

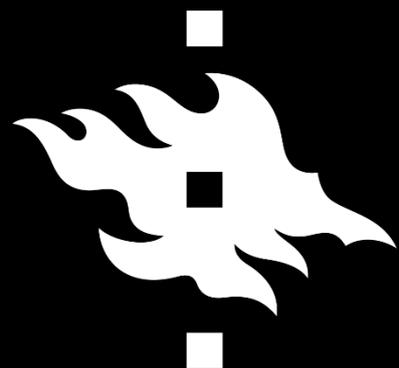
# PANELS & ROUNDTABLES

THE ELEVENTH NORDIC CONFERENCE ON  
MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

“BREAKING AND CREATING BOUNDARIES  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST”

THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NORDIC SOCIETY  
FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

14 – 16 AUGUST 2019 IN HELSINKI

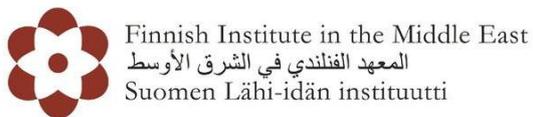


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# KEYNOTES

**14.8. 16.30-17.30 GARETH STANSFIELD** PROFESSOR OF MIDDLE EAST POLITICS, AL-QASIMI PROFESSOR OF GULF STUDIES, AND THE DIRECTOR FOR THE CENTRE OF KURDISH STUDIES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EXETER  
[RESILIENT BOUNDARIES AND FRAGILE STATES: THE PARADOX OF SOVEREIGNTY IN THE CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE EAST](#)

**15.8. 16.00-17.00 SARI HANAFI** PROFESSOR IN SOCIOLOGY AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT  
[BREAKING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN SECULARISTS AND ISLAMISTS: THE CASE OF THE GENDER EQUALITY DEBATE IN TUNISIA](#)

**16.8. 9.00-10.00 BRYNJAR LIA** PROFESSOR OF MIDDLE EAST STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO  
[TABOOS AND BLINDSPOTS IN MIDDLE EAST STUDIES: SOME REFLECTIONS](#)

# WEDNESDAY 14.8. 9.30 – 11.00

## SESSIONS I

### THE POLITICS OF ISLAM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE

**CHAIR: ROLA EL-HUSSEINI, LUND UNIVERSITY**

These three papers by Lund university graduate students show the diversity of the politics of Islam in the recent past and the contemporary world. All three papers analyze notorious groups, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Lebanese Shia organization Hezbollah, and the Iranian “Islamic-Marxist” Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK). The papers explore the discourse of these organizations through an analysis of the speeches of Hezbollah’s secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah, the competing fatwas issued by the religious clerics of ISIS and its rival in Syria Jabhat al-Nusra, and defense speeches given in court by senior MEK members in 1972. These three papers are based on discourse analysis conducted while working on master’s theses at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, Lund University.

### NEW AND OLD ENEMIES: HEZBOLLAH’S DISCOURSE ON THEIR INTERVENTION IN SYRIA

**DEMIAN VOKŠI, LUND UNIVERSITY**

This paper draws on the speeches of Hezbollah’s Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah between 2013 and 2018, to examine how Hezbollah has attempted to legitimize their involvement in the war in Syria. Hezbollah framed their discourse in several ways, including jihad and martyrdom, themes connected to the issues of Lebanese unity in the face of adversity and nominal rejection of sectarianism, in addition to themes connected to the experience, zeal and readiness of the resistance. Hezbollah also framed the Syria war as both a local and a regional issue, where the future of the region will be decided. This was

conducted not only against old enemies, Israel and the US, but also against a new threat manifested in the *takfiri* forces, supported by Israel, the US, and some Arab states. Hezbollah is therefore able to adapt to geopolitical realities and combine previously established discourses with new ones to mobilize its followers.

### ‘WAR OF THEOLOGY’, THE THEOLOGICAL ASPECT OF THE SPLIT BETWEEN JABHAT AL-NUSRA AND THE ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ IN 2013

**ORWA AJJOUR, LUND UNIVERSITY**

In April 2013, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), announced his group’s expansion into Syria and merger with Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) to form the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham or ISIS. JN’s leader Abu Mohammad al-Jolani denied the merger while accepting ties between the two groups. Al-Jolani also swore an oath to the head of al-Qaeda Central, Aymen Al-Zawahiri. Tension escalated, and the dispute was referred to al-Zawahiri who ruled against the merger. A theological debate then emerged, dividing the Salafi-Jihadi *ulama*’ into those supporting and opposed to the merger. Each group’s position was supported by texts from the Quran, the Sunna, and narratives from Islamic history. I contend that although Salafi-Jihadi *ulama*’ used the same concepts (*al-baya*, obedience and Muslims’ unity) to bolster their argument, their distinct interpretations of these concepts support the theological and political divides between the different Salafi-Jihadi factions.

## IMAGINING A REVOLUTIONARY IRAN: NATIONAL NARRATIVES IN THE REVOLUTIONARY DISCOURSE OF THE MOJAHEDIN-E KHALQ

JAMES ROOT, LUND UNIVERSITY

The Mojahedin-e Khalq was an Iranian “Islamic revolutionary” guerrilla organisation, formed in the 1960s, and committed to armed insurrection against the ruling dictatorship of Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi. Its ideology, a synthesis of Islamic, Marxist, and nationalist discourses, was the first elaboration of a revolutionary Shi’a ideology in the Iranian context.

Through an analysis of speeches given by arrested Mojahedin members in court, I explore their construction of counter-narratives to the prevailing state-nationalist discourse of the Iranian regime, juxtaposing Shia Islamic and socialist-revolutionary themes (such as state legitimacy, class solidarity, anti-imperialism, historical paradigms, self-sacrifice and apocalypse). Theoretically grounded in cultural and genre analysis as well as notions of publics and counter publics, I argue that the Mojahedin reinterpreted the lessons of Islamic and Iranian culture and history to build a narrative making the case that revolution was not only just and legitimate, but inevitable.

## TRAVELERS, TRANSLATIONS AND BIOGRAPHIES

CHAIR: SYLVIA AKAR, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

### CROSSING BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES: ‘Ā’ISHAH AL-BĀ’ŪNĪYAH AND HER TRAVELS

THOMAS EMIL HOMERIN, UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

The Mamlūk period was a productive time for Arabic scholarship and literature, as Damascus and Cairo arose as vibrant urban centers, attracting scholars and students from across the Muslim world. This led to opportunities for travel, education, and employment, yet these opportunities had one common characteristic: they were available almost

exclusively to men. In Syria and Egypt, and most of the medieval world, women’s involvement in travel, education, and public life, was often restricted. However, there were exceptions, including the prolific writer and poet cĀ’ishah al-Bācūnīyah (d. 1517) who, as a woman, crossed from the margins to the mainstream of religious scholarship and literary production. Drawing from historical and biographical sources, and especially from cĀ’ishah al-Bācūnīyah’s writings, I will examine her social and intellectual background, her travels, and scholarly interactions in order to highlight some of the social trends and intellectual forces at work in the late Mamlūk period.

### FROM JOHN GUSTAF AGELII TO ABD AL-HADI AL-MAGHRABI: BREAKING BOUNDARIES IN MYTH AND REALITY

SEDGWICK MARK, AARHUS UNIVERSITY

John Gustaf Agelii, also known as Ivan Aguéli and as Abd al-Hadi al-Maghrabi, was born in 1869 in Sala, Västmanland, and broke artistic, political, geographical, and religious boundaries. He became one of Sweden’s leading painters, engaged in violent “direct action” in support of anarchist politics and animal rights in France, and was one of the first people from the Nordic region to convert to Islam and become a Sufi, while living in Egypt. After his early death in 1917, Aguéli became the subject of myth, both in Sweden and, as an early figure in the Traditionalist movement, in France and then America. This paper looks at Aguéli’s life and at subsequent myth-making, especially at Aguéli’s significance for Traditionalism.

### TRANSLATING TRADITIONALISM FOR AN ALBANIAN AUDIENCE

MENDIM AKITI, BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

Sedgwick’s work focuses on Western Europe and North America, however, some of the authors he analyzes have been translated into languages and are read in places beyond the scope of his studies, in this case, Macedonia. These texts have exclusively been translated by Edin Lohja, an Albanian scholar living in Canada. This paper places Sedgwick’s

definition of Traditionalism in conversation with Satareh Houman's, situating Lohja at their intersection. Key to both definitions is Rene Guénon. Guénon, however, is absent from Lohja's translations. Instead of framing these texts through the lens of Guénonian Traditionalism, in his prefaces Lohja alludes to a tug of war between extremists and moderates, framing Traditionalist Islam as the authentic tradition lost in the struggle. This paper provides an initial foray into the study of Traditionalism in the Albanian community within Macedonia – a context which forces us to rethink our definitions of Traditionalism.

## TEMPORALITIES AND MATERIALITIES OF MOBILITY

**CHAIRS: ANITTA KYNSILEHTO, TAMPERE UNIVERSITY & BRUNO LEFORT, TAMPERE UNIVERSITY**

In this panel, we draw on ethnographic approaches to delve into the multiplicity of temporalities and materialities embedded within assorted configurations of mobile practices in the Middle East and North Africa. We discuss migratory contexts in which forced and more voluntary forms of mobilities come together, including people without a regular migration status and returning diasporas, in a pace that may contrast with imagined timings of moving about and forging spaces where one could feel as someone who belongs. Within these encounters, multiple boundaries need to be challenged and transgressed, not all of which are easy to foresee beforehand. We also argue that, in these processes, new spaces of sometimes unexpected solidarity are being formed.

### “COMING BACK HOME”? THE DISCOVERY OF BOUNDARIES AND THE DELUSION OF BELONGING AMONG RETURNING DIASPORIC YOUTH IN BEIRUT

**BRUNO LEFORT, TAMPERE UNIVERSITY**

This paper explores the politics of positioning among young people originating from the Levantine diasporas in the Americas as they “come back” to live in a place where they are said to have their roots in. Relying on collaborative ethnographic work conducted in

student milieus in Beirut (2007-2016) and Montreal (2016-2019), it discusses how young people arriving in a city they imagined without knowing have to learn how to navigate entangled social boundaries. Not only does the discovery of these multiple potential fault lines affect their ability to interact with their surroundings but it also forces them to confront their understanding of their own life-trajectories as the “normal” direction of migration is reversed and several temporalities collide with each other. Drawing on these micro-sociological situations, this paper questions how we conceptualize basic notions such as “home”, “roots” or “belonging” when we study people and communities on the move and shifts the focus toward the complex interplay between roots/routes and identity/alterity.

### HYBRID AND MOBILE PROTECTIONS: MIGRATION AND HUMANITARIANISM ACROSS NORTH-EAST AFRICA AND THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN

**ELISA PASCUCCI, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI**

The migration route from the Horn of Africa to the central Mediterranean is described one of the most dangerous in the world. International organizations have promoted securitized protection policies for migrants traveling across the route, in which scant assistance is associated with the repression of the networks facilitating mobility. However, recent literature highlights the need for more nuanced accounts of the actual experiences of safety, violence, risk and aid along this and other routes. Drawing on fieldwork in Egypt, this paper proposes the notion of hybrid and mobile protections. Such notion foregrounds: 1) the deterioration of state and UNHCR-based protection; 2) migrants' demand for a transnationally flexible and mobile system of protection 3) the centrality of work and economic relations, and the role they play in undermining or reinforcing basic protection from violence.

### MAKING DO AS A MIGRANT IN MOROCCO: NAVIGATING BOUNDARIES

**ANITTA KYNSILEHTO, TAMPERE UNIVERSITY**

The new migration policy, announced by the King Mohammed VI in September 2013 and the ensuing regularization campaigns migrants without residence permits, as well as the possibility for migrants' associations to formalize their existence are central components of the changing migratory landscape in Morocco. However, despite the pronouncement of this new policy, many aspects have remained the same. These include the criminalization of migrants residing in areas close to the Spanish borders. Drawing on multi-sited ethnographic research with people on the move and those engaging in migrant solidarity, this paper focuses on the possibilities and hindrances in trying to "make do" in Morocco. It uses the concept of intersectionality that is helpful in shedding light to gendered and racialized aspects of displacement together with other dimensions, such as age and migration status (or lack thereof).

## SYRIAN NATIONAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES AND SUBJECTIVITIES

CHAIR: SARI HANAFI, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

### SYRO-LEBANESE BONDS AND THE PERMEABILITY OF URBAN AND SOCIAL BORDERS: THE CASES OF BAALBEK, TRIPOLI, AND ZAHLE

JEAN-BAPTISTE ALLEGRI, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

Since 2011, more than a million displaced Syrians found a shelter in Lebanon as they fled a devastating civil war (Thorleifsson, 2016). Most displaced Syrians settled in the neighbouring areas of the Bekaa valley, Akkar and North Lebanon (UNHCR, 2019). These Lebanese peripheral regions were socioeconomically integrated to the Syrian hinterland under Ottoman rule (Seurat, 2012). Despite the disruptive entrenchment of the Syro-Lebanese border in 1920, the thinness of this frontier sustained practices of interdependence overtime (Chalcraft, 2009; Dionigi, 2017). Hence, these contiguous territories to Syria are marked by their autonomy of

practice which generates a local fluidity of identities (Obeid, 2010). As a result, the mapping of the Syrian migration post-2011 expressed these cross-national patterns of affinity or *asabiyya* (social solidarity). Examining the cases of Baalbek, Tripoli, and Zahle, I will argue that the density of the bonds (weak to strong ties) between Lebanese and Syrian populations within each municipality determined Syrians' capacity to permeate their hosting communities' urban and social boundaries. Dense bonds generated welcoming Lebanese attitudes which facilitated the penetration of displaced Syrians into urbanity. This territorial inclusiveness widens Syrians' access to local social (and clientelist) networks' protection, while weaker bonds establish their social segregation. This research based on seven months of qualitative fieldwork observes that the thickness of Syro-Lebanese *Asabiyya* demonstrates a capacity to cross formal, urban and eventually patronage boundaries.

## THE RE-CONFIGURATION OF SYRIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AND BELONGING: DECONSTRUCTING THE LOGIC OF 'SUPPORTING' THE BAATH REGIME IN SYRIA

RAHAF ALDOUGHLI, LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Amidst the excessive violence that has spread across all of Syria since 2011, questions about how the Ba'ath regime has maintained its domination and coercion over Syrians who are still living inside Syria, has been ignored. Beyond the purely military functions of violence, this paper invites a dialectical rethinking of the Syrian war, favouring an analysis that sees ideas inscribed in material practices through viewing material practices as always already structured and laden with ideas. For example, there is no such thing as a police force without the ideas of enforcement and punishment. Within this context, this paper mainly asks the following questions: How has the Syrian war reconstructed national identities and belongings? How does the Baath regime maintain legitimacy, and how do claims of national belonging articulate with other experiences of solidarity? How important is national loyalty for political order anyway? The Syrian war is not only a proxy war, its

complexities go beyond the obscurities of the various layers and dimensions of outside intervention and agendas. Such complexity is evident when we see the public demonstrations of support for Bashar al-Assad since the outbreak of the uprising in 2011. For the purpose of this research, the starting point of this research is conceptualising that such support has not come out of the blue but needs a propaganda machine and a national ideology so effective that they create for the Assad followers a universe of imagined facts. Therefore, this paper aims to explore how new boundaries have been constructed based on those who support and oppose the Baath regime. Such boundaries have reconstructed meanings and concepts of national belonging and identity.

### POLITICAL SUBJECTIVITY, DISPLACEMENT, AND SYRIANS IN THE DIASPORA

AMANY SELIM, UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

In studying Syrians' political subjectivities, the focus has been often on emphasizing silence, fear, and abjection as integral aspects. Regime practices of surveillance and control enforced through diverse institutions were largely productive of these feelings which were core to the construction of political subjectivities. Spectacles of violence in early 1980s loomed large in the imagination of Syrians, inhibiting for years any kind of political action to emerge. With the upheavals that swept the region in 2011, feelings of euphoria and newfound freedom were widely expressed and celebrated. However, subjectivities rooted in and gained through contentious politics were soon repressed and unmade. In light of this, what kind of a political subject and subjectivity can one talk about amidst massive destruction and displacement, and after years of conflict? It might as much comprise a simplification to ascertain a return to enforced silence and reconciliation with the status quo. Instead, the aftermath has launched a dialectical process of political subjectivization where both ruptures and continuities with the pre-uprising/conflict era are at play. By drawing on interviews with young Syrian political activists in the diaspora in Europe, this paper aims at gathering insights into the past and present experiences of

activists with politics and political action and how they are reconfigured in exile. It seeks to integrate the impact of displacement in the analysis of Syrians' articulations and narratives of the political and how embeddedness in various 'social fields' might be giving rise to a new subjectivity.

### TRACING TRANSNATIONAL TRIBAL NETWORKS – THE CASE OF BANI KHALID IN JORDAN, SYRIA AND LEBANON

CHAIR: PÄIVI MIETTUNEN, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Tribes and tribal networks are not a relic of the past. In fact, they are more relevant than ever, as throughout the region, the tribal relations have influence on state politics, national and transnational conflicts, cultural representations, production of mass culture, and many other forms of the contemporary society. While adapting to the modern world, the tribes are also actively participating in shaping it.

Bani Khalid is considered one of the biggest tribes in Jordan and Syria, and members of the tribe also reside in Lebanon. However, their tribal networks also extend to Gulf Region and to their place of origin in Saudi Arabia. This panel discusses the tribal networks, identities and heritage in the contemporary Middle East, focusing especially on the Bani Khalid and their coping with the social and cultural changes caused by state politics, media, and the war in Syria.

### POLITICAL AUTHORITY (SHYKHDOM) IN THE NORTHERN JORDANIAN BADIA

ALA'ALDEEN MAHMOUD MOHAMMAD AB-ABNEH, YARMOUK UNIVERSITY

Jordan is usually described as a tribal nation-state ruled by a tribal leadership and dominated by tribal affiliations and loyalties. Over the years, the regime and Bedouin tribes have developed a unique symbiosis. The regime has depended several times on the tribes and

Bedouin elements in the army to crush external as well as internal enemies. However, family and tribal loyalties sometimes surpass the civil attachments created by the state. They play a significant role in people's everyday lives and their interactions with bureaucratic and judicial procedures.

Tribalism in Jordan has always been intermingled with other forms of collective identity such as pan-Arabism. Thus, local patriotism has competed against other local, regional, and trans-regional identities, whether national, religious, or otherwise. The existence of such myriad forms of identification is not peculiar to Jordan; it is indeed common to many other countries in the region. These constituent elements are not mutually exclusive, for they often overlap and complement one another. The priority and significance given to each of these forms of identity by individuals can be understood in the historical, political and social climate.

### AL-BADIA AND THE BEDOUIN IN A CHANGING WORLD: THE CASE OF NORTHERN JORDAN

MOHAMMED S. SHUNNAQ, YARMOUK UNIVERSITY

The forms of nomadism and their stages of social development are related to the economic and environmental conditions of the population. The latter often contribute to determining the economic resources on which the population depends such as pastures, herbs for grazing, drought, lack of permanent stability, uneven spreading. Additionally, the social systems that distinguish Badawah are the product of human vulnerability to the environment.

The Bedouin kinship system is mainly based on tribal divisions, with links and relations that are at times cooperative and at others hostile. Power remains the most important criterion for extending control and influence over the desert lands of the clans, as the stronger is given the opportunity to benefit from the rich pastures of the Badia to provide adequate food for the animals and livestock in its possession.

This study will explore the socio-economic changes that have taken place in the

Jordanian Badia by studying the case of Bani Khalid and other tribes in the region such as Al-Sirdiah, Al-Issa and Al-Sarhan. The study will analyze the internal and external relationships within and between the tribes, and to the state.

### BANI KHALID TRIBE IN JORDAN AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION MECHANISMS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES FROM THE SAME KINSHIP GROUP: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY IN AL-MAFRAQ DISTRICT

AREEJ ZIAD AHMED AL SMADI, YARMOUK UNIVERSITY

This anthropological field study aims at examining how kinship between the refugees and citizens in the host country affects the reception and integration of them in the host communities. It also aims at examining the socioeconomic impact on both parties and whether if geopolitical borders affect the kinship relations among the Arab tribes.

The study has focused on Bani Khaled in Mafraq governorate in Northern Jordan. Because of the war many Syrians from Bani Khaled tribe fled from their country to Jordan. Bani Khaled tribe members from both Jordan and Syria have long-standing historical ties because there were no international borders between the two countries until the divisions defined by the Treaty of Sykes-Picot.

The study has employed the participant observation and the historical approaches to trace Bani Khaled's tribe in Jordan and Syria family history and observe the relationships between the family members from the two countries.

The study concludes that the tribal relations between the two countries play an important role in integrating refugees into the host society.

### MEDIA, SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF ORAL HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY TRIBAL COMMUNITIES.

PÄIVI MIETTUNEN, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Satellite TVs and smartphones have quickly become standard commodities in the tribal communities of the Middle East. Music, TV programs and other mass culture is being produced and targeted to tribal audiences, especially in Jordan, Gulf states and Saudi Arabia. At the same time, various Facebook groups and Youtube channels are being utilized to collect and distribute tribal heritage and Bedouin culture transnationally. On a personal level, social networks are maintained through communication via smartphones. WhatsApp and many other chat programs include also video and audio, which allows even the illiterate members of the community to participate in long-distance communication.

What kinds of new narratives and symbols are being formed by these new communication means, and in what ways are they being distributed and represented by the members of the tribe? This paper traces the consumption of media and utilization of social media platforms to produce and reproduce tribal identities. This research is mostly based on interviews and participant observation among the Bani Khalid in Northern Jordan and Lebanon, while also adding comparative material from other tribes.

## GREAT POWERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

CHAIR: PINAR TANK, PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE OSLO

### RUSSIA AND THE ARAB GULF STATES: AN EVOLVING “STRATEGIC” PARTNERSHIP?

BASMA EL ETREBY & SHADY ABDEL SALAM MANSOUR, FUTURE FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH AND STUDIES

Moscow’s military presence in Syria and position on the Muslim brotherhood’s affiliated militias in Libya has projected Moscow as a critical powerbroker to Arab Gulf States in the

unfolding Middle East security architecture, especially with the evolving US retreat. Moscow’s decision not to side with any party in the Gulf Crisis indicates that Russia is not only pragmatic but is reconsidering its relations with the geopolitically critical Gulf region. Against this backdrop, the perception of the Russian Gulf relations as mainly occupied with economic gains is in fact ignoring the strategic implications that the evolving relations and the surge in official visits between Moscow and Gulf states dictate. This paper will try to address this gap in perception concerning Russian-Gulf relations, especially UAE and Russia and whether or not they have reached a ‘strategic’ partnership. It will examine the understandings on Yemen, Syria and Libya, and possible military cooperation.

## PERVASIVE GEOPOLITICAL BORDERS OF THE MIDDLE EAST POLITICS – THE IMPACT OF GREAT POWERS INTERFERENCE ON THE REGIONAL ORDER

MARTINA PONÍŽILOVÁ, UNIVERSITY OF WEST BOHEMIA

This paper deals with the causes of great powers engagement in the Middle East and its consequences on regional development and stability. It explains its polarization due to the United Kingdom’s post-imperial security regime, the overlay of the Mid-East politics by bipolar conflict dynamics, the region’s division into competing blocks caused by the US and Soviet client relations with local countries and consequent inability to create region-wide organizations and to unify and stabilize the region. The paper shows the causes of the Middle East’s continuing fragmentation: regional powers rivalries, the US policy of strengthening allies against their local rivals and the competition between the USA, Russia and emerging powers resulting in unstable balance of power. The inability of regional powers and organizations to stabilize the conflict-prone Middle East leads to further interference of great powers in regional politics and security guarantees for Mid-East states, which weakens the overall regional autonomy.

## BOOKS, WHEAT, AND US DOLLARS: TRACING THE IMPACT OF PL 480 ON IRAQ

MICHAEL DEGERALD, LUND UNIVERSITY

Several Arabic language books published by the Iraqi government from the 1970s located in the University of Washington library had “Public Law 480 Program” stamped on the inside cover, an unexpected detail. PL 480 is described as a “food aid program” run by the USA that began in the late 1950s, so why were books from Iraq, a country with broken ties to the US, part of this program, especially since Iraq was not in the program? The answer ties together US Cold War policy, postcolonial development in the Middle East, and US academia to trace a curious series of connections. A seemingly benign program to aid US farmers not only accidentally shaped “area studies” research in the US for generations to come but had a marked impact on developing countries and their attempts to become self-sufficient in food production.

## RE-INVENTING THE FUTURE BETWEEN MICRO-CHANGES AND

## MACRO-CHANGES: WESTERN NARRATIVES ON SAUDI ARABIA

ANNALISA PAVAN, UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA

Saudi Arabia's rapid transformation at several levels is attracting considerable attention from the media worldwide, and the Saudi social agenda in particular is taking Western commentators and analysts by surprise, despite the inevitable Saudiphobia fueled by Khashoggi's murder. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman stated that “The crucial requirement for reform is public willingness to change traditional society”, and stressed the need for “normality”, which will be attainable only by returning to “moderate Islam”. The Saudi leadership always clarifies that economic and social development will be achieved without rejecting Saudi traditional values. Drawing on official documents, facts and figures, and recent literature, this paper will explain how Saudi Arabia, caught between a traditionally conservative culture and the rapid macro-changes which are taking place in the country - perceived by the rest of the world as micro-changes, or long overdue changes - is struggling to cross boundaries and to re-invent its future.

WEDNESDAY 14.8. 11.30 – 13.00

## SESSIONS II

### FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS: ENERGY, SECRET RELATIONS AND WORDS

ELIE PODEH, THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

### CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS: SHOULD SAUDI ARABIA MOVE TOWARDS ENERGY COOPERATION WITH ITS NEIGHBORS?

SAMUEL WILLNER, UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is currently experiencing unprecedented changes and challenges – both in the realms of economics and politics – which, principally, could become an opening for many unforeseen opportunities and ventures. Currently, Saudi Arabia's electricity is generated almost exclusively by thermal power plants powered by oil and gas. Within the framework of the "Vision 2030" economic reform program, the Al-Saud has presented its ambitious plan to transform the kingdom and dramatically diversify the Saudi economy. This paper will discuss Saudi Arabia's current energy situation, its political and economic challenges that the prestigious "Vision 2030" attempts to address. In addition, this paper will discuss Saudi Arabia's potential for energy cooperation with its neighbors and will focus on analyzing the benefits of possible energy cooperation between Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel. This article will mainly be based on various press reports.

### TURKEY'S SYRIAN CHALLENGE AND NATO'S TURKISH CHALLENGE

PINAR TANK, PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE OSLO

The project will examine Turkey's policy in Syria from an international, regional and domestic perspective, aimed at understanding its dynamics and impact on Turkey's relations to its allies. It asks the following key questions. Firstly, what are the internal dynamics driving Turkish foreign policy in Syria? Secondly, how are the respective foreign policies of Turkey and the United States in Syria impacting Turkey's relationship to its allies in NATO? And finally, how does the developing Turkey-Russia relationship draw Turkey further from the "West" and what may be some of the long term consequences of this shift regarding a more autonomous Turkish foreign policy? The paper uses a qualitative methodology drawing from official documents, discourses and semi structured interviews with NATO officers.

### THE "MISTRESS SYNDROME": ISRAEL'S SECRET RELATIONS WITH STATES AND MINORITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 1948-2018

ELIE PODEH, THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

In order to survive in a hostile environment in the Middle East, Israeli decision makers developed a pragmatic regional foreign policy, designed to find ways to approach states, leaders and minorities willing to cooperate with it against mutual regional challenges (such as Iran until 1979, Turkey, the Kurds, the Maronites in Lebanon, Jordan and more). Contacts with these potential partners were mostly covert, creating Israel's "Mistress Syndrome." The aim of this lecture, which is part of a new comprehensive project on Israel's secret relations with its neighbors during the years 1948-2018, is two-fold: First, to offer a theoretical framework explaining the meaning and features of the "mistress syndrome";

and second, to focus on several episodes of such clandestine activity, such as Israel's ties with Saudi Arabia and Gulf in general.

## A DANCE OF WORDS: IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS SAUDI ARABIA

OLIVIA GLOMBITZA, UNIVERSITAT AUTONOMA DE BARCELONA

Despite Rouhani's government building on a more constructive approach since his election in 2013, regional tensions particularly between Iran and Saudi Arabia notably deteriorated, which is reflected in Iran's foreign policy discourse. Approached through constructivism and the sociology of power, where elites constitute actors and ideology constitutes a resource in the elites' competition for political power, the paper responds to how this domestic competition influences Iran's foreign policy. It inquires into how the Iranian political elite employs ideology in the representation of Saudi Arabia and argues that the discursive employment of Iran's Islamic as well as Shi'a identity are taking on both a unifying and dividing role. The paper thereby adds to larger debates on religion's instrumentalization in politics. Analysing the Iranian political elite's discourse during Rouhani's presidency through CDA this paper focuses on three main issues, the war in Yemen, the JCPOA and the Hajj incident in Saudi Arabia.

## MANDATE PERIOD – WESTERN IMPERIALISM

CHAIR: MARK SEDGWICK, AARHUS UNIVERSITY

## CHALLENGING SKYLY BOUNDARIES: APPROACHING AVIATION IN 1920S-1950S MIDDLE EAST

ÖGÜTCÜ ÖZGÜR, BERLIN GRADUATE SCHOOL MUSLIM CULTURES & SOCIETIES

This paper is an introduction to my ongoing dissertation project on the emergence of airspace and aviation in the Middle East during the transition from British colonial rule to post-colonial nation states. While this is a limited and emerging research field, my working hypothesis is that airspace played a

significant but thus far overlooked role in the making of nation states, borders and existing power structures in the Middle East. Focusing on the airspace above Egypt, Mandatory Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq, my research traces notions of airspace and implementations of air policies as represented in British colonial documents and in Arabic-, Hebrew-, and English-language media coverage. In this paper, I will engage two archival case studies to discuss how an aerial perspective on bordering processes can potentially offer a nuanced understanding of the development and renegotiation of borders within colonial and imperial structures.

## MAPS, BORDERS AND THE ACCURACY OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE DESERT PERIPHERY OF THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST.

MAGNUS HALSNES, UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

This paper explores the role of maps and cartographic technology in the establishment and implementation of borders in the desert periphery of the Middle East during the mandate period (c. 1916–1948). Maps were used in negotiations of territorial settlements and served as sources of knowledge and information. They provided a basis for border negotiations, definitions and agreements. However, the maps were often inaccurate, especially in the largely unknown desert areas, and as such created both confusion and conflict in translating the paper lines into reality on the ground. The maps from the mandate period are interesting historical sources of knowledge that have not received much scholarly attention. Drawing on archive material and contemporary maps this paper focuses on the relation between maps, borders and the frequent use of surveys and exploration in the creating and implementing the desert borders of the Middle East after the First World War.

## ALCOHOL IN NORTH AFRICA DURING THE ERA OF FRENCH COLONIZATION

NESSIM ZNAIEN, AIX-MARSEILLE UNIVERSITY

This communication is a part of a research project on the role and impact of alcohol in the French Empire during the colonial

period. Financed by a French foundation, my research team has explored the question of alcohol in colonial North Africa (Morocco, Algeria), and the Levant (Syria and Lebanon). This work had completed a Phd Dissertation on alcohol in colonial Tunisia that I defended in Paris-Sorbonne University in september 2017. We have tried to establish whether rates of alcoholism increased within these societies during this time, and how local government and Oulema subsequently reacted to this phenomenon. Our primary aim has been to identify whether there was any consistency in approach to the issue of alcohol consumption across the French Empire during this period, whilst assessing the role of other global factors and muslim culture at the same time. To carry out this research, my team has drawn on extensive archive material within French administration record offices, hospitals, courts and police stations, as well as source material from novels and local newspapers written in French and Arabic.

### POLICING THE LIVESTOCK: BEDOUINS AND THE COLONIAL STATE IN THE IRAQI-SYRIAN BORDERLANDS, 1919-1939

LAURA STOCKER, UNIVERSITY OF NEUCHÂTEL

Adopting a trans-border perspective, this paper examines processes of state formation and border delimitation in the interwar Middle East with a focus on Bedouin tribes in the Syrian-Iraqi borderland. By looking at the cross-border movement of tribes and their livestock and systems of tax collection by the French and British Mandatory authorities, it intends to analyze the multi-layered and complex power relations between different state authorities and Bedouin groups in the desert borderland. Drawing from the French and British records, this paper shows how colonial state power was implemented at the margins and how it modified the economic, political and social structures of Bedouin communities. On the other hand, the impracticability of taxation systems, caused by cross-border movement of tribes and their livestock, as well as unsettled border disputes, reveals the fragility of the colonial states in these regions, eventually opening new spaces of agency for their inhabitants.

### SYRIAN EXPERIENCES THROUGH INTERVIEWS

CHAIR: MARKO JUNTUNEN

#### ”I WAS AFTER SOMETHING I COULD IDENTIFY WITH” – A DANISH ISLAMIC STATE WARRIOR TELLS HIS STORY

MEHMET ÜMIT NECEF, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN DENMARK

This paper will present an analysis of two recorded interviews with Enes Ciftci, a Danish citizen of Turkish-Kurdish origin, sentenced to seven years in jail in 2016 for having gone to Syria to fight for Islamic State (IS). The interviews are a part of a project aiming to shed light on the reasons behind why some Danish Muslims are attracted to IS. The author visited the inmate four times and has spent approximately fourteen hours with him. The paper will also present moods, feelings and reflections of a researcher and former left-wing extremist during the visits. Taking inspiration from “Lifeworld Method” the author acknowledges that he has to establish a distance from his preconceptions stemming from his experiences in left-wing extremism in Turkey in the 1970’s.

#### ”COMPLETELY ORDINARY GIRL”: FIRSTHAND NARRATIVE FROM A SWEDISH SYRIAN TRAVELER WHO JOINED ISLAMIC STATE

HENRIETTE ESHOLDT, LUND UNIVERSITY

This paper presents a single case study of a young female Swedish so-called Syrian traveler (hereafter called Jasmine), who went to Syria in 2014, after IS’s self-proclamation of the Caliphate. The analysis takes its point of departure in data consisting of: 1) Visual materials of Jasmine and two blogs (consisting of uploads of texts, pictures and a short story) created by Jasmine a couple of years before leaving for Syria, and 2) A Facebook profile (consisting of uploads of texts, pictures and videos) created by Jasmine around the time she went to Syria. The analysis describes how Jasmine went from, in her own words, being a “completely ordinary girl” to propagandizing for radical Islam on social media from Syria. The analysis is complemented with

data from interviews with persons in Jasmine's close social milieu as well as with professionals in the field (such as police officers, social workers etc.).

## HEALTHCARE UNDER FIRE IN SYRIA

AGNETA KALLSTRÖM, UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

This paper explores what kind of violence health care workers have met and whom they believe to be the perpetrators in Syrian conflict. This study is based on semi-structured interviews of 26 health care workers. The preliminary results confirm that the interviewees consider the Syrian regime and Russia as the most serious threats to the health care system. Armed groups were seen as less dangerous with the notable exception of Islamic State in Syria (ISIS). While the actions of the other armed groups also came up in the interviews, their degree of severity was notably lesser. In order to protect health care in modern conflicts it is imperative to comprehensively understand this manifestation of violence. This includes knowing the environment, perpetrators, their motivations and modes of action among other things. The results of this study lay the groundwork for such efforts on the long term.

## “GREENING THE MIDDLE EAST”: DISCOURSES ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND A GREEN SHIFT IN THE MENA REGION

CHAIR: ALBRECHT HOFHEINZ, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Climate change and an international energy market increasingly favouring renewables pose serious challenges to the countries of the Middle East and North-Africa, raising many questions regarding (a) the urgency of new policies to facilitate transition towards renewable energy sources, and (b) the fostering of more sustainable patterns of energy consumption. In tackling these challenges, both state and society must handle the difficult transition away from carbon-based “rentier

state” economies. Even in authoritarian countries, such transitions depend on a certain degree of public consent and legitimacy. Hence, studying how these challenges are communicated, framed and justified in public provides a window into ongoing processes of the MENA region's adaptation to the challenges outlined above. Presenting studies of public discourse(s) on climate change and the green shift, and on the many different actors engaged in shaping popular perceptions of these issues, this panel explores prospects for a successful green shift and consequences in the MENA region of the energy transition taking place globally.

## GREEN ACTIVISM IN THE DESERT

TILDE ROSMER, ZAYED UNIVERSITY

The rulers of the UAE are quick to respond to the latest global trends and have over the last decade initiated impressive renewable energy projects such as the multi-faceted Masdar project. Being a top-down organized society, an important question is to what degree these discourses and efforts are paralleled among the public? In order to answer this question, this article will map the environmental and sustainability focused non-governmental organizations in the UAE, exploring which issues engaged individuals are focusing on and how they relate, or not, to state policies. Moreover, it will investigate the size of the engagement by individuals from the local Emirate community, a highly relevant question in an expat-dominated society. Who established and runs Environmental NGOs, what is the response from the local community? Moreover, do they connect to the larger issues of climate change and a green economy, or do they focus in the preservation of nature and animals?

## ARABIC LITERATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE

TERESA PEPE, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

This chapter adopts ecocriticism as a theoretical framework to analyse how recent Arab literary works deal with the subject of nature. It discusses a number of examples explicitly dealing in a fantastic way with the issue of global warming, as for example *Utopia [Yütübiya]* by Ahmad Khalid Tawfiq (Egypt)

and the graphic novels *Using Life* [Istikhdām al-Hayā] by Ahmed Najī (2014). It also discusses the way other literary works, as for example the critically-acclaimed dystopian novels *Otared* [‘Utarid] (2015) by Mohamed Rabie, and *The Second War of Dogs* [Al-Ḥarb al-Kalb al-Thāny] (2017) by Ibrahim Nasrallah, indirectly deal with environmental questions. The vision that these works present goes from the dystopian environmental catastrophes to future green utopias achieved through the use of genetic engineering and renewable energy. In the light of these examples, our study objects the use of a specific category of “climate fiction” in Arabic literature, but it argues that the environmental question is becoming a growing concern for Arab authors, as part of a long-standing tradition of political commitment (iltizām).

## GREEN GIGANTOMANIA? POLITICAL ECONOMY IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTRA-REGIONAL COMPETITION FOR THE LARGEST RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**BRYNJAR LIA, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO**

Recent years have witnessed a tremendous surge in new renewable energy projects in the Middle East, in particular within the field of solar energy. A particularly striking feature of these projects is their size, not merely the huge geographical space they occupy, but the importance of size in the public discourse about them.

This paper explores public discourses on selected renewable mega-projects in the Arab world: the Noor Ouarzazate complex in Morocco, the Egyptian Benban Solar Park, and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park in UAE. It discusses possible reasons for, and implications of, the portrayal of these projects primarily in the terminology of size (“the world’s largest”), including technical-economic requirements, foreign investor preferences, inter-Arab rivalry motivations and finally, the political elites’ desire for preserving the rentier state model in a new green garb.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE GREEN SHIFT IN LEBANESE POLITICS: BETWEEN CONTESTATION AND CO-OPTATION

**JON NORDENSON, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO**

The consequences of Climate change will be severe and potentially destabilizing in Lebanon, and substantial efforts towards both adaptation and mitigation are necessary. Yet, for a country facing continued political and economic crisis as well as the impact of the war in neighboring Syria, such a transition will be demanding for state and society alike, and a successful green shift will be dependent on substantial popular support. Given the peculiarities of the Lebanese system, it would also depend on a certain level of political consensus and willingness to challenge entrenched practices and interests. This paper explores these challenges by analyzing how the contentious issue of electricity is treated in Lebanese political discourse through a study of the 2018 parliamentary election campaign. The paper identifies the central actors taking part in these discussions, and their respective positions and frames/narratives on the issue, and investigates whether one (or more) discourse(s) is able to dominate the national debate.

## SANCTUARY IN THE CITY? ASSISTING URBAN REFUGEES IN 21ST CENTURY

**CHAIRS: ARE JOHN KNUDSEN & SARAH TOBIN (CHR. MICHELSEN INSTITUTE)**

An increasing number of refugees live in poor neighbourhoods in towns and cities across the Middle East, a premier refugee region with one of the world’s highest urbanization levels. While host states have taken in millions of refugees, they do not have the resources or capacity to provide for them. Aiding refugees living in cities and urban areas is therefore a major challenge to humanitarian policy. While the size and complexity of cities account for many of the problems facing refugees, they are also part of the solution. Cities have larger and often unregulated labour markets, more shelter options and ready

access to health and school facilities. Cities and towns can also offer greater freedom of movement and better prospects for successful socio-economic integration and entrepreneurship. Using examples from urban displaced in Lebanon (Beirut, Tripoli), Palestine (East Jerusalem) and Jordan (Marfaq, Irbid) this panel asks whether humanitarian policies be re-designed to accommodate refugees in urban areas and, indeed, if refugees can find “sanctuary in the city”?

### ‘IMPLEMENTING AND INFLUENCING’: PARTICIPATION IN REFUGEE GOVERNANCE IN TRIPOLI, LEBANON

ROBERT FORSTER, CHR. MICHELSEN INSTITUTE (CMI) & UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

Facing growing restraints on visas and work permits, Syrian urban refugees in Lebanon are increasingly subject to ‘bureaucratic invisibility’, opting to remain ‘hidden’ rather than face potential harassment, arrest or deportation in their interactions with the Lebanese state. Nonetheless, urban refugees have long been documented as agents of social change engaging with and participating in their host communities through a variety of channels despite overt challenges. Based on ethnographic research among Syrian refugees in Tripoli, this research project investigates the policy context of this group, particularly, how participatory and inclusive area-based approaches are applied to, and experienced by urban refugees in the Lebanese context, as well as the channels through which these groups communicate with actors on the local, national and international levels. An understanding of these dynamics aims to provide insight into site-centric refugee policy design, in addition

### “WORKING FOR A COUNTRY THAT IS NOT MY OWN”: SYRIAN REFUGEE GOVERNANCE AND THE JORDAN COMPACT’S WORK PERMIT PROGRAM

SARAH TOBIN, CHR. MICHELSEN INSTITUTE (CMI)

In 2016, the Jordan Compact was implemented, holding out promises of economic growth and opportunities through annually-renewable work permits for up to 200,000

Syrian refugees. Based on field research in Marfaq and Irbid, this paper argues that the work permit project typifies a ‘post-neoliberal’ refugee governance regime where the Syrian refugees are expected to provide for their own livelihood through their own (manual and physical) labour, and to contribute to the economic welfare of the host government through national economic systems such as taxation and promote global ‘good will’ by not migrating onwards. This governance regime relies upon and entrenches stereotypes and subjectivities that make Syrians the most sought-after laborers in the country, region, and beyond: hard-working, entrepreneurial, trustworthy, and ‘deserving’ refugees. Syrians themselves reproduce the narrative, despite high levels of underemployment and skills/employment mismatch, discussing their status under the permit-system as ‘flexible’ and ‘mobile’ that amplifies their status as quintessential workers in the new gig economy.

### EMERGENCY URBANISM IN SABRA, BEIRUT

ARE JOHN KNUDSEN, CHR. MICHELSEN INSTITUTE (CMI)

Since the mid-1980s, generations of displaced people have sought refuge in the ramshackle Gaza buildings, a multi-story hospital complex built by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Damaged during the civil war, today the buildings blend in with the run-down Sabra-Shatila neighbourhood in Beirut’s “misery belt”. The paper charts the buildings’ history and main characters: the lodgers, landlords, and gatekeepers who respectively lease, rent and control the dilapidated buildings’ dark corridors, cramped flats and garbage-strewn stairways. The multi-story buildings are examples of emergency urbanism whereby displaced people seek refuge in cities and can be read as a vertical migration history of people escaping conflict, displacement and destitution. Examining the buildings’ as archives of spatial and political histories provides a genealogy of displacement and emplacement that can inform the study of emergency urbanism and promote solutions in cities for refugees lacking access to affordable housing.

## NO SANCTUARY IN THE CITY: THE CASE OF SHU’FAT CAMP, JERUSALEM

KJERSTI BERG, CHR. MICHELSEN INSTITUTE (CMI)  
& UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

Home to around 20,000 Palestinians, Shu’fat camp is managed at the margins of the city. The camp is often referred to as extraterritorial, as outside the jurisdiction of both the Israeli and the current Palestinian authorities, and characterized by poverty, physical deterioration and lawlessness. As a refugee camp in occupied East Jerusalem, Shu’fat camp

epitomizes some core political issues of the conflict over Palestine: Israeli concerns over security, the future of Jerusalem, and the refugee issue, unresolved since the war over Palestine in 1948. In the Palestinian case, camps have been highly contested sites, and spaces of political struggle and confinement, marginalization and improvements, representing both the suffering and the right of return. In this presentation I will focus how this camp and its inhabitants have been handled by Israel and by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

## ELABORATING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN GROUPS: FROM THE FIRST MILLENNIUM BCE TO TODAY’S MIDDLE EAST: SESSION 1, FIRST MILLENNIUM BCE

**CHAIR:** PÄIVI MIETTUNEN, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

**DISCUSSANTS:**

CAROLINE WALLIS, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

JOHANNES BACH, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

RICK BONNIE, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

ANTTI LAHELMA, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI,

PÄIVI MIETTUNEN, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

MELANIE WASMUTH, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

RAZ KLETTER, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

JAN RETSÖ, UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

First, we will reflect upon groups and groupness in the Ancient Near East. We will discuss how particular groups such as Babylonians, Arabs, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Elamites, Judeans, Egyptians etc. appear in our textual sources. What evidence can we put forward to argue that these groups correspond to culturally homogenous entities? In the same way, what arguments can we put forward to say that is not the case? Are we dealing with methodological nationalism?

WEDNESDAY 14.8. 14.30 – 16.00

## SESSIONS III

### ELABORATING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN GROUPS: FROM THE FIRST MILLENNIUM BCE TO TODAY'S MID- DLE EAST: SESSION 2, TODAY'S MIDDLE EAST

**CHAIR:** PÄIVI MIETTUNEN, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

**DISCUSSANTS:**

CAROLINE WALLIS, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

JOHANNES BACH, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, FINLAND

RICK BONNIE, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, FINLAND

ANTTI LAHELMA, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, FINLAND

PÄIVI MIETTUNEN, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, FINLAND

MELANIE WASMUTH, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, FINLAND

RAZ KLETTER, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, FINLAND

JAN RETSÖ, UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN

To the contemporary political actors, the ancient past offers a dense forest of symbols to explore and choose from when elaborating boundaries between groups. How is the ancient past mobilized in competition over political resources today? Material culture inevitably gets tangled up in this process as monuments are preserved, destroyed or left to decay; objects flood the antiquities market or get hoisted back after lengthy legal procedures. What can be said about the antiquities trade and how does it impact academic research? We will also reflect upon the practical and ethical challenges of community archaeology today. What does talking about cultural heritage actually mean?

### CHRISTIANITY IN THE MID- DLE EAST

**CHAIR:** RIIKKA TUORI, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

DENOMINATION, HISTORY, LAN-  
GUAGE: BOUNDARY FOR-  
MATION IN LATE OTTOMAN  
SYRIAC CHRISTIAN NATIONAL-  
IST MOVEMENTS

**MICHAEL SIMS, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**

In the late Ottoman Empire, the Syriac Christians sought to promote their communal development and interests within a rapidly changing political and social system. As part of this process, church leaders and lay-intellectuals sought to define communal boundaries through overlapping and conflicting criteria of denomination, history and language. Within the church, this debate often focused on divisions between Orthodox and Catholic Syriac communities. However, an often-overlooked

debate is boundary-making between Syriac and Armenian Christians, who frequently intermarried, lived in shared spaces, and even shifted self-identification for emigration, property disputes or political representation. The challenge of delineating these communities was of importance for both church and Ottoman authorities as well as purveyors of nascent Syriac Christian nationalist movements. This paper explores this process and its long-term impact on Syriac Christian identity movements through examining discussions within two underutilized sources: contemporary Syriac Christian periodicals, and correspondence records of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate.

## CHOOSE LIFE. CHOOSE JERUSALEM. THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND THE 'HOLY CITY' 1945-1970

LAURA ARIKKA, ÅBO AKADEMI

The Ecumenical Movement, and especially the newly established World Council of Churches (WCC), started a more organized cooperation in the end of the 1940's, just a few years after the Second World War. The 'Holy land' had had major changes regarding colonial powers, new states, borders and new inhabitants. The area, and especially the city of Jerusalem was of a particular interest to the WCC. For the next twenty years, the WCC not only discussed about the importance of Jerusalem, but also acted to maintain the Christian presence and the status of the Churches in the city. This paper reveals the diplomatic and political acts by the WCC regarding Jerusalem between 1945 and 1970, found in the Archives of the organization. These findings paint a picture of a strong advocacy work by the WCC, while its public statements gave the public another picture.

## AN ORTHODOX-JEWISH VOICE FROM THE HOLY LAND: THE RABBINIC STATEMENT ON CHRISTIANITY (2015) EXAMINED

PEKKA LINDQVIST, ÅBO AKADEMI

An orthodox Jewish statement on Christianity, "To Do the Will of Our Father Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians", was issued in December 2015, promoting a new inter-faith partnership. It signals a shift in the (especially Israeli) Orthodoxy. The original signatories were rabbis mostly from Israel. The statement received both praise and harsh criticism. Very little scholarly discussion has been published. While the statement has to pass the test of time before anything can be said of its lasting importance, it is a noteworthy new opening. It is also primarily an Israeli initiative, which adds to its importance, since the high level theological Jewish-Christian dialogue has been mostly an European and American phenomenon. I will analyse the document and read it in the light of the long continuum of Jewish-Christian relations. I will also compare it with the earlier Dabru Emet – document, almost unanimously rejected by the Orthodox.

## DENOMINATIONAL MOBILITY AMONG PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS

MARI PARKKINEN, UNIVERISTY OF EASTERN FINLAND

The community of Palestinian Christians is relatively small, however, there are thirteen traditional denominations and several evangelical denominations present in Israel and Palestine. Living together has its benefits and challenges. This study examines the prevalence of denominational mobility among the Palestinian Christians and the reasons for it. The preliminary results suggest that denominational mobility is common among the Arab Palestinian Christians. The reasons for the denominational mobility include for example marital status, personal spirituality and economic benefits. The results further suggest that the crossing or switching denomination can cause tensions in the family and in the congregation. This study uses qualitative methods. Thirty-five Palestinian Christians participated in the study. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2017. The age distribution was from eighteen to eighty-one and the participants belonged to nine different Christian denomination.

## THE BOUNDARIES OF STATE INTERVENTION: DEALING WITH 'PROPERTY' IN MODERN SYRIA

CHAIR: RIINA ISOTALO

The present panel aims to historicize the relationship between the state and individuals through a reconsideration of the status of property. Law n°10, recently issued by Bashar al-Assad, aroused controversy as it allowed the regime to deprive certain citizens of their rights to own land. The terms of the debate quickly turned to sectarian issues and discussion of how the law enables the Syrian regime to override the Sunni majority and increase the access to property for the minorities. This panel departs from the sectarian hypothesis by highlighting how the very notion of property has been shaped by the emergence of the modern Syrian state (post Tanzimat era), and evolved alongside the dynamic of the state. Authorities have tried to encroach on local power through the definition of landowners' rights. By focusing on three different stages, the Ottoman period, the Independence, and the current time (from the war to post-conflict stage), the panel aims to explain how property has always been at the core of the dialogue between individuals and authorities, as both struggled to preserve or extend their prerogatives on the local stage. Studying the role and status of property underlines how the state exercised its power over its territory.

## THE COUNTRYSIDE AND LAND REGULATIONS IN THE OTTOMAN PROVINCES

VANESSA GUENO, AIX-MARSEILLE UNIVERSITY & IREMAM

The present communication aims to discuss the rural conflicts which arose from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman reform. While recent studies of the Syrian countryside have given an in-depth analysis of the economic aspects of these reforms, the new social relations and the evolution of the laws they engendered, research has focused on how the implementation – and first of all, the translation of the law – at the local stage affected the relations of domination between the notables ('ayān), who maintained ownership of the land, and the

farmers who worked on that land. Studying these relations allows us to understand the new relationship established between the Ottoman authorities and local elites. It also allows us to analyse the interpretation of the law, and explain how this legal category introduced by the reforms empowered some specific groups at the local stage, forcing the reorganisation of the political elites in Ottoman Syria. This presentation is based mostly on an in-depth reading of religious and secular tribunals (shārī' and nizāmī) in the Tabū archive.

## REFORMING PROPERTY LAWS, UNDERSTANDING PROPERTY REFORM

MATTHIEU REY, WITS UNIVERSITY - CNRS

This presentation focuses on the agrarian reform in Syria in the wake of the independence. Between 1946 and 1958, land ownership and social rights in the countryside aroused intense debate in the parliament, which ruled the country throughout this period (except during its suspension from 1952 to 1953). By highlighting the different proposals concerning land and social rights as well as the way the issues were interpreted by the different political parties (Baath, socialist, liberal, and Muslim Brotherhood), the present communication highlights how property, as a social, political and legislative category, reflected the scope of state intervention, in other words, how it was an area in which the authorities were conscious of and manipulated their status as a public power over local authorities. In many respects, the authorities during the Independence, often denounced as corrupted absentee landowners, inherited from the Mandate legacy, in which administration lacked of knowledge about properties. The government tried to change the situation by enforcing the power of the state as the embodiment of sovereignty. This course of action was not without its difficulties however. Therefore, an investigation into the nature and application of property rights allows us to understand the competitive view over the conception of the state.

## PROMOTING RIVALRY AND DIVISION TO IMPROVE CONTROL: A LOCALISED HISTORICAL

## ANALYSIS OF THE REGIME'S USE OF LAND REFORM IN THE QUSEIR AREA OF SYRIA (1966-2019)

MARIE KOSTRZ, EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

This paper aims to present a localised historical analysis of the Syrian regime's application of the 1958 land reform in the rural and borders area of Quseir, from the reform's implementation in 1966 until today. The paper argues that supporting a new form of social justice by nationalizing and restoring a fairer land access between big landowners and farmers has not been the only goal pursued by the Baath party and the Syrian regime. The paper looks at how the regime has used the reform to maintain political and land control over the territory by using land and property access as a tool for setting up networks of patronage, alternately building and breaking alliances with competing actors (tenant farmers, big landowners) depending on the country's political context and the regime's degree of fragility. I will explore how this policy, which damaged Quseir's social cohesion, contributed to the 2011 uprising in the region and the particularly violent civil war that ensued. The paper also specifically focuses on how land reform and property access, during the current transitional phase from wartime to post-conflict era, have been used by the regime to rebuild Quseir's population based on its degree of loyalty, in order to ensure the regime's durability.

## CHANGING BILATERAL RELATIONS

MARTINA PONÍŽILOVÁ, UNIVERSITY OF WEST BOHEMIA

## BREAKING AND CHANGING RELATIONS; THE MOROCCAN-SAUDI ARABIAN CASE

MARIANNE ARINGBERG LAANATZA, LUND UNIVERSITY

Breaking and changing relations; the Moroccan-Saudi Arabian case During more than six decades Morocco and Saudi Arabia have been very close friends and allies, giving each other political support in inter-Arab affairs. Morocco has benefited enormously from Saudi financing. Suddenly there is a break. The new Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman did suddenly change the rules of the "game" in a way that was not acceptable to Morocco's king Mohammed VI. This development has an impact on both Morocco's position in inter-Arab context and in its Moroccan-Subsaharan context. Since Saudi Arabia cannot count on Morocco regarding the Saudi-UAE policy to isolate Qatar, support of the war Yemen etc. Saudi Arabia has suddenly started to support Algeria's policy in Western Sahara and POLISARIO. The paper highlights the consequences of this breaking and changing and analyses its possible impact also in a broader perspective.

## BOUNDARIES AND THE SAUDI-ISRAELI RELATIONS

ABDULAZIZ ALGHASHIAN, ESSEX UNIVERSITY

There have been many things that evolved since the 2011 uprisings in the Middle East, and the Saudi-Israeli relationship is no exception. In recent years, the shared security concern they share in Iran has led to speculation of covert Saudi-Israeli cooperation. There have been academic contributions claiming that there is an "unholy alliance" between Saudi Arabia and Israel (Davidson, 2013). I disagree with such conclusions as there are still significant boundaries and constraints due to Saudi identity. I argue that Iran caused Saudi Arabia and Israel to passively cooperate in recent years. My aim is to conceptualize the notion of cooperation by introducing "passive cooperation" as a way that enables Saudi Arabia to maintain the legitimacy of its identity, while reaching its mutual interests with Israel. My aim is to shed more light on the very misunderstood Saudi-Israeli relations. As result, the Saudi-Israeli boundaries are there, but they are shifting.

## AGREEMENT OF ALGIERS (1975): RELIABILITY IN DOUBT

ALI GRANMAYEH, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

The Agreement of Algiers was initially negotiated by the Shah of Iran and Vice-President of Iraq in March 1975 in Alger, signed by the foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq in June 1975 in Baghdad and registered at the United Nations in July 1976, put an end to longstanding border dispute between the two Muslim countries in the Middle East. However, it was unilaterally violated by Iraq five years after the conclusion. Iran and Iraq signed the agreement under different circumstances. Confident of its superiority, Iran intended to clarify the situation of its borders with Iraq and secure its legitimate rights in the Shatt-al-Arab international /navigable river. On the contrary, Iraq wanted to keep the status quo and adamant with Iran's repeated request for settlement of border disputes. In particular, Iraq had maintained a claim that the Shatt-al-Arab was an Iraqi waterway and that its navigable part should remain under Baghdad's exclusive control. As such, Iraq accepted the Algiers Agreement not willingly but forced to do so by its domestic problems, particularly the rebellion of Iran-backed Kurdish tribes. As soon as the powerful regime of Iran collapsed in February 1979 and Iran's armed forces was purged in upcoming months, Iraq took advantage to annul the Agreement of Algiers and declare a war against Iran in September 1980. The war ended in July 1988 without any achievement for belligerents but hundreds of thousands casualties and huge destruction in both countries. Once Iraq occupied Kuwait in 1990 and a multinational army was mobilized to expel the Iraqi forces from the occupied emirate, once again the Iraqi government was forced by regional circumstances to approach Iran for normalization of relations and revalidate the Agreement of Algiers. Following the downfall of the Baathist regime in 2003, the Iraqi Shiites seized an upper hand in Iraqi politics and consequently Iran became an influential power in Iraq. Yet, some Iraqi politicians have occasionally expressed dissatisfaction with the Agreement of Algiers and demanded a revision of some articles of this bilateral/international treaty in favour of Iraq.

This study should verify the origins of the Algiers Agreement, the attitude of international community towards it at the time of conclusion, annulment and revalidation of agreement, and its reliability in the wake of changing politics in Iraq and floating relationship between Baghdad and Tehran.

## THE GEO STRATEGIC CHALLENGE FOR LAUNCHING A NEW REGIONAL SECURITY ORDER: THE IRAQI – SYRIAN CASE

AHMAD SHIKARA, ARAB INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

Defeating ISIS militarily in Iraq and Syria should create a conducive political environment for the two countries to engage in strengthening military capabilities across contiguous boundaries. Interpretative qualitative and analytical methods are used to follow up the dynamics of regional security such as the infiltration of ISIS remnants from crossing Syrian – Iraqi boundaries. The aim centres on launching a new regional Geo-strategic order starting with the determined Syrian and Iraqi efforts to stabilise security across their mutual boundaries. However, the conclusions has real-politic dimensions though admittedly shrouded with uncertainty due to the persistence of the Syrian crisis with all the critical internal and external ramifications. Furthermore, the eventual outcome of Iraqi internal reformation efforts of Adel Abdul Mahdi's new government creates public and regional optimism but has yet to build a "New Iraq".

## GENDER BOUNDARIES, BODILY EXPERIENCE AND PUBLIC SPACE

CHAIR: SYLVIA AKAR, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITION AND ITS MODERN

## COMPONENTS IN PRESENT DAY INTERIOR OMAN

KAJSA AMUNDSEN, UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

This paper explores the significance of tradition in interior Oman and analyses how to behave “traditionally” today require modern means. It is based on a ten-month fieldwork in the Dakhiliyah-region in 2014, a region regarded as the most traditional and religious part of Oman. The women I spent time with proudly framed practices and choices as traditional. At the same time, they had a generally positive attitude toward (right kind of) change, and they were highly technologically updated. Unformal and formal visits is seen as the core of traditional behaviour, and serves as the empirical basis of this paper. Emphasising the artificial separation between modernity and traditionality, this paper explores how modern means, such as smartphones, have become an essential part of acting traditionally. I argue that today modern technology is necessary to fulfil many traditional social obligations and for the women to show their religious, moral and traditional identity.

## RESHAPING GENDERED BOUNDARIES IN JORDAN: YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES BUILD NEW CONCEPTS OF GENDER RELATIONS IN THE COUNTRY

IVANA COSMANO, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

This paper sheds light on Jordanian educated youth’ stories of resistance to dominant models of womanhood and manhood imposed by the country’s socio-cultural conventions. Traditionally, Jordan is a patriarchal society which inscribes men and women into a culturally “gender-appropriate” script that defines people’s behaviour, life-expectations, and aspirations within society. However, Jordan is a young and flourishing country characterized by a thriving and well-educated youth who is willing to promote change by subverting social restrictions and overcoming gender norms. Drawing upon examples of a variety of youth-led projects - such as the Slam Poetry Underground and SheFighter - which aim to promote change by addressing controversial gender-related issues, this paper highlights young Jordanians’ struggle to cross old gendered boundaries and to create new ones. Based on

extensive research fieldwork in Amman, this paper gives voice to the often-neglected Jordanian youth whose potential for change is yet to be explored.

## BODIES AT THE MARGINS?

MARIE BJERRE ODGAARD, AARHUS UNIVERSITY

In recent years research on Muslim-majority contexts increasingly focus on the body and gender in terms of boundary-drawing efforts in and (especially?) on Middle Eastern and Arab countries (Abu-Lughod 2013, Massad 2007). From an anthropological perspective, this leaves us with a pressing question - namely how to understand bodily orientations in Muslim-majority societies, without digging deeper into narratives of self-discovery (Foucault 1978) or resorting to name particular identities or communities through a “Westernized” gaze (Boellstorff 2005). In this article I draw on fieldwork in Amman, Jordan, as I give examples of how a number of men and women relate, in different ways, to the implications that language and ideas about the body have in terms of their own bodily experiences. Concludingly I draw the contours of boundary-crossing discoveries take place in spaces inhabited by multiple others, and how bodily experiences are (and have been) extending into visual arts and (semi)public performance.

## GEOGRAPHIES OF INTIMACY: MAPPING THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF INTIMATE SPACES WITHIN THE STATE-SANCTIONED PUBLIC SPHERE IN IRAN

KIANA KARIMI, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Even though spatial studies after Henri Lefebvre have shown the plasticity of space as a social and cultural construct, the scholarship on public sphere in Islamic societies continues to be dominated by reductive and essentialist boundaries of public versus private, religious versus secular, and male versus female. This paper brings examples of daily life in Tehran that underscore the role of women in the re-configuration and appropriation of state-regulated public space toward their use and needs. On the metro-line, streets and in bazaar, Iranian women use informal, direct and intimate performances, borrowed from the

customs of the private space, that create ephemeral sites of social bonding and social intimacy in an otherwise formal, mediated and segregated public space. These daily performances map on the city a transient geography of agentive bonding that defy the official and ideological borders and demarcation of space. This paper tentatively calls this mapping "geographies of intimacy": sites, locales and movements in which the formal borders of space are crossed toward producing temporal social intimacy. Paying attention to these performances underscores the fluidity of ideological borders in the face of daily demands of life, and underlines the political potentiality of citizen's gestures, behaviors and performances in producing unmediated connection and collective identity.

## SPACES BEYOND: LIVING AND GOVERNING THE SPACES OF OCCUPATION IN PALESTINE

CHAIR: MIKKO JORONEN

This panel deals with the questions related to the interconnectedness of different spaces and spatialities, with particular focus on the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It aims to bring together manifold ways through which spatial relatedness operates, for instance in relation to different temporalities, questions of citizenship and gender, co-constitution and interdependency of different sites, and the ways of using spatial relations as means to govern (and resist the violence of) occupation. Specifically, the panel deals with the following issues: the ways of constituting future and past as embedded to the present conditions of Palestinians living in refugee camps; biopolitics of checkpoints and its effects on gender and spaces of family life; the (b)ordering of uneven gender relations and the demographical object of ethnically cleansing West Bank through the Israeli spousal VISA restrictions; and the ways in which (settler) colonial violence is spatialized into negotiated precarities in Palestinian communities under threat of eviction, displacement and land appropriation.

## THE EFFECTS OF CHECKPOINTS IN PALESTINE ON WOMEN AND THE HOME

JEMIMA REPO, NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

This paper examines the gendered effects of the 'separation barrier' in occupied Palestine in the context of Israeli settler colonialism. From 4am every morning, thousands of Palestinian men spend up to two hours waiting to pass through Israeli checkpoints to work in Israel in pursuit of higher wages. Drawing on a series of interviews with women whose husbands undertake the daily commute through Checkpoint 300 near Bethlehem, we analyse the impact of the gendered restrictions and consequences of the border technology on their everyday family lives. We examine three aspects in particular; first, the temporal effects that keep men away from the home and the family; second, the negative psychological impact of the checkpoint on couple and family relations; and third, the effect on the sexual division of labour in the home in the absence of the husband. We conclude that the disciplinary effects of the checkpoint extend beyond the physicality of the checkpoint, governing relations, affects and power relations in the intimate space of the home.

## POLITICS OF FUTURE IN PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS

TIINA JÄRVI, TAMPERE UNIVERSITY

From the beginning of their refugeeness, Palestinians have aspired to return to the homes. The call for the right of return has been the premise for the Palestinians political struggle, it was the objective around which Palestinian resistance was organized, and it currently manifests itself not only in political discourse but also in the materiality of the refugee camps. However, since the beginning of the Oslo process, refugees have felt increasingly marginalized in the political arena, and the worsening political and economic realities around Middle East continues to deteriorate their living conditions. In this paper, based on ethnographic fieldwork in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan and West Bank, I contemplate the ways my refugee interlocutors negotiate their aspirations aiming to answer the pertinent needs of their everyday life in relation to the political call for return. I discuss, in particular, how the imagining of

future(s) brings together different spatialities and temporalities, and how ambiguities of everyday life reflect to, what I call, the politic of future.

## MARRIAGE UNDER OCCUPATION: ISRAEL'S SPOUSAL VISA RESTRICTIONS IN THE WEST BANK

MARK GRIFFITHS, NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY

In the West Bank, hundreds of non-Palestinian women who are married to Palestinian men have recently been issued shortened visas with tightened restrictions. This means they are often prevented from working, their mobilities are severely reduced and they are placed in extremely precarious bureaucratic and procedural positions. The research in this article draws from fieldwork interviews with women affected by such restrictions to show how politically induced precarities produce gendered effects towards specific ends of the occupation of Palestine. We thus frame a discussion of the women's experiences of visa regulations through precarity before giving an account of the profound effects on women's roles in family and political life. We then broaden the focus to consider Israel's occupation of Palestine and the demographic implications of the gendered effects of visa precarity. In doing so we make the argument that Israel's spousal visa regulations contribute to

the (re)production of uneven gender relations and the demographic objective of emptying out the West Bank.

## NEGOTIATING COLONIAL VIOLENCE: SPACES OF PRECARISATION IN PALESTINE

MIKKO JORONEN, TAMPERE UNIVERSITY, FINLAND

This paper examines the ways in which colonial violence is transformed and spatialized into negotiated precarities at the occupied West Bank. The notion of 'negotiated precarity' is developed herein to refer to two aspects in particular. Firstly, to spatial compartmentalization, which show how the settler colonial power operates by creating precarious administrative zones, where the life of the colonized becomes prone to several flexible, negotiated uses of power. Secondly, negotiated precarity is used to refer to the conduct of the colonized that counter, transform, redirect, cancel or hamper the colonial spatialisations of power. By focusing on the 'negotiated precarities' in a singular West Bank village, I exemplify how the colonial governing is entwined to spatial compartments that enable several informal, indirect and ad hoc techniques of colonial violence, but also how the colonial governing is constantly mobilized, negotiated, countered and redirected in/through the everyday Palestinian spaces.

# THURSDAY, 15.8. 9.00 – 10.30

## SESSIONS IV

### RE-DRAWING THE POLITICAL BORDERS OF THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL: FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

**CHAIR:** GARETH STANSFIELD

**DISCUSSANTS:**

DAVID ROBERTS, DEFENCE STUDIES DEPARTMENT, KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

COURTNEY FREER, MIDDLE EAST CENTER, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

BIANCO CINZIA, INSTITUTE OF ARAB & ISLAMIC STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

MATTEO LEGRENZI, CA' FOSCARI U OF VENICE

The Gulf crises of 2014 and 2017 have arguably brought to the surface long-standing divergences in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), putting into question the founding rationale of the bloc: the existence of shared security perceptions regarding external threats. To a great extent these crises have shifted the focus of local regimes to threats emerging from within the region itself. More proactive, assertive policies both at a domestic and regional level have emerged as a consequence of heightened threat perceptions. Only a detailed, substantial review of these policies, can clarify how the political imagined boundaries are being redrawn both within the bloc and in the surrounding region. This roundtable would therefore investigate how the Gulf monarchies are evolving after the watershed year of 2011, analysing their cross-border economic, political and security activities, the manipulation of trans-national communities and identities, and the regionalization of their security agendas.

### A ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION: LIMITS OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

**CHAIR:** TIINA HYYPPÄ, FINNISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE

**DISCUSSANTS:**

MARC OWEN JONES, HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY

ANITTA KYNSILEHTO, TAPRI

BILGE YABANCI, STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE FOR TURKISH STUDIES (SUITS)

EHAB GALAL, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

MEZNA QATO, KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

In many of the countries researched in the Middle East and North Africa, the quite authoritarian regimes have imposed severe restrictions on freedom of speech and also academic freedom. In Turkey, for example, the AKP government has virtually waged “a war on academia” in recent years, but it is not the only country in the region limiting research. In some other countries the restrictions have more to do with deep-seated sensibilities and taboo-like topics, some countries might monitor the use of social media. In this round table session researchers working on and in different countries discuss these limitations. What kind of issues a researcher needs to take into consideration when planning and doing the research? What about publishing the results or engaging in critical public debates on the topics researched or wider social and political issues in the region? What kind of consequences can a researcher be faced with?

## IMAGERY AND INSPIRATION

CHAIR: MIKKO VIITAMÄKI

### THE PAST IN THE PRESENT — AN ESSAY IN COMPONENT ANALYSIS (BASED ON CONTEMPORARY FICTION)

STEPHAN GUTH, IKOS - UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

In their attempts to assess the present state of affairs, Arab fiction authors and film directors increasingly assign the past a crucial role in their cultural production. At times, the past comes along as something hidden that must be revealed to overcome a trauma; at others, it continues to haunt the protagonists who are unable to get rid of it; very often, it serves as a contrastive foil, evoking the “good old days” or simply relativizing the present by pointing to repetition and/or continuity; in historical novels, present dilemmas are discussed in disguise, as scenarios of long by-gone times; most often, however, authors/directors turn to the past as the period that produced the present. Based on selected pieces of contemporary fiction (written and cinema) and equipped with the methodological tool of Component Analysis, the paper seeks to identify the role of the past in the authors/directors’ world views.

### IMAGERY IN SA‘DI’S ADVICE AND INJUNCTIONS IN GERMAN TRANSLATIONS OF GOLESTĀN

NINA ZANDJANI, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

When the philosopher Loqman is asked from whom he had learned adab, he answers: from those without adab (Sa‘di’s *Golestān* 1258, 2:20). This paper focuses on how the imagery connected to adab has been rendered in selected German translations of *Golestān* (Graf 1846, Bellmann 1982/1998 and Göpel 1997). The study compares and analyses various topics connected to adab, such as moderation, humility and generosity, expressed through areas from the natural world, e.g. animals, plants and colours; the human world, e.g. persons and parts of the human body; the social context, e.g. war, clothes and numbers; and the cultural tradition, e.g. Islamic and ancient Persian traditions (based on Schimmel 1984, 1992 and Zipoli 2009). The results show that even though various translation strategies have been applied when rendering the images,

a majority of the images have been kept in the German translations.

### THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS POETIC INSPIRATION IN ARAB CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE ISLAMIC DOCTRINE ON POETS AND POETRY

MAXIM YOSEFI, UNIVERSITY OF GÖTTINGEN

The paper focuses on the notions of inspiration in Arab culture as a factor that has greatly influenced Islamic teaching. Its premise is that popular pre-Islamic beliefs in inspiration through jinn had not been rejected, but rather approved, reinforced and reinterpreted by the new religion. The major hypothesis is that, maintained in the Arabic literary tradition and scholarly writings, pre-Islamic conceptions of preternatural inspiration have moulded important aspects of the central theological doctrines of Islam (such as inimitability, absolute truthfulness and divine eloquence of the Quran) and had a decisive impact on the centuries-long Islamic discussion of poets and poetry. To argue this, the paper applies discourse analysis and contextualises references to jinn in poetry and anecdotes about early Arab poets.

### DEPICTING AMMAN IN CONTEMPORARY JORDANIAN LITERATURE

ISMAEL ABDER-RAHMAN GIL, CA' FOSCARI UNIVERSITY OF VENICE

This work aims at studying the image and imaginary of Amman across the Jordanian literature. With this, we try to join two disciplines the literary and Arabic studies and, the social and cultural anthropology. Therefore, we aim to analyze Amman as a sociocultural independent system describing the social and political dynamics that led to creating “Ammani” as new identity paradigm and how this has been materialized in Jordanian literature, transforming from being a peaceful, picturesque or boring small city, to being a metropolis, a scenario of dystopian novels where class struggle, ethnic or religious internal wars and the crude violence of patriarchy are present. With this work, we want to see how the growth of the city and its identity(ies) have manifested, described and represented from the

Jordanian writers and the reception it has among readers. For the selected texts, we have to do a deep reading and make a description and analysis of the different eras and how is Amman depicted politically, culturally and with the gender identities of its citizens according to the authors and/or the characters. For a better understanding of the context of each work, we also need to know the promotion and censorship policies present in the country, as well as the publishing market.

## BREAKING AND CREATING SOCIAL BOUNDARIES

CHAIR: HENRI ONODERA

### THE END OF BERBER'S MARGINALIZATION? THE BUILDING OF NEW MOROCCAN PLURAL IDENTITY AFTER THE ARAB SPRING

KATARZYNA BRATANIEC, ANDRZEJ FRYCZ MO-DRZEWSKI KRAKOW UNIVERSITY

The paper aims to present the Berber minority in the context of the Morocco's history and formation of the modern Moroccan nation, with special focus on Berber women's position in the society. The struggle for empowerment of Berber women is linked to a broader process of recovery of the Berber identity within the sphere of culture and language and to the activity of the Moroccan women's organizations advocating for gender equality in the Kingdom. In the Berber community woman, who stay in the countryside have no similar opportunities for learning Arabic, while most men are bilingual. The economic opportunities and life chances are strongly connected with gender. But woman have been crucial to the reproduction of language and identity. Due to the nature of the undertaken research problem, I used the historical-comparative method.

### THE ISSUES OF USING THE NEO-SHU'UBIYYA CONCEPT IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

ŠARUNAS RINKEVICIUS, VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

The neo-shu'ubiyya concept names the modern attempts of construction of non-Arab nationalisms and identities in the Middle East.

Since the 1960s scholars have revived the term shu'ubiyya in neo form as it was started to be observed that pan-arabism began its decline simultaneously being replaced by the quest for local identities based on non-Arab historical traditions and narratives and is no longer a universal goal shared by the whole region. The paper analyzes the use of the concept to name the undergoing processes in the Middle East considering the geographical and cultural boundaries for this concept in the light of current social and cultural practises observed in the recent years as well as the issues that scholars may face while adapting the neo-shu'ubiyya concept.

### THE IBADI NAHDA AND THE INTEGRATION INTO SUNNI ALGERIA

KNUT VIKØR, UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

The Ibadi minority in the Mزاب had for centuries lived in isolation in the Sahara. When French forces entered the oasis in the late nineteenth century, they forced an integration of the oasis and its religious group into an Algeria that was dominantly Sunni. This paper will examine how the political development influenced the revived legal discussion among the Ibadis, the so-called Ibadi nahda, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### EXPLORING SOCIAL BOUNDARIES IN THE OTTOMAN CONTEXT: CONCEPTS, SEMANTICS AND PRACTICES, 16TH TO EARLY 19TH CENTURIES

BARBARA HENNING, OTTO-FRIEDRICH-UNIVERSITÄT BAMBERG

The paper explores how Ottoman actors made sense of processes of social differentiation over time: How were boundaries between different groups in society being drawn, negotiated and – at times – transgressed, and how did the concepts of social boundaries, along with the semantics and imageries used to describe them, change over time? Adopting the perspective of conceptual history, the paper suggests some starting points for deliberations about Ottoman epistemologies of boundary making. It brings together two types of source material: Passages from political advice literature discussing social hierarchy and

boundaries from a normative perspective, and examples from court registers describing individual cases in which boundaries were being challenged. Read in conjunction, the material suggests that while the concept of *hadd* (Ottoman-Turkish for ‘boundary’) plays an important role, other aspects like the notion of an involuntary mixing (*ihtilat*) also need to be taken into account when inquiring about Ottoman ways of conceptualizing social difference.

## THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF POLITICAL ACTION IN THE MENA REGION

CHAIR: ROLA EL-HUSSEINI, LUND UNIVERSITY

This panel brings together papers by three students who explore various kinds of political action as they investigate the transformations of cultural resistance to Israeli Occupation in contemporary Palestinian theatre; the reconstruction of the traumatic events of the genocide by Ezidi poets as a means of understanding the past; and the migration policy of the Algerian government vis-à-vis refugees from Syria and migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. These projects are based on fieldwork and archival research conducted while working on their master’s theses at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, Lund University

## A TALE OF INTERNATIONAL PRODUCERS, NOT VICTIMS: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF A PALESTINIAN THEATRE IN A REFUGEE CAMP

IREM AYDEMIR, LUND UNIVERSITY

This ethnographic study of the Freedom Theatre (TFT) in the West Bank Jenin Refugee Camp explores the experiences of the artists and the audiences of TFT, and how they perceive the concept of anti-victimization as a form of cultural resistance, based on semi-structured interviews and notes from five-months of ethnographic fieldwork. This study examines the ways in which certain techniques are utilized in both local and global Palestinian circles of Palestine, challenging and going beyond the prominent, and most times

sole idea of *occupation* in the Palestinian mind, which is the conventional understanding of resistance until today. By examining how this specific theatre practice within the scope of *culture of resistance* challenges the constructs of victimhood, oppression, and subaltern, the TFT offers a new understanding of resilience and performativity, which accentuates a way out of *victimhood*, as a contemporary form of cultural resistance in the Middle Eastern context.

## AT THE CROSSROADS: ALGERIAN MIGRATION POLICY TOWARDS SUB-SAHARANS AND THE ROLES OF KEY PLAYERS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

LINDA EL-NAGGAR, LUND UNIVERSITY

Despite establishment of an Algerian migration profile in 2015, Algeria remains hesitant to establish a migration policy towards the increased flows of sub-Saharan migrants and refugees into the country. Researchers are divided about the political direction of Algerian migration policy, and have also neglected the roles of key players in the Mediterranean region in relation to sub-Saharan migration in Algeria. This study will use key-informant interviews with representatives of the EU, international organizations and civil society to explore the multifaceted layers of Algerian migration policy towards sub-Saharan migrants and refugees, and the relations between Algeria and other actors on migration policy. Knowledge of these factors is essential for a deeper understanding of Algeria’s migration profile. Questions raised in the interviews touch upon Algerian migration policy towards sub-Saharan migrants and refugees, and the relations between Algeria and the EU, international organizations and civil society on sub-Saharan migration.

## REPRESENTING A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE THROUGH ÊZÎDÎ POETRY

MAIRÉAD SMITH, LUND UNIVERSITY

The ethno-religious Êzîdî minority has just commemorated the fifth anniversary of their genocide. While justice has so far been

delayed and the international community slow to respond, Şingal Êzîdîs feel abandoned, living displaced from their ancestral home of Şingal in camps scattered across the Kurdistan region of Iraq. In the absence of formal mechanisms of documentation this research looks to a group of Şingal poets involved in documenting the events through Arabic prose poetry, and their reconstruction of memories of the past as a means for understanding the events that have occurred. A narrative analysis has been used on a selection of poems written and interviews conducted with five poets. Through reconstructing the past in the present, the poets narrate counter-histories which give access to untold experiences which are comprised of stories of the everyday in which violence is embedded. In doing so, the poets serve to document and historicise their suffering while rebuilding the foundations of the collective.

## DIS-ORDER IN MENA: THE POWER OF NARRATIVES, NARRATIVES OF POWER

CHAIR: WOLFGANG MÜHLBERGER

The proposed panel refers to a transdisciplinary book project entitled 'Political Narratives in the Middle East and North Africa - Perceptions of Instability and Conceptions of Order'. The conceptual framework is based on narrative as a lens for analysing the discursive communication of political entrepreneurs with in interest or a stake in the Middle East. It also refers to the levels of instability experienced in the region, in particular since the 2011 uprisings. Informed by this approach, it will be of particular interest to examine the functional interplay between narratives as sense-making tools and conceptions of order. To this end, we investigate political narratives on three levels: non-state actors, regional players and global powers. As contributors to the volume, the four panelists cover the entire range of actors, looking at the narrative dimension of a political movement (Tunisia's Al-Nahda), in bilateral conflicts (Israel-Palestine), as well as in Turkey's foreign policy or in the relationship between strategic partners (US and Egypt). The main editor will introduce to the topic with a concise conceptual outline on political narratives.

## THE EUROPEAN UNION'S EPIC CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF THE SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURHOOD: A NARRATOLOGICAL TAKE ON THE MEDITERRANEAN

MÜHLBERGER WOLFGANG, FINNISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (FIIA)

The European Union makes use of its foundational meta-narrative to propose an ideal type of political order – based on intergovernmentalism and the devolution of sovereignty – to the outside world. In the regional context of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), facing a mixed reception of this grand récit, its external action is molded on the rhetorical level into geopolitical concepts such 'neighbourhood', 'partnership' and the 'Mediterranean'. These terms simultaneously address issues such as proximity, vicinity and periphery, frame the quality of an asymmetric relationship and, in general, express a metaphorical understanding of the region. Yet these three paradigms and their respective discourses remain disjointed, lacking the elaborate plot-character of a coherent foreign policy narrative. Therefore, the epic grand narrative of the Union's inception, expansion and integration remains the sole distinct story for external projection in the EU's dealings with the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEM).

## CHASING THE WIND: CLASHES OF ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN NARRATIVES

OLLI RUOHOMÄKI, FINNISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (FIIA)

There are two clashing and seemingly irreconcilable master narratives present in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that revolve around what happened in 1948 with the formation of the state of Israel. The Palestinian narrative illustrates a people unjustly deprived of its land by invaders. The Israeli narrative on the other hand illustrates a justified return of the historically dispossessed diaspora to the land of their forefathers. Even if it appears that it is in their best interests to do so, neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians are able to officially acknowledge each other's master narratives, put the past behind and move forward. It is with this predicament in mind that the article examines how the Israelis and the

Palestinians have constructed their narratives and how they inform the policies and practices of respective governments.

## TURKEY AS THE ORDER-PRODUCING COUNTRY: NARRATING THE 'NEW TURKEY' IN THE MIDDLE EAST

TONI ALARANTA, FINNISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (FIIA)

This chapter analyses the political narrative rationalising and justifying Turkey's foreign policy in the post-2011 Middle East. It first detects the long-term traditions of strategic thinking in Turkey in order to demonstrate how these previous formulations have enabled or restricted the AKP's ability to produce intellectually and emotionally convincing narratives of Turkey's foreign policy. These narratives are contextualised by analysing them in tandem with other important actors' aspirations, also including assessments regarding the applicability of Turkey's foreign policy narrative.

## AMERICAN NARRATIVES OF ORDER-BUILDING IN THE MIDDLE EAST: DASHED VISIONS ON THE NILE

VILLE SINKKONEN, FINNISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (FIIA)

The present chapter takes stock of one manifestation of US foreign policy agency, namely, the narratives of order building that US administrations have employed vis-à-vis the MENA region in the post-9/11 era. It seeks to uncover how the narratives employed by the successive presidential administrations have evolved over the past seventeen years and to what extent these narratives are predicated upon different ways in which administrations fathom America's global role and US leadership &or 'hegemony' in an evolving and complexifying 21st-century world. In short, the order-building narratives bear contextualisation in terms of both, the broader global and regional &structural' developments and the domestic political context of the United States, which, especially in the current climate of political polarisation, plays a prominent role in predicating the content of US foreign policy discourse.

THURSDAY 15.8. 11.00 – 12.30

## SESSIONS V

### ISLAM AND SOCIETIES

CHAIR: ILKKA LINDSTEDT

#### MUSLIM RESPONSES TO THE SECURITY THREATS CAUSED BY ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

LAURA WICKSTRÖM, ÅBO AKADEMI UNIVERSITY

In response to the current ecological crisis, various representatives for Islam attempt, as do most religious traditions, to restore environmental and ecological values in their religious tradition. However, most of the Muslim intellectuals are engaged in other questions such as local and regional politics, equality questions, and the place of religion in the society. In spite of this there are an increasing number of Muslim scholars who occupy themselves with environmental issues. The understanding of climate and environmental changes as possible security threats in the Middle East has contributed to an increased comprehension of the environmental situation. Questions such as water distribution are of immediate interest and one challenge is how ecological questions could be emphasized in contemporary Muslim societies. The purpose of this paper is to present some Islamic ecological perspectives and how they are manifested today and look into the question of environmental changes and possible security threats.

#### EROSION OF CITY CORPORATISM: THE CASES OF MOSUL IN IRAQ AND TRIPOLI IN LEBANON

TINE GADE, NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (NUPI)

So far, scholars working on urban issues in the Middle East have mainly focus on capital cities or urban peripheries, neglecting secondary cities. In this paper, I argue that the most radical transformations in the Middle East in recent years have taken place in secondary cities that come in the shadow of the capitals from which the regimes rule. Mosul in Iraq, Tripoli in Lebanon and Aleppo in Syria represent such cities in which swathes of Sunni populations perceive themselves as dethroned in the affairs of the state. I argue that these secondary cities should be central to much of the crisis in the Middle East.

Secondary cities in Levant and Iraq had provincial capital status during the Ottoman Empire, but lost power at the creation of modern states under European colonial rule in 1920-1921. Thus, they emerged as hubs of resistance to the modern order. Secondary cities developed an exceptional 'city patriotism', anchored in a cross-class corporatist alliance against outsiders. Considered as capitals of Sunnism of their respective states, they were also more conservative than the cosmopolitan state capitals.

However, successive and competing mobilizations since 1960s gradually eroded and fragmented the sense of unity and loyalty to the city. In this context, Salafism offered a refuge for urban poor who had become alienated with state institutions.

The paper based on more than 300 interviews with politicians and Islamist leaders in Tripoli and Mosul, as well as secondary literature and primary sources in Arabic.

## BOUNDARIES OF INNOVATION: TURKISH RELIGIOUS POLITICS BETWEEN PEDAGOGIC INVENTIVENESS AND THEOLOGICAL TRANSGRESSION

TORSTEN JANSON, LUND UNIVERSITY

This paper discusses the Turkish state sponsored celebration of 'Holy Birth Week' (HBW), commemorating the birth of Prophet Muhammed. Successfully transformed from 2010 into a massive, national celebration, it was initially considered a success for the Islamically oriented AKP government. It however not only infuriated the secularist opposition: it spurred theological critique, alleging HBW to represent an unacceptable religious innovation (*bida*), leading to its discursive re-formulation and significant downsizing from 2017. Based on visual and textual analysis, this paper explores the HBW controversy as indicative of the current blurring of the sacred/secular, traditional/modern, public/private binaries in Turkish religio-politics in particular, and within moderate Islamist movements in general. Re-medialized and innovative celebrations sacralizes secular institutions and public spheres, while simultaneously secularizing religious practices and imaginations. Religio-pedagogical inventiveness thus requires delicate boundary-drawings, between aspirations to mobilization and sacred authority, and the dangers of transgressing institutional mandates, theological sensitivities and notions of authenticity.

## YOUTH AND RELIGION IN A LANDSCAPE OF CHANGE: THE ROLE OF IBADI-ISLAM IN THE CONTEMPORARY OMANI SOCIETY

CORINA LOZOVAN, LUND UNIVERSITY

This study focuses on understanding the role of Ibadi-Islam in the contemporary Omani society, by looking at how Ibadi traditions are present in the daily lives of young Omanis. They are considered the most educated generation since Sultan Qaboos came to power in 1970. The discovery of oil stimulated a profound development that had an impact on religion and mass religious education, which has brought new interpretations and challenges for the religious authorities. The fieldwork for this study provided data for analysis on how the Ibadi youth conceptualizes and practices Ibadi-Islam, considering the historical and religious changes in the Omani society. The various Ibadi traditions that are daily selected, reinterpreted and reproduced by them, the political and the religious elite can provide insight on how new formations of Ibadi traditions have established themselves and the influence they have on constructing the Omani identity.

## ANALYZING CONTEMPORARY ARAB AUTHORS

CHAIR: MIKKO VIITAMÄKI

### HOMOSEXUALITY AS A POETICS OF TRANSGRESSION IN RABIH ALAMEDDINE'S KOOLAIDS: THE ART OF WAR

KHALED GHAZEL, UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

In his book *Arab American Literary Fictions, Cultures, and Politics* (2007), Steven Slaita addresses Rabih Alameddine's debut novel, *Koolaid: The Art of War* (1998) and contends that the gay Lebanese-American author 'utilizes a fragmented narrative to subvert a host of truisms'; a stance previously advocated by Wail Hassan, who also argues in his article 'Of Lions and Storytelling' (2004) that the novelist 'subverts dominant discourses, ideologies, and sanctioned narratives,' particularly those pertinent to 'individualistic becoming and self-realization.' With these poetics of subversion in mind, I draw on the theme of homosexuality in *Koolaid: The Art of War* to explore how Rabih Alameddine transgresses 'conventional' sexual/gender boundaries not only as a 'liberating' medium through which new queer identities can be constructed in Lebanon/the Middle East, but also as a disruption of the dominant masculinist/heterosexual metanarratives being antithetical to homoerotic desire. In addition, I seek to point out how in *Koolaid: The Art of War* the queer characters' sexuality is shaped

as a position of dissidence and rebellion against the normative structures and boundaries of Lebanese/Middle Eastern sexual practices.

## THE SLOW SUBVERSION OF GENDER ROLES IN THE WORK OF THE SYRIAN WRITER ANISA ABBOUD

LOVISA BERG, DALARNA UNIVERSITY

Through subtle descriptions and a mixture of realism, history and fables the Syrian writer Anisa Abboud deconstructs the idea of specific gender roles in her novels. Through a close reading of her three latest novels the paper demonstrates how the concepts of masculinity and femininity, and in particular the destabilization of these set gender roles, function as a trope in Abboud's authorship through which she critiques the social order and the patriarchal society depicted in her novels. By using mythical figures and archetypal characters in new settings and circumstances she creates a gap in the mind of the reader between the expected behavior and the actual behavior of the character and through these gaps she elegantly pushes the boundaries of what the concepts of masculinity and femininity really comprises.

## THE APPEAL OF THE GOTHIC IN HASSAN BLASIM'S FICTION – IKRAM MASMOUDI

IKRAM MASMOUDI, UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

Acclaimed Iraqi writers are using gothic aesthetics and motifs to narrate a historical moment marred by ubiquitous violence, cultural crisis and disintegration. Hassan Blasim's stories are filled with unspeakable and 'unreal' violence. More than representing the irrational violence raging outside the texts in a realistic rendering, Blasim's fiction produces in the readers its own brand of violence by staging the horror that lies within, with paralyzing and terrifying effects. Drawing on some of Blasim's most powerful gothic stories – The Corpse Exhibition, The Iraqi Christ and The Green Zone Rabbit among others, I will show how in recycling an old western genre (Gothic) to narrate a barbaric present, Iraqi literary production may effect cultural critique and change.

## A PSEUDO-PROPHET UNMASKED: REREADING SEASON OF MIGRATION TO THE NORTH AS CRITIQUE OF POST-COLONIAL ELITES

MARTIN RIXINGER, AARHUS UNIVERSITET

Although widely considered as the most important Arab novel al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ's *Mawsim al-hijra ilā l-shimāl* (Season of Migration to North) from 1966 has only in the last two decades become an object of academic interest. Most of the secondary literature is however, influenced by post-colonialist approaches. As a consequence the protagonist Muṣṭafā Sa'īd is usually interpreted as idea-conveyor speaking out truths about the identity dilemma the Arab World faces after colonization. Such interpretations neglect the literary devices with which the author distances himself from the self-stylization of the protagonist as a Prophet. Furthermore the bombastic phraseology the protagonist used as an anti-colonial intellectual and the violent attitude to women during his London years is contrasted with the modest and pragmatic service for the local community to which he dedicated himself after settling in a small town on the Nile.

## THE PAST AND THE FUTURE WITHIN THE PRESENT: NARRATIVES OF PEOPLE, STATE AND GLORY IN THE CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE EAST

CHAIRS: CARL ROMMEL, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI & LIINA MUSTONEN, INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER

In many places in the world, narratives of the past are mediated by nostalgia. These narratives often construct a home or a place that no longer exist or perhaps never existed. In the same vein, projects

led by states, civil society or marketing agencies (to name a few) build on dreams and ideas of a better future. Also in the Middle East people narrate stories about the past and dream about the future; and like elsewhere in the world the states in the greater Middle East region try to buy legitimacy by convincing their citizens that the past was glorious and that the future will be better. In this panel we look into interlinkages between such narratives and analyse their effects within the contemporary political and socio-economic settings in which they are expressed. Focusing specifically on cases in Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon and Yemen, the papers in this panel explore the ways in which dominant narratives are constructed against the contemporary realities in the greater region. We aim to shed light to the greater purpose of these narratives and ask: how are they connected to time and space on the one hand, and citizens' worries about their contemporary circumstances on the other? And what are the political projects that motivate these narratives? How do they benefit the state or the people in power? All in all, the panel explores what dominant narratives of particular spaces in the greater Middle East tell us about the present. Hence, we ask how do narratives of the past and future shape people's realities and, what are the ways in which they help to construct concrete state policies.

## THE GARBAGE STATE: NARRATING THE (NON)GOVERNANCE OF BEIRUT LITTORAL

SAMULI LÄHTEENAHO, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Politics of waste and state have been at the fore in Lebanon since a Summer 2015 waste crisis and the state's incapability of solving it. Social movements quickly took up slogans that played on themes of refuse and government as a rescaled critique of the Lebanese state. Four years later, issues of waste governance persist, and the motif of a "trash state" is still frequent. Focusing on littoral public spaces in Beirut through understandings of publicness and state responsibility as related to waste, this paper looks at how presence and absence of state are narrated. Tracing a popular ambivalence in relating to the state, the paper examines ways people encounter the state on the city's coastline. The paper suggests that understandings of public, and where one may face the state, are as fluid as the untreated sewage flowing down to the sea, in a process ever recalibrating relations between state and society.

## SEAMLESS THREADS AND BROKEN TIMELINES: MENDING CARPETS AS MATERIAL CRITIQUE AT THE ISTANBUL GRAND BAZAAR

PATRICIA SCALCO, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Founded in the 15th century, the Istanbul Grand Bazaar has retained across centuries its main characteristics as a place of trade. As old as the Bazaar, the commerce of kilims and carpets, remains one of the Bazaar's most iconic trades. Grounded in ethnographic research, this paper explores the notion of temporal endurance through an analysis of the role of the 'repairman' (tamirci) in the context of the carpet trade. This highly skilled weaver is responsible for mending rugs with various types of damage, restoring the piece, as much as possible to their original status. Yet, in the light of the market's preference for vintage and antique carpets, the repairman can also be employed by carpet sellers to mend 'temporal gaps', skilfully building the passage of time into otherwise contemporary rugs. The paper focuses on this practice to reflect on the material and temporal inconsistencies and (dis)connections this form of mending attempts to account for.

## INVITING DESTINATIONS, NO VISA: DREAMS OF COSMOPOLITAN BELONGING ON THE SOUTHERN SHORE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

SENNI JYRKIÄINEN, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Egypt's second biggest city Alexandria, this paper addresses young people's dreams of cosmopolitan belonging and ideas of their city as part of the wider world. It focuses on debates about belonging on digital platforms among technologically adept, middle class people, linking the theme of connecting with the 'outside' with nostalgic narratives of Alexandria's 'cosmopolitan' past. The paper suggests that connecting with people around the world through new technologies has enabled young Alexandrians to extend their social worlds and relationships to faraway places and people but has also resulted in disappointing encounters where some people felt that

matters of citizenship and ethnicity heavily restrained their dreams of cosmopolitan belonging. This paper combines ethnographic research with the examination of online debates on Alexandria's location within the Egyptian state and the Mediterranean region. The paper shows some ways of navigation in relation to multiple restrictions, including visa policies.

## THE STATE AS A PROJECT: STORIES OF FUTURES, VALUES AND MEGA PROJECTS IN CONTEMPORARY EGYPT

CARL ROMMEL, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

In contemporary Egypt, everyone talks about and dreams of projects, large and small. On the one hand, men from all social backgrounds are on the hunt for a small business – a 'project' (mashru') that could provide additional income to strained family budgets. On the other, the military-dominated state is investing heavily in mega projects: a new Suez Canal, a new capital, fish farms and industrial zones. Based on ongoing ethnographic fieldwork in Cairo, this paper delineates how projects are narrated, by state actors, in the media, and in everyday conversations. It illustrates how Egyptians assign immense hope to the ability of circumscribed projects of investment and action to generate more prosperous futures, but also how such aspirations have long been thwarted by defunct infrastructures and poor maintenance. As such, I conclude, to what extent can the predicament of the Egyptian state be narrated as a promising but ultimately dysfunctional project?

## “GO FORWARD TO THE GLORIOUS PAST”: NARRATIVES OF EGYPT'S PAST IN 2012

LIINA MUSTONEN, INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER

This paper discusses the politics of the oldest and most famous sporting club in Egypt during the politically tense period that followed the Egyptian uprising in 2011. Dissatisfied with the physical infrastructure of the sporting club and its changing membership, some of the members of the club found refuge in the narrations of the Club's "glorious past". They advocated for a "return to the past" as in their accounts it would provide them a better future. But what was better in the club in the past? And what are the ways in which the dissatisfaction with the sporting club reflect the then prevailing political tension in the country. By combining an analysis of literary narrations of the sporting Club's "glorious past" and my ethnographic fieldwork in the very same club in late 2012 and in 2013, the paper illustrates how the narrative of the club's glorious past was shaped by the politics of the period. In specific, the paper sheds light to the boundaries that these narratives drew between different groups of people.

## ASSYRIAN IDENTITY IN A CHANGING WORLD

CHAIR: DAN-ERIK ANDERSSON, LUND UNIVERSITY

The situation for the Assyrian people has changed dramatically during the last decades. The number of Assyrians still living in their historical homeland, i.e., in parts of today's Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran, has substantially decreased. A growing number of Assyrians and an increasing part of the total Assyrian population is now living in Western diaspora, in countries like Sweden, Germany, the USA and Australia. In this new environment they face new challenges. Physical survival is not at stake, but cultural survival is. The threat is not genocide, but assimilation.

In this panel we will look at these challenges. What is left of the original visions of the Assyrian national movement? What place do religion have for modern Assyrians? How do young Assyrians in diaspora form their identity?

## WHAT IS LEFT OF THE IDEOLOGY OF THE ASSYRIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

NICHOLAS AL-JELOO, KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY

The Assyrian national movement has its origins in the native intellectual circles that resulted from the burgeoning educational systems of Qajar Iran and the late Ottoman Empire, developing into a secular nationalist ideology by the end of the nineteenth century. Its development was stunted by the Assyrian Genocide (1914-1925) and Simmel Massacre (1933), which led to a stigmatization of the movement, particularly by certain Assyrian Christian denominations, which began to disassociate from it and encourage their own sectarian-based “national” identities. Despite these setbacks, the second half of the twentieth century witnessed the establishment of Assyrian political parties and the entrenchment of the Assyrian national movement among communities worldwide. With the tragic circumstances in Iraq and Syria, depopulation and emigration has meant that their numbers in the Middle East have dwindled drastically. This paper will explore the consequences of this on the Assyrian national movement, and prospects for an uncertain future in the region as an ultra-minority.

## RELIGION AND ASSYRIAN IDENTITY

SVANTE LUNDGREN, LUND UNIVERSITY

The Assyrians are, per definition, a Christian people from the Middle East. The church has always been of importance, not only for spiritual reasons, but also as a pillar for the Assyrian culture and language. Today, however, more and more Assyrians live in countries, not the least Sweden, which are among the most secular in the world. In his groundbreaking dissertation from 1999, the Swedish-Assyrian sociologist Fuat Deniz noted that in the diaspora religious belonging had become more irrelevant and Assyrians more and more opted for an ethno-nationalistic identification. Today, twenty years later, the fact is, however, that the Assyrian churches in Sweden attract substantially more people than the Assyrian secular organizations. This paper will discuss the reasons for this.

## EXPLORING IDENTITY AND RELIGION AMONG A GROUP OF ASSYRIAN/SYRIAN PUPILS IN SWEDEN

VICTOR DUDAS, UPPSALA UNIVERSITY

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to explore the identity and religion among a group of Assyrian/Syrian (a Swedish term for Assyrians, Syriacs, Arameans and other groups) pupils in Sweden (age 9-15 years; n=74). The group has a history as a minority in the Middle East. The existence as a minority continues today in Sweden where religion is present in the ethnic identification. Through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews the following results were generated. Religion was an important part of the identity of the pupils. Religion as well as language seemed to be intertwined with the ethnic identification as Assyrians/Syrians. Some of the pupils stated that they felt a responsibility to maintain and transfer their religion and language to coming generations. Expressing doubt regarding specific religious beliefs could be met by criticism from their parents and efforts to change doubt to faith.

## PERMEABILITY AND SALIENCE: SYMBOLIC AND SOCIAL BOUNDARIES IN TURKEY UNDER AUTHORITARIAN PRESSURE

CHAIR: PAUL T. LEVIN, STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE FOR TURKISH STUDIES (SUITS)

In recent years, Turkey’s tumultuous socio-political landscape under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has received tremendous scholarly attention. However, the ‘authoritarian turn’ of Turkey has been mostly associated with formal institutional erosion, such as the capture and control of formal democratic institutions by the executive. The institutionalist approach falls short of explaining how authoritarianism affects dynamic social relations, such as social group formation, contentious politics and everyday life. This panel aims to study the diffusion and contestation of ethnic, class, gender, national and communal boundaries in Turkey within the context of its ‘authoritarian turn’ with multidisciplinary insights from political science, sociology, and anthropology. It demonstrates that while authoritarian regimes seek to reify homogenous collective identities out of the heterogeneity of individual and group boundaries through disciplinary and

institutional structures, the topdown homogenization attempts are challenged by various societal actors through new social, cultural and political practices by creating permeable boundaries. Using original fieldwork data, panelists integrate insights from social movements, urban studies, collective violence, and nationalism literatures to examine how boundaries are reconstituted, challenged and crossed under authoritarian regime dynamics.

## RETHINKING THE BOUNDARIES IN EVERYDAY LIFE: A SPATIAL APPROACH TO KURDISH QUESTION OF TURKEY

SEREN SELVIN KORKMAZ, STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY

As Henri Lefebvre discusses the social space is made up by the networks and channels which are the integral part of the everyday life. Thus, everyday life is an area where the ethnic, spatial and class-based boundaries in society are created, blurred and recreated. My research examines the social exclusion of Kurdish population of Turkey. I argue that Turkey's Kurds have witnessed different exclusion processes in different geographies of Turkey and Kurdish identity is defined and recreated in the interrelations between space, identity and class in the everyday life. Thus, to analyze Kurdish Question as a whole impedes to observe the everyday resistance of Kurdish population towards the state and various incorporation stories. That is why, my research aims to shift the attention to an alternative approach which focuses on the political economy and everyday life together. Rather than a time-centered analysis, I offer a space-centered analysis of Kurdish question.

## MANEUVERING ACROSS AMBIGUITIES AND BOUNDARIES: NEGOTIATIONS OF NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

EROL SAGLAM, STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY, INSTITUTE FOR TURKISH STUDIES (SUITS)

A considerable volume of scholarly corpus has extensively dealt with how national identities have historically been forged out of a multitude of experiences through a series of political, economic, sociocultural, and technological interventions (Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm 2004; Gellner 1983). These accounts have also pertinently explored how states around the world strived and struggled to generate a homogeneous identity through linguistic, cultural, educational, and juridical policies. In the Turkish context, too, such nationalist agenda of the state has been thoroughly analyzed both through its institutional enactments (e.g., promoting the use of Turkish across schools and discouraging/banning the use of minority languages in public) and how resistance to this socio-cultural homogenization has faced a violent oppression (e.g., discrimination against non-Muslim minorities and oppression of Kurds) (see, Yegen 2004; Ozkirimli 2000; Ustel 2005; Ungor 2011). And yet, how Turkish identity in contemporary Turkey still bears ambiguities through which nationalist imaginaries and boundaries are incessantly re-negotiated, subverted, and breached in the everyday life has rarely been explored through its everyday entanglements. Drawing on an ethnographic research in northeast Turkey, this paper explores how Greek-speaking and yet Turkish-nationalist communities indeed performatively dismantle nationalist boundaries and bring together what are thought to be mutually exclusive identities (Greek vs. Turkish), forcing us to rethink the scope and everyday maintenance of contemporary identities.

## CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AND COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE AND CHANGING INTERGROUP BOUNDARIES FROM DEMOCRATIZATION TO DE-DEMOCRATIZATION

IMREN BORSUK, STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR TURKISH STUDIES (SUITS)

This article addresses an ethnic conflict puzzle: How does de-democratization affect intergroup boundaries? While the EU-induced democratization in Turkey gave way to the increase of communal violence against Kurds over the last decade, the growing state's monopoly over the means of ethnic violence under the impact of democratic backsliding has decreased it in recent years. However, the popular anger and communal violence have changed the target and diverted from Kurds into Syrian refugees. Locating communal violence into contentious politics literature and focusing on the

mobilization process, this article discusses how intergroup boundaries between Turks, Kurds, and Syrians have changed and why the targets of communal violence veered from Kurds into Syrians in a context of dedemocratization.

## BREAKING AND BRIDGING THE 'US/THEM' DIVIDE: NEW FORMS OF CIVIC MOBILIZATION UNDER AUTHORITARIAN PRESSURE

[BILGE YABANCI, GRAZ UNIVERSITY](#)

Particularly in the aftermath of the 2016 coup attempt, the ruling Justice and Development party (AKP) has pushed its authoritarian agenda through religious, political and gender/sexual polarization. This study looks into new civic mobilizations that challenge, contest and seek to bridge the social and symbolic boundary imposed and entrenched by the AKP. The study particularly focuses on (i) the new forms of grassroots women's collective action defying the religious versus secular women dichotomy and (ii) dissident Islamist-leftist networks that seek to create shared definitions of justice and class issues across the left-right boundary. Based on interviews with activists, the study aims to answer 'what collective actions and mechanisms do these groups that initiate and constitute boundary change?' and 'What roles do they play in contesting authoritarian power structures in Turkey?' Overall, the study contributes to the understanding of the role of creative and novel forms of cross-boundary encounters and conversation and the ensuing civic resistance to authoritarian regime dynamics.

## TRANSCENDING THE BOUNDARIES OF LAW, EDUCATION, RESIDENCE, AND CULTURE: PALESTINIANS AND MIZRAHI JEWS BETWEEN STATE AND NON-STATE ACTIONS

[ORGANIZER: KIMBERLY KATZ](#)

[CHAIR: ORIT BASHKIN, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO](#)

The 1948 Palestine War produced porous physical and cultural borders between each of the surrounding Arab states and Israel. How did the implementation of new borders complicate people's movements? How did life in border communities take shape in educational and cultural forms? How did the arrival of Mizrahi Jews complicate ethnic boundaries between Arabs and Jews and between Jewish and Arab spaces? This panel considers Palestinians' efforts to transcend the Jordan-Israel geographical boundaries imposed through legislation and the Jordanian educational boundaries that narrated a particularly Hashemite Jordanian legacy. In the first case Palestinians were arrested for committing a crime in crossing the border; in the second case Palestinians sought to enhance their socio-economic mobility and their nationalist sensibilities. Moreover, the Israeli state wished to construct boundaries between European and Arab Jews through the construction of transit camps. In other cases, however, Palestinians insisted on boundaries between cultures, as a way of resisting cultural appropriation. The nonstate Palestine Liberation Organization's efforts in this regard shifted Palestinian culture into the realm of resistance.

## PALESTINIANS AS "INFILTRATORS": THE JORDAN-ISRAEL BORDER FOLLOWING THE 1948 WAR IN PALESTINE

[KIMBERLY KATZ, TOWSON UNIVERSITY](#)

This paper examines the application of Jordanian law to Palestinians living in the West Bank following the 1948 War that left many Palestinians on one side and their homes and fields on the other side of the 1949 Jordan-Israel Armistice line. As Palestinians adapted to life as Jordanian citizens but, often, also as refugees, I argue that they did not see the border as an obstacle to reaching their lands or traversing it, notwithstanding the legalities and local/international laws and armistice agreements. Palestinians crossed the border for grazing purposes, selling and buying, transporting currency considered illegal, among many other reasons, the more personal seemingly not recorded in arrest

records. Analysis of case studies of border crossings, penalties applied, and socio-historical circumstances offer a framework for rethinking what scholars and politicians have referred to as infiltrations by Palestinians who ignored a border that has not existed a few years prior.

## PEDAGOGICAL FUGITIVITY: SEAM ZONE SCHOOLING IN THE WEST BANK, 1948 – 1954

[MEZNA QATO, KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY](#)

After the 1948 war and the dispossession of most Palestinian refugees into Jordanian territory, a massive educational infrastructure was developed to accommodate the needs of students. This educational system provided the newly-expanded Jordanian kingdom with a tool by which they hoped to reproduce and consolidate a state narrative that could both denationalise Palestinian youth and implicate them into Hashemite legitimacy. Concomitantly, however, Palestinians too came to regard education as a vehicle for mobility and security in precarious times. This paper focuses on the schools in the frontier villages on the border between Israel and Jordan, and proposes the concept of pedagogical fugitivity in order to understand how education came to be enacted by teachers and students. Through the use of institutional archives, memoirs, oral histories, and intelligence reports, this paper asks, between Palestinian nationalist stirrings and desires for class mobility, what precisely did Jordanian education do, and what was done with it?

## “A PEOPLE WHO SING SHALL NEVER DIE”: MOBILIZING THE BOUNDARIES OF PALESTINIAN POPULAR CULTURE IN THE 1970S

[TOUFOUL ABOU-HODEIB, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO](#)

This paper looks at the Palestine Liberation Organization's promotion of Palestinian culture in the 1970s. As part of its state-building project in exile, the PLO promoted several Palestinian cultural products and performative practices, such as embroidery, songs, and dabké dancing. The PLO's aim in this was twofold. On the one hand, by promoting the exhibition and performance of Palestinian culture around the world, the organization had the proclaimed aim of preserving it against disappearance. On the other hand, the PLO explicitly strove to counteract the appropriation and redefinition of Palestinian popular culture as Israeli culture. Focusing on the latter aspect, this paper explores reactions to Israeli initiatives that laid claim to the same cultural forms that the PLO promoted as Palestinian, and how the boundary thus constructed around what constitutes Palestinian popular culture became intimately tied with the notion of resistance.

## CROSSING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE TRANSIT CAMP: MIZRAHI JEWS IN 1950S ISRAEL

[ORIT BASHKIN, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO](#)

This paper studies the ways in which Middle Eastern Jewish migrants to Israel crossed the borders between Israeli urban centers and transit camps. During the 1950s, Middle Eastern Jews (Mizrahim) arrived in Israel. The state settled them in transit camps in tents and shacks, and supervised their movement to permanent housing. Mizrahi Jews, I suggest, resisted the state's settlement policies by squatting illegally and by fighting settlement plans in faraway locations. While individuals who disobeyed the government lost rights to state benefits, including food and labor, Mizrahi Jews wanted to stay close to big cities where they could eventually find jobs. In doing so, they challenged the state's intention to create borders between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi spaces and to populate the border zones with Mizrahim. The state, however, used violent means, especially police violence, against these squatters.

THURSDAY 15.8. 14.00 – 15.30

## SESSIONS VI

### STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

CHAIR: PEKKA TUOMINEN

#### THE (NEW) SOCIAL CONTRACT/ عقد اجتماعي IN THE MIDDLE EAST: FINALLY RECONCILING STATE AND NATION?

BERNHARD TRAUTNER, DEUTSCHES INSTITUT FÜR  
ENTWICKLUNGSPOLITIK

The presentation develops a conceptual framework for thinking about social contracts between the state on the one side, and society on the other, for a) analysis and b) policy prescription for social and political organization in the Middle East. The written or implicit social contract, applied not as a normative blue print of 'Western' origin but as an analytical tool is to be validated with local stake holders. It shall eventually substitute the highly conflictual focus by foreign policy and international cooperation actors on transforming or re-building the nation state. Reconstituting or rather: newly inventing state-society relations and building trust within society and its constituent groups comes on top of the challenge reconstructing the physical damages by the current wars in the region (cf. 'Toll of War' World Bank 2018). The paper discusses one case where stateness has been destroyed or at least seriously damaged even before the so called 'Arab Spring', Iraq (since 2003). It addresses the following research questions: First, at the conceptual level, which actors, factors and processes contribute to forging a sustainable social contract in MENA countries affected by violent conflict and state collapse? Second, at the empirical level, to which of these actors, in the case of Iraq as an example, does society turn to for providing the most crucial delivery of the contract, human security?

#### YOUTH VOTE IN TUNISIA: A FAC- TOR OF RISK FOR POLITICAL CONSOLIDATION?

BOSCO GOVANTES & ANTONIO ALFONSO, UNI-  
VERSIDAD PABLO DE OLAVIDE

The aim of this paper is to analyse Tunisia's democratic status through the experience of the vote (or not vote) of the young electors in the Municipal elections in May 2018. In order to analyse this features, we perform an extensive data analysis of the electoral results of the Municipal elections in 2018, both globally and locally, combining this quantitative information with qualitative data obtained on the field interviews to political and social elites. This fieldwork took place during pre-electoral, electoral and post-electoral periods. One of the most relevant elements of this electoral process was the extraordinarily low turnout, 35.6% among registered voters (17% of the potential voters) and the astonishing level of disaffection towards the traditional parties, especially remarkable among young voters. In fact, a big percentage of these electors preferred to vote to independent list not linked to the parties. Independent lists obtained altogether more support (32.9%) than any single political party did (winning party Ennahda, obtained 28.6%). This election had, additionally, an important effect on the national political dynamics. Among others, the decomposition of the ruling party, Nida Tounes, due to its internal divisions or the cancellation of the Carthage Agreement supporting the National Unity Government. The current research analysis through vote data the political behaviour of the young voters, particularly affected by the social and economic crisis, and its effect in the current crisis of the political system, which is a major factor of risk for the consolidation of the democratic transition.

#### REVERSING THE COOPTATION ARGUMENT: THE RELEVANCE OF STATE-AFFILIATED CIVIL SO- CIETY

GOLROKH NIAZI, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Cooptation is frequently invoked by researchers in the MENA region to explain the failure of civil society institutions like labor unions, elsewhere understood to be effective challengers to state power. In this paper, I will argue that cooptation does not automatically render an organization ineffective as an agent for democratic change. By deconstructing the concept of cooptation and using data collected during 9 months of fieldwork on the Tunisian General Labor Union, I will present civil society as an abstract superstructure built from the assimilation of its heterogeneous subunits, within which a diverse membership engages in politics. Drawing insight from Taylor's theory of 'abeyance structures', I will show how during periods of cooptation, internal transformation in patterns of civic engagement initiated by diverse groups within civil society, allows these actors to sustain their place as an important agent in countering the power of the state.

## ISRAELI NAKBA DENIAL AND PALESTINIAN REFUGEES:

### RELIGIOUS TEXTS – CREATING AND REFLECTING NORMS AND BOUNDARIES

**CHAIR:** RIIKKA TUORI, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

### IMAGE OF THE ETHIOPIANS IN THE ASCETICAL LITERATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN MIDDLE EAST

**SERAFIM SEPPÄLÄ, UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND**

The image of Ethiopians in Early Christian literature has been interpreted in modern scholarship as thoroughly racist (Guy) and not racist at all (Snowden etc.). The matter is of importance for modern discussions on racism, not least because "Ethiopian" functions as symbol for all Africans. To deal with the question, however, one needs a careful analysis on the metaphorical usages and their contexts in a wide variety of sources. This paper examines the image of Ethiopians in sources that are at

## IMPOSING AND BREAKING SPATIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES

**MICHAEL FISCHBACH, RANDOLPH-MACON COLLEGE**

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks have brought renewed attention to resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem from the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, a war Palestinians call the Nakba. Yet Israel's long-standing opposition to refugee reparations, including return/repatriation, constitutes a clear boundary delimiting what is possible diplomatically. This opposition is part of the process of Nakba Denial: Israel's reimagining of Israeli-Palestinian relations in order to create and maintain real and ideological boundaries that preserve Jewish ethnocracy. This study examines how Israel used the Nakba to create new spatial and demographic boundaries separating Arabs in Palestine/Israel from their land and from Jews. It details how Israel thereafter has used Nakba Denial - specifically, denial of any responsibility for the flight and permanent exile of the refugees - to create and enforce imagined boundaries that redefine history. Israel has done this to counteract the refugees' attempts to break through all these boundaries, including through their demands for repatriation.

the heart of both Catholic and Orthodox Christian spirituality but are not sufficiently used in studies on this topic: the ascetical literature written in the Middle East from the fifth to seventh centuries. The paper is based on three well-known classical works (Apophthegmata of the desert fathers, John of Sinai, Palladius), and three less known works (Barsanuphius and John of Gaza; Anastasios of Sinai, the "anonymous collection" of Apophthegmata).

## THE HAGADAH OF PESAH IN AMAZIGH TRADITION

**AKSELI SAVIRANTA**

This document examines the text of the Hagadah of the Jewish festivity of Pesah as celebrated by the North African Amazighs of Tinghir in Morocco. Its beginning presents an overview of the history and the cultures of the Amazigh, Jewish, and Judeo-Amazigh communities in North Africa. The celebration of Pesah, as a milestone in Jewish creed and

history, is studied within the North African context and with particular attention to the local Hagadah translations. Among these translations, the Judeo-Amazigh text of Tinghir represents one of the few if not the only known text in existence in a Judeo-Amazigh language. A transliterated excerpt of this text is provided along with an English translation; the Hebrew and Judeo-Tunisian texts are included for comparison as well. Furthermore, the Judeo-Amazigh text is analysed, and the role of each language as well as their overall dynamic are evaluated, and examples of distinctions between the Judeo-Amazigh and the Hebrew texts are listed. Comparisons between the different North African texts and traditions suggest that taking the Amazigh aspect into account, as opposed to the mostly Arabocentric approaches used in the analysis of the history and the texts of North African Jewish communities, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the particularities of the region.

### THE RULE OF FAITH AS AN APPROACH TOWARDS THEOLOGICAL CONVERGENCE IN FACE OF VISIBLE TEXTUAL TENSIONS

KARL-HENRIK WALLERSTEIN, ABO AKADEMI UNIVERSITY

This paper pays attention to the fact that there has always been a Rule of Faith as guide, principal or approach in the encounter with the visible textual tensions of the Old Testament. The parting of the ways, i.e. the Christian, Jewish and the Muslim division, could be understood theologically, from the backdrop of different hermeneutical presuppositions. These different hermeneutical presuppositions I would like to highlight with Psalms 44 as case text. In the end of the paper, I will suggest a hermeneutical solution to the theological problem that this text raises. Even though there are differences between Christianity and Judaism, there is, behind the obvious controversies, a theological similarity that goes back to a shared and common understanding of God. This feature is not so obvious within the Islamic traditions, however, not absent at all.

### THE LANGUAGE OF COERCION IN THE QUR'AN AND ITS

### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF RAPE IN ISLAMIC LAW

AMANDA LIPSKE, WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

This project is an analysis of the language of coercion, or ikrah, in the Qur'an to determine how it may figure into the reclassification of rape in Islamic law. It will thoroughly analyse the Qur'anic text for the word coercion in various forms, and compare the different ways it is used in order to move from a shared responsibility of the rape between rapist and victim to one that places it squarely on the rapist. It will advocate for a reclassification of rape in Islamic law to one of ḥarābah, or forcible and violent taking, in order to remove the stringent requirements necessary to prosecute crimes of zinā, or illicit sex.

### BOUNDARIES AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN ARTS

CHAIR: WOLFGANG MÜHLBERGER, FINNISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### CURATING UNITY: MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF THE ARCHAIC, THE NATIONAL PAVILION OF IRAQ AT THE 57TH VENICE BIENNALE

ANASTASIA SHANAHAH, AARHUS UNIVERSITY

The system of national pavilions at the Venice biennale allows participating countries to showcase their highest and most innovative cultural achievements. This is particularly important to countries that have been denied the opportunity to represent themselves on their own terms, such as former colonies. This paper investigates how the curators of Archaic, the national pavilion of Iraq at the 57th Venice Biennale, communicate the message of national unity by inscribing Iraqi artists from diverse ethno-religious communities into an Iraqi art historical development – from the ancient times, through modernism to contemporaneity. Since the meaning of political ideology may not be obvious at the first glance, the paper combines the multimodal analysis of the pavilion with the discourse of politics of

representation to investigate its implied meanings. The paper argues that the curators produce a particular image of Iraq, where different ethno-religious communities form a united Iraqi nation.

## “POLITICAL BODIES” INSIDE OF THE ACTUAL AND IMAGINARY SHOPPING MALLS

MIKKO MAKI, TAMPERE UNIVERSITY

**Abstract** This paper begins with the theoretical examination of architecture’s role in constructing a (non-)place where political may or may not occur. It connects Jean-Luc Nancy’s interpretation how places are created with bodies to the invention of an unpredictable subject as political singularities. Built surroundings’ role to the concept of political has become the relevant sub-field of the political theory in recent years. This paper looks and comments Qatari-American artist Sophia Al Maria’s interpretation of shopping malls as a possible ‘political’ places. The starting point is the empirical situation, where post-political attitude has conquered the place of political, in the contemporary Arab States in the Persian Gulf. The paper continues to ask what is the role of actual and imaginary shopping malls to the political, how these spaces can create or break boundaries, and how the art-related representations effect on the empirical political situations.

## LAND, MEMORY, AND GENDER IN PALESTINIAN ART

LUISA GANDOLFO, UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

Since 1948, the Nakba has been remembered through cultural representations of the land that incorporate the body as an extension of the land. As artists use their bodies, and the bodies of others, to carry narratives connected with the land and exile, memorialization traverses cultural and political boundaries. In doing so, two (re)visitings occur: the memorialization of the landscape via the body from afar, and second, physical interaction with the land in situ, while recalling the land as it was in the past. Reflecting on the two approaches, this paper builds on Barthes’ concept of the ‘reality and past both as one’ (Barthes 1988) to question how the gendering of the land allows the female form to metaphorically and physically negotiate temporal and geographical

boundaries, as well as the ways that art addresses the past through cultural memorialization.

## COSMOPOLITANISM, ACTIVISM AND ARAB DOCUMENTARY FILM

JOSEPHA WESSELS, MALMÖ UNIVERSITY

Egyptian films like *1/2 Revolution* (2011) and *The Square* (2013), gave Arab documentaries a boost after the 2011 growing global interest in the Arab uprisings. Since 2014, Syrian documentaries rose to high acclaim at international film festivals and the Oscars awards in 2017. Palestinian documentaries such as *Speed Sisters* (2015) and the Oscar-nominated and Emmy-award winning *Five Broken Cameras* (2011) also entered the global stage, radically changing stereotypical views on the Middle East. Since the 1970s, Arab documentary filmmakers have been highlighting connections between values of humanism and struggles for personal freedom and democracy restricted by colonialism and authoritarianism. This paper reflects how the experience of war, oppression, occupation, uprooting and forced migration, influenced contemporary Arab documentary films. Emerging creative global communities congregating at international film festivals, where Arab artists connect on various humanistic, socio-cultural and political levels with non-Arab peers, offer fresh insights in perspectives on cosmopolitanism and world-citizenship.

## BREAKING BOUNDARIES OR ENTRENCHING OLD ONES? POST-ARAB SPRING EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

CHAIR: HOMAY HOODFAR, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

This panel explores women and political representation in the post-Arab Spring Middle East. Our papers examine both the dynamism and potential for change engendered in the Arab Spring and the entrenchment of durable

structures of inequality and exclusion experienced by female political representatives and female constituents. We examine the impact that women and political representation may have on constituents and respective publics. Combined, the papers argue that the revolutionary potential of the Arab Spring is still subject to pre-2012 structures of patriarchal legacies of representation such as *wasta* and dynastic heritages. The papers explore in-depth the contours of the making of female political leaders as well as the impacts on their constituents in cases from across the region, adding to our knowledge of post-Arab Spring regime activity, both differences and similarities, which will play a key role in the region's future for a long time to come.

## FEMALE MPS, WASTA, AND THE ROLE OF PROTEST IN POST-ARAB SPRING JORDAN

SARAH A TOBIN, CHR. MICHELSEN INSTITUTE IN BERGEN

*Wasta*, or kin-based favoritism, is well-cited in Jordan as both necessary and undesirable for resource allocation. Female MPs report often feeling constrained by this system, even if it is the very mechanism by which they were elected, especially in the quota system. Furthermore, many constituents report that female MPs are “less corrupted by *wasta*” than the male counterparts. While the Arab Spring in Jordan was a relatively small event, the region's activities have had large ramifications on the renewal of hope in protest as a means of accomplishing political change seeing numerous large-scale protests of proposed tax and labor laws in 2017-8. Based on interviews with female MPs and constituents, this paper explores the possibilities that female MPs in particular have to respond to protests in ways that ameliorate the need and constricting nature of *wasta* and simultaneously create a new and enhanced space for responding to constituent needs.

## IT'S IN THE BLOOD: THE EFFECT OF DYNASTIC RULE ON THE SUBSTANCE OF GENDER QUOTAS

BOZENA WELBORNE, SMITH COLLEGE

GAIL BUTTORFF, HOBBY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Our research explores whether the presence and influence of political dynasties neutralizes the effects of gender quotas in the Middle East and North Africa. Daniel Smith's research (2018) reveals that female politicians are much more likely to have dynastic backgrounds than men in OECD states. The likelihood of this being the case is increased in countries of the Global South, many of which tend toward dynastic or proto-dynastic rule. In this paper, we argue that the more women from political dynasties running for office—even with gender quotas facilitating their entry into politics—the less likely there is to be an overall shift in policies meant to benefit women. In this way, dynasties mitigate the potential revolutionary effect of gender quotas and affect the types of women likely to run using them. We evaluate this hypothesis by replicating Smith's statistical analysis with a new dataset from the MENA.

## SECTARIANISM AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

ROLA EL-HUSSEINI, LUND UNIVERSITY

In some Arab nations, the quota system has provided an effective means to increase political representation of women in governance. In these countries, the quota system has enabled women to demonstrate their competency through public service. I will contrast political representation by women in these non-sectarian states to the dismal standing of women in the sectarian countries of Iraq and Lebanon. I use the role played by quotas in Iraq following the 2003 US invasion, and the similar political status of women in the non-quota state of Lebanon, to question the efficacy of quotas in sectarian countries. I also outline the importance of external actors in the deployment of state feminism. The enactment of a women's quota is a regular part of Lebanese political discourse. I argue the Iraq case demonstrates the shortcoming of quotas in states where political power is enacted within a regressive system of power-sharing.

## 'GENDER JUSTICE' VERSUS 'GENDER EQUALITY': ELITE WOMEN'S FRAMING PROCESSES IN IRAN AND TURKEY

MONA TAJALI, AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE

Much of the literature on Muslim women's activism presents the nature of such organizing in dichotomous terms of egalitarianism (secular) or complementarianism (religious), with little regard for dynamism of women's campaigning efforts. Addressing this gap in the literature, this paper analyzes the recent framing processes of various elite Islamic party women in Iran and Turkey to demand for women's greater access to political office, in terms of 'gender justice' rather than 'gender equality'. Based on personal interviews and study of public statements and publications of elite women, or those with close ties to key political figures, this paper critically examines the political and social implications of women's framing processes that are not conventionally deemed as feminist, given their complementarian undertones. It argues that women's strategic use of 'gender justice' enables them to find resonance with the Islamic elites while also advocate for equal opportunities between genders, including gender quota adoption.

## NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST: FOREIGN POLICY AND THE CHANGING REGIONAL ORDER

**CHAIR: KATERINA DALACOURA, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS**

The aim of this panel will be to identify, detail, evaluate and explain new directions in the international relations of the Middle East. To this end, its participants will examine the foreign policies of the key external powers influencing the region—the US, Russia, and the European Union—as well as two key regional powers, Turkey and Israel, since the eruption of the Arab uprisings. The panel will identify and explain the foreign policy these actors adopted in the wake of the Arab uprisings, and assess their impact. Keeping theoretical questions at arm's length, the panel will nevertheless examine the degree to which concepts of IR – such as the balance of power, ideological pursuits and identity politics – are still useful in understanding present and future

trajectories in the international relations of the Middle East. It will also assess the impact of the foreign policies of the specific actors on the regional order, loosely defined as the current constellation of structures and relationships that define the Middle East.

## RETHINKING ISRAELI FOREIGN POLICY IN THE WAKE OF THE ARAB UPRISINGS

**AMNON ARAN, CITY UNIVERSITY, LONDON**

The eruption of the 2010 Arab uprisings has generated a great deal of academic scholarship. However, the foreign policy of Israel, a key power in the Middle East, has received limited attention. Furthermore, as this paper will demonstrate, the conventional wisdom purported by the current debate, which is that Israel adopted a 'defensive realist' foreign policy posture in the wake of the Arab uprisings, is wrong. Rather, utilising an innovative approach that looks at Israeli foreign policy through a domestic lens, this paper will demonstrate that Israel adopted a foreign policy stance of entrenchment. This posture is predicated on peace for peace not territory, reinforcing Israel's military capabilities, and granting limited autonomy to the Palestinians under Israeli occupation. Unlike the traditional view of Israeli foreign policy decision-making, which portrays it as ad hoc and lacking in planning, the paper shows that entrenchment derived from a coherent strategy.

## THE EUROPEAN UNION BETWEEN IDEOLOGICAL PURSUITS AND POWER BALANCING: THE FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICIES OF THE EU AND THE SHAPING OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN (DIS)ORDER

**PETER SEEBERG, CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE EAST STUDIES**

With the Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy the EU wanted to promote a rules-based global order, thereby to position itself as a specific and significant player on the international political scene. But, influenced by the instability of the Middle East, the EU has sought to adapt to the changing conditions. By establishing a comprehensive sanctions regime it was the ambition of the EU to

affect the course of the Syrian crisis and, concerning Iran: by playing an active role in connection with the JCPOA, the EU attempted to present itself as an important actor in the Middle East. However, limits of the EU impacting the Middle East realities were demonstrated in the case of Libya and in connection with the Mediterranean migration crisis.

## THE SYRIAN CONFLICT AND THE CRISIS IN US HEGEMONY

JASMINE GANI, CENTRE FOR SYRIAN STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

US policy has significantly shaped the Syrian conflict and has rightly received much attention. However, in this paper I will consider this dynamic in reverse and argue that the Syrian conflict has precipitated structural changes in both domestic US politics and global politics, undermining American hegemony. The paper will assess the role of recent historical factors in laying the foundations for the US's position on Syria, namely the Iraq war and US-Syrian antagonism since the Cold War. Despite the apparent differences between the Bush, Obama and Trump administrations, I argue that the US's official policies towards Syria did not dramatically change across the three administrations; however, each administration shaped the foreign policy constraints of the next, and each dealt a blow to three core pillars of US hegemony: willingness to lead, capacity and legitimacy. The paper will conclude with the ramifications of US retreat for the Middle East, evaluating ideological and geopolitical continuities and change.

## ANKARA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND REGIONAL ORDER IN THE MIDDLE EAST: WHAT DOES 'THE NEW' TURKEY WANT?

KATERINA DALACOURA, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Much has been made of Ankara's ambitious foreign policy in the Middle East during the AKP period and its perceived failure following the 2011 Arab uprisings. The devastating civil war in Syria, at Turkey's doorstep, is rightly seen as the greatest crisis facing Ankara's foreign policy establishment over the past few years. But what are the objectives of Turkish foreign policy at the present moment of flux in the region? And how to they link up with the

ambition of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his party to create a 'new' Turkey? Two conflicting ideological requirements drive Turkey's foreign policy towards the Middle East region: nationalism, which dictates the approach toward the Kurdish issue at home and abroad, and Islamism, which shapes attitudes towards a variety of state and non-state actors (from Saudi Arabia and Qatar to Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Palestinians, not least in Gaza). Nationalism and Islamism are being reconstituted in the new Turkey, however, and the impact of their changing relationship has repercussions for the regional order.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN UiO

CHAIR: ZEHAD SABRY

Many years ago The Arabic Language team at University of Oslo saw the need to switch their teaching approach to more modern one. In this panel we would like to share our experiences with implementing the communicative approach in a Nordic university, especially last couple of years. We found that this approach fulfilled our students' academic needs in learning the language rather than just learning about it. I want to present about some interrelated concepts to the communicative approach and impact of these concepts on our program. Among these concepts Language proficiency criteria, student-centered learning, flipped classroom, using authentic materials, spiraling way of teaching language inputs, task-based teaching, and project based teaching, treating culture as a skill, treating Arabic as a language of communications, and anxiety-free classroom. I will focus mainly on teaching reading and listening strategies and the importance of the communicative feedback in and outside the class.

## THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH, INTERRELATED CONCEPTS AND RECEPTIVE SKILLS

ZEHAD SABRY, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

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## TEACHING ARABIC IN A CHANGING WORLD

STEPHAN GUTH, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

This intervention tries to assess the role the teaching of Arabic at universities outside the Arab world plays, or could and should play, in the framework of Middle East Studies, a discipline that tries to keep up with the rapid changes that are taking place in the Arab world as well as in the West (refugees, increasing Islamophobia, etc.), a discipline also that is increasingly phased with the media and that claims to have a mission of "social relevance". How "socially relevant" is it to teach Arabic at a Scandinavian university? And which kind of Arabic? And how? And what does that mean not only for Middle East Studies, a discipline of the "area studies" type, but also for the older philological disciplines that used to be the primary domain of Arabic Studies? – The paper will start from the Oslo experience, hoping to inspire a more general discussion.

## ZIONISM WITHOUT BORDERS: NARRATIVES OF THE PROMISED LAND IN AND BEYOND

CHAIR: HANNU JUUSOLA, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

This panel conceptualizes Zionism not only as the European ideology that fueled the colonization of Palestine, but moreover as a secularized protestant concept that penetrates the Western world. This panel analyses the genealogy of Zionism (Shohat, 1988), tracing its trajectory in Christian Zionism (Sharif, 1983) and its transmission to its later Jewish effluent. It draws its roots in the protestant colonization of the Americas (Mamdani, 2015) through the spread of Zionist Protestant Christianity by European settlers who travelled to and settled first in 17th century North America. The panel debates Jewish Zionism's culmination as a settler project where Israel becomes the Promised Land of the Jews (Segev, 1993), and the culmination of American (pre) Zionism where America becomes the Westernized Promised Land. It further explores the composite history of contemporary Christian guilt (Pieterse, 1979), tracing its contemporary manifestations in acts of displacement and projection of European fear that will eventually produce the victims of Christian Zionism as the anti-Semite par excellence.

## RELOCATING ZION: THE PILGRIMAGE TO AMERICA AS THE PRECONDITION FOR THE/A NEW WORLD

AHMED DIAA, CAIRO INSTITUTE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

The Mayflower pilgrimage presented an avant-la-lettre Zionist narrative, not only because of the role it played in shaping the mythologeme of a settler colonial project that would anticipate and inspire its Zionist forerunner, but also because it inaugurated a strict reading of the old testament as a manual for colonization. My paper argues that the pilgrimage to America indexes the protestant-secular forsaking of Jerusalem as the spiritual centre and pilgrimage destination, in a word the Zion, of Christendom. The relocation of the Christian/secular Zion to North America

did not only allow for the reinvention of Palestine as a Jewish promised land, but also the inauguration of a New World centred around the pilgrimage to America, and a modern condition whose spiritual centre, or Zion, is the United States.

## THY KINGDOM COME JERUSALEM UNDONE: IMMIGRATION, TRUMP, AND ARAB CHRISTIANS

KARIM MALAK, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK CITY

In this paper I explore how US faith politics have unfolded since the election of Trump when it comes to the place of Arab Christians. I demonstrate how the US uses and misuses Arab Christians to fulfill its imperial designs in the region contemporarily by supporting Zionist land annexation in Jerusalem (van Doorn-Harder, 2011), and the immigration of Arab Christians to America. I show that Trump's faith politics are a continuation of the politics of his predecessors since Jimmy Carter brokered the Camp David peace accords in 1978, the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000 (Christiansen, 2001) and George Bush's 2003 Iraq war (Samuel, 2017). This I argue can be observed through the resurgence of Zionist Christianity (Penton, 1979; Pieterse, 1979). I close by pondering the contemporary case of Egyptian Coptic Christians in US and their struggle to adapt to the theological and faith politics of Zionist Christianity

## THE INTERTEXTUALITY OF THE METAPHOR OF THE PROMISE LAND IN PARADISE LOST AND IKHTEYYAH

HADEEL KARKAR, UNIVERSITE DE LORRAINE.

The study of colonial empires hardly addresses empire as a subject matter; one of the main reasons can be attributed to the rare accessibility and contribution of the colonized object of empire to this field. This paper explores the relevance of settler-colonialism as a paradigm for the analysis of Zionist and British imperialisms in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and contemporary Palestinian author Imil Habibi's *Ikhteyyah*. The paper probes parallels and correspondences between the narrative of colonizing Palestine and the pervasive colonial

discourse that prevailed during the early stages of building the American empire. A comparative analysis is offered of the intertextuality of biblical references in narratives of colonialism in literary texts from the 17<sup>th</sup> century British writings, and Palestinian contemporary literature. I explore the intertextuality of the metaphor of the *Promised Land* in Protestant writings as a discursive strategy in narrating settler-colonialism, and how this metaphor was used to create facts on the ground to the point where mythical narrative became an astounding reality of the colonial projects from the standpoint of two authors in two different eras.

## WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF? ANXIETY-PRODUCTION AND FEAR POLITICS IN ZIONIST DISCOURSE

HANINE HASSAN, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

This paper surveys the formation of Zionist fear to understand why fear, as a socio-political construct, has unfolded in the Zionist narrative. In tracking Zionist expressions of fear, there appears to be mainly two fears in play. One is the fear of European anti-Semites who oppress Jews and victimize them; and the other is a fear of the victims of Zionist settler-colonialism and racism. Both seem to occur in tandem, and function as sources of anxiety for the Zionists for very different reasons, and both seem to be instrumentalized for different purposes. In order to analyze the uses to which fear has been adapted, adopted, or rejected in Zionist political decision-making, I trace its uses from 1897 in the minutes of the Zionist Congresses, which planned the movement's strategy, and specifically the speeches of Max Nordau, the perceived intellectual godfather of the movement. I will then proceed to study the way these fears were deployed as an incitement to European Jews to adopt Zionism.

FRIDAY 16.8. 10.30 – 12.00

## SESSIONS VII

### ROUNDTABLE ON THE STATE OF MIDDLE EAST-ERN STUDIES IN THE NORDIC REGION

CHAIR: HANNU JUUSOLA

DISCUSSANTS:

JAKOB SKOVGAARD-PETERSEN

STEPHAN GUTH

MARIANNE ARINGBERG LAANATZ

HANNU JUUSOLA

MARK SEDGWICK

THORIR JONSSON HRAUNDAL

30 years have passed since the first Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies was held in Uppsala in January 1989. Over the decades, studying and teaching of Middle Eastern studies have evolved significantly. The panel focuses on the history, present and, especially, the future challenges of the Middle Eastern and cognate studies in the Nordic countries and elsewhere. What is the current reality of the studies? How the MENA area should be studied and taught? How Middle Eastern and cognate studies should be related to other disciplines and societal changes? The panel consists of the short comments by the panelists followed by a discussion in which the audience can also participate. The panelists are Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, Stephan Guth, Marianne Laanatz, Mark Sedgwick, and Hannu Juusola (Chair).

### CLERICAL NETWORKS, DISCOURSES AND THE STATE IN MODERN TWELVER SHI'ISM

CHAIR: OLIVER SCHARBRODT, UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

After a period of quietism among Twelver Shi'i clerics following the failures of the

Constitutional Revolution, the policies of the newly formed Pahlavi state once again prompted the clerics back into discussions about the nature of the modern nation state. Since then, Shi'i clerics have formed differing conceptions about the state and clerical involvement. This panel is part of the interdisciplinary ERC project "Alterumma" that studies the transformation of Twelver Shi'i Islam in the Middle East and Europe since the 1950s. The panel will investigate the various ways that clerical networks and discourses have constructed the state in both Iran and Iraq by combining intellectual history with the qualitative methods of political science. The panel will begin by examining the leadership of the role of the "Maraje Thalath" or the three religious authorities. From there, the papers will show the different ways that clerics imagined participation in the state. This includes the tension between perfectionism and liberty in the works of Morteza Motahari, debates about the creation of shura councils since the 1960s, and the role of the marja'iyya in the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court.

### THE HAWZA OF QUM'S BREATHING PERIOD: THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MARAJE THALATH (1941-1953)

MOHAMMAD MESBAHI, THE ISLAMIC COLLEGE

If the modern history of the hawza of Qum could be categorized in a number of defining periods, the second period (1937-1953) would be one of the most profound periods of the hawza 'ilmiyya of Qum. It marks the leadership of three prominent and outstanding maraje; the Ayatollahs Hojjat Kooh-kamare'i (1892-1952), Khonsari (1888-1952) and Sadr (1882-1953), known as maraje thalath. Together, they managed to firmly establish the modern hawza against the tide of analysts' assumptions that the religious sector would be gradually eliminated from the Iranian political

scene, and no one had dared to even imagine the possibility of the re-consolidated hawza ‘ilmiyya to capture the entire political arena within a short span of time. This paper will research the political and social contributions of the maraje thalath, in addition to focusing on the impact of Ayatollah Borujerdi (1875-1961) in Qum from 1945, influencing the latter part of this breathing period.

## MOTAHARI AND THE TENSION BETWEEN FREEDOM AND PERFECTIONISM

CHRISTOPHER POOYA RAZAVIAN, UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Morteza Motahari, one of the principle intellectuals of the Islamic revolution of Iran, argued for perfectionism, that it is the duty of the state to promote the good life. He stated that the moral purpose of the government was to foster faith and righteous deeds among the citizens. Simultaneously, Motahari stated that freedom (azadi) is one of the primary human values. Perfectionism has been critiqued by liberals for allowing the state to limit an individual’s freedom in order to promote the good life. This paper will examine how Motahari brought these two ideas of perfectionism and freedom into equilibrium. It will argue that while Motahari defended state paternalism, he considered liberty of consciousness, and critical engagement with religious beliefs, to be a necessary component of the internalization of faith.

## MODERNISING CLERICAL AUTHORITY IN TWELVER SHIISM: CONSULTATION (SHURA), CLERICS, AND THE STATE

OLIVER SCHARBRODT, UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

The charismatic and individual forms of religious authority in Twelver Shiism suggest an opposition to more collective modes of decision-making, derived from the Qur’anic notion of consultation (shura). However, with the rise of the modern nation-state in the Middle East in the 20th century, the concept of shura has been propagated and embedded in modern Shia thought by a number of prominent clerical figures in order to reform and modernise clerical authority. Early proponents, such as Mahmoud Taleghani (1911-

1979) or Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr (1935-1980), considered shura as a mechanism to institutionalise and strengthen clerical authority vis-à-vis the modern nation-state. Other clerics, such as Muhammad Al-Shirazi (1928-2001), developed consultative notions of clerical authority (shura al-fuqaha’) as alternative to the autocratic tendencies in Khomeini’s concept of “the absolute guardianship of the jurisconsult (wilayat al-faqih al-mutlaqa)”.

## THE FORMAL IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NAJAFI MARJA’IYYA AND THE STATE: THE LAW OF THE IRAQI FEDERAL SUPREME COURT

YOUSIF AL-HILLI, UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

The Iraqi Federal Supreme Court has a significant role to play as the highest judicial authority within the state. Article 92 of the Iraqi constitution suggests a role for ‘experts in Islamic jurisprudence’ in this formal body, leading to disputes between the marja’iyya and the government over the implications of this for clerical involvement within the formal state structure. This is accompanied by varying attitudes amongst clerics themselves as to whether such a formal role is suitable for the marja’iyya as an independent clerical establishment. Through looking at the suggested law of the Iraqi Supreme Federal Court, this paper will seek to demonstrate the intricate relationship between the Najafi marja’iyya and the state, assessing the attempts made by the marja’iyya for its formal inclusion in the judiciary and the reasons for the failure of these attempts.

## WOMEN, POLITICS AND MULTIFACETED FEMINISMS

CHAIR: SENNI JYRKIÄINEN

## ISLAMIC FEMINISM IN POST 2011 EGYPT: POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES

MULKI AL-SHARMANI, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

According to Omaima Abou-Bakr - the Egyptian scholar who investigates gender and hermeneutics in Islamic interpretive tradition and the co-founder of the Egyptian non-governmental research organization Women and Memory Forum- the goal of Islamic feminism extends beyond epistemological reform to “developing into a conscientious social and activist movement” (Abou-Bakr 2015: 182). My presentation focuses on contemporary Egyptian Islamic feminism and its socio-political significance after the 2011 Revolution. I tackle the following questions: what are the current knowledge projects in Egypt that can be defined as Islamic feminism? Who are the producers and interlocutors of this knowledge? What role does Egyptian Islamic feminism play in enabling or hindering gender activism? And how are these knowledge/activism projects impacted by the current socio-political context of the country? The paper draws on a five year field research in Egypt (2013-2018).

### CROSSING BOUNDARIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM IN EGYPT: FEMINIST NGOS SINCE THE ARAB SPRING

EMMA SUNDKVIST, LUND UNIVERSITY

Based on fieldwork and interviews with feminist NGO-activists in Cairo that frame their work primarily on human rights conventions, this paper argues that the ways in which they have adapted their activism to the changing political climate in Egypt since the uprising 2011 make them enact human rights in very different forms. Drawing from Ingram's (2008) three images of human rights politics - human rights as implementation, rights and as action - I reveal how NGO feminist activists managed to enact part of all these images in their struggle to battle and confront injustice and oppression based on gender. These findings contribute to the rich body of literature addressing gender activism in Egypt during and after the revolution with the unique perspective of human rights theory, not only as law but as modes of activism that challenges the imagined divide between civil society and other forms of political resistance.

### THE ROLE OF THE FIRST LADY IN EGYPTIAN POLITICAL LIFE: AN INVESTIGATION INTO SUZANNE MUBARAK'S THIRTY YEARS AS A FIRST LADY

MUSTAFA MENSRAWY, DOHA INSTITUTE

DALIA ABDELHADY, LUND UNIVERSITY

Utilising discourse and content analysis of newspapers from Al Ahram daily, the paper traces the changing role of Suzanne Mubarak during her thirty year tenure as Egypt's First Lady. The paper will emphasise the role she played in promoting state feminism, coopting civil society organisations, and eventual bid for her son's rise to rule. The paper documents the important role she played in promoting social and cultural developments and highlight the shift in her role into more formal issues relating to governance. This shift also coincides with the beginning of the rise of stronger forms of opposition that were eventually culminated in the 2011 uprisings and the ousting of Mubarak.

### BREAKING FORM: CYBERFEMINISM AND (SELF-)PROMOTING RESISTANCE IN CONTEMPORARY IRAN

KRISTIN SORAYA BATMANGHELICHI, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Less than a decade since the June 2009 uprising that followed Iran's presidential election, cyberfeminist activities in Iran have undergone significant changes given the global movement of its women's rights activists and the generational shifts in social media usage. While activists living in exile went online to continue pursuing on-the-ground projects, a younger generation has pursued other tactics, often promoting quick, one-issue social media campaigns through Instagram and Telegram. Viral videos of their unveiling on public streets and/or dancing solo and with friends have turned many of them into Instagram “celebrities.” The transition to cyberactivism for a once flourishing and established Iranian women's movement has been both uneven and stunted. Numerous rights-based platforms have fallen into disarray due to poor exposure, infighting, funding problems, Internet filtering and mixed messaging; moreover, reception among Iranian publics has been

ambivalent. This paper inquires upon the recent bifurcations and shifts in Iran's women's rights movement post 2009, looking closely at its potential vulnerabilities given the rise of self-promotive activist strategies and more so, the paucity of feminist, gender equality, and/or anti-discrimination discourses in which to ground them for the purpose of long-term sustainability.

## REMAKING BOUNDARIES IN THE GULF

**CHAIR: JON NORDENSON, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO**

This panel addresses shifting boundaries in Saudi Arabia and Qatar post June 2017, which in many ways marks the point where old boundaries was challenged on multiple levels, including physical, political and social. Mohammed bin Salman was appointed Crown prince in Saudi Arabia and the Qatar crisis erupted, when Saudi-Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and UAE cut all ties with Qatar overnight, and closed off the countries only land border. The events unfolding in the months to follow has had widespread consequences, both on the ground and in our theoretical understanding - some of them discussed in this panel.

The resilience of states and people in responding to closed borders opens up for new ways to engage with taken for granted understandings of the Gulf. In questioning the ways in which boundaries have been re-drawn between people, and between humans and non-humans, the ongoing crisis also becomes a lens for larger theoretical engagements.

## RENTIER STATE RESILIENCE: WHAT THE QATAR CRISIS CAN TEACH US ABOUT RENTIERISM

**HEND AL SULAITI, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN DENMARK**

The 2017 crisis posed a unique test on the rentier state, as regional isolation did not result in international sanctions, a military confrontation, or domestic instability. So far, we have

seen other rentier states go through more drastic crises, "historical junctures" in a sense, events that forced their standing institutions to change dramatically. From the Iraq invasion, to the sanctions on Libya, and later revolution, and the sanctions on Iran. the international community unanimously isolated and punished those regimes, leaving little room for them to test their boundaries.

This paper looks at the rentier structures in Qatar, assesses their resilience, and refers to Gray's "Theory of Late Rentierism in the Arab States of the Gulf" in an attempt to analyze which late rentier characteristics helped sustain rentier structures during the first 6 months of the Qatar crisis, and whether this indicates that the rentier state is not as volatile as expected in its late stages.

## VISA TO THE WORLD: EGYPTIAN EXPATRIATE WORKERS IN QATAR AND SECOND PASSPORTS

**MARI NORBAKK, UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN**

Expatriate workers live precariously in the GCC. Temporary residential permits tied up to employment status ensure that any expatriate must live with the knowledge of potentially leaving on short notice. During the beginning of the Qatar crisis, Egyptian expats explored potential strategies to secure their futures. They felt caught between states as Egypt cut all diplomatic ties to Qatar. Through engaging with their desires for second passports, the paper explores how middle class Egyptians view increased access to border-crossing mobility as securing their futures.

Focusing on middle class Egyptian expatriate workers in the Arab Gulf makes for an interesting lens into how privilege is constructed. Economically they are part of a global middle class but as holders of "weak passports" they are hindered from a type of easy mobility often associated with the term "expat". This paper maps out the complex structure of privilege constructed between economy, citizenship and borders in the Arab Gulf.

## AUTOMATONS AND BOUNDARIES OF THE TRANSNATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE SIMULACRA IN THE QATAR CRISIS

MARC OWEN JONES, HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY

While public sphere theorists from Arendt to Lyotard have long discussed how boundaries of the public sphere serve to include some in the debate but exclude others, few have considered the role of automatons, let alone in the Middle East. Schaffer's analysis of the intelligent automaton blurred boundaries between human and machine, and automation versus reason. In such an analysis it was the artisan labourer whose mechanistic actions risked him being branded as an intelligent automation. Yet the reverse is also true= robots representing reason. The Qatar Crisis saw the swarming of thousands of Twitter bots masquaring as real citizens in automated fashion. Using anomaly detection and content analysis, this paper documents the existence of, and analyses the impact of, millions of online bots during the Qatar Crisis. It argues that rather than overt top down censorship, an emerging aspect of digital authoritarianism is the automated appropriation of the online public sphere, designed to give an illusion of civil society, but ultimately existing as a simulacra.

## CONFLICTS ON THE FIELD: THE GULF-CRISIS AND FOOTBALL DIPLOMACY

CHARLOTTE LYSA, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

In the months following the outbreak of the Qatar crisis, the conflict was played out on several fields - including that of football. Qatar, the host of the 2022 FIFA World Cup and the beIN Sports network has long used the sport as a diplomacy-tool and to gain political leverage.

Saudi Arabia has since the crisis erupted launched a campaign aimed at delegitimizing Qatar's soft power efforts, in order to pressure the country to give in to the boycotting countries demands. One of the targets has been Qatar's role in football and in particular, the beIN Sports network. Since 2017 then, football has been used not only to strengthen ties - but also to sever them. This paper argues that the attack on Qatar's grand sports ambitions might serve as a way to hit where it hurts the most, and examines how the campaign differs from traditional sporting boycott.

## SHIFTING BOUNDARIES IN IRAQI KURDISTAN

CHAIR: ANU LEINONEN

### 'KURDISH ISLAM'?: THE INVENTION OF SUNNI ORTHODOXY IN THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

TINE GADE, NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (NUPI)

'National Islam' is a term that not long ago was seen as self-contradictory, since Islam is based on the idea of a transnational Umma. However, in recent years, governments in Europe and the Middle East, from Morocco to Saudi Arabia, have attempted to nationalize Islamic traditions, strengthening official religious institutions and showcasing national specificities in religious traditions. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), preachers close to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the dominant party in power, increasingly hail 'Kurdish Islam' for its moderate and tolerant inclinations, creating boundaries with what they consider 'Arab Islam' in Iraq. Through this discourse, the KDP reinvents and showcases Kurdish religious orthodoxy, while ignoring the many historical ties between Arab and Kurdish Islam in Iraq. However, representatives of religious orthodoxy object to the notion of 'Kurdish Islam'. Moreover, the KRG has a laissez-faire policy towards quietist Salafism (Madkhalia). These groups often have a divisive role in their local societies and might therefore contravene the Kurdish national identity sought by the KRG.

### DEPENDENT AND DISUNITED. POWER STRUGGLES AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM IN IRAQI-KURDISTAN

SILVIA-LUCRETIA NICOLA, FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN

This paper deals with the internal change processes inside the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan following the failed unbinding referendum on independence held unilaterally in September 2017. The focus is laid on the

identity boundary shifts inside the Iraqi-Kurdish society moving from a crumbling overarching collective identity to stronger clan and party-based loyalties. These developments might appear paradoxically at a first sight, given that the Autonomous Region seemed to earn more and more international support and recognition. While the relationship with central Iraq was continuously depreciating between 2005 and 2014 due to the regional government's power grab with regard to oil exploration as well as physical boundaries alterations in their favour in disputed areas, internally, the Kurdish Regional Government left the impression that even internal "brotherly" wars had been put aside and social boundaries redesigned aiming at the consolidation of a Iraqi-Kurdish collective identity.

## KURDISH NATIONALISM AND ITS RESULTS FOR THE MIDDLE EASTERN BOUNDARIES

SEYED AHMAD FATEMI NEJAD, FERDOWSI UNIVERSITY OF MASHHAD

Kurdish nation is among the most historical peoples in the Middle East which partitioned in Turkey, Iraq, and Syria under the Treaty of Sevres. Within these countries, Kurds are notable ethnic groups making powerful nationalist movements. The movements have long been suppressed by Turkey, Iraq and Syria, but three incidents have changed the Kurdish situation in these states: a) establishing a no-fly zone in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq which enforced by NATO after 1991; b) US involvement in Syrian civil war in support of Kurdish militia; c) participation of Kurds in Turkish political system after the AK-party coming to power. The aim of this article is to study why, in spite of these changes, Kurdistan independence is inevitable. Answering the question, I will use Anthony D. Smith theory of nationalism, and discuss perennialist and modernist bases of Kurdistan independence.

## MEDIATIZED DIASPORA CONTESTING BOUNDARIES

CHAIR: EHAB GALAL, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Since the Arab uprisings of 2011, the possibility for political opposition in Arab countries has once again faced new boundaries, while people and media have crossed physical boundaries to live in and broadcast or communicate from for instance Europe. The focus of this panel is how Arab diasporic communities in Europe use transnational Arab media to mobilize, negotiate and contest political action post-Arab Spring. Drawing on findings from a collective research project on 'Mediatized Diaspora', the papers of this panel present four case studies of Syrian, Tunisian, Bahraini, and Egyptian diasporic communities in Europe. Across the four papers, the question is how the four diasporic communities' uses of Arab media stimulate or confine particular boundary-crossing identification and action formation with a special attention to Arab media, which are critical towards current political regimes in the Arab region.

## MEDIATIZED POLITICAL ACTION FORMATION AMONG SYRIANS IN SCANDINAVIA

ZENIA B. HENRIKSEN AB YONUS, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

This paper investigates the structures of political action formation among Syrian communities in the Öresund region of Denmark and Sweden with focus on everyday media use. The ongoing civil war has resulted in a diverse political landscape with diaspora communities as mediator between Syria and the international community. Media was used to mobilize and ease coordination of demonstrations but their role has shifted, and this paper explores how the vast amount of graphic material demobilizes the Syrians abroad. The paper is based on 20 semi-structured interviews with Syrians in the two countries, and the exploration of the Syrian mediatized diasporas and their use of media makes it possible to describe the mediation of war shaping both understandings of the war and the sense of belonging within social spaces highly characterized by transnational exchange of information via media.

## CONTENTIOUS ACTION FORMATION AMONG TUNISIAN DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE

MOSTAFA SHEHATA, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

The Tunisian revolution and its aftermath in the last eight years have produced a considerable shift in Tunisian power and media, providing a significant model of democratic transition in a long-standing autocratic region. In post-revolutionary Tunisia, along with other revolutionary cases, the convergence between media and politics has left fundamental transformations in the prevalence and structure of contentious action. These transformations, which have been facilitated by different media channels, have marked a significant interaction from Tunisian diasporic communities. Considering the political significance of media for Tunisian diaspora as a point of departure, this paper investigates—through the logic of connective action theory—the potential effects of Tunisian media users on the formation of transnational contentious actions. Based on a series of semi-structured interviews with Tunisians living in France, Denmark and Sweden this paper focuses on the strategies of communicative interaction with Tunisian transnational contentious actions.

## MAKING AN IMPACT. FORMS OF MEDIA USE AMONG BAHRAINIS IN EXILE IN EUROPE

THOMAS FIBIGER, AARHUS UNIVERSITY

This paper presents an analysis of transnational political action formation, in relation to different forms of media, among Bahrainis in Europe. Bahrainis, forced in exile or a voluntary diaspora, use different media to follow the situation in Bahrain, but they also contribute to different forms of media to affect that situation. The presentation is based on fieldwork in 2018 (and 2019) among Bahrainis in the UK and in Denmark. Bahrainis in exile and/or diaspora find the grievances of their compatriots poorly covered by both national, regional and international media. Based on social media reports and personal communication from Bahrain, Bahrainis in Europe evaluate the news, and some use this to form news of their own, using social media as well as NGOs, press conferences, seminars and events to highlight the situation in Bahrain, aimed at both Arabic and Western media and audience.

## MEDIA USE ACROSS GENERATIONS. MEDIATIZED EGYPTIAN DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE

EHAB GALAL, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

The Egyptian regime changes in 2013 has left the country's political opposition in a state of internal struggle, disillusion, despair and impotence. Egyptians inside and outside Egypt are still trying to come to terms with the situation, while regime-critical media inspired by liberal or Islamist positions have been forced to broadcast and work from outside Egypt. The focus of this paper is, how different generations of media users in Europe with Egypt as their ancestral home use Arab media and to which extend their current media uses have influenced and changed their political stance towards the Egyptian regime. Based on qualitative interviews with media users in Denmark, Sweden, and France, the question is how the reason for and length of stay in Europe, current relations to the ancestral home of Egypt, and the situation in the country of residence influence media uses and political mobilization.

## REFUGEE EXPERIENCES

CHAIR: TIINA JÄRVI

### 'OTHERNESS' IN THE LABOUR MARKET: A CLOSER LOOK AT ECONOMIC INCLUSION WITHIN THE REFUGEES' CONTEXT

TAMARA A KOOL, MAASTRICHT GRADUATE SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE/UNU-MERIT

Jordan has long experienced societal transformations, partly resulting from significant influxes of refugees at various points in time. Subsequently, social boundaries have been constantly revisited along multiple dimensions - from cultural to economic. Thus, this paper delves into the topic of refugee labour market engagement from a social exclusion perspective, and argues that understanding how refugees shape their labour market experience comparative to the host community.

Based on 35 semi-structured interview moments with those of Palestinian origin and

Syrian refugees - both in and outside refugee camps – this paper sets out first to explore how different protracted refugee groups effectively partake in and shape their labour market engagement. This is done against the backdrop of a thorough discussion onto the extent to which existing policies and programmes hinder their engagement, and what are the obstacles that stand in the way of truly address their needs.

### COMMUNAL CARE, LOCAL AID AND 'REFUGEE-REFUGEE HUMANITARIANISM' IN A PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP

SALLA-MARIA KORHONEN, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

In this paper, I will provide an ethnographic account of daily charity work of Al-Farouq, a community-led charity in a Palestinian refugee camp in Irbid, North of Jordan. By using local charity as a prism, I will discuss how aid reworks a given community: where are the boundaries of the camp drawn and what are the dis/connections between different sites of communal care? I will look at the various encounters that take place throughout everyday processes of receiving and providing aid. Although charity tends to reinforce hierarchical relationships and class boundaries, the assumed separation between the givers and receivers of charity is unsustainable in the context in which local aid workers are often simultaneously refugees, aid givers, recipients of aid, and hosts offering support to fellow refugees. Local charity interventions create a tapestry of care that challenges the mainstream humanitarian narrative of a singular suffering victim and sheds light on 'refugee-refugee humanitarianism'.

### ENTA GAZZAWI?!: AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY OF OCCUPATION, STATELESSNESS, SIEGE, AND BORDERS

ABDALHADI M. ALIJLA, GLOBAL YOUNG ACADEMY

Borders of nation-states have become the natural barriers that constrain and organize the movements of people. These borders have entry and exit points such as airports, seaports, and border crossings. Besides being an

essential element in defining the national identity of the majority of people who lives inside their geography, these borders can be used as a political tool to control the movement of people as a punishment for their political orientations. In the age of mobility control, inequality in general as well as the refugee crisis and the Arab Uprisings in particular, the Palestinians of Gaza have been excluded from the external world and isolated in the Gaza Strip through different mechanism related to borders and visas. This paper is an auto-biography of occupation, travels, airports and border crossings. It describes life under occupation, visa and border violence in the Rafah borders and the Israel's Erez checkpoint, Allenby, and then experiences at European and Middle Eastern airports and borders. The paper explores the state of the exception of living under the occupation as a Palestinian. I explore how the systematic profiling of the Palestinians is operating in Arab countries' borders. Moreover, this paper focuses on the transformation of a person, who was a migrant and asylum seeker, to become a citizen, and how borders can operate as a quasi-citizen of a developed nation. This is a narrative of the 21st century through the eyes of a Palestinian transformed into an unconfirmed Swede. Keywords: Borders, Nation-state, Violence, Palestine, Gaza, Refugees.

### DISCOVERING THE STRATEGY OF INVERSION – OVERCOMING BOUNDARIES IN PALESTINIAN ORAL TRANSMISSION

KAWTHAR EL-QASEM, HOCHSCHULE DÜSSELDORF

For more than seventy years, Palestinians have been exposed to massive loss and disconnection. Thus, the motif of overcoming borders, boundaries and limitations of all kinds is pivotal to Palestinian oral transmission. The presented study reveals inversion as a major strategy in doing so: represented by the invivo code "Others live in their homeland, our homeland lives inside us" inversion builds on the permutability of the normative order of ard (earth) and `ard (honour/performance) and enables protagonists to maintain the coherence of their identity and experience, produce and preserve knowledge, testify to their resistance and resilience and reinforce their

hope and belief in justice against all odds. This paper presents the results of a Reflexive Grounded Theory Study (RGTM) conducted in 2011 in Jordan, Palestine and Israel. Data

analysis according to the RGTM allowed the reconstruction of the practice of Palestinian Orality and the strategy of inversion.

FRIDAY 16.8. 13.30 – 15.00

## SESSIONS VIII

### ANTI-CLERICALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY

CHAIR: LIINA MUSTONEN

Anti-Clericalism tends to appear whenever clerics gain political and social influence. People of a different persuasion – religious or non-religious – may begin to criticize what they consider is the overly powerful position of the clergy. In the Middle East, roughly from the 1970s a religious resurgence, in Arabic *al-sahwa al-diniyya*, gradually placed the clergy – Muslim, Christian, Jewish – in a more prominent position. And by the 2000s, anti-Clericalism was also on the rise.

Although the religious resurgence has received massive attention, it has mainly been studied as a lay movement. The role of the clergy has been less studied, and the later anti-Clericalism has been neglected. Anti-Clericalism has almost solely been studied in a European context, especially in Catholic countries. In the Middle East, it has been discernible in several countries such as Iran and Saudi-Arabia. The panel proposes to direct the study towards the new wave of Anti-Clericalism in Israel and Egypt. What is interesting about the two countries is the political attention given to attacks on Jewish and Muslim clergy in mainstream media.

### MAPPING JEWISH ANTI-CLERICALISM IN A POST-SECULAR WORLD

JOSHUA SABIH, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

The Hebrew term *Rabbanut* stand for more than the person of a rabbi. Actually, it comes to embody authority and power of the clergy as a divinely mandated religious institution through which *Rabbanut* expresses and defines not only the true belief, but also its self-identification as a custodian of the city of God (Israel) and man (the Jew).

In this paper, I shall examine two types of anti-rabbinical or anti-clerical discourse: Secular anti-clericalism of the Israeli Maimonideanism and the religious anti-clericalism of the Israeli Karaites philosophy of law. The epistemological reason for these two models is to debunk the binary opposition of the religious vs the secular.

In this regard, I shall focus on both Yehoshua Leibowitz's understanding of Maimonides as the enlightened philosopher/jurist in his critic of Religious-Zionism's political theology, and the Karaites' critic of the Rabbis' claim to derive their authority from the Oral Law, which the Karaites reject as Divine.

### ANTI-CLERICALISM IN CONTEMPORARY EGYPTIAN ACADEMIA: THE CAIRENE SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

ANDREAS NABIL YOUNAN, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Two dogmas have played a pivotal role in the dominating Sunni Islamic discourse: 1) the non-existence of clerics and therefore clericalism and 2) the dichotomy between religion and secularism. Three Egyptian scholars, Ḥasan Ḥanafī (b. 1935) along with his students Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd (1943-2010) and 'Alī Mabruk (1958-2016) – also known as *The Cairene School of Islamic Studies* – challenged these understandings through their scholarship and engagement in the public debate by, as Muslim intellectuals, criticizing the well-known mutual legitimation between the Islamic scholars ('*ulamā*') and the ruler (*waliyy al-amr*).

This paper will shed light on anti-clerical elements in the intellectual discourse in contemporary Egypt by examining the schools' critique of *turāth* (intellectual Islamic tradition/heritage) and the self-assigned authority and monopoly of the '*ulamā*' on the interpretation of "true" Islam – elements that have

remained undiscussed until now in modern scholarship on secularism and modernity."

## ANTI-CLERICALISM IN THE ISRAELI MILLET SYSTEM

JUDITH AAGAARD, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Israel is a multi-religious and highly hierarchized confessional society. It defines itself as a Jewish and secular state operating with a Millet system that it has inherited from the Ottomans. The uneven and conflictual relationship between the different confessions is often articulated through anti-clerical discourse in its various forms. Israel's Anti-Clericalism represents an interesting phenomenon for social sciences as well as religious studies due to its local features that can improve our understanding of, inter alia, the relationship between religion/religiosity and secularism/modernity. Central to my paper is the question of how the authority and power of the clergy is understood, interpreted and contested; 'Anti-Clericalism, after all, tends to appear whenever clerics gain political and social influence'.

This paper will show diverse examples of Anti-Clerical tendencies within and strategies used by different religious and ethnic groups. The common denominator of these examples is their use of Anti-Clericalism as a means to secure individual and/or communal rights in face of the millet system and the power of the clergy.

## ANTI-CLERICALISM ON TV

JAKOB SKOVGAARD-PETERSEN, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

This paper argues that, in Egypt, anti-Clericalism reflect the relationship between al-Azhar and the rulers of Egypt. When there is mutual respect and support, anti-Clericalism rises in Islamist quarters, whilst in time of tension, anti-Clericalism is mainly expressed in Secularist quarters. Since 2015 there has been tension between the Sisi regime and al-Azhar, and for the first time, Secularist anti-Clericalism has become a mainstay of pan-Arabi television.

Focusing on the seminal figures of Islam al-Buheiri and Ebrahim Eissa, this paper will analyse their programs – Islam hurr and Mukhtalif `Alaih – and the role of the channel

al-Hurra. Moreover, it will compare their themes with the typology of classical European anti-Clericalism as laid out by Hugh Meleod.

## ALLEGORY AND ANTI-CLERICALISM IN MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY: THE CASE OF IBN RUSHD

SAER EL-JAICHI, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

The medieval Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd, or Averroes, (1126-98), who lived in medieval Spain, famously argued in support of allegorical interpretation of Islamic scripture, as a tool for overcoming apparent inconsistencies within the Qur'an, and conflicts between its teaching and reason. To date, several fine expositions of Ibn Rushd's stance on the nature and role of allegory in Qur'anic exegesis have appeared. However, the connection between his argument in favor of allegorical interpretation and his anticlerical sentiments has not adequately been traced in most of these studies. My interest in this paper is threefold: to show how Ibn Rushd's innate preference for allegorical interpretation (ta'wil) stems from his anticlerical position; to address, in particular, the hermeneutical nuances in his attitude toward allegory, in the context of his defense of the divine truth; and to clarify how this defense was a function of his effort to dismantle the authority of the clerics and specialists in Islamic theology ('ilm al-kalam).

## DIASPORA EXPERIENCES

CHAIR: MULKI AL-SHARMANI, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

## REFUGEE IN JESUS CHRIST: EXPERIENCES OF ARAB ASYLUM MIGRANTS IN FINLAND WHO HAVE CONVERTED FROM ISLAM TO CHRISTIANITY

IIRIS NIKANNE, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Following the so-called migrant crisis in Europe, a considerable number of Muslim asylum seekers have invoked conversion to Christianity. While it can be assumed that there are multiple motives behind the conversions, this

master's thesis aims at increasing understanding about the experiences of those who have undergone a religious transformation. The methods include data from semi-structured interviews with ten self-proclaimed converts and three pastors working with people of Muslim backgrounds, analyzed by using qualitative content analysis. Each participant had his own unique experience about the conversion process, but there were also common aspects shared by the interviewees. The participants had undergone a socially, psychologically and spiritually challenging process, the most prominent aspects of which will be discussed in the presentation.

### 'THE CHURCH IS OUR HOME': MIDDLE EASTERN CHRISTIAN DI- ASPORA NARRATIVES ON THE 'EXCLUSIVE' TEMPORAL SPACE OF SPIRITUAL BUILDINGS

FIONA MCCALLUM GUINEY, UNIVERSITY OF ST  
ANDREWS

This paper explores the boundary-making role played by places of worship in a diaspora context using the case study of Middle Eastern Christians in the UK. By attending a place of worship, its members 'belong' to a specific group with its own identity, rules and processes. In a diaspora context, a place of worship often acts as the hub of the community providing a space to (re-)create familiar sights, sounds and smells of the homeland as well as socializing with group members. The paper explores the extent to which the community church both acts as a boundary-maker between the group and wider society and also defines group identity in relation to religion, ethnicity and nationality. The data comes from participant observation and interviews conducted in London and Scotland between 2014 and 2015 as part of a collaborative EU-funded project entitled 'Defining and Identifying Middle Eastern Christian Communities in Europe'.

### "HOME" IN A POCKET FOR HOME-ON-SHOULDERS

TOMOKO YAMAGISHI, MEIJI UNIVERSITY

This paper tries to maintain that networking remains a persistent mode of life among peoples in and from the Middle East, when various boundaries call for their redefinition. It is symbolic that anyone who carries mobile-phone or electronic terminal clicks the icon of "Home" daily, while more and more people wander far from their homes in the Middle East. The Farsi/Persian word "khāneh-bedush/home-on-shoulder" often suites those refugees and immigrants. It is said that sense of "homeland" in nation-state system, which requires geographical boundaries, are apt to be undermined today, and Middle Eastern countries stay relatively in weak national integration due to their ethnic complexity and unreasonable borderlines. On the other hand, we observe Middle Eastern peoples, in and out of the region, utilizing ICT, engage vastly in networking along and beyond their kinship, ethnicity or nationality. Their preference for connectivity may be regarded both historical and contemporary.

### POSTING IDENTITY: STAMPS, POLITICS AND THE PROCESS OF STATE BUILDING IN THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY 1994-2018

IDO ZELKOVITZ, YEZREEL VALLEY COLLEGE AND  
THE UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

My paper focuses on the visual analysis of stamps that were printed, distributed and used in the Palestinian Authority during the period of 1994-2018. The stamp is an important source for historians and scholars of nationalism. The use of icons, images and ideas that were designed to shape public opinion in the Palestinian Authority, can shed light on political and social issues that were at the heart of the Palestinian society during this period. In this context, one should remember that Postage stamps intended for interior and international use play an important role in shaping collective memory. In the case of the Palestinians, where a national group, had to maintain and build a memory, without having self-determination and found itself fragmented between competing factions, stamps and the visual aspects of their graphic design, played an important role in shaping the national image.

## TENSIONS BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL – CITIES AS BEACONS OF REFORM

CHAIR: PEKKA TUOMINEN

### TANGIER (MOROCCO) AS A BORDER CITY: URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS AT MULTIPLE BORDERS

STEFFEN WIPPEL, PHILIPPS-UNIVERSITÄT MARBURG

The presentation will consider Tangier as a border city. Borders display an ambivalent character: they are not only separating lines, preventing humans and goods from crossing, but also interfaces that offer opportunities for cross-border exchanges, with changing qualities according to time and kind of flows. Consequently, they can impair as well as foster economic progress and urban expansion. After a short historical outline, the presentation will focus on Tangier's contemporary experiences. In its more recent history, the role and development of Northern Morocco's metropolis has been repeatedly characterised by its specific position at multiple borders – international borderlines, maritime façades, limits of ports and free zones, regional block borders, and intercontinental delimitations. This multiplex border situation generated as well as blocked numerous flows from, to, and through Tangier making it a cosmopolitan city in international (colonial) times, before it “re-moroccanised” after independence and rapidly globalised with the more recent development visions.

### DEMOCRATIZING CAIRO: THE PERILS AND PROMISES OF ‘PARALLEL PARTICIPATORY PLANNING’ IN THE POST-REVOLUTION CITY

CLAIRE PANETTA, THE GRADUATE CENTER - CUNY

After the January 25th Revolution of 2011, a group of Egyptian architects and urban planners known as MADD Platform developed a proposal for the Maspero Triangle, an impoverished, but historically significant, district in Cairo that had long been the object of government redevelopment plans. However, while state-sponsored proposals had advocated the razing of the neighborhood and the relocation of its residents, MADD Platform's proposal foregrounded the community and guaranteed their continued residency. Unexpectedly, the plan attracted the attention of government officials, but in the ensuing political tumult, the group lost control of the project, and, in late 2018, the government demolished more than 75% of the neighborhood. This paper explores the fate of MADD Platform's work in Maspero, analyzing how a moment of post-2011 political possibility gave way to a seeming return to the status quo, one defined by unpredictable acts of state-sponsored destruction—of lives, livelihoods, and built environments.

### CHALLENGING TERRITORIAL STIGMA IN ISTANBUL: BETWEEN THE UNIVERSALIST CATEGORIES AND LOCAL HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES

PEKKA TUOMINEN, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

In the vernacular geographies of today, cities seem to be composed of territorially bounded areas, associated with attributes that travel across sociocultural contexts. There are universalist depictions of processes of gentrification, fears of city centres losing their historical identities and districts that have come to symbolise all aspects of failed urbanisation. Often they result in superficial comparisons that do not take into account divergent historical trajectories.

In my presentation, I examine the territorial stigmatisation in Istanbul in different periods. I argue that at the heart of the matter are different hierarchical positions between rural and urban, as well as the division between the traditional neighbourhood and the anonymity of the city composed of boulevards and squares. These sociospatial environments have been posited against the global hierarchy of value in ways that reflect changes in the urban transformation of the city. From the classic hierarchies of modern and traditional, to their early challenges expressed in populist terms, the focus has shifted into more or less successful hybridisations of the former categories, combining local and

global significations. Based on my ethnographic fieldwork in the run-down district of Tarlabasi, my aim is analyse the dynamic between the dominant historical narratives and their culturally intimate challenges in the course of everyday life.

## HYBRID MEDIA AND STRUGGLES FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE ARAB WORLD

CHAIR: BRYNJAR LIA, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

The combined effect of political upheavals and technology-driven media transformations has put social and political cohesion in the Arab world under pressure. Times of uncertainty like the current one in the Middle East upset people's habitual interpretive frameworks and increase the media's ability to shape public consciousness. At the same time, the media itself have been changed by political and technological development. Media are hybrid in two senses. Politically, media outlets in various Arab countries experience a considerable degree of editorial freedom, but they are not at liberty to cover every issue in whichever way they want. Technologically, the rise of social media has challenged the traditional media as a "marketplace for ideas" while simultaneously being a powerful tool for disinformation by authoritarian political elites. The papers in this panel explore how journalists, the public and powerholders navigate the possibilities and constraints produced by this double hybridity.

## DEBATING TERRORISM IN A POLITICAL TRANSITION: JOURNALISM AND DEMOCRACY IN TUNISIA

JACOB HØIGILT, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

In March 2015, in the midst of a political transition, Tunisia was rocked by a terrorist attack at the Bardo museum in downtown Tunis in

which 21 people were killed. How did Tunisian journalists manage the tension between a heightened sense of insecurity and the country's uncertain democratic development? This paper analyses journalistic commentary on the causes and implications of terrorism four years into the transition sparked by the Arab uprisings. It provides an empirically nuanced perspective on the role of journalism in political transitions, focusing on journalists as arbitrators in public debate. We argue that influential Tunisian journalists fell back on interpretive schema from the Bin 'Ali era when they tried to make sense of the Bardo attack, thus facilitating the authoritarian drift of the Tunisian government at the time. They actively contributed to the non-linearity of a political transition, despite enjoying real freedom of speech.

## ONLINE ACTIVISM IN EGYPT AND KUWAIT: COUNTER-PUBLICNESS AND DEMOCRATIZATION

JON NORDENSON, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

This paper explores the use of online platforms among activists in the Middle East, and the importance of such platforms in effecting change. Based on a detailed, empirical analysis of the day-to-day use of online platforms by activists in Egypt and Kuwait, I illustrate how and why online platforms are used by activists, which benefits this usage provides, and identifies some crucial features for successful activism. I argue that the campaigns studied were able to effect change, but also show how activism - even online - quite effectively might be hindered. I further argue that the main benefit gained by activists is the counter-publicness online platforms provide, which enable excluded groups to organize, articulate their demands and mobilize for these in their national publics.

## DRAINING THE SWAMP JOURNALISM: AUTOMATED NEWS IN THE GULF TWITTERSPHERE

MARC OWEN JONES, HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY

While the role of social media in the Middle East is generally accepted to be ambiguous, moving beyond binaries of utopian or

dystopian potentials, authoritarian innovation in the areas of news and journalism have resulted in particularistic new phenomenon. The confluence of long-practised state censorship in Saudi Arabia and the embrace of new technologies is leading to shifting practises in digital journalism, one of which is the non-overt automation of news accounts. By using methods of automated account detection on Twitter pioneered by this author, this paper seeks to explore; a) the extent of automated journalism in the Arabic Gulf Twittersphere b) the potential impacts of such journalism c) the nature of the journalistic content. Preliminary analysis has already showed that automated Twitter accounts are highly active in 'swamping' both regional and local hashtags - drowning out legitimate debate. The paper contends that swamping is a form of authoritarian innovation that attempts to rebound the unbounding force of new media technologies.

## JOURNALISM UNDER INSTRUMENTALIZED POLITICAL PARALLELISM: MEDIA AND POLITICS IN LEBANON

KJETIL SELVIK, NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

What is the role of journalism in hybrid political regimes where political competition and media pluralism coexist with authoritarian practices? How do journalists navigate to carve out a professional space? The paper investigates the media-politics nexus in Lebanon. Lebanon's media system is characterized by political parallelism, understood as stable links between political actors and the media and reporting that reflects political divisions. Moreover, it is heavily marked by political clientelism. The paper examines the room for journalistic agency under instrumentalized political parallelism based on face-to-face interviews with 25 Lebanese journalists. It finds journalists being under multiple pressures and shows how they seek to overcome their constraints. We argue that journalists maneuver along two conflict axes, one horizontal, between political leaders, and one vertical, between the grassroots and the elites. Connecting to one or the other may increase their political weight, increasing the element of uncertainty for the regime.