well reduce one's employability. This may be especially the case when one directly critiques the political role of funding institutions or research donors — or when one does not use traditionally accepted frameworks for analyses and scholarly discourse. Secondly, opening up to this suffering may also be harmful and result in vicarious trauma — something that remains largely unrecognised within the academic community. It may thus result not in the transformation but the full-blown rupturing of one's lifeworld, with all the physical and mentally agonising effects thereof. Thirdly, and let's be realistic here, it may also result in one's arrest, torture and disappearance — or (at best) in one's inability to re-enter or remain in the country of one's research. Here, we see an unequal distribution of risk, since (Giulio Regeni's murder notwithstanding) local researchers still bear the greater brunt of this risk, as they may not only put themselves but also their families and friends in harm's way and have a much harder time escaping

from these harmful situations due to visa regulations and institutionalised racism elsewhere. But also, it is not uncommon for international researchers to tone down their public criticisms of a regime or a political actor due to a fear of being unable to re-enter the country of research or landing into trouble with local authorities. This does raise the difficult question of what responsibility one has and at what cost: Who can speak out in the face of suffering? Whose voice is heard? And for whom can one speak out? And at what costs? At what exclusions? And in what ways? It is with such questions in mind, that colleagues and I have established the Critical Middle East Studies section of British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES), which includes a very active Facebook group with over 2700 members. We have noticed that there is a real desire amongst Middle East Studies scholars and activists to engage with such questions, and particularly how these relates to modes of knowledge production in Middle East Studies.

Dr Vivienne Matthies-Boon is Assistant Professor of the International Relations of the Middle East at the University of Amsterdam. She is the leader of the Critical Middle East Studies (CMES) section of BRISMES and her forthcoming book on "Life, Death and Alienation: Counter-Revolutionary Trauma in Egypt" will be published with Rowman and Littlefield (e-mail E.A.V.Boon@uva.nl).

Notes

¹ Examples of such works are the writings by Amro Ali, Maha Abdelrahman, Salwa Ismail, Mona Abaza with regards to Egypt. They provide nuanced critiques Egypt's social and political constellation, without necessarily falling into utter despair.

THE MAKING OF IR IN THE MIDDLE EAST: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOLARSHIP AND TEACHING IN THE REGION

By Waleed Hazbun (University of Alabama)
and Morten Valbjørn (Aarhus University)

To what degree should the way IR scholars in the Arab region study and teach IR be shaped by their geopolitical location and relationship to IR in North American and Europe? On 21 and 22 June 2018, IR scholars from across the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and North America met at a workshop in Beirut to debate these questions and ongoing efforts to make way for more voices from the region and scholarship about the region in global IR debates.

يتطرق هذا المقال إلى أي درجة تكون الطريقة التي يُدرّس ويُدرّس بها باحثوا العلاقات الدولية في المنطقة العربية متأثرة بمواقعهم الجيوسياسية وارتباطهم بالعلاقات الدولية في أمريكا الشمالية وأوروبا. في 21 و22 حزيران 2018، التقى باحثون في العلاقات الدولية من جميع أنحاء الشرق الأوسط وأفريقيا الشمالية وأوروبا وأمريكا الشمالية، في ورشة عمل أقيمت في بيروت من أجل طرح هذه الأسئلة وعرض الجهود المستمرة، التي من شأنها إفساح المجال أمام المزيد من الآراء والبحوث النابعة من المنطقة وكذلك البحوث حول المنطقة في الحوارات العالمية (Global) في العلاقات الدولية.

The “Middle East” is one of the most written about regions outside of North America and Europe within the fields of International Relations (IR) and Security Studies, but very little of global scholarship in these field is written by scholars based in or from the Arab region.¹ In the past two decades, following Ole Wæver’s observation that “IR might be quite different in different places,” IR scholars have become increasingly interested in the development of IR scholarship beyond North America and Europe as well as the broader issue of how, where, and why IR scholarship gets produced. Even as scholars have sought to produce postcolonial, non/post-Western, and global approaches to IR, scholarship about the Middle East and scholars from the Arab world have yet to be fully engaged in these debates.

While the debates about how to make IR more “global” and how to incorporate different understandings of the “international” are ongoing (see Bilgin 2016), we consider it vital that scholars and institutions in the Arab world become producers of knowledge about not only the Middle East, but

also global politics. Scholars and institutions in the Arab world must not only offer specialized local knowledge, they must seek to offer insights, perspectives, and theorization about global politics, global order, and different conceptualization of the international.

Working with several partners, in June 2018 we organized a workshop in Beirut, Lebanon with a group of IR scholars working across the Middle East as well as Europe and North America. This workshop brought together multiple ongoing, overlapping projects with the goal of seedings and cross-fertilizing these diverse efforts. Most directly, the workshop followed from one we held in Aarhus, Denmark on November 3, 2017 that explored whether, how, and why scholarly identities “in here” — in terms of the geographical, disciplinary and cultural-institutional context and background of scholars — matter to how scholars approach, theorize, discuss and evaluate Middle East IR (See Valbjørn and Hazbun 2016). That workshop brought together scholars familiar with the “Global IR” and “Post-Western IR” debates and asked them to critically analyze the impact of scholarly identities and institutional relationships on the development of IR scholarship. Participants highlighted the highly contingent nature of how various scholarly identities, relationships, and institutions shape scholarship. They noted how multiple factors relating to geographical and cultural-institutional context and the disciplinary location of scholars help define patterns of scholarship. Efforts to forge a more “global” IR must engage with these factors and the hierarchies and partitions these generate in order to pluralize the field.

Our discussions at the Aarhus workshop also identified the disconnection between the Global IR debate and the Middle East and North Africa. The Global IR debate rarely addresses the region, while scholars in the region as well as those who work on IR of the Middle East (including those developing “critical approaches”) rarely address the Global IR debate, even to criticize or address its limits. The Aarhus workshop led us next to focus on developing connections between scholars in the regions and initiating conversations and awareness about meta-theoretical issues, such as: Why do IR scholars in the region study and teach what they do? To what degree does or should what and how they study and teach IR be shaped by their geo-cultural and institutional location and their relationships to IR in North

American and Europe?

TOWARDS A BEIRUT SCHOOL OF CRITICAL SECURITY STUDIES

As a follow-up, we sought to bring the conversation into the region with a workshop that would engage scholars working in and from the Arab world. The workshop began on June 21, 2018 with a public forum co-organized by the Beirut-based Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) and held at the Issam Fares Institute Auditorium at the American University of Beirut. The well attended event offered an opportunity for workshop participants and others to learn about and engage with the “Beirut Security Collective,” a network of scholars from, working in, and/or with close ties to institution in the Arab world.² In 2016, with support from the ACSS, this collective formed a working group on Critical Security Studies in the Arab Region to develop a series of research projects as well as a summer training programs for students and junior scholars in the region. The focus of the forum was the collectively-authored “Towards a Beirut School of Critical Security Studies: A Manifesto” (Abboud, et al. 2018). As working group co-director Samer Abboud (Villanova University) noted, the Collective promotes the development of critical approaches to the study of security-related questions in the Middle East. The idea behind a so-called “Beirut School” of critical security studies is to develop alternative understandings of security that focus on the concerns and experiences of scholars and societies within the Arab region, and more broadly, the Global South. The project strives to affirm and extend the contributions of postcolonial international relations and critical security studies to the study of security questions in the Middle East. In particular, it seeks to foster alternative approaches based on encounters with lived experiences of insecurity and through engaging with knowledge produced by scholars and institutions in the Arab world. Waleed Hazbun explains that an additional goal of the project is to build an alternative scholarly institutional infrastructure in the region, including research projects, funding sources, training programs, and publishing outlet. Hazbun argued that only by developing a more autonomous basis for scholarship will scholars in and from the region be able to build and sustain IR knowledge production that focuses on regional and societal understandings of insecurity. Currently serving as the Middle East representative on the executive committee of the Global South

Caucus of the International Studies Association, Hazbun also noted the affinity of the Beirut School project with efforts promoted by the Global South Caucus. Bahgat Korany, a professor of international relations at the American University in Cairo, served as a discussant. In the 1980s, Korany, of Egyptian origin, was one of the first scholars to critique the existing security studies scholarship on the Middle East and work to formulate alternatives that drew on notions of human security. He was also a leading member of what has since come to be referred to as the “Montreal School of Middle East IR” that brought domestic politics, political economy, and ideational issues into a field long dominated by realist approaches to national security (see Korany, Noble, and Brynen, eds. 1993). In his comments, Korany noted the underappreciated precursors to the Beirut School efforts and outlined several important questions and challenges that a “Beirut School” would need to address, such as the need to bridge issues of human security and national security and address the hyper-militarized nature of regional geopolitics.

THE MIDDLE EAST AND IR THEORY

The workshop continued on June 22, 2018 with three panels that sought to address questions relating to IR scholarship and teaching in the region. The first panel, moderated by Morten Valbjørn, offered comparative perspectives on the position of the Middle East and scholarship from the region within efforts to development IR theory. Drawing from her study of IR in and from Latin America, Maiken Gelardi (Aarhus University, Denmark) offered a useful mapping of approaches and strategies for how to advance the Global IR research agenda. She outlined avenues for applying theories developed in regional cases to the larger global canvas, underlining that Global South theories should not necessarily be limited to their “own” regions. May Darwich (Durham University, UK) offered specific suggestions for cross-fertilization between IR theories and region-focused analyses. She highlighted the domestic politics turn in IR theory and how this should be, but has yet to be, exploited by scholars of Middle East IR and IR scholars in the Middle East. Much of the IR scholarship on the Middle East, especially by area studies experts and those from the “Montreal School,” has rightly emphasized the importance of domestic politics within the region for explaining patterns and regional system dynamics, but little of the

scholarship has made any impact on IR theory and scholarship beyond the region (such as in the manner of Stephen Walt's realist approach to balance of threat). Darwich noted how this scholarship has often ignored decades of research in Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) while, with a few exceptions, FPA has rarely addressed Middle East cases. In what could be viewed as contributing to the broader effort to "de-exceptionalize" the study of Middle East IR, Darwich suggested scholarship on IR of the Middle East could use engagement with FPA as a pathway to increase the comparative value of the work produced on the IR of the Middle East that draws on empirically rich case studies.³ Zaynab El Bernoussi (Al Akhawayn University, Morocco) connected these broader questions about research on the Middle East *and North Africa* (emphasizing the importance of including the often marginalized North Africa in these discussions) by bringing in the importance of considering how and what gets taught to students in the region. She advocated teaching IR in a way that is tailored to what she termed "the perspectives of the periphery" and noted her own research on the notion of "dignity" in Arab politics. She nevertheless recognized that the development of "perspectives of the periphery" runs the risk of being viewed as irrelevant elsewhere. Attempting to navigate this tradeoff El Bernoussi noted the need for teaching students in the periphery "to move from being a passive experience to becoming an active experience."

IR FOR AND FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

Our second panel brought together IR scholars who have been teaching at American-style universities in Beirut and Cairo and writing about the IR of the Middle East. Karim Makdisi (American University of Beirut) moderated the panel that offered a range of suggestions for what sort of IR should be developed by scholars in the region. Bahgat Korany offered a paper that highlighted the "mind-shaping" role of textbooks. Drawing on content analysis studies of major IR handbooks and textbooks, Korany noted how much of this material amounts to "Americans talking to Americans" about "our" foreign policy. Moreover, within Anglo-American IR, not only is there little engagement with ideas and scholars beyond the North Atlantic, but most engagement is limited to one's specialized sub-field, resulting IR being dominated by (US-based) "academic tribes and cartels." Korany argued that IR scholars working in English-based programs in the Global South have an

opportunity to train students that can be versed in the Anglo-American IR literature but possessing "an empirical basis for...a critical approach of what is designed/presented from outside." Considering the proliferation of English-based university programs across the Arab world, Korany boldly advocated for a strategy of developing locally-produced textbooks in both English and Arabic editions, as now there might be a regional market beyond one's own home university. Beyond the prepared paper, Korany noted the importance of developing locally produced knowledge that does not neglect the global.

Bassel Salloukh (Lebanese American University) also noted the value of working at the cross-section between Anglo-American IR and the cultivation of a perspective from the Arab world, but he offered a different strategy with a focus on "how the study of Middle East IR feeds into and enriches these mainstream theoretical debates." Salloukh emphasized the need for both "our" teaching and research to address the main theoretical, methodological, and thematic debates in IR and that our scholarship must meet the standards needed to be published in the leading IR journals, suggesting that publishing in poor quality regional journals fails to accomplish these goals. Only good work that adheres to rigorous methodological standards will be on a solid footing to critically engage mainstream/Western scholarship and theories and, in the process, will "open them up to new interpretations and discoveries." At the same time, Salloukh also noted the "best theoretical insights generated from the study of ME IR today come from an insistence on an eclectic critique of realist theories, one that combines realist material explanations of state behavior and alliance choices with domestic regime security and immaterial ideational constructivist explanations." Salloukh noted the promising trends in recent Middle East IR scholarship, including work on non-state actors, where there is a rich body of work, and institutional efforts such as POMEPS and APSA-MENA that are helping to promote solid, rigorous quality work on the IR of the Middle East (see, for example, Lynch and Ryan 2017).

Coralie Pison Hindawi (American University of Beirut), a member of the "Beirut Security Collective," traced the evolution of how she approached teaching "Introduction to International Politics." Having begun by organizing her syllabus around a standard textbook rooted in mainstream

Anglo-American IR theories and examples, Pison Hindawi soon noticed that this material was “so obviously at odds with international politics as experienced outside of the United States.” She saw “the classroom in general, and more particularly an introductory course on International Politics, as an opportunity to question dominant discourses or common sense.” She abandoned that textbook and instead adopted an innovative, multidisciplinary textbook organized around broad questions about global politics (Edkins and Zehfuss 2014). She also put emphasis on cultivating the students’ ability to engage with the major questions and challenges they witnessed in international politics (from their location and experiences in Beirut). Her new approach deemphasized, but did not abandon, teaching mainstream theoretical approaches. In contrast to Salloukh, Pison Hindawi fears that to the degree that she teaches mainstream Anglo-American theories (i.e. the “isms”), while it gives students ability to be conversant in Anglo-American IR, it also helps perpetuate the dominance of such theories as it implies they remain at the center of IR.

The discussion following the presentations brought out many of the complexities of these issues. For example, while some have stressed the importance of Middle East IR engaging in more mainstream, less regionally or area studies focused IR discourses and debates, doing so risks scholars being faced with a choice between accepting the existing terms of reference or else being ignored outside the region. At the same time, the work of future textbook authors based in the region will surely benefit from more research of the sort that Salloukh advocates. All these efforts are needed to contribute to the restructuring of the academic infrastructure of IR as advocated by Hazbun. It was also noted, however, that locally produced scholarship, in some cases, might uncritically support the policies and interests of authoritarian regimes (when scholars politically identify with or are unwilling to critique local authorities) or else, for different reasons, reflect the interests and perspectives of the former colonial powers in the region (where scholars were trained). Lastly, it was noted that many universities in the Arab region are constrained by financial resources, large classes and heavy teaching loads as well as lack of academic freedom, making it hard for faculty to innovate or use classroom engagements as a basis for creating knowledge.

TEACHING IR IN THE ARAB WORLD

The final panel addressed: How should “International Relations” (IR) be taught in the Arab region? Students can offer a responsive constituency for efforts to develop new approaches and understandings of global politics. With the support of the ACSS, months before the Beirut workshop Hazbun began soliciting contributions for what has been tentatively called a “Handbook for Teaching IR in the Arab World.” This project seeks to develop teaching materials for use within educational institutions in the Arab (and beyond) to assist instructors in efforts to offer more pluralist approaches to IR but more specifically materials that address the needs and concerns of students, scholars, and policy makers in the Arab region. With growing interest in the development of a more “global” IR, it is also expected these materials will be useful to instructors and scholars elsewhere. While short of the textbook project suggested by Korany, this handbook seeks to serve as a guide and tool kit for instructors.

Following the initial call for contributions and a wide range of expressions of interest, several of the prospective contributors were invited to the Beirut workshop. Having previously shared an interest to develop such a project, Allison Hodgkins (American University in Cairo) agreed to help edit the handbook. As a long-time instructor in both Jordan and Egypt, Hodgkins has many insights into the challenges of teaching security studies for future policy makers in the region. She has a special interest in developing teaching tools, such as role-playing games and simulations, structured around the issues and approaches most relevant to scholars and practitioners in the region. George Irani (American University of Kuwait) drew on his US-based IR training as well as years of teaching in Lebanon, Kuwait, the US and elsewhere to outline the tools he feels need to be taught in an Intro to IR course to produce informed citizens of the world. Marco Pinfari (American University in Cairo) noted that most IR textbooks and theories rely on the expectation of familiarity with European and North American history and politics, which is often not the case with students in the Global South. Pinfari then wondered if their “understanding of international relations would benefit from an attempt to ground key IR concepts and theories on events that are part of the history of Egypt and of the Middle East.” He suggested, for example, rather than presenting the

notion of international society as product of European history, one might present the concept in reference to the case of Amarna in Ancient Egyptian history. Such an approach, however, runs the risk of scholars in each country tailoring their IR to the specific sorts of historical knowledge students in each location might have. Pinfari also suggested that in teaching notions of, for example, Westphalian sovereignty, these could be taught as distinct forms developed in Europe rather than as universal concepts. Eugene Richard Sensenig (Notre Dame University-Lebanon), and Cherine Hussein (Swedish Institute of International Affairs) noted the value of drawing on different sources and experiences including Marx, Said, Gramsci and Freire as well as gendered approaches to IR. They emphasized the need to develop counter-hegemonic theories as well as approaches that address the “messy lived realities” of peoples and situated struggles including the positioning of the researcher as both a subject and object within cultural and power relationships involved in the discipline.

Hazbun ended the session and the workshop noting he will continue to solicit contributions for the handbook (including short essays, teaching modules, and annotated bibliographies) and identify additional contributions (newsletter readers with interest should contact him at whazbun@ua.edu). One goal would be to follow the model of the Hindawi’s presentation and ask a range of scholars teaching an Intro to IR course to draft a short essay reflecting on how they teach it and why (including a Syllabus). The same could be done for those teaching (usually graduate level) IR of the Middle East courses. Following revisions and editing contributions will be compiled in a pdf handbook while some will be posted as essays in blog form on the *Beirut Forum* (<http://www.thebeirutforum.com>) and on the ACSS website.⁴

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Notes

¹ In specifying this project’s scope as the “Arab region” we are following the parameters of both the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) and the APSA MENA program by focusing on the scholars and institutions from and/or based in member countries of the Arab League. More broadly, we are interested in the making of IR scholarship about the Middle East and North Africa, which we consider as a subfield of both IR and Middle East studies developed by scholars globally.

² The Beirut Security Studies Collective consists of Samer Abboud, Omar Dahi, Waleed Hazbun, Nicole Sunday Grove, Coralie Pison Hindawi, Jamil Mouawad, and Sami Hermez.

³ Many ideas in Darwich’s presentation were based on an unpublished manuscript co-authored with Prof. Juliet Kaarbo entitled “IR in the Middle East: A Foreign Policy Analysis Perspective on Domestic and Decision Making Factors in Theoretical Approaches.”

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RESEARCHING POLITICS IN EGYPT THROUGH/ AS POPULAR CULTURE

By Nicola Pratt (University of Warwick)

This article presents some preliminary findings of research into popular culture and politics in Egypt. It briefly discusses how to conceptualize the relationship between popular culture and politics and the role of popular culture in understanding the 25 January 2011 revolution and its aftermath, with a focus on contemporary Egyptian films. It also argues for the significance of Egyptian popular culture as an archive of popular voices and narratives of the 2011 revolution.

يتطرق هذا المقال إلى بعض النتائج البحثية الأولية حول الثقافة الشعبية والسياسة في مصر. ويتناول المقال كيفية تنظير العلاقة بين الثقافة الشعبية والسياسة والدور الذي تلعبه الثقافة الشعبية في فهم أبعاد ثورة 25 يناير/كانون الثاني 2011 وتداعياتها، مسلطاً الضوء على الأفلام المصرية العصرية. كما يقوم المقال بطرح جدال حول أهمية الثقافة الشعبية المصرية كونها أرشيفاً لأصوات ثورة 2011 الشعبية وحكاياتها.

In the last decade, there has been growing interest in popular culture in the Middle East and North Africa, further boosted by the uprisings and mass protests from 2010 onwards. In particular, scholars of anthropology, sociology, and cultural and literary studies have studied the vibrancy of popular culture and its role in mobilizing and articulating resistance, and challenging state media narratives of events (amongst others, Abaza 2013, El Hamamsy and Soliman 2013, Mostafa and Valassopoulos 2014, Swedenburg 2012). Yet, until now, political scientists have largely ignored popular culture and its role in the 2010-2011 uprisings. This reflects a general lack of attention to non-conventional forms of political agency within the field of political science. Over the past two and half years, I have been part of a research project entitled 'Politics and Popular Culture in Egypt: Contested Narratives of the 25 January 2011 Revolution and its Aftermath.'¹ Through a focus on popular culture, the project places popular agency at the centre of analysis of political dynamics and outcomes in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings and considers unfolding political events beyond the 'political transitions' paradigm.

How can we conceptualize the relationship between

politics and popular culture? The starting point for the project was that popular culture is not only about entertainment but that it is also political. In his seminal work, *Politics and Popular Culture*, John Street (1997) identifies three ways in which politics and popular culture intersect: 1) the articulation of political ideas, values and goals in pop culture; 2) the use of pop culture by different actors to advance political causes; and 3) state cultural policies that shape pop culture. However, what constitutes politics does not exist a priori. As Lisa Wedeen argues in her 2002 article in APSR ('Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science'), culture, defined as 'meaning-making processes,' makes political practices (such as, elections) 'intelligible.' In other words, the meaning of politics is constructed through culture. Whilst she is interested in 'culture' in general, her argument is undoubtedly applicable to popular culture. In other words, popular culture is not only a vehicle for the expression of politics, as well as being shaped by politics, but is also part of constructing the meaning of politics. Attention to the process of meaning-making is particularly important in a revolutionary context, in which popular movements were seeking to challenge the status quo. In addition, our research project takes inspiration from work undertaken by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK, and influenced by Marxist thinkers Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, which defined popular culture as a 'site of ideological struggle' over the cultural meanings that underpin politics and relations of power (amongst others, Bennett 1986, Hall 1991, 1997). Hence, we have approached Egyptian popular culture since 2011 as an important lens through which to understand political struggles in the aftermath of the 25 January uprising.



Popular culture is also an effective entry point into teaching and discussing the 25 January 2011 revolution with a wider audience. As part of the public outreach for our project, we organized a program of Egyptian films at HOME (an independent cinema in Manchester, UK) on 12-13 October.² The program, entitled, 'The 2011 Egyptian Revolution Revisited' presented four films exploring different aspects of the 2011 Egyptian revolution and its aftermath: three documentaries and one feature film. The documentaries were: the Oscar-nominated 'The Square' (dir. Jehane Noujaim, 2013), 'Waves' (dir. Ahmed Nour, 2013), and 'Trace of the Butterfly' (dir. Amal Ramsis, 2014). The feature film was 'Clash' (dir. Mohamed Diab, 2016). All four films present personal dimensions of the revolution and its aftermath and convey some of the euphoria and optimism as well as disappointments and trauma experienced by ordinary Egyptians who participated in them. Each film was followed by a lively audience discussion. In addition, director Amal Ramsis joined us for a post-screen Q & A session for *Trace of the Butterfly*.

The program highlighted contemporary Egyptian films as an important source for understanding Egypt's recent past on many levels. Each of the films revealed how the 25 January 2011 revolution and its aftermath impacted upon 'ordinary people' and their role within it. In this respect, the films presented a more complex picture of political transformations than is often portrayed in political science scholarship, illustrating the relationship between subjectivity and political agency and how these shift over time. In addition, the films, when viewed together, also effectively illustrated how the meaning of these events is contested. An important theme arising out of discussions across the two days was the difficulty of representing an event such as the



Egyptian revolution that is unfinished and disputed. In particular, it is notable that the films sidestepped the contentious issue of 3 July 2013 (coup or 'will of the people?') and did not deal with the Rabaa and Nahda square massacres of 14 August 2013. In light of the failure of these films to address the post-July 2013 events, questions were posed as to whether they were complicit in narratives justifying the return of the military to power and its accompanying violence. 'Clash' was alone in presenting a critique of the post-July 2013 situation, creatively portraying the repressive political atmosphere through its entire setting in a police truck. It also alluded to some of the state violence perpetrated against the Muslim Brotherhood. However, there was no reference to the massacres. A possible explanation for this could be related to the second challenge facing Egyptian filmmakers as well as other cultural producers: that state censorship and political repression, which have massively increased under the regime of President Fatah El-Sisi, make any criticism of the military impossible.

Popular culture can also be approached as an invaluable archive. As the regime of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi tries to reconstruct the meaning of the 25 January 2011 revolution in ways that seek to erase the revolutionary aims of the protesters, popular culture becomes an increasingly important means to document the revolution's diverse histories and capture popular voices threatened with repression and erasure from the historical record. In this respect, a major output from the project will be a digital archive of Egyptian popular culture.

A workshop exploring the relationship between politics and popular culture in the Middle East and North Africa will be held at the University of Warwick, UK, 7-9 May. A call for papers can be found

here:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/cpd/popularcultureegypt/powerandresistancepost-2011/>.

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Notes

¹ This is a three-year project, funded by the Arts and

Humanities Research Council (grant no. AH/N004353/1). The co-investigators are Dalia Mostafa, University of Manchester, and Dina Rezk, University of Reading. Sara Salem was the project Research Fellow. For more details, visit:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/cpd/popularcultureegypt/>

² The event was co-organized with Dalia Mostafa and Dina Rezk and funded by the University of Warwick and Economic and Social Research Council (grant no. ES/M500434/1) and supported by HOME. For more details, visit:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/cpd/popularcultureegypt/filmweekend/>

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DEFINING CITIZENSHIP IN A MILITARIZED STATE: THE SYRIAN CASE

By Rahaf Aldoughli (Lancaster University)

My research lies at the intersection of militarism and masculinity by posing the question of how women were constructed in the Syrian Constitution (1973) and laws prior to the 2011 Syrian uprising. I examine how the perpetuation of the logic of masculinist protection as being associated with ideas of heroism has maintained and reinforced women's subordination since the 1970s in Syria. While most feminist scholarship dealing with state formation in the Arab world attribute its gendered nature to dictatorship, patriarchy and religion, a debate about the nature, origin and development of states, and their relation to militarism and masculinism is lacking. Using Young's (2003) conceptualization of "masculinist protection", I argue that the construction of militarized masculinity in Ba'ath ideology ensures the preservation of gendered laws that perceive women as less equal.

يتمحور البحث حول نقطة الالتقاء بين العسكرية والذكورية، وذلك من خلال طرح سؤال حول الطريقة التي تم من خلالها تمثيل النساء في الدستور السوري (1973) والقوانين المتبعة قبل الثورة السورية. كما أتطرق إلى ربط منطق الحماية الذكورية واستمراريتها بمفهوم البطولة، وكيفية مساهمته في ترسيخ خضوع النساء منذ سبعينيات القرن العشرين في سوريا. وبينما تقوم غالبية بحوث النسوية في شؤون تشكيل الدول في المنطقة العربية، بتعزيز طبيعة هذا التشكيل الجندي إلى الدكتاتورية والذكورية والدين، إلا أنه يوجد نقص في الجدالات حول طبيعة الدول وأصلها وتطورها وعلاقتها بالعسكرية والذكورية. ومن خلال تصور يونغ (2003) حول الحماية الذكورية، أ طرح إشكالية أن بنية الذكورية العسكرية في الإيديولوجية البعثية تضمن الحفاظ على القوانين الجنديرية التي تعطي المرأة قيمة أقل من الرجل.

Amidst the sweeping counter-regime uprisings that has spread across Syria since 2011, questions about how women were constructed in the Syrian Constitution and laws prior to the uprising have subsided. My research aims to contextualize the origin of militarism and masculinism¹ prior to the current war to highlight how masculinized national ideology, coupled with centralized militarism, has maintained and reinforced women's subordination since the 1970s. I use Iris Young's (2003: 4) model of "the logic of masculinist protection" as being

associated with “ideas of chivalry”. Central to the logic of masculinist protection is the subordinate status of those perceived as in need of protection. By constructing and perpetuating an image of the man as courageous, dominating and active, women are positioned as secondary in such a vertical spectrum. I argue that the perpetuation and gratification of the chivalric male model in the Ba'ath ideology and depending on militarism in the early state formation in Syria — which can still be traced in the Constitution's preamble and Syrian political culture — correspond to the subordinate status of women in Syrian laws (Nationality Act and Penal Code).

The case for investigating the subordinate status of women in both state and society lies in the fact that Syrian national identity is being formalized and established by a state that is officially secular. As such, it is astonishing that, despite Syrian women officially having become enfranchised in 1949 — much earlier than Swiss women, who did not obtain the right to vote until 1971 — even when conceived as members of the political realm, their citizenship is somewhat hypothetical as they are in no way assured of equality with men.

My research seeks to unify three different areas of inquiry — masculinist protection, militarism and Ba'athism — to arrive at a deeper understanding of how gender bias, national identity and belonging have been constituted in Syria since the early 20th century. Given the geopolitical context of the Syrian case, my research aims to answer an important question as to what Ba'athism is and how it is used to perpetuate masculinism. The example of Syria thus presents an extraordinary opportunity to explore how dominant national ideology generates and imbues masculinist ethos and values. My research contributes to an understanding of gender in other countries in the Middle East.

Debates on constitutions and legislation in Middle Eastern societies have discussed gender bias from various perspectives: religious patriarchy, tribalism and tradition or to women's changing social and legal status (Sha'aban, 1991; Hill, 1997; Maktabi, 2010). More particularly, in the Syrian context, studies conducted on the gender bias have attributed the subordinate position of women to the repressive political climate created by the authoritarian Ba'ath regime (Manea, 2011; Meininghaus, 2016) or to the patriarchal values invested in society (van Eijk,

2016). However, such attempts to connect tradition and religion to women's subordination in the Constitution and laws disregard the role of national ideologies in promoting and maintaining gender inequality in those legal texts. More importantly, contextualizing the historical and political background to legislation in Syria, scholars argue that current laws were enacted under the French Mandate and are still in force (van Eijk, 2016: 30). The problem with this kind of argument is that, like other feminist studies, it too disregards the intimate link between Syria's turbulent history (featuring multiple military *coups d'état* from 1949 until that of Hafez al-Assad in 1970) and the perpetuation of masculinism in the Constitution and laws.

I argue that the continuation of the colonial legacy seen in Syrian laws can be attributed to the consolidation of Ba'athist political ideology and a militaristic regime, in which idealization of the male warrior delineates models of Syrian citizenship. Hence, I take a different approach: masculinism not as an element of explanation but rather as one of interpretation, a tool of what is called ideology critique (Harvey, 1983).

At the heart of this intellectual enterprise is the conceptualization of the nation as an extension of the family, which perpetuates hierarchies based on gender (see Baron, 2005: 6). When the nation is “envisioned as a family, the concept of family honor could be easily appropriated as the basis of national honor” (Baron, 2005: 7). Such configuration of the nation as a family is often closely linked with the emphasis on the role of the man as a *masculine protector*, defending both women and the nation. This connotation between *'ird* (honor) and *'ard* (land/nation) combines notions of militarism and masculinity. However, this feminization of the nation supplanted the authority of not only the man as a masculine protector but also the state, which is prevalent in Syrian legislation. In other words, this feminization is juxtaposed with nationalizing women's sexuality and imposing the state's authority on their bodies by controlling women's fertility and legalizing violence against them in the name of *protecting* honor (women's purity). Nonetheless, this imposition of the logic of *masculine protection* in Ba'ath ideology has planted hierarchy in the legal narratives by perceiving women as in need of male guardians. Moreover, this authority of *patriarchal protection* enhances the subordination of women and determines their relationship to the state. This is

reflected in Syrian nationality law, under which women are prevented from passing their citizenship to their children. In this context, using Young's conception, my research looks at the masculine assumptions underpinning the nationalized models propagated in the early emergence of Ba'ath ideology, and at how the early formation of the Syrian nation-state centralizes the logic of protection by epitomizing the role of the army in consolidating the newly emerged state. Without understanding the subtle gendering of the 1973 Constitution² and Syrian laws, we cannot make adequate sense of the persistence of a culture that legitimizes the dominance of violence and militarism today.

Implicit in the focus of this investigation is the assumption that Ba'athism in Syria has developed as a necessary component of the establishment and consolidation of the nation-state. As an ideology based on the logic of masculine protection, Ba'athism plays a role in inventing national solidarity and in identifying gender roles. Consequently, it must be said that the birth of the nation-state in Syria has been marked by a dominant nationalist narrative that homogenizes a definitive construction of masculinist protection. The subordination of political authority to militarism at the start of the Constitution structurally burdens women in terms of their incomplete political personhood. Using this approach, my research aims to highlight how investigating Ba'ath ideology and contextualizing the militaristic background to the early formation of the Ba'ath state can explain women's subordinate status in Syrian laws. Because much legal analysis is based on particular conceptions of tradition, religion and patriarchy, interrogating the perpetuation of masculinist protection in national ideologies can change how the Constitution and laws are interpreted and applied.

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Notes

¹ This research uses the notion "masculinity" as an analytical tool for investigating the subordinate position of women in Syrian national narratives. Conceptualising "masculinity" as a cultural construct, it is the appropriation of certain sets of modes and practices that incite hierarchy and domination of one sex over the other. "Masculinism" is, however, used in this research to denote the relationship between power and the privilege of accessing this power not by the virtue of anatomy but through the cultural association with masculinity. Masculinism explains this relationship between power, authority and the cultural construction of masculinity.

² The English-language version of the 1973 Syrian Constitution referenced in this thesis is retrieved from the website of the Carnegie Middle East Center: <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/50255?lang=en>. References to extracts from this version are cited as "(SC)". As a native speaker, I find that the content and spirit of the Arabic version of the Constitution are maintained in this version.

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MIDDLE EAST STUDIES THROUGH A FEMINIST LENS

By Anwar Mhajne (Stonehill College)

This article highlights the important contributions of feminist scholarship to the study of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Doing so, it reflects upon the major developments in feminist studies with a focus on gender and nationalism, Orientalism, Islam, women's agency, and the veil.

هذا المقال يسلط الضوء على المساهمات الهامة في الدراسات النسوية للشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا. ومن خلال القيام بذلك، فإنه يعكس التطورات الرئيسية في الدراسات النسوية مع التركيز على الجندر والقومية، الاستشراق، الإسلام، دور المرأة، والحجاب.

The aim of this article is to reflect on the major developments in the field of feminist studies in relation to the study of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Feminist research on the MENA began in the nineteenth century during movements for social reform and modernization in postcolonial states (Kandiyoti 1996) such as Egypt, Iran, Syria, Morocco, and the Palestinian territories. The literature on gender and nationalism subsequently incorporated a critique of Orientalism; a focus on gender and Islam; the study of gender and states in terms of the symbolic representations of gender in (in)formal institutions; the separation between the domestic sphere (family/home) and the public sphere; women's agency; and feminist views on the veil (Charrad 2011).

Feminist scholars of the MENA region have explored the extent to which colonial, postcolonial, and imperial histories have complicated gender relations and hierarchies in the Muslim world. One of the major themes includes Orientalism and its legacy. Orientalist depictions, which portrayed the Orient as stuck in a fixed and primitive culture, relied on binary classifications separating the East and West as irrational/rational, traditional/modern and active/passive (Charrad 2011). These studies contradicted previously dominant understandings of the passive Muslim woman, located on the margins of class and history, subjected to rigid traditions in restricted contexts (Hasso 2005). As Ahmed (1992) showed in the case of Egypt, where the British colonial rule relied on the narrative of the

“oppressed” women and the “otherness” of the colonized brown men to assert its cultural superiority and justify its oppressive colonial practices. These critiques have extended to more recent Western interventions in the region and its discourse about the liberation of women, as in Iraq and Afghanistan (see Abu Lughod 2009). The feminist challenge to orientalist binaries goes further to problematizing the depiction of modernity and tradition as opposites (Hasso 2005). For example, Deniz Kandiyoti and Lila Abu-Lughod have pushed MENA gender studies beyond binaries of modernity/tradition, East/West, insider/outsider, secular/Islamist and authentic/inauthentic (Hasso 2005).

The relationship between religion, gender, and daily practices has produced complex feminist analyses in the MENA region. Some of the issues feminists covered under this theme are the Islamic law, Islamic feminism, and the veil. Feminist MENA scholars have focused on Islamic family law which regulates the rights and obligation of men and women in the family (e.g. divorce, marriage, custody, and inheritance). They challenged the misperception of Islam as being innately oppressive towards women by exploring the different ways in which family laws are framed and implemented across the Muslim world (see Kholoussy 2010). They argued that this diversity is a result of varying legal systems and different legal interpretations of the Islamic text.

Another issue addressed by feminists is the compatibility of Islam with feminism. Appearing in the 1990s (Badran 2009), Islamic feminism refers to women who aim to elevate Muslim women's status and achieve equality by relying on and engaging with modern reinterpretations of the Qur'an and other fundamental religious texts of Islam. Islamic feminists do not see Islam itself as oppressive to women. For example, Mernissi (1987) writes that Islam promotes equality between the sexes. However, Ahmed (1992) and other Islamic feminists believe that religious scholars interpreted the Qur'an in a way that deserted the message of equality in early Islam, underprivileged women by excluding them from the public sphere and formalized discrimination against women into Islamic law (Charrad 2011).

Feminists also challenged Western and secular perceptions of the veil as oppressive to women. In the twentieth century, the veil became a marker of

personal and collective identity, its meaning shifting with political circumstances. The veil has been associated with oppression, liberation, piety, cultural authenticity, heresy, and opposition to Westernization. For instance, unveiling constituted a political statement during anticolonial struggles as well as among proponents of women's rights in the early decades of the twentieth century (see Charrad 2001). However, veiling was also adopted by women as a form of resistance and reaffirming their identities as Muslim women. In the 1970s, with the rise of Islamism in the MENA region, some women took up the veil as an everyday practice. As Saba Mahmood (2005) explains, pious Egyptian Muslim women of various socioeconomic backgrounds used the lessons of gender-segregated associations to cultivate the ideal virtuous Muslim woman.

Feminist scholars of the MENA region also focus on the role of the state in shaping gender relations. One central issue under this theme is nationalism as a structure that shapes women's lives and sociopolitical roles. Patriarchal states encouraged the depiction of the nation as a woman and describing women as the mothers of the nation (see Baron 2005). This made women's bodies a site of discourse on nation-building, cultural and religious authenticity, as well as patriotism. In some cases, it portrayed women as markers of sectarian, religious and ethnic identity. Other scholars who study the development of the state and its relationship with gender from an institutionalist perspective focused on how states play a central role in expanding or restricting women's socioeconomic, legal, and political rights (see Hatem 2005). More recent scholarship focused on how states hypervisibilize certain bodies such as women resulting in restriction of opportunities and justification of abuse toward women (see Amar 2011). Paul Amar coined the term "hypervisibility" when analyzing sexual assault incidents in Tahrir Square during and after the events of the uprisings to address the "processes whereby racialized, sexualized subjects, or the marked bodies of subordinate classes, become intensely visible as objects of state, police and media gazes and as targets of fear and desire" (Amar 2011, 305). This gives the state the power to enforce its desired definition of respectable behavior and traits by shaming and shunning unrespectable women, while providing protection and opening for political participation for women who perform respectability.

Relying on a bottom-up approach to studying gender

and recognizing the weight of patriarchy, feminist scholars challenged the Western perception of Muslim women as submissive and passive by shedding light on Muslim women's agency in formal movements and associations or in defiance voiced in everyday practices (Charrad 2011). Feminist MENA scholarship has demonstrated the complexity of women's lives and choices. Women's agency in organizations developed in a close, yet complicated relationship with nationalist anticolonial struggles in the region. The feminist literature on women's agency in the MENA region explores the persistence of patriarchal political, economic, religious, and familial structures as well as women's responses to these structures. Various feminist studies (see Mahmood 2005) found that women in the region bend the rules and in the process, create different realities, which could change the rules altogether (Charrad 2011). Edited collections, such as Mernissi (1987), contributed to challenging the image of the passive Muslim woman by highlighting women's voices from the Middle East and presenting evidence of women's agency.

Feminist scholarship examined how women assert their agency through bargaining with patriarchal sociopolitical structures to garner specific demands and elevate their status in society (Kandiyoti 1988). For example, nationalist movements enabled women's participation during periods of struggle and unrest, promising to respect their demands for more equality and representation. However, as soon as stability ensued, women's demands were ignored in the name of preserving national unity. Despite this marginalization, women utilized their organizing experience to expand their political participation by developing associations, organizations, and movements (See Sadiqi & Ennaji 2006). These groups covered various issues ranging from human rights advocacy, to democracy and to Islamism (Charrad 2011). Women's movement in the MENA region has been expanding further since the 1980s, due to the expansion of education and the states' rapid economic liberalization policies which encouraged women's participation in the workforce. In some cases, such as Egypt (See Mhajne & Whetstone 2018), state and societal dynamics force women to bargain with patriarchy by employing patriarchal discourses on respectable femininity, and maternal identities enabled some women to engage, challenge, and resist the state. By using respectability politics centered around maternalism and the institution of motherhood, women have

helped to advance democratization by challenging human rights abuses and further increase women's participation in politics.

Feminist scholarship on the MENA region has expanded our understanding of religion, politics, and gender. It has shed light on under researched issues in the traditional MENA scholarship and has attempted to correct Western misperceptions about the Muslim world.

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CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN THE MENA: BRIDGING THEORIES, DISCIPLINES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

By Irene Costantini and Ruth Hanau Santini
(University of Naples L'Orientale)

The Procida Symposium on "Contentious politics in the MENA: bridging theories, disciplines and methodological approaches", recently convened by Ruth Hanau Santini and Hugo Leal, has hosted a diversity of scholarship identifying in the "long-2011" perspective the key to open the debate on social mobilisation in the MENA region beyond narrow timeframes, by developing scholarship further on how to identify critical junctures on the one hand and re-conceptualizing agency along the lines of transformation and emancipation on the other.

قامت ندوة بروسيديا Procida مؤخرًا تحت عنوان "سياسة منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا المؤدية للنزاع: ربط النظريات والتخصصات والأساليب المنهجية"، باستضافة بحوث متنوعة قامت بتمهيد الطريق للنقاش حول التعبئة الاجتماعية في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا من منظور "عام 2011 المديد" للخروج عن الأطر الزمنية الضيقة. وعلى ذلك يتم التركيز على تحديد المنعطفات الحرجة من جهة، وإعادة تصور الأعمال الفاعلة على غرار التحول والتحرير من جهة أخرى.

About seven years after the Arab uprising, social mobilization in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) occupies a residual but omnipresent space between revived forms of authoritarian reconfigurations and political violence (Hinnebusch 2016). As old and new political authorities have failed to address many of the problems leading to the 2010-2011 protests, unmet demands still feed popular discontent. Different forms of contentious politics point to different kinds of transformative agency, be it under the guise of ordinary acts of resistance or contestation, or visible manifestations of discontent and demands for change. They all point to changing state-society' dynamics across the region, ranging from peace-time to war-torn political orders.

The Procida Symposium on "Contentious politics in the MENA: bridging theories, disciplines and methodological approaches", jointly organised by

Ruth Hanau Santini from Università L'Orientale in Naples and Hugo Leal, from Cambridge University between October 4-6th 2018, has emphasised the importance of adopting a long historical perspective when looking at contentious politics in the region. All scholars agreed on the usefulness of identifying 2011 as one among many critical junctures in the region's political trajectories. The shared assumption was to frame the analysis of contentious episodes and outbursts within more accurate historical reconstructions, underlining continuities and changes vis-a-vis the past. The symposium also stressed the importance of a stronger and more continuous dialogue between methodologically distant approaches dealing with regional politics of protest and agency reconfiguration, from quantitative analyses (Beissinger, Jamal and Mazur 2015; Barrie and Ketchley 2018) to ethnographic approaches (Altorki 2015; Obeid, 2015; Martinez 2018).

Some analyses took as points of departure macro-economic indicators, whose relevance as triggers for revolts has often been overstated in the literature, as Eugenio Dacrema pointed out. Francesco de Lellis historically reconstructed mobilizations outside Cairo, with a special emphasis on rural areas. He showed how Egyptian rural constituencies have been included in the associative field since 2011 thanks to 'external allies', such as advocacy NGOs, solidarity activists and political organisations. He convincingly argued how, instead of 'de-politicising' the rural associative space, external allies played an active part in the mobilization of rural constituencies. Other scholars adopted social network analysis and applied it to online and offline activists' networks: Hugo Leal investigated how contentious action in Egypt took shape between 2005 and 2010 while Johanne Kuebler delved into the existence and role of an online Maghrebi diaspora vis-a-vis the 2010-2011 uprisings.

Scholars coming from a social movement studies' background endorsed the relational turn and showed its virtues, as was the case by Ester Sigillo', whose work on Islamic charities in Tunisia and their post-revolutionary NGOisation was interpreted as an opportunity for participation in the redefinition of a post-authoritarian Tunisia. Tore Hamming extended a social movement studies' approach to the study of an alleged heterogeneous but somehow analytically unified Sunni Jihadi movement, by looking at Sunni Jihadi infighting in Syria. By focusing on the

external environment, the groups' senior figures and the realm of the ideologues or sympathisers, Hamming accounted for the clash between Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State. The topic of mobilised religion was also taken up by Teije Hidde Donker from a relational point of view, who looked at how different contentious forms of collective action have a strong relational dimension which cannot forego the role and importance of religion.

Keeping the focus on contentious politics in another political order torn by political violence, Irene Costantini delved into instances of social mobilisation in post-2003 Iraq. By focusing on a comparison between different episodes of popular protests, the analysis explored the interaction between social mobilisation and contextual factors, including Iraq's cycles of violence, its pluralistic and highly divisive political system and its fragmented geography. Episodes of social mobilisation in Iraq are a reflection of such factors, but, unintentionally, have also contributed to strengthen them. A similar approach was adopted by Ruth Hanau Santini and Giulia Cimini in their analysis of the conditions differentiating the multitude of contentious episodes in Morocco and Tunisia in 2010-2011 and in 2016-2017 when a new wave of protests shook both countries. The authors stress the continuity of mobilization, and while taking socio-economic factors seriously, they refrained from attributing to this dimension a reductionist explanatory power. The identification of 2016-2017 as a possible new wave of contentious action after 2010-2011 points to the importance of keeping a longer historical approach characterized by dynamic and historically contextual accounts of collective action. The paper in particular underlines the differences between 2010-2011 and 2016-2017 in both countries, while pointing to the continuing symbolic construction and re-definition by protest actors of alternative social realities shaped by new forms of agency.

Fredric Volpi employed historical process-tracing to dissect the three crucial weeks that led to the resignation of Ben Ali. His contribution advances methodologically our understanding of political contingency as inter-relational uncertainty. Thematically, it explored the causal relationship between structural frailties of authoritarian rule and the process of regime collapse, as well as the interactions between pro- and anti-regime actors. The workshop has also counted on the research conducted by an anthropologist who worked for

several months in a Jordanian bakery, José Martinez, whose ethno-anthropological reading of individual tactics in the everyday life of Jordanian bakers stressed how norms around bread subsidies could be challenged in the everyday life. He showed the extent to which ordinary forms of contention can go beyond binary interpretation of domination/resistance, state/society, and legality/illegality, pointing to the importance of fluidity in power relations.

The empirical diversity represented in the workshop cannot but call for a greater diversity for the study of contentious politics in the MENA region. This is what John Chalcraft proposed by providing a 'critique of agency beyond and against Social Movement Studies'. He pointed to the limits of social movement studies' approaches to the study of agency in post-2011 MENA showing instead the potential of adopting a Gramscian approach, centered around the notions of 'collective man', 'cultural-social unity', and 'common conception of the world'. Similarly, Gennaro Gervasio looked at the role of civil society in the Egyptian uprisings through Gramscian lenses, identifying the elements of the accompanying narrative, torn between subaltern agency and a mainstream actor.

The diverse spectrum of contentious episodes that the authors recounted during the workshop, the approaches that they privileged and the methodological choices that they made have all been constrained by the limitations that researchers from within and outside the MENA region face in conducting their work on similar topics. In addition to posing new methodological challenges that invite for collecting alternative data, these limitations call for a reflection on the ethics and politics of conducting research in often hostile and fluid political contexts. Rather than disengaging from the field of contentious politics, the authors called for developing tactics within and outside the university, which are capable of striking a balance between researchers' safety and academic commitment.

The "long-2011" perspective that opened the workshop is only one entry point to the study of contentious politics, one that allows to see what predated the Arab uprisings' momentum and its subsequent evolution. It also allows to unpack agency in order to examine its multiple manifestations beyond the "usual suspects", challenge the straitjacket of static frameworks of

analysis, and situate the study of contentious politics constructively in the nuances of grand narratives. In this sense, the workshop's contribution is not to substitute those masterful accounts of contentious politics that authors such as Joel Beinin and Frederic Vairel (2011), Gilbert Achcar (2013), Gerges Fawaz (2015), Asef Bayat (2017), Charles Tripp (2013), John Chalcraft (2016) and others have produced, but rather to provide novel insights to stimulate new angles of analysis, premised on historically longer accounts and a more dynamic dialogue among methodologically diverse accounts.

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RESEARCH ESSAYS

MOST IRANIANS WOULD VOTE NO TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC: RESULTS OF A DIFFERENT SURVEY

By Ammar Maleki (Tilburg University) and Vahid Yucesoy (Université de Montréal)

Does a vote cast for a reformist presidential candidate necessarily signify support for the Islamic Republic in Iran? A ground-breaking survey conducted amongst more than 19,000 Iranians reveals that if Iran ever held a free referendum, at least 70 percent of Iranians would vote against the Islamic Republic. Using an innovative approach, the survey has been conducted in a completely anonymous fashion, unlike previous Iran-related surveys gauging the attitudes of Iranians.

هل يدل التصويت لصالح مرشح رئاسي إصلاحى بالضرورة على دعم الجمهورية الإسلامية في إيران؟ في مسح رائد، شمل ما يزيد على 19000 إيراني؛ كشفت النتائج عن أنه في حال أجري استفتاء حر في إيران، فإن 70% من الإيرانيين على الأقل سوف يصوتون ضد الجمهورية الإسلامية. وقد تم إجراء المسح بأسلوب مبتكر يضمن أن تكون هوية المشاركين مجهولة بشكل كامل، وهو ما لم يتوافر في المسوح السابقة التي أجريت من قبل بهدف دراسة التوجهات السياسية للإيرانيين.

Over the past several months, Iran has been the scene of widespread discontent expressed by teachers, farmers, truck drivers, nurses, factory workers, and other citizens. At times, the discontent has been expressed through widespread strikes and scattered protests. Despite President Rouhani's promises of tackling corruption, taming the Revolutionary Guards' hold on the economy, and providing greater political and social freedoms to the population, many Iranians have been complaining about the authorities' insensitivity to their socio-political and economic situation.

As early as January 2018, Iran was the scene of large-scale protests (#IranProtests) led by the urban poor who took the streets in more than 100 cities. These protests have taken the authorities by surprise as the urban poor had long been considered the bastion of support for the regime. Yet, the seething anger of Iran's most downtrodden segments of population should not take anyone by surprise.

The level of dissatisfaction with the entire regime is now an open secret. Just how widespread is it? Above all, did Iranians who voted for Rouhani in 2017 do so out of their conviction for reform within the system? What's their perception of the status quo in the country?

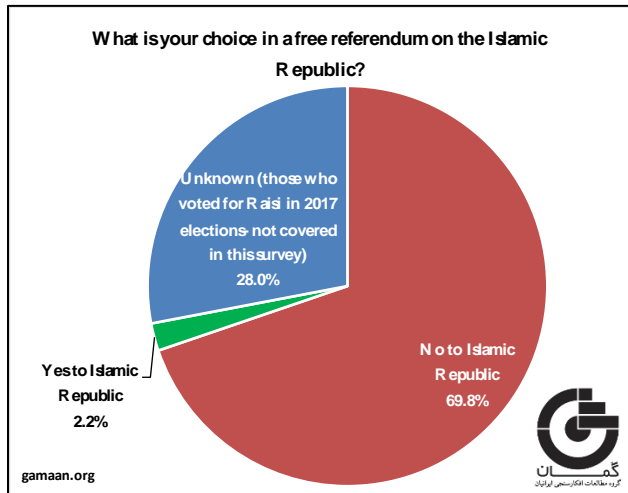
The answers to these questions can be found in a recent survey (Maleki 2018) conducted by research group Gamaan which analyses and measures public attitudes in Iran. This ground-breaking survey reveals the political attitudes of 72 percent of Iranians who had not voted for the conservative candidate, Ebrahim Raisi, in the 2017 elections. The survey used the snowball sampling method through social media, especially the Telegram, which has 40 million users in Iran (Kravchenko et al. 2017). More than 19,000 Iranians participated in the survey, 88 percent of which have been inside the country. The respondents have been from every province in the country. The sample has been weighted to be nationally representative by age group, gender, region and educational level. Moreover, as for the external validity check, the weighted sample replicates the official results of the 2017 elections.

There was a conspicuous gap and need in the literature for the type of survey conducted by Gamaan. In fact, in Iran, there are few institutes that carry out surveys. These are either directly state-affiliated bodies like the Iranian Students Polling Agency or indirectly affiliated with the state such as IranPoll. The latter, which also happens to be the most cited in the U.S. media (Taylor 2018), is directed by a scholar associated with conservatives in Iran. The IranPoll has been at the centre of controversy for often times exaggerating the approval ratings of the current regime in Iran despite the fact that the country has been rocked by protests and discontentment lately.

It is a known fact that authoritarian countries are afflicted with the difficulty of providing reliable survey results. As it often happens in authoritarian contexts like Iran, respondents tend to give biased responses to non-anonymous surveys in order not to be flagged. IranPoll surveys were conducted under such circumstances. This bias, also called the desirability bias, is what our survey aimed to avoid. The Gamaan survey's methodology makes up for this difficulty by providing the anonymity of respondents in order to properly measure and capture the political attitudes that Iranians cannot express

under present-day circumstances.

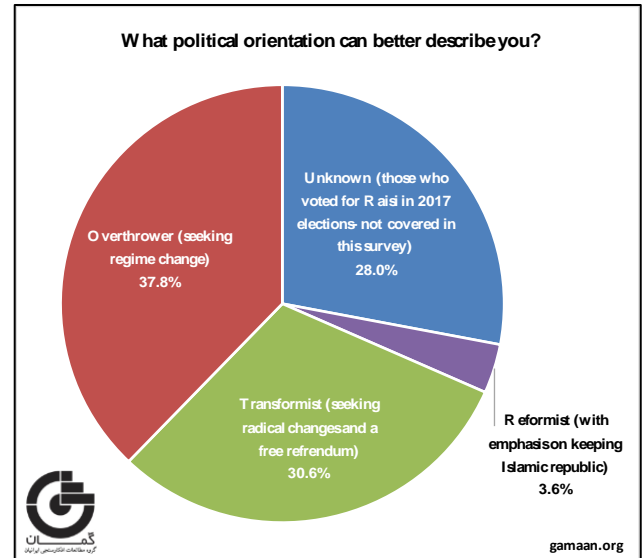
Carried out in a completely anonymous way through SurveyMonkey, an online survey tool used by various organizations, the Gamaan survey found out that in a free referendum, at least 70 percent of Iranians would vote “no” to the Islamic Republic.



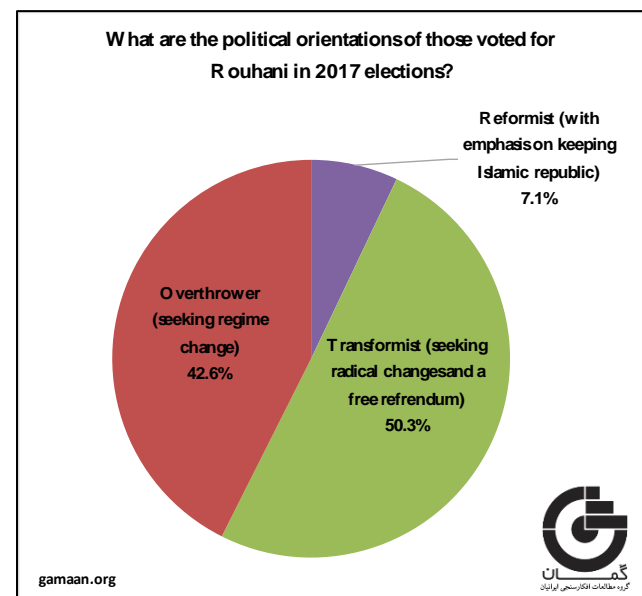
The survey also found that while 37.8 percent of Iranians want the regime to be overthrown entirely (i.e. overthrowers) and another 30.6 percent of Iranians want a radical transformation of the regime through a referendum (i.e. transformists). However, it is important to bear in mind that transformists are not promoting reform within the Islamic Republic. They seek a transformation into a secular system through a peaceful transition. In essence, they believe that the Islamic Republic is incapable of reform. So, out of the 72 percent of Iranians who did not vote for Raisi (Rouhani's adversary from the conservative camp) in the elections, only 3.6 percent identifies as reformists who would want to keep the Islamic Republic.

The survey revealed that a vote cast for Rouhani does not automatically translate into support for the Islamic regime. Previous surveys broaching such subjects have not guaranteed the anonymity of the respondents.

Iranians also expressed a diversity of views on the political system most appropriate for the country. Whilst 24.3 percent of Iranians support a secular presidential system, 14.6 percent are in favour of a secular constitutional monarchy. In total, 42 percent

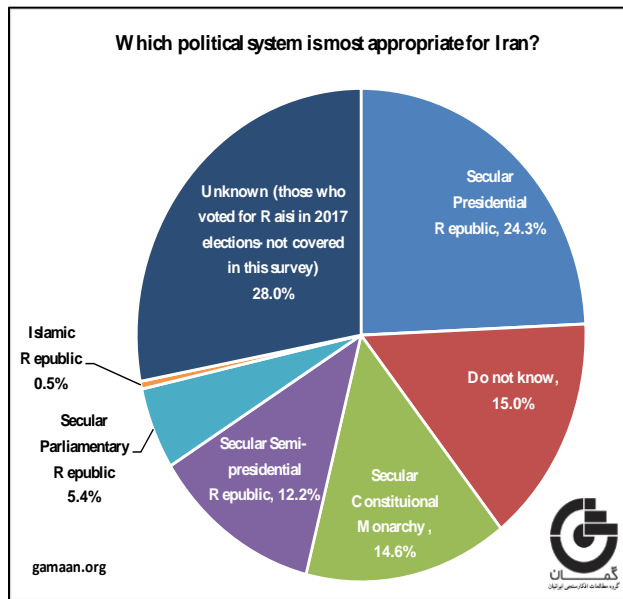


of Iranians would favour a form of secular republic whereas 15 percent said they do not know yet which system is better.



Another striking finding of the survey was the candidates Iranians would vote for in a free election as their president or leader of a parliamentary party. Amongst 17 renowned political or civil activists/figures, Iran's former crown prince, Reza Pahlavi, was the most popular person (38 percent) followed by Nasrin Sotoudeh (8.1 percent), a famous human rights activist who was arrested a few days after publishing the results of this survey. Reformists like Mir-Hossein Moussavi and Mohammad Khatami would get 4.6 percent and 4.4 percent respectively in free elections. It is

interesting to note that although 38 percent of Iranians would give a chance to Reza Pahlavi, only 15 percent identify as monarchists.



As Iran is traversing extremely difficult socio-economic and political times at the moment, people's dissatisfaction with the political system in place presages further trouble for the Islamic Republic. The current status quo characterized by repression, inattentiveness to the demands of various socio-political and ethnic groups, the pressure of the renewed economic sanctions and the ongoing mismanagement of state resources by the authorities could easily drag the country into an upheaval. After four decades of having the only theocratic regime in the world, and after two decades of unfruitful efforts to reform the system, it seems that the majority of Iranians do not support the Islamic Republic anymore and seek fundamental changes in favour of a secular democracy in Iran, preferably through peaceful means such as a free referendum (IranWire 2018).

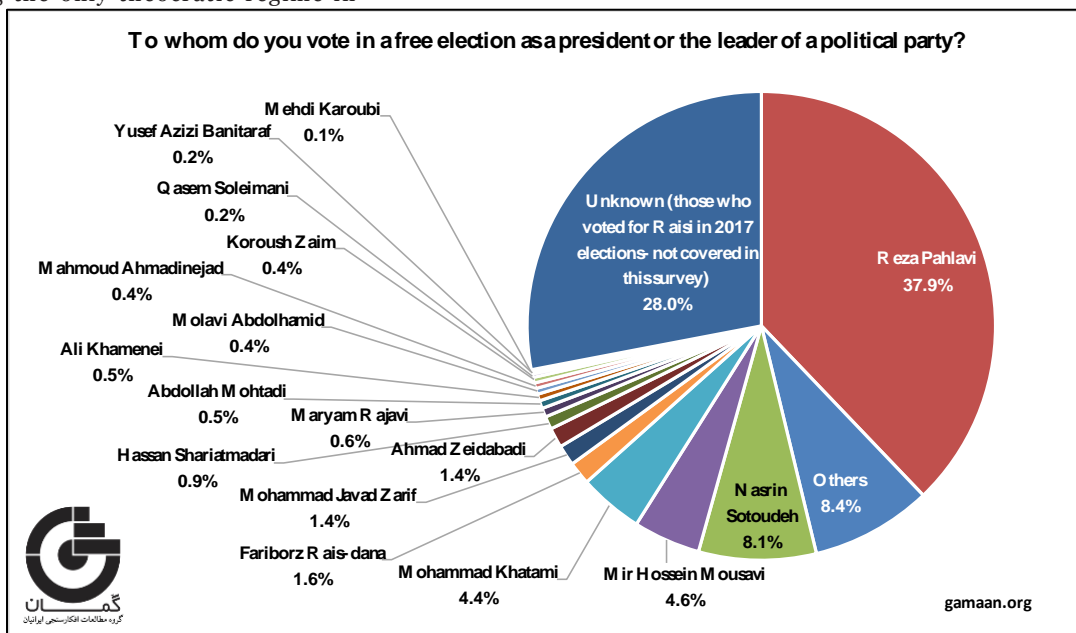
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LINKAGE DIPLOMACY: UTILIZING ECONOMIC SANCTIONS TO PRESERVE THE UNITY OF GCC

By Shady Mansour (Future for Advanced Research and Studies)

Qatar and Oman adopted cooperative policies towards Iran, at a time when regional tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran is rising. Saudi Arabia and UAE, the leading countries within the GCC, cut their ties to Qatar, and persuaded Oman to stop such cooperation. The paper will analyze their policies in the light of “linkage Diplomacy”, namely, how leading countries within a security alliance utilize economic sanctions or rewards to deter member countries from pursuing divergent policies.

تبنّت كل من قطر وسلطنة عمان سياسات تعاونية تجاه إيران، وذلك في الوقت الذي تصاعد فيه التوتر بين المملكة العربية السعودية من جانب، وإيران من جانب آخر. وقد قامت كل من السعودية والإمارات بقطع علاقاتهما بقطر، كما تواصلت مع سلطنة عمان، من أجل وقف مثل هذا التعاون. وتحلل هذه الورقة هذه السياسات في ضوء “دبلوماسية الربط”، والتي تذهب إلى أن الدول الرئيسية في التحالف الأمني تعتمد إلى فرض العقوبات الاقتصادية، أو تقديم الحوافز المادية من أجل ردع أعضاء التحالف من تبني سياسات تتناقض مع توجهات التحالف الأمني.

Despite the held conviction that security threats increase the cohesiveness of an alliance, the GCC represents an exceptional case, as Qatar and Oman do not perceive Iran as a threat, while Saudi Arabia tries to counter Iranian attempts to spread its regional influence near its borders. Economic sanctions and incentives represented tools to pressure Qatar and Oman to stop pursuing policies that is threatening to their national security.

GCC is trying to preserve its unity in the face of security threats emanating mainly from the increasing Iranian influence in the region. One of the main challenges facing the regional bloc stems from the fact that some members i.e. Oman and Qatar, do not share the Saudi perception of Iran as an existential threat. One possible explanation of the Omani and Qatari deviant policies towards Iran is their economic interests. Accordingly, security cooperation within alliances is better sustained if it protects the economic interests of its member states, while also preventing them from strengthening economic cooperation with countries posing a

security threat, as is the case of the Omani and Qatari relations with Iran.

This paper will first pinpoint the linkage diplomacy as a theoretical framework to explain how security cooperation impacts economic cooperation among countries and vice versa. The paper will then proceed to explain the security landscape in GCC countries, efforts aimed at countering security threats, the Omani and Qatari divergent foreign policies as well as whether Saudi efforts would succeed in changing Omani and Qatari policies. Finally, the paper will present a number of concluding remarks.

LINKAGE DIPLOMACY

“Linkage diplomacy” argues that alliances are more likely to preserve its unity, when they provide member countries with economic gains, to sustain security cooperation, or by imposing economic sanctions on them to deter them from pursuing certain policies that is perceived as contradictory to the principles of the alliance. Such policies could take three main forms. The first one is giving side payments, which refers to asymmetric economic gains that one state can receive from another. Direct ways include aid and loans, whereas indirect ways include, for instance, trade liberalization that offers asymmetrical gains if one government opens its market while the other maintains trade barriers. For the wealthier state, the military value of the alliance justifies side payments to the allies. The weaker state gains from the relationship on both economic and strategic dimensions.

The second form is bargaining over reciprocal concession, which means mutual gains made from an exchange of reciprocal access, for instance through trade agreements. (Davis 2008 / 09, 150 – 151). Finally, states can impose Economic sanctions, in order to dissuade allies from pursuing policies that are harmful to the interests of other member states.

One requirement for the successful application of “linkage diplomacy” is credibility in either rewarding or punishing. A state might need a significant military capability to extract concessions in negotiations, as Pyongyang, for instance, would not have won concessions in negotiations with the US and South Korea, had it not possessed the capability to inflict physical damage on both countries (McKibben 2015, 81).

In addition, a state can credibly threaten to cut off some beneficial forms of trade with another state to get concessions on an issue at hand, if it can bear the consequences of losing that trade relationship. For example, China threatened to suspend its export of high-tech raw materials to Japan in 2010 if it did not release a Chinese captain, whom it detained earlier. If China could not economically bear the loss of revenue generated from these exports, its threats would be meaningless (McKibben 2015, 82 – 83).

Finally, this strategy is also sometimes costly on the part of the threatening party. If a country is coerced by force of arms or sanctions, it might seek to offset the resulting loss of trade or other beneficial interactions by increasing its ties with other states, thus decreasing the coercer's ability to wield power over the targeted state in any future bargaining (McKibben 2015, 84). Moreover, "linkage diplomacy" is indistinguishably tied to intangible issues, such as prestige or reputation. If such linkage diplomacy result in severe losses for the targeted state, a settlement becomes less likely, even when perceived gains from linkage or the cost of sanctions are high (Morgan 1990, 326 – 327).

GULF ARAB STATES' SECURITY LANDSCAPE

Gulf Arab States face a number of security threats, especially after the Arab Spring, due to the fall of several Arab countries into turmoil. The deteriorating security landscape in the Middle East gave rise to two forces deemed threatening to the security of Gulf Arab states: Iran and terrorist organizations. The latter includes Shiite groups sponsored by Iran and Sunni terrorist organizations.

The Arab Spring provided an opportunity for Iran to dominate Syria, consolidate its influence over Lebanon and Iraq, and increase it over the Houthis in Yemen. Arab states of the Gulf found themselves entangled by Iranian proxies. Iranian MP Ali Riza Zakani, who is close to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, made it clear that Tehran is now in control of decision-making in four Arab capitals implying Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad and Sana'a (Tower.org, 2014).

The GCC countries responded to these security threats by resorting to ad-hoc coalitions in an

attempt to fight the Iranian influence in the region. The first one is the "Arab Coalition" for Yemen, which is primarily aimed at enabling the legitimate and internationally recognized government of Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi to return to power in Sana'a after conquering the Iran-aligned Houthis, in addition to preventing Tehran from establishing a foothold in Saudi Arabia's backyard, or gaining control of the strategic Bab-el-Mandeb strait (Global Security.org n.d.).

The second coalition is the "Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism" (IMAFT), which Saudi Arabia announced on 15 December 2015. IMAFT members are 40 predominantly Muslim countries from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. The declared aim of the coalition is to coordinate the fight against "terrorist organizations", including ISIS (Browning 2015). However, the coalition could be seen as a tool to counter Shiite Iran's influence throughout the region.

Both Qatar and Oman did not share Saudi's enthusiasm to counter the Iranian influence in the region, as both countries developed strong relations with Iran. Since 2011, Oman served as a diplomatic backchannel between Washington and Tehran when it hosted secret meetings between diplomats and security leaders from both countries. This paved the way for the final nuclear agreement with Iran which was ratified on 14 July 2015 (Al-Bolushi 2016, 391). The Omani role angered the Saudis, as Riyadh interpreted Muscat's hosting of secret talks between Washington and Tehran as dismissive of the other GCC states' security considerations (Cafiero and Yefet 2016, 49 – 55).

Moreover, Oman was accused of siding with the Houthis, Iran's proxies in the Yemeni conflict, and of collusion with the Iranians to send weapons to their proxies in Yemen (Al-Falahi, 2016). Muscat and Tehran also engaged in military cooperation, including joint military exercises to practice search and rescue operations. The last of which was held in April 2017 (Daily Sabah 2017).

Simultaneously, Muscat continued to adopt policies that challenge Riyadh, as the former refused to downgrade its diplomatic relations with Tehran following the attack on the Saudi embassy in Tehran in January 2016 (EIU ViewsWire 2016). In addition, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on its Twitter account that the British people "took a courageous

decision to leave the EU”, and Ishaq Al Siyabi, former vice-chairman of the Shura Council, tweeted his hopes for Oman to hold “a similar referendum determining its fate in the GCC”, in a move that threatens the unity of GCC. Finally, Oman refused to join the Saudi-led-Arab coalition for Yemen and the Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism until January 2017.

Qatar, on the other hand, developed a close relationship with Iran. One of the causes of the last Gulf crisis that erupted between the Quartet countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt) and Qatar was an agreement between Qatar and Iran which was finalized in April 2017. It is alleged that Qatar paid around \$700m both to Iranian figures and the regional Shia militias they support in exchange for the release of members of its royal family who were kidnapped in Iraq while on a hunting trip (Solomon, 2017). This deal was interpreted by the Quartet countries as an indirect support to the Iranian militias, and Iran’s expansionist project in the region.

In addition, it should be taken into consideration that Qatari-Saudi relations experienced ups and downs. Between 2002 and 2007, Saudi Arabia withdrew its ambassadors from Qatar in protest of broadcasts by Al Jazeera that criticized the kingdom and its founder (Kirkpatrick 2014).

Another potential cause that can count for the current tension between the Quartet countries and Qatar is its support for political Islamic groupings. After the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011, Qatar pursued an active foreign policy that aims at supporting the Muslim Brotherhood ascendance to power in North Africa, especially in Egypt and Libya, in addition to Syria (Ulrichsen, 2017). The Qatari support went unabated even after the Muslim Brotherhood lost power in Egypt and Libya (International Crisis Group 2016), which further strained the relations with Arab Quartet countries.

This conflict resulted in the 2014 crisis when Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE cut ties with Qatar and withdrew their ambassadors from Doha for nine months. The standoff ended by the signing of an agreement which Doha has not adhered to (Verrastro, 2017), resulting in the current Qatari crisis of June 2017.

INTERPRETING OMANI AND QATARI POLICIES

Both Qatar and Oman have developed close relations with Iran over the course of years. This could be explained by strategic hedging and economic interests. As for strategic hedging, Qatar and Oman utilized hedging with Iran as a balancing strategy against Saudi Arabia to preserve an independent foreign policy (Pierini, 2013) and to protect the state from attempted interference in its domestic affairs (Tessman 2012, 204).

On the other hand, Economic Interests played a role in enhancing such cooperation. Qatar has a desire to receive Iranian backing to ensure the peaceful development of the Qatari natural-gas fields adjacent to Iranian territorial waters (Guzansky 2015, 114), while Oman has a vital interest in enhancing economic cooperation with Iran. Firstly, Oman hoped to reap the benefits of playing a crucial role in the removal of sanctions against Iran on February 2016, especially in sectors such as gas, logistics and tourism (Cafiero & Yefet 2016, 51). This is reflected in a visit made by Omani Foreign Minister Youssef bin Alawi bin Abdullah’s to Tehran to discuss ways of boosting bilateral ties. Moreover, in March 2016, car manufacturer Iran Khodro, announced the establishment of a \$200 million joint venture to produce cars in Oman (Esfandiary and Tabatabai 2017).

Secondly, Oman pursued policies to diversify its economy, especially after it suffered from a sharp decline of oil prices 2014. Oman’s proven oil reserves are estimated at only 5.5 billion barrels (January 15, 2010). Based upon the current rate of production of 740,000 barrels per day, of which 733,000 are exported, Oman will run out of oil in about 20 years (Lefebvre 2010, 106). Hence, economic ties with Iran are vital for the Omani interests.

ECONOMIC INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS

Starting from January 2017, the Omani foreign policy witnessed a slight shift in orientations. This was evident in Oman’s defense minister’s letter to the then Saudi Arabia’s Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announcing the Sultanate’s decision to join the “Islamic Military Alliance to fight Terrorism” (IMAFT) (Radio Free Europe 2016). Muscat’s decision to Join Riyadh-led Islamic

alliance, after initially rejecting it, was read as a sign that Oman was ready to reconcile GCC's concerns about Muscat's growing relationship with Tehran (Esfandiary and Tabatabai, 2017).

This could be attributed to a host of factors, the most prominent of which are the economic ties between Oman and other GCC countries, Saudi Arabia and the UAE in particular. The GCC is the major market for Omani goods. In addition, by 2010, the GCC's share of all foreign direct investment in Oman accounted for 25%, and for 50% if oil and gas are excluded.

Furthermore, US President Trump's harsh rhetoric against Iran and the continued imposition of sanctions may have altered the Omani calculations about Iran, especially after Tehran faced many obstacles in enjoying the benefits of a nuclear deal, due to the pending American sanctions relating to its missile program and its sponsorship of terrorist groups.

It is still far from certain that Oman's foreign policy is tilting back towards the GCC, but strong economic leverage over Oman could help in pushing the country to align with other GCC countries. This is especially so because the Omani port city of Duqm is of high strategic importance for both Saudis and Emiratis, who have already developed plans to link it to their countries' roads, railways and pipelines. For both Saudi and the UAE, the Omani port is a safe point of access to the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz (Cafiero & Yefet 2017).

As for Qatar, the Quartet imposed partial economic sanctions on Doha in an attempt to change its foreign policy deemed threatening to them. These measures included banning land, sea and air travel to and from Qatar, as well as restricting Doha's access to their banking systems (Feteha 2017).

The economic sanctions have affected Doha's economy negatively, and its stock market lost more than 14% of its value since the boycott began on 5 June 2017. Foreign reserves dropped more than 10 billion dollars during the first month of the political rift as the Qatari government attempted to alleviate pressures created by deposit withdrawals from the boycotting countries (Kennedy, 2017).

In addition, Qatar Airways avoided the airspace of the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia which resulted in longer flight times and higher fuel costs. Standard & Poor's has downgraded Qatar's rating, warning that the diplomatic crisis could prompt investors to pull money out of the country.

On the other hand, Qatar managed to find alternatives through developing trade relations with other states, as it resorted to importing food supplies from Iran, Turkey and India (Alkhalisi, 2017). Furthermore, Qatar revitalized its military agreement with Turkey, signed in 2015, allowing Turkey to deploy 600 Turkish troops to the military base in Qatar following the crisis (Sariibrahimoglu 2017).

If Qatar manages to mitigate the negative consequences of the economic sanctions that will certainly reflect one of the major drawbacks of "linkage diplomacy". It will weaken the Arab Sunni front against Iran and threaten the unity of GCC (Middle East and North Africa 2017, 186). However, if both sides manage to reach a negotiated settlement to the crisis this might give an indication that Riyadh was successful in utilizing linkage diplomacy with Qatar.

CONCLUSION

This paper attempted to explain the impact of security cooperation on economic cooperation within regional alliances. Oman and Qatar's relations with other GCC countries reveal how economic cooperation or sanctions are vital for sustaining security cooperation. Both Oman and Qatar have drifted away from Saudi-led GCC policies, especially regarding building cooperative relations with Iran.

There are indications that Oman tried to change its policies towards the GCC preparing for joining the Saudi-led Islamic coalition. The change in Omani policies could be attributed to pressures from other GCC countries, especially Saudi Arabia. This also came at a time when the US is putting increasing economic pressures on Iran that might affect its ability to enhance relations with Oman. On the other hand, to date Qatar refuses to accept the demands of the Quartet countries because they represent an infringement to its sovereignty. If Qatar insists on maintaining this position, it will be an indication of the failure of linkage diplomacy, and the possibility

that the Qatar crisis would unfold into a protracted conflict in the Middle East region.

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ASC 2.0 - THE AREA STUDIES CONTROVERSY REVISITED

By Jan Busse (Bundeswehr University Munich)

The persistent need to revisit the so-called Area Studies Controversy (ASC) from multiple disciplinary angles guided a workshop titled “The Area Studies Controversy Revisited”. It was based on the assumption that the ASC remains a major point of contention when it comes to the relationship between social sciences and regional studies. While the debate originated some 20 years ago, its content has considerably evolved ever since. By taking the Middle East as its example, the workshop attempted to revisit the ASC, take stock of the debate and exchange innovative ideas in order to yield new perspectives.

الحاجة المتزايدة لمراجعة الجدل المستمر حول دراسات المناطق من زوايا التخصصات المختلفة كانت الموضوع الرئيسي لورشة العمل بعنوان "مراجعات الجدل حول دراسات المناطق". فإن الجدل ما زال مستمر بين دراسات المناطق والعلوم الاجتماعية. وعلى الرغم أن الجدل استمر لأكثر من عشرين عاماً، فإن فحوى الجدل قد مر بعدة تطورات. وقامت ورشة العمل بمراجعة هذا الجدل مع التركيز على الشرق الأوسط كمثال يسمح بتبادل الآراء المختلفة وتقديم أفكار وتوجهات جديدة.

Even two decades after its inception, there is a clear need to revisit the so-called Area Studies Controversy (ASC) from multiple disciplinary angles. This insight guided the participants of the workshop “The Area Studies Controversy Revisited”, held at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon on 29 and 30 September 2018. The workshop took place with the support of the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) as a project of its Transformation working group. Initiated by AGYA member Jan Busse, it brought together a diverse group of scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds who are based at universities in Europe and the Middle East.

The workshop was based on the assumption that the ASC remains a major point of contention when it comes to the relationship between social sciences and regional studies. While, however, the debate originated some 20 years ago, its content has considerably evolved ever since. By taking the Middle East as its example, the workshop attempted

to revisit the ASC, take stock of the debate and exchange innovative ideas in order to yield new perspectives. Originally, the controversy highlighted the alleged incompatibility of social sciences and regional studies. In this sense, it was argued that social science theorizing is often based on a universalism that risks not properly taking into account existing cultural variations of specific regions, such as the Middle East. Regional studies, such as Middle East Studies, in turn, tend to be preoccupied with a particularist perspective that claims that the region is unique and not comparable to other regions in the world.

By contrast, however, the workshop encouraged its participants to take into account the conceptual and theoretical advancements that have been made ever since the beginning of the ASC. Therefore, as with any other region, it can be argued that the “Middle East is not an exception from the global condition, but an inseparable part of its developments” (Jung 2009). As a result, Fred Halliday (1996), one of the most distinguished experts in both the disciplines of International Relations and Middle East Studies, suggested combining what termed the ‘analytic universalism’ and the ‘historic particularism’ of the Middle East.

On this basis, the workshop highlighted that there is need to move the ASC forward by taking Edward Said’s critique of Orientalism and the subsequent debate more seriously (Said 1978). It follows that the universalism of social sciences rests on Eurocentric foundations and that regional studies are informed by universalist, Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies, too. Therefore, the workshop can be understood as an attempt to advance the debate and to develop a second generation of the ASC, which also problematizes the Western origins of most conceptual and theoretical approaches, be it in social sciences or regional studies.

As part of the first panel, which encompassed engagements with overarching issues of the Area Studies from different disciplinary perspectives. Morten Valbjørn Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science at Aarhus University, based his elaborations on previous contributions related to the ASC (Valbjørn 2003, 2004). Emphasizing the need to make use of the lens of the “Global IR debate” in order to advance the underlying debate, he clarified that the global IR debate has thus far mostly been ignored in Middle

East Studies, even though it possesses useful benefits to ask how IR is studied around the world (see Valbjørn and Hazbun 2017). In particular, Valbjørn (2017) highlighted that it is reasonable to distinguish between four different types of dialogue. First, an eristic dialogue refers to a dialogue that is characterized by strife and mainly about reproducing your own identity. Second, a hierarchical dialogue is a dialogue about trading goods based on an uneven division of labor in academia. Third, a reflexive dialogue reflects the limits of one's own knowledge, while different fields of study persist. Finally, a transformative dialogue exists if two fields of study merge and transform to a new one. As a result, the ASC has historically fluctuated between the hierarchical and reflexive forms of dialogue but it has the potential to become a transformative dialogue, too. Subsequently, Sari Hanafi, Professor of Sociology at the American University of Beirut examined the situatedness of Area Studies in the Middle East between Islamization and Post-colonial Studies. He pointed out that a sense of uniqueness persists in the Middle East, and that there are excessive perspectives of post-colonialism and Islamization. Post-colonial perspectives tend to neglect authoritarianism, whereas an Islamization of knowledge tends to reject Western knowledge. Contrary to these perspectives, Hanafi suggested to study both Western and indigenous knowledge in their own right and to accommodate both. This, however, appears to be problematic as in the Arab world, post-colonialism and Islamization represent forms of identity politics that are not aimed at generating scientific knowledge. Birgit Schäbler, Director of the Orient-Institut Beirut and Professor of the History of Western Asia, described history as a conservative and inward-looking discipline. According to her, a major problem lies in the fact that perspectives from other parts of the world are often treated as information, while German and European histories could be described as Area Histories themselves (see Schäbler 2007). In this sense, area histories represent a fusion between expertise on an area and a discipline. She also pointed to a new development which is a call for more entangled histories, such as a history of the Middle East in its entanglement with Europe. Moreover, she highlighted the limitations of Global History approaches which tend to embed a region in a global context but often only rely on English language sources. In contrast to this, inter-disciplinarity needs to be taken seriously.

The second panel addressed the ASC through the lens of the relationship between IR and Middle East studies. As a contributor to the original ASC and the seminal volume titled "Area Studies and Social Science" (Tessler, Nachtwey, and Dressel 1999), Bahgat Korany, professor of IR at the American University in Cairo, stressed that while originally area studies were on the defensive, this is no longer the case. Rather, the competencies of area specialists with a new generation have significantly improved. Young scholars and students do not see the problem of the Controversy because they are specialists in the Middle East and the disciplines. According to Korany, the challenge lies at present at two levels. The first relates to the transregional dimension, or the question how to compare the Middle East to other regions. Second, though each discipline deals with the problem in a different way the disciplines have now to get a more profound understanding of the regions they refer to. A content analysis of some IR handbooks and textbooks shows a very high degree of superficiality when analyzing Middle East problems. He also pointed out that each discipline deals with the Controversy in a different way. In general, Korany highlighted that there is no going back in the intelligent use of universal concepts and methods for the study of areas, than continuing to bridge the dwindling gap between Area Studies and Disciplines.

Jan Busse, Senior Researcher in International Politics and Conflict Studies at the Bundeswehr University Munich addressed the ASC through an engagement with World Society theorization and governmentality. For that purpose, he referred to the empirical example of Palestine and pointed out that power dynamics here rely on a globally pervasive pattern of modern governmentality which is structurally embedded in the overarching structural horizon of world society. Accordingly, he advocated for simultaneously taking into account a macro-perspective of world society and a focus on rationalities and technologies of governmentality in Palestine as the micro level. As a result, the combination of world society theory and governmentality can help overcoming the gap between IR and Middle East Studies (Busse 2018).

In his presentation, Andrea Teti, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Politics and International Relations of the University of Aberdeen, argued that the discursive structure of the Area Studies Controversy (ASC) remains unchanged, specifically the epistemic divergence within orthodox Social

Science between universalizing Disciplines and particularist Area Studies which undermines interdisciplinary research (see also Teti 2007). He also pointed out that in practice ‘area scholarship’ could no longer be accused of being theoretically weak or derivative, with innovative work being done in both orthodox and critical veins. This suggests that the sociology of the ASC and its attendant (sub)fields is rather different than its epistemological divides. He also called for more ‘ecumenical’ scholarship, arguing that while the epistemic status of research results remains a bone of contention, even within the strictures of the ASC, there is no reason for positivist scholarship not to draw on qualitative work and for post-positivist scholarship not to draw on quantitative methods.

The contributors to the third panel addressed the ASC in different research contexts. Jan Claudius Völkel, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the Institute for European Studies of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, assessed the possibilities and limitations of measuring democracy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Based on his own experience as regional coordinator “Middle East and North Africa” at the Bertelsmann Foundation’s Transformation Index (BTI), he highlighted that there are certain problems related to such an endeavor. First, he clarified that using the term MENA is problematic due to its Eurocentric origin. Hence, the term West Asia might be more appropriate. Moreover, there are problems in measuring democracy concerning matters of subjectivity and objectivity, while at the same time, the normative background of liberal democracy needs to be addressed. Additional challenges that confront democracy rankings relate to sudden transformations which cannot easily be taken into account, and to the question of how to weight different indicators (Völkel 2015). Subsequently, Katja Mielke, Senior Researcher at the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), suggested making use of mid-range concepts as a solution to the ASC (Mielke and Hornidge 2017). She pointed out that thereby the gap between mere theory and empirics can be bridged. In particular, she introduced three categories of mid-range concepts that are suitable of fulfilling this purpose: grounded theory derived concepts, theory-laden as opposed to theory-derived concepts, and finally epistemological lenses. Crucial in this regard is, according to her, to overcome perspectives that are pre-determined by a focus on statehood. The third

contribution in this panel was presented by Bilal Orfali, Associate Professor of Arabic Studies at the American University of Beirut. He emphasized that a dichotomous separation of the East and West is dangerous, in particular, because it results in two different areas of research with little common ground.

The final panel of the workshop dealt with knowledge production from different perspectives. First, Claudia Derichs, Professor of Transregional Studies of South-East Asia at the Humboldt University Berlin made clear that it is important to take into account the internal heterogeneity of regions (see Derichs 2017). She questioned that geographical space represents a useful category under which this heterogeneity can reasonably be assembled. She pointed out that different disciplines approach regions differently. For instance, when anthropology examines kinship, it is mostly non-Western societies that are researched, whereas the sociology of the family looks at allegedly more “modern” societies. Political science rarely takes kinship as an analytical concepts and prefers to take the “state” into account. She observed underlying connectivities between human actors, which can be understood as ‘emotional geographies’ as the reason for this split. It is also important to note that Europe is an area as any other area, so that the above mentioned concepts are also valid in this context. In his contribution to the panel, Stephan Stetter, Professor of Global Politics and Conflict Studies at the Bundeswehr University Munich, advocated for de-westernizing concepts such as state, nationalism and individualism. According to him, we cannot talk anymore about analytic universalism and historic particularism as it was the case in the original Controversy. The focus should not be on methodology but on how to generate meaningful insights into the region. In this regard, Historical International Political Sociology can make a reasonable contribution to the debate in order to make sense of what he observes as an analytic polycentrism as opposed to analytic universalism. In addition, it is important to deconstruct macro-perspectives in order to focus on the micro-level of specific practices. In this sense, it is reasonable to perceive political struggles and dynamics as being embedded in global entanglements that shape the history of regions in world society (see Stetter 2008). The concluding presentation was by Seteney Shami, Founding Director-General of the Arab Council for the Social Sciences. She stressed that

while the ASC persists, its context and its stakes have changed in the past 20 years. Furthermore, there is much diversity in the ways in which the study of different areas is organized, in terms of disciplinary configurations and thematic foci. Thus, there is a need to focus on the genealogy and history of different area studies. Certain social science disciplines focus on the study of a Western self, whereas Area Studies are seen as the study of the other (Shami and Miller-Idriss 2016). According to Shami, it is important to note that the universities in the Middle East have inherited disciplinary cultures, but that there is no sufficient discussion about how to organize knowledge in ways that suit the needs of the region.

It was an important achievement of the workshop to facilitate a substantive dialogue and exchange of ideas between scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds from Europe and the Middle East. The participants agreed that there is a persisting need to address the ASC, in particular because it has considerably evolved in the past two decades. The workshop participants expressed great interest in continuing the dialogue that started in Beirut, aiming at a publication output resulting from a subsequent workshop in 2019.

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TEACHING POLITICAL SCIENCE IN/ON THE MENA REGION

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE 'UNDERSTANDING THE MIDDLE EAST' INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL

By Rosita Di Peri (University of Torino)

The revolts of 2011 gave new impetus to studying the Middle East. As a result, and boosted by an ever increasing demand for knowledge about this part of the world, a high-level summer school dedicated entirely to the region has been held in Turin since 2014. By tying together didactics and research and being grounded in a political science approach, the summer school proposes a critical reading of the key aspects of how the contemporary Middle East is studied and represented.

منحت ثورات 2011 دافعا جديداً لدراسة الشرق الأوسط، وإثر الطلب المتزايد في العالم للمعرفة حول هذه المنطقة، تم إنشاء مدرسة صيفية رفيعة المستوى مكرسة لدراسة هذه المنطقة في "تورين" منذ العام 2014. وتقتصر المدرسة الصيفية القيام بقراءة نقدية للجوانب الرئيسية لمعرفة كيفية دراسة منطقة الشرق الأوسط المعاصرة وتمثيلها، وذلك عبر ربط التعليم بالأبحاث في مجال العلوم السياسية.

In 2013, when I proposed that my department organises a summer school with a Political Science approach focused on studying the contemporary Middle East, the reaction was enthusiastic. I am sure that the 2011 revolts had played a part in this response. The magnitude of the events has a significant impact on departments in Italy, such as the one in which I work.¹ Issues related to the Middle East have received seldom attention over the years. More broadly, area studies are not widely recognised to be an autonomous field of study in Italian universities. In this context, where disciplinary divisions have maintained critical importance in entering academia and for career advancement, the recognition of hybrid, contaminated, and interdisciplinary sectors such as those of Middle Eastern studies are neither valued nor encouraged. In line with this attitude that is shared by other European academic fields, few political science scholars have studied extra-European phenomena or countries over the years. As a result, academic courses devoted to the MENA

region have been mostly the domain of scholars of the history of international relations or linguistics.

Overall, at least until 2011, Italian political science² remained rather resistant to the penetrations of area studies. First of all, prior to 2011, scholars of Middle Eastern politics with a permanent position in Italian universities were a handful. Second, the inclusion of MENA studies as an autonomous field of study detached from both classical Political Science and International Relations has been a consistent challenge. To illustrate, a section of "Mediterranean Studies" was only accepted as a non-permanent section of the annual conference of the Italian Society of Political Science as recently as 2016. In the past decade, the rapid transformation of the international context had an important impact on the evolution of Middle Eastern studies, even in Italy. International relations scholars have given more space to the issues related to the MENA region, even if the studies focused mostly on security issues. 2011 also had an impact on the research agendas of established and early-career Italian political scientists. On the one hand, regional developments encouraged the emergence and expansion of a young, very competent and competitive scholarship among early-career scholars who remain without permanent contracts. On the other hand, the attention to a neglected and often ghettoised field of study has increased, which has led to an unprecedented growth in publications on the MENA region.

Urged by an ever-increasing demand of knowledge about this part of the world,³ the idea has emerged to organise a high-level summer school in Turin dedicated entirely to the Middle East. Relying on previous cooperation agreements and consolidated research relationships, the international scientific committee of the "Understanding the Middle East" summer school (<http://www.to-asia.it/to-mideast/>) met the challenge to organise a coherent and articulated programme that, in each annual edition, addresses one of the key issues related to the region. The chosen perspective grounded in Political Science. In this sense, political science is, however, understood in a broad sense: political philosophy, political sociology, and the history of thought, are all considered among others. At the same time, major attention is paid to methodological issues and, in

particular, those relating to fieldwork. In fact, one of the most interesting features of the new scholarship on the Middle East, especially in Italy, is access to fieldwork – an aspect that substantially differentiates this new scholarship from the previous one. Considering, moreover, the issues related to the precariousness of the research job (inside and outside academia), the summer scholar also focused on improving skills to be competitive on the “research market” received: how to write a research project, how to work on a publication, how to choose a publisher, etc.

Between 2014 and 2018, there have been five editions of the summer school. The core idea of the project is to deconstruct the imaginaries and stereotypes that have formed the representation of the Middle East as a result of the oft-inaccurate media coverage. The summer school is delivered over five days of lectures enriched by sessions of video projections and debates. The participants are immersed in a fruitful atmosphere; they spend one week discussing Middle Eastern issues both inside and outside the classroom. At the end of the week, the participants sit for an exam. The summer school is open to a maximum of 35 individuals, and the selection is based on CV and letter of motivation, and previous studies or experiences in the Middle East. While PhD and master’s degree students are given the priority, the school has also hosted BA students and practitioners (such as journalists, NGO personnel, etc.) who want to deepen their understanding of regional issues. A rigorous selection process has often guaranteed very motivated, diverse and active classes with participants coming from all over the world. Over the years, with various editions of the summer school, a virtual class of alumni has evolved, which has contributed enormously to the success of subsequent editions. This network of alumni has certainly helped the participants to feel part of an extended community and, simultaneously, to find useful contacts for their future projects. In fact, one of the most interesting aspects of the summer school is precisely the relationship and exchanges between participants and lecturers attending the summer school.

Having in mind the critical approach to the study the Middle East and its representation, during the first edition the focus was on the elements of continuity and change in the study of the region before and after 2011. The starting point for this edition was a

special issue that I co-edited and was published in 2015 in the *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*,⁴ which demonstrates the interchange between teaching and research. In 2015, the second edition, focused on the transformation of contentious politics, a theme that was central to the post-2011 debate. The third edition examined the political economy of the Middle East: a reflection on the close connection between the use and exploitation of natural resources and authoritarian resilience. The theme of Middle Eastern representations was central to the fourth edition, which was devoted to narratives and their dissemination, especially by looking at the role of the media but also that of scholars and think tanks. Finally, the 2018 edition focused on the struggle for regional hegemony and questioned sectarianism and sectarianization as a paradigm to examine regional politics.

The variety of topics addressed, the participation of more than 180 students and professionals, and the contribution of 35 lecturers have certainly shown the validity of the format and the overall experience of the summer school. This success (each year, 35 participants have been selected from more than 60 applications) can be ascribed to a few factors. Undoubtedly, the summer school was well-timed; it filled a gap during an important historical and political moment of transformation for the region but also for Middle Eastern studies grounded in a Political Science, which was not always adopted in similar initiatives over the years. Moreover, the summer school clearly proposed didactics close to research by seeking reflection on relevant theoretical and empirical issues that are too often marginalised. If the goal has been achieved, the next generations of scholars will acknowledge it when they reap the benefits. Meanwhile, we are sowing.

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Notes

¹ The Department of Culture, Politics and Society (CPS) is the result of a multidisciplinary project that merged

various departments, including political studies, anthropology and sociology: <https://bit.ly/1PxiqCj>.

² In Italy, International Relations (IR) are not a separate scientific sector but fall under the general umbrella of Political Science.

³ As shown by the success of the international master's degree courses in Italy. For example, in the previous academic year, the CPS's master's degree in International Studies had 380 students, 90 of whom focused on MENA politics: <https://bit.ly/290C5gv>.

⁴ Rivetti, Paola, and Rosita Di Peri. "Continuity and Change in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings". *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42.1 (2015): 1-145.

HANDLING DIVERSE INTERESTS AND DEMANDS IN TEACHING POLITICS AND IR IN AND ON THE MIDDLE EAST

By Guy Burton

Educators and students may have different motivations for pursuing a subject/course and being in the classroom. It is therefore vital that educators recognize this while also identifying the core objectives and content for their courses when teaching politics and IR both of and in the Middle East. For the author, this consists of two main goals: one, to provide a fundamental understanding of the discipline/subject; and two, to prepare students for further study and/or employment by developing their analytical skills. These goals are drawn on the author's experience of teaching politics and international relations courses generally and specifically in relation to the Middle East, both inside and outside the region.

قد يكون للمعلمين والطلاب محفزات مختلفة لالتحاقهم بمادة معينة أو لوجودهم في الصف، ولذا من الضروري أن يكون المعلمين على دراية بذلك عند تحديد الأهداف الرئيسية ومحتوى موادهم، عند تعليم مواد العلوم السياسية والعلاقات الدولية حول الشرق الأوسط والتعليم في المنطقة بذاتها. وبالنسبة للكاتب، يتكون ذلك من هدفين رئيسيين: الأول، توفير فهمًا أساسيًا حول المادة/التخصص، والثاني، تحضير الطلاب للدراسات التخصصية و/أو المسيرة المهنية من خلال العمل على صقل مهاراتهم التحليلية. وقد استقصى الكاتب هذين الهدفين من تجربته الواسعة في تعليم مواد السياسة والعلاقات الدولية عمومًا وحول الشرق الأوسط خصوصًا، سواء كان داخل المنطقة أو خارجها.

I have taught comparative politics, international relations, public administration and public policy of and in the Middle East to both undergraduate and postgraduate students – Kurdish, Malaysian, Emirati, British and Central Asian – since 2012.

My reflections are based on these experiences and students in two local institutions and a branch campus of a British university in three different locations, in Iraqi Kurdistan, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Broadly, my experience of teaching across these three sites may be summarized as follows: higher education faces competing interests, motivations and demands among educators, students, institutions and governments, including tensions between quantity

and quality and the tension between mass effects of higher education against the individual benefits and challenges. Effective teaching of politics and international relations on and/or in the Middle East must take these into account.

QUANTITY OR QUALITY?

There has been an expansion of high education over the past half century, at the global level as well as in the Middle East. Governments, providers and participants (i.e. students) alike have been motivated by the collective and individual gains: higher education is associated with higher average incomes and earnings for individuals, along with greater engagement and participation in the world around them (Sarrico, McQueen and Samuelson 2017, Devarajan 2016). The increase in higher education has been provided by both public and private providers. For the public sector, the collective benefits are prominent, while for private providers, the opportunity to generate income (especially those that are for-profit) is a powerful motivation.

At the same time, the increase in quantity has not been matched by a concurrent rise in quality. Recent observations point out the lack of preparedness both by students wanting to enter higher education as well as graduates. As a result, there has been concern at the need for greater numeracy and literacy skills that is not being achieved at the secondary school level (World Bank 2007, Turner and Rudgard 2018, Sarrico, McQueen and Samuelson 2017). The increase of foundation or bridging programs between schools and universities arguably attest to this point as well as the fact that few students enter higher education with developed critical thinking.

The situation is further exacerbated in the Middle East itself, where governments have expanded the university sector as they hope to benefit from both the research advances and more skilled labor that results. But at the same time, the authoritarian nature of many of these governments has resulted in a preference for certain types of knowledge – i.e. the natural sciences over the social sciences – and an aversion to more critical perspectives (Altorki 2013). Indeed, the contemporary pursuit of a questioning approach comes into conflict with the prevailing model of higher education associated with rote

learning and memorization of “facts” (Devarajan 2016).

CATS AND DOGS

The question of quality is a key one when it comes to the classroom and the differing roles and interests of educators and students. Educators are also researchers, who are motivated to push the boundary of their discipline and develop new ways of understanding phenomena. Students, by contrast, enter the classroom with differing levels of research skills and knowledge of the region’s history and politics, or of political science, international relations and public administration. For some (e.g. my British exchange students), their exposure to the Middle East was largely filtered through mainstream media’s reporting of current events. For others (e.g. Kurdish and Emirati students), their knowledge was local rather than regional and their discourse in class and assignments often reflected that of the ruling elites. Given the authoritarian nature of such governments, this may have reflected self-preservation as well as the curricular scope of their previous education.

Students also differ in their motivations for taking a class. For some, it might be a simple wish to know and understand more about the region and its politics. But such students are few in number. The majority enroll for more utilitarian reasons, whether to gain sufficient credit to graduate or to acquire relevant knowledge and skills for employment after graduation.

The range of prior student knowledge and motivation makes it difficult to respond to them all. Because of this, my approach was to aggregate these competing interests and experiences in the design and delivery of my courses, and resulting in two main goals. The first was to provide students with a broad overview of the region’s politics and history and international relations, so as to give them a grounding and provide them with the fundamentals on which more advanced study and analysis may take place. The second was to find ways to help students develop and acquire the tools associated with more advanced analysis, including the capacity to reflect and think critically.

CRITICAL THINKING, NOT CRITICISM

The increased availability in higher education and the trade-offs it has generated in quantity against quality are felt in the classroom between educators and students. Most educators are keen to impart knowledge and provide a high-quality course. Some students will be at a level to respond to this, others may not.

Where critical thinking is not the norm, and memorization and rote learning predominant, this can be problematic. This can also result in misunderstanding between educator and student, especially if a critical approach is taken that includes challenges to predominant forms of knowledge and understanding. Consequently, teaching in parts of the region and under such circumstances requires some finesse. For some subjects, there is space to adopt approaches that invite challenge. For example, the study of Orientalism can be applied in a relatively unproblematic way, especially when students are encouraged to read the historic texts to identify bias and their authors' motivations.

On other issues, including subjects that are contemporary and/or relate to the government and its action, this can prove more challenging. Typically, I have found it helpful to draw on parallels and analogies, including the experience of other countries and cases. This comparison has also proven necessary on occasion because (when teaching public policy) I have found few materials that offered a critical perspective of a given topic. This is especially the case when looking towards official documents and accounts, which often focus on "successful" examples or specific cases that are not directly comparable with elsewhere. One example of this occurred in the UAE a country where most government publications and case studies focus on success and avoid failure or challenges. In the absence of such material, I used the British government's own documentation of possible outcomes following Brexit to demonstrate potentially poorer outcomes. On another occasion, I used Cairo's current strategy to resolve traffic congestion as a way of examining how to respond to its problematic implementation and Tunisia's design of its e-government strategy as a case study to compare against the UAE's. The Cairo and Tunisian cases also provided examples of governance in the wider Arab world, which provided my predominately Emirati

students with a wider, regional perspective in their course.

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

Critical thinking is a broad objective that I wish to instill among my students. But when it comes to teaching the specifics of the politics and international relations of the Middle East specifically, I find two main ways of doing so: either the narrative or the comparative approach. Although many of the textbooks for Middle East politics courses are comparative (see, for example, Edwards-Edwards 2018, Owen 2004, Fawcett 2016 and Halliday 2005), I preferred to start with an historical narrative for a different country each week.

As students became more familiar with different countries' political history, social and economic development, they became more confident and began to see similarities and differences between them – enabling them to undertake a more comparative approach towards the end of the course as we began to discuss the role and actions of different political actors, groups, movements and experiences, such as the military, Islamists and the ideas of modernization and democratization.

In addition to the narrative approach, I also tried to bring in alternative perspectives, both established and new ones. The former included Orientalism and on which I found the film, *Reel Bad Arabs*, based on the book of the same name (Shaheen 2009), to be an extremely useful audiovisual tool which illustrated the main points I wanted to make and discuss. Regarding new perspectives, I would end my course on the region's politics and international relations by looking at current and future developments, including the role of external rising powers like China and the BRICS. The main challenge here, however, is the opposite of the Orientalist account: a relative paucity of available (and academically oriented) material. This gap also helps explain my own research interests and pursuits.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I began this piece by noting the range of different motivations, interests and objectives associated with students, educators and governments and the

tensions between quantity and quality and critical thinking versus criticism. I then pointed out how these manifested themselves and how I have tried to accommodate them all within the classroom.

It is difficult to satisfy them all however. They will pose challenges, especially when the interests, needs and demands of one may come into conflict with those of another. How best to resolve these differences will come from dialogue with others, whether it is internally, among the educator and students in the classroom, in the institution, or in forums like this one. Through doing so, it is possible for educators to establish their core principles and objectives. This, I believe, is the bedrock on which they should base the design and delivery of their courses and which they can consider the wider context in which they have to work.

Guy Burton (Alumnus 2013) has worked at the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government in Dubai, Nottingham University's Malaysian campus, the University of Kurdistan-Hewler in northern Iraq and Birzeit University in Palestine. In 2015 he co-organized 'The Ethics of Political Science Research and Teaching in MENA' workshop, which was supported by APSA (E-mail: guyburton@gmail.com).

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INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR AMANEY JAMAL - JULY 2018



Amaney Jamal, the Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics and director of the Mamdouha S. Bobst Center for Peace and Justice, has taught at Princeton since 2003. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of California-Los Angeles and her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. She taught at Columbia University before arriving at Princeton. Her most recent book, “Of Empires and Citizens: Pro-American Democracy or No Democracy at All,” was published in 2012 by Princeton University Press. She teaches on topics including politics of the Middle East, democracy in the Middle East, gender and Islam, and comparative politics. She is also principal investigator for the Arab Barometer project, which measures public opinion in the Arab world.

أمانى جمال أستاذة العلوم السياسية ومديرة مركز ممدوحة بويست للسلام والعدالة، في جامعة برنستون منذ العام 2003 باحثة بارزة ومرموقة في علم السياسة في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا. في المقابلة أدناه، نحاورها حول أحدث أبحاثها ومسيرتها التعليمية وحياتها العامة، ونأخذ نصائحها للعلماء الشباب.

1. WHAT IS YOUR LATEST RESEARCH PROJECT, AND HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN IT?

I am very much interested in mass behaviour and mass political attitudes. In the last few years, I have been consistently working on the [Arab Barometer](#). Now we are working on the fifth wave. The project involves continuing quality questionnaires and quality data to generate analyses about citizens in the Arab world. As for my personal research, I am now working on couple of things. I have a portfolio on religion and politics in the Middle East. There has been a lot of interest in research on Islam and its influence in the region. I am particularly interested in the influence of religion at the micro level of political behavior. Religion plays a role in the daily lives of citizens, and my aim is to study how religion matters at that level. We have used a variety of research methods, such as survey research and lab experiments to gather data. We have published a couple of papers, and some others are under review. More recently, I am working on a book project on the segregation of economic classes across societies. The book examines the sources and consequences of this growing trend. I find that some societies are more residentially segregated than others; rich and poor neighbourhoods are segregated. The idea of this book developed over several years of thinking. I have been interested in the question of altruism, explaining altruistic behaviour, and questioning why some people are more altruistic than others. Growing up in Palestine was another factor that inspired this book project. In Palestine, we had wealthy classes, but we constantly encountered poverty at the daily level, which is also a reality across the Arab world. Some rich neighbourhoods are evolving but they lack societal appeal. Finally, I am working on another project related to the incorporation of Muslim migrants in the United States and Europe, i.e. Muslims in the West.

2. HOW DOES YOUR SCHOLARSHIP INTERACT WITH POLITICAL SCIENCE AS A DISCIPLINE, AND WITH ITS BROADER COMMUNITY?

My research is motivated by what I see in the Arab world. I have a solid training in Political Science, and I frame my research questions to make it

interesting and relevant debates within political Science. The Middle East is not so unique or different from other regions, and it should not be excluded from key social science theoretical models. Decades ago, the division between Political Science and Area Studies was stark. But the current generation of Middle East scholars has overturned these divisions, and the field is in a much better place now.

3. HOW DOES YOUR RESEARCH INFORM YOUR TEACHING AND PUBLIC LIFE?

My research is directly linked to teaching. I offer students a perspective that is not a mainstream one. My teaching is often informed by my research on citizens' behavior and attitudes in the region. In other words, I offer the perspective of citizens in the region. Drawing on this perspective, I can shed light on dynamics in the region that is not in the mainstream media and policy analyses. At the public level, I see my research as revisiting political science paradigms. It offers nuances and correctives to our understanding of many theoretical debates. Further, in my own public life, I am visibly Muslim, I study difference, I have appreciation for cultural differences, and in my research I offer this different perspective.

4. DESPITE YOUR SENIORITY, WHAT DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH AS A SCHOLAR, AND HOW DO YOU MANAGE THAT? AND WHAT ARE CHALLENGES OF BEING A FEMALE SCHOLAR FROM THE REGION?

There are lots of struggles. The most important one is 'time'. As you become senior, you are still trying to invest and build your own research. But there is a high demand on the time of senior scholars, and the challenge becomes how to allocate the time. The Middle East Political Science community is still struggling to create a critical mass. The Middle East is a challenging region to research, and it is always relevant to the policy world. Therefore, it is difficult to keep people in the field. The region also suffers from increasing problems, like conflict, war, and authoritarian entrenchment---all factors which make it difficult to conduct research. Again, this has a direct impact on our field.

At the same time, there is a growing gap between the training of scholars in the Arab world and those in the West. Therefore, the demands on senior scholars'

time is increasing: publishing, reviewing articles, travelling to the region to conduct research, teaching obligations, etc. It is a blessing because there is so much to be done, but it is a constant challenge.

At the personal level, being from the region is also challenging as I am constantly trying to correct people's misinformation about the region, and it becomes tiring. I am also a mother of four children, and balancing academic work and family life remains not easy for women. Women have to be more diligent, and more vocal in juggling career and family. There is still a lot of work to be done in terms of ensuring that academic institutions provide support for mothers. Yes, things are getting better, but there are still ongoing issues.

5. WHAT SINGLE PIECE OF ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR JUNIOR SCHOLARS STUDYING THE REGION?

Academia can be a challenging environment because of the peer review structure, which can be demoralizing. It is very important for junior scholars to know and be aware that their predecessors as well as their senior scholars have been going through the same process. Even senior professors still get rejections! Staying in academia is about being able to deal with that part of the process. I advise junior scholars to seek out mentorship, and to discuss their own strengths and weaknesses in a more explicit, constructive setting. Also seek out your own peers as colleagues and assets, the connections that I made with my own cohort during the early stages of my career were the most valuable. Being part of research groups, presenting work, receiving criticism and feedback is crucial for junior scholars.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SEPTEMBER 2018: MENA WORKSHOP IN RABAT, MOROCCO

APSA's MENA Workshops continued this year with a two-part program on "The Evolving Role of Political Institutions in the Arab World." The first workshop was held from September 24-28, 2018 in partnership with the Center for Studies and Research in Social Sciences (CERSS) in Rabat, Morocco. Twenty-five PhD students and early-career faculty from across the MENA region, Europe, and the United States were selected to attend.

Together with a follow-up workshop in January 2019 at the University of Tunis-El Manar, the program aims to explore the relationship between formal political institutions and political liberalization in the MENA region. In Rabat, participants discussed core questions and theories of formal political institutions as well as the implications of these theories for political representation, channeling citizen interests, government performance, and more broadly, political liberalization. Classroom discussions were enhanced by visits to the Moroccan Parliament and the National Council for Human Rights. More broadly, the workshop included sessions on research design and manuscript preparation, best practices and approaches for conducting field research, and scholarly networking. Fellows also shared their own research on topics related to political institutions in the MENA region.

Co-leading the workshop were Ahmed Jazouli (Independent Scholar, Morocco), Tofigh Maboudi (Loyola University Chicago, USA), Asma Nouria (University of Tunis-El Manar, Tunisia), Abdallah Saaf (Mohammed V University, Morocco), and Peter J. Schraeder (Loyola University Chicago, USA).

APSA's MENA Workshops are a multi-year initiative to support political science research and networking in the Arab Middle East and North Africa. Funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, the program is a major component of APSA's efforts to engage with political science communities outside the United States and support research networks linking US scholars with their colleagues overseas. Since 2013, over 130 scholars have taken part in the program, which is funded through 2019. For more information, visit APSA's MENA Workshops website at <http://web.apsanet.org/mena/>.





ALUMNI NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS

Over the past year, many of our alumni (both fellows and co-leaders) were invited to present their research and participate in conferences in different parts of the world, including 18 alumni at APSA's Annual Meeting in Boston, MA and 5 alumni at the upcoming MESA Conference in San Antonio, TX. For more information, see the [Alumni Network](#) section of our website.

If you would like to submit an announcement to be included in future Alumni News, send your updates directly to menanewsletter@apsanet.org. Please join us in congratulating the following alumni for their continued professional accomplishments:

2013 ALUMNI

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