“Freedom is a daily practice."

***Conference on the New Middle East***

***October 18-October 20***

***University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign***

***Conference Program***

*All events will take place on the third floor of the Levis Center; 919 West Illinois Street; Urbana, Illinois, except meals which will be served on the second floor.*

**Thursday, October 18**

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| 7:00 pm | Welcome by [**Valerie Hoffman**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Hoffman)**,** Director of the Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies    Welcome by [**Wolfgang Schlör**](http://provost.illinois.edu/about/staff/schloer/index.html), Interim Associate Provost for International Affairs    Welcome and Introduction by[**Ruth Watkins**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Watkins), the Harry E. Preble Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences    **First Keynote Address**: [**Prince Moulay Hicham ben Abdallah**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Abdallah), consulting researcher at Stanford University; founder and CEO of the Moulay Hicham Foundation for Social Science Research on North Africa and the Middle East: "After the toppling of the Jumlukiya: Crises versus Political Institutionalization"  <http://moulayhichamfoundation.org/category/design/prince-moulay-hicham-ben-abdallah> |
| 8:30 - 9:30 pm | Reception on the second floor of the Levis Faculty Center |

**Friday, October 19**

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| 9:15-11:45 am | **Religion, Politics and New Social Movements** |
|  | [**Asef Bayat**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Bayat), Dept. of Sociology, University of Illinois: [“Islam and the Arab Spring”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Bayat)    [**Jeremy Walton**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Walton)**,** Georgetown Center for Contemporary Arab Studies:["Politicizing Practice or Practicing Politics? Turkish Negotiations of Liberalism, Secularism and Islam"](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Walton)    [**Joyce Dalsheim**,](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Dalsheim) Dept. of Global, International, and Area Studies, University of North Carolina – Charlotte: [“ "Unusual Convergences: Peacemaking and “Other Spaces” in Israel/Palestine"](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Dalsheim)    [**Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi,**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Ghamari)Dept. of History, University of Illinois: [“Is it Useless to Revolt? Revolutionary Transformation and Islamist Politics in Iran and Egypt”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Ghamari)    Panel chair:[**Anna-Maria Marshall**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#MarshallAM), Head, Department of Sociology, University of Illinois |

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| 12:00-1:00 pm | Lunch for conference participants and attendees    Student poster session on the second floor of the Levis Faculty Center |

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| 1:00-2:45 pm | **How Are Minorities Faring?** |
|  | [**Abbas Vali**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Vali), Department of Sociology, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul:[“The Politics of the Transition to Democracy and the Subordinate Identities in Iran”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Vali)    [**Anthony Shenoda**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Shenoda), Department of Anthropology & Religion, Leiden University College:["Miracles as an Otherworldly Modality of Power: Some Thoughts on Coptic Christian Negotiations of Islam, Revolution, and Change in Egypt"](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Shenoda)    [**Senem Aslan**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Aslan), Department of Politics, Bates College:[“Accommodation or Control? Recent Changes in Minority Policies in Turkey and Morocco”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Aslan) |

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| 2:45-3:00 pm | Coffee break |

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| 3:00-4:15 pm | **The State of the Economy: Labor, Resources, and Development** |
|  | [**Bassam Yousif**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Yousif), Department of Economics, Indiana State University: ["Economics and Revolution"](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Yousif)    [**Hadi Salehi Esfahan**i](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Esfahani), Department of Economics, University of Illinois: ["Political Change and the Prospects of Economic Development in the Arab World"](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Esfahani)    Panel chair: [**Kenneth Cuno**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Cuno)**,** Department of History, University of Illinois |

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| 4:15-4:30 pm | Coffee break |

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| 4:30-6:45 pm | **Gender Dynamics: What Has Changed?** |
|  | [**Haideh Moghissi**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Moghissi), Sociology, York University, Canada: [“Women's rights and the ‘Spring’ of Islamism in the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons (Un)learned”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Moghissi)    [**Zakia Salime**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Salime), Sociology & Women’s Studies, Rutgers:[“A New Feminism? Gender Dynamics in Morocco's February 20th Movement”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Salim)    [**Gul Marshall**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Marshall)**,** Department of Sociology, University of Louisville: ["The Politics of Gender Equality in Turkey"](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Marshall)    [**Paul Amar**,](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/)Global and International Studies, University of California at Santa Barbara,["New Logics of Popular Sovereignty and Subaltern Alternatives to Egypt's 'Thug State'"](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Amar)    Panel chair: [**Gale Summerfield**](http://hcd.illinois.edu/people/faculty/summerfield_gale/profile.html), Director, Women and Gender in Global Perspectives Program, University of Illinois |

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| 7:00 pm | Reception on the first floor of the Levis Faculty Center |

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| 8:00 pm | Showing of ["A Separation"](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1832382/) | Animal Sciences Laboratory; Room 150  1207 West Gregory Drive Urbana, IL 61801 |

**Saturday, October 20**

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| 8:30-9:30 am | **Second Keynote Address:**[**Roger Allen**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Allen), Prof. Emeritus of Arabic & Comparative Literature, University of Pennsylvania: [“The Corruption of Power and the Power of Corruption: Contemporary Historical Fiction in Arabic, with Special Reference to Morocco”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Allen)    Introduction by **[Waïl Hassan](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm" \l "Hassan)**, Director, Program in Comparative and World Literature, University of Illinois |

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| 9:30-10:00 am | Coffee break |

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| 10 -11:45 am | **Cultural Expressions: The Arts** | |
|  | [**Ted Swedenburg**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Swedenburg), Dept. of Anthropology, University of Arkansas: ["Egypt's Music of Revolt, 2011: From Sayyed Darwish to DJ Amr Haha"](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Swedenburg)    [**Dina Ramadan**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Ramadan), Department of Foreign Languages, Cultures and Literatures, Bard College: ["When Artists Become Martyrs: Representing the Egyptian Uprising”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Ramadan)    [**Hamid Naficy**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Naficy), Professor of Radio-Television-Film and the Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor in Communication, Northwestern University:[“Iran-US Mediatic Public Diplomacy”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Naficy)    Panel chair: [**Lillie Gordon**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Gordon), School of Music, University of Illinois | |
| 12:00-1:00 pm | | Lunch for conference participants and attendees on the second floor of the Levis Faculty Center |

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| 1:15-3:00 pm | **Media in the Middle East Today** |
|  | [**Joe Khalil**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Khalil), School of Communication, Northwestern University in Qatar: [“The Emerging Arab Media Environment”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Khalil)    [**Niki Akhavan**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Akhavan), Department of Media Studies, Catholic University of America:[“State-Sponsored Media, Cultural Production, and Information Wars: The Case of Iran”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Akhavan) (Paper will be read by [**Valerie Hoffman**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Hoffman), Director, Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Illinois    [**Rebecca L. Stein**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Stein), Anthropology, Duke University: [“Viral Occupation:  Social Media, Israeli Sovereignty, and the Camera”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Stein)    Panel chair: **[Angharad Valdivia](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm" \l "Valdivia)**, Head, Department of Media and Cinema Studies, University of Illinois |

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| 3:00-3:15 pm | Coffee break |

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| 3:15-4:15 pm | **Locating Power in the Arab World Today** |
|  | [**Linda Herrera**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Herrera), Dept. of Educational Policy, Organization & Leadership, University of Illinois:[“Power and Politics in the Age of Social Media”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Herrera)    [**Abderrahim Foukara**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Foukara), Washington Bureau chief, Al Jazeera: [“The Arab Spring Revolutions: Back to the Future Familiarity or the Road Less Travelled?”](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/abstracts/default.htm#Foukara)    Panel chair: [**Feisal Mohamed**](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Mohamed)**,** Department of English, University of Illinois |

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| 4:20-5:00 pm | **The Future of Democracy in the Middle East**  Moderated Discussion on the Future of Democracy in the Middle East: all conference participants and CSAMES Middle East faculty are invited to participate    Panel chair: [**Valerie Hoffman**,](http://newmiddleeast.csames.illinois.edu/program/speakers/default.htm#Hoffman) Director, Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Illinois |
| 6:00 pm | Dinner for conference participants |



*Demonstration in Casablanca calling for political change, June, 2011*

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*Registration*

Free registration is requested. If you plan to attend any receptions or meals, [please click here to register.](https://illinois.edu/fb/sec/9640789)



*Courthouse square, Libya*

*Presentation Abstracts*

**Prince Moulay Hicham ben Abdallah**, consulting researcher at Stanford University; founder and CEO of the Moulay Hicham Foundation for Social Science Research on North Africa and the Middle East

**Niki Akhavan**, Department of Media Studies, Catholic University of America: “State-Sponsored Media, Cultural Production, and Information Wars: The Case of Iran”

While analysis of political calculations and economic factors are important to understanding Iran’s troubled foreign and domestic relations, the cultural components underpinning them must also be taken into consideration. Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic, state entities and officials have been consistent in decrying cultural onslaughts from those identified as enemies and have emphasized the necessity for promoting various forms of home-grown media productions. Given factionalization and continually shifting political alliances, however, consensus on the nature and scope of such productions has been rarely achieved. The official Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) services dominate the airwaves, but media supported by a range of current and former state figures and institutions reflect core disagreements over Iran’s political and cultural identity. At the same time, massive foreign state sponsored and independent media operating in opposition to the ruling system pose additional challenges for any attempts at presenting uncontested portraits of contemporary Iran.  Focusing on official state media as well as outlets that have permission to operate inside Iran, this paper examines Iran’s culture wars and their imbrication with power struggles within the country. In so doing, the paper highlights state organs’ tactics for enhancing their influence as media and cultural producers. Specifically, it considers examples pertaining to the expansion of state actors’ presence online, the creation of new outlets such as the IRIB’s Documentary Channel, and the production of content for non-Iranian audiences.

**Roger Allen**, Prof. Emeritus of Arabic & Comparative Literature, University of Pennsylvania: “The Corruption of Power and the Power of Corruption: Contemporary Historical Fiction in Arabic, with Special Reference to Morocco”

In this study I propose to illustrate the ways in which Arabic historical novels may have played a role, albeit a tangential one, in the development of the political and social atmosphere that resulted in the events of 2011. I explore first the role of historical writing and the close linkages between it and other types of narrative. Passing by Scott and Tolstoy, I then arrive at a discussion of a group of recent historical novels written by Moroccan authors that have “the power of corruption and the corruption of power” as major themes.

**Paul Amar**, Global and International Studies, University of California at Santa Barbara, “New Logics of Popular Sovereignty and Subaltern Alternatives to Egypt’s ‘Thug State’”

This paper will aim to articulate subaltern forms of sovereignty -- social banditry, vigilantism, community self-policing, and football-fan militancy -- that have emerged in Egypt following the uprising of 25 January 2011. These forms of autonomous organization have generated novel kinds of political assertion, created a new vocabulary for representing stateness and governmentality, and unleashed a range of forms of political and social violence and resistance. This piece aims to contribute to the political anthropology of the state and the political sociology of revolutions by looking beyond the limits of the optics of civil society and identity politics, beyond the “pragmatism” of Bourdieuvian notions of logics or social capital, and will grapple with the realities of violence, sexuality, and class that neo-institutionalists tend to ignore.   In this context, I will trace the military junta and Islamist parliament’s deployment of discourses of hypermasculinity, thuggishness, predatory sexuality, and moral respectability that attempt to discredit and justify extreme repression of these “anarchic” forms of youth and community self-organization.  And I will draw upon my new ethnographic fieldwork to articulate what novel theories of governance, horizontal organization, autonomy, collectivity, and nationalism emanate from these local assertions, as they are characterized by their practitioners.  Can these be the seeds of a counterhegemonic formation of popular sovereignty that could substitute for the limitations of both militarized emergency rule, and Islamic piety-centered electoral/representative politics?  Or are these local, subversive appropriations of “thug politics” doomed to be ephemeral phenomena?

**Senem Aslan**, Department of Politics, Bates College: “Accommodation or Control? Recent Changes in Minority Policies in Turkey and Morocco”

When are governments most effective in containing ethnic contention through accommodation of ethno-cultural rights? This paper seeks to answer this question through an analysis of the Turkish and Moroccan states’ new reforms that address ethno-cultural rights and their consequences for Kurdish and Berber mobilization, respectively. In both countries, several constitutional and legal amendments were passed during the past decade to address Kurdish and Berber demands for cultural rights. The Turkish state lifted many of the restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language in the media and education. It opened a TV channel that broadcasts in Kurdish and established Kurdish language and literature departments in certain public universities. These policies became a turning point in Turkish political history as they constituted the first official acknowledgement of Turkey’s ethnic pluralism. The Moroccan state opened an institute for research in Berber culture and for the development of the Berber languages. In 2011, as part of its constitutional amendments, Morocco declared Berber as an official language alongside Arabic.

This paper will discuss why the Moroccan state has been successful in forming an uneasy, and yet peaceful relations with its Berber population while the Turkish state failed to contain the armed Kurdish movement. Looking at the consequences of the reforms, this paper will underline the importance of the timing of reforms. I argue that after prolonged armed conflict between states and minorities, reforms that accommodate cultural demands of minorities fail to bring ethnic peace and reconciliation. In other words, reforms came too late to end the conflict. This paper will discuss the reasons behind the failure of these reforms in Turkey, including their uneven and incomplete implementation by the local bureaucracy. In Morocco, however, the state responded to ethnic resentments much earlier than the Turkish state did. The early Moroccan accommodation of ethno-cultural demands when the Berber movement showed its first signs of politicization have been influential in containing the movement despite many of the reforms’ symbolic nature.

**Asef Bayat**, Dept. of Sociology, UIUC: “Islam and the Arab Spring”

The Arab Spring, with its largely civil, peaceful, and immensely popular character, surprised many experts and lay observers. But an intense debate continues about the ideological underpinnings of the Arab revolutions. Are they liberal, democratic, religious, or simply nonideological revolutions? The recent remarkable success of religious parties in the polls in Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt has begun to cause anxiety among those who feared that these revolutions would spearhead an Islamist takeover of the Arab world. Do these revolutions herald the entrenchment of Islamist politics in Middle Eastern societies and states? This paper attempts to answer this question.

**Joyce Dalsheim**, Dept. of Global, International, and Area Studies, University of North Carolina – Charlotte: "Unusual Convergences: Peacemaking and “Other Spaces” in Israel/Palestine"

As people watched the unfolding events of the Arab Spring, in another corner of the Middle East a little “cottage cheese revolution” was going on. What began as anger over the price of everyday food products in Israel grew to a nationwide series of social protests that grew with time and continued into the summer of 2012. Protests over food prices eventually became protests over housing prices, and although many Israelis are convinced that the country’s economic problems are entangled with its military spending, its ongoing struggle with the Palestinians, and its expenditures in the West Bank to protect expanding Jewish settlements, these issues proved too divisive for the social protest movement to raise. Including as many Israeli citizens as possible became more important than addressing fundamental political issues that might alienate the religious and the Right. At the same time as attempts at Left/Right and secular/religious convergence were being made in these protests, a number of other unusual convergences have been taking place in Israel/Palestine. Although these have gone mostly unnoticed, they have managed to begin crossing some of the country’s deepest social and political divides. The Israeli Left, opposed to the Occupation and ongoing expansion of settlements, is at ideological odds with religious settlers whom they consider obstacles to peace and the very worst enemies of the Palestinian cause. Despite this, a number of organizations and influential individuals have recently been bringing together left-wing and secular Israeli Jews, secular and religious Palestinians, right-wing politicians, and religious Jewish settlers to talk about ways of cooperating and living together. These unusual convergences, and the inevitable reactions against them, will be the focus of this talk.

**Hadi Salehi Esfahani**, Department of Economics, UIUC: “Globalization, Economic Development, and Political Change in the Middle East and North Africa”

The Arab Spring has raised the prospects of democracy in many Arab countries. However, democratization is often a long and turbulent process, which may have significant adverse consequences for the economy for a decade or longer. This paper examines the potential challenges facing the Arab economies in this process and assesses the possible outcomes in light of the past experiences of democratization in other developing countries. The paper argues that the most relevant cases are those of Iran and Turkey and those of the Latin American countries that went through political change after 1980. The experience of Eastern European countries after the breakup of the Soviet Union can also offer some, though limited, lessons for the Arab Spring. The results of this analysis suggest that the Arab countries that are going through political change may experience slow growth and high inflation for a few decades before their new institutions take form and mature sufficiently to render reliable economic policies and stable economic performance. However, the process can be made shorter and more effective if policymakers and the general public develop a better understanding of the potential pitfalls of institution building and the possible ways of avoiding them.

**Abderrahim Foukara**, Washington Bureau chief, Al Jazeera: “The Arab Spring Revolutions: Back to the Future Familiarity or the Road Less Travelled?”

Fifteen months ago, with Egypt’s Mubarak forced to step down in just eighteen days, the tide of peaceful change throughout the Arab region looked inexorable. Today, however, even as millions of Arabs continue to show incredible valour in the face of often bloody repression, the journey to real change has never looked so arduous. Several peaceful protests have since been forced to pick up arms or overwhelmed by forces accused of looking backward rather than forward. Thus, the certainty and unity of fifteen months ago has in many cases given way to division and a less certain vision of the future. Hardly surprising, the more committed say, arguing that the region has never before been down this difficult but exciting road. Will such a resilient spirit produce a new Arab order in the end or will it succumb to William Butler Yeats' bleak vision of a world falling apart because its center cannot hold? Whatever the answer, the revolution continues to be televised to an almost general consensus: the region’s genie has come out of the bottle looking for an end to decades of fear and tyranny. Will that end be irrevocably achieved? History will tell, not news anchors.

**Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi**, Dept. of History, UIUC: “Is it Useless to Revolt? Revolutionary Transformation and Islamist Politics in Iran and Egypt”

The so-called “Arab Spring” failed to extend its spirit with the same revolutionary impulse into the formation of new states. In Tunisia and in Egypt, two important centers of the revolt, the old opposition parties curtailed peoples’ democratic aspirations and demands of social justice and dignity in favor of sustaining the old regime’s institutional continuity. The Green Movement in Iran was unable to realize its demand for new presidential election in 2009. Do these experiences suggest that revolt is useless? I will argue that the core achievement of a revolutionary moment is in its actual experience rather than in its outcome.

**Linda Herrera**, Dept. of Educational Policy, Organization & Leadership, UIUC: “Power and Politics in the Age of Social Media”

The  battles for a democratic Egypt are being waged on many fronts, including on social media. This talk asks, are youth in Egypt and the wider Middle East region, armed with an ever-advancing arsenal of high-tech tools and technologies, growing as a counterpower? Or are these tools and technologies reinforcing a highly unequal form of power that favors entrenched  and new power elites like the Muslim Brotherhood?  How are power and counterpower operating in the age of social media?

**Joe Khalil**, School of Communication, Northwestern University in Qatar: “The Emerging Arab Media Environment”

This presentation offers conceptual reflections and empirical analyses on the state of post-uprisings Arab media. Grounded in a series of recent fieldwork, Khalil discusses the emerging media environment marked by a growth of local mainstream mass media and an increased role of alternative movement media. The analysis proceeds in three parts. The first part explores challenges in defining terms like ‘local’, ‘mainstream’ and ‘alternative’ in a changing Middle East. Are satellite news channels still relevant? Did the uprisings do away with state media? How important are alternative voices? Taking Tunisia and Egypt as case studies; the second part provides a tapestry of various media appearing during and after each country’s uprising. After years of politically stale local media landscape, the newly reacquired freedoms are hyper-mediated spaces in which revolutionaries and regime sympathizers are operating.  Using a political economy approach, the third part of the presentation aims to identify the range and diversity of the emerging media players. By way of conclusion, it then offers reflections on change and continuity in Arab media.

**Gul Aldikacti Marshall,**Sociology, University of Louisville

Gender equality has long been the agenda of the Turkish feminist movement.  Although the Turkish Republic has congratulated itself since its establishment in 1923 for being a Western-style democracy where women have citizenship rights, including the rights to vote, work, divorce, and inherit, members of the feminist movement, which started in the early 1980s, found these rights inadequate and consistently criticized the shortcomings of the legal framework.  Turkey’s bid for European Union membership and the election to government of an Islamist party three times in a row have brought new actors with new perspectives on women’s rights and gender equality to the political sphere in Turkey. I examine the convergence and divergence among the perspectives of feminists, the AKP government, and the EU.  I also discuss the implications of these actors’ viewpoints and actions.

**Haideh Moghissi**, Sociology, York University, Canada: “Women's rights and the ‘Spring’ of Islamism in the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons (Un)learned”

What has come to be known as “Arab Spring” is a remarkable turning point in the modern history of the region. However, the swift turn that the movement for democracy and social justice has taken in favor of Islamists signals the challenges ahead for women’s rights activists and other progressive social forces. Drawing upon the experiences of women in Iran after the revolution, this paper asks whether there are lessons to be learned from the revolutionary processes in the Middle East and North Africa.

**Hamid Naficy**, Professor of Radio-Television-Film and the Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor in Communication, Northwestern University: “Iranian Internet Cinema—A Cinema of Embodied Protest”

This talk focuses on the emergence of what I call “internet cinema.” I choose Iran in the late 2000s as a case study of this phenomenon, particularly since the 2009 disputed election, which returned Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president.  Iran provides an example of the use of the new media in support of democratic ideals that in recent months have rocked Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, and much of the Muslim world in the Middle East and North Africa.  This internet cinema is driven by the cosmopolitanism of the population and the wide and deep penetration of the Internet and its various modalities of connectivity and interactivity in Iran.

**Dina Ramadan,**Department of Foreign Languages, Cultures and Literatures, Bard College

In the awake of the “Arab Spring,” we have seen a renewed interest in artistic production from the region, one which revolves around the relationship between art and activism, and an interrogation of the role of the artist during times of “revolution.” This paper will examine some of these questions as they pertain to the Egyptian context, by focusing primarily on the Egyptian Pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennale. The platform, curated by the Ministry of Culture, honored the memory of the 32-year-old multimedia artist and musician, Ahmed Basiony, who died from gunshot wounds during the violence in Tahrir Square on January 28, 2011. The exhibition, “30 Days of Running in the Space,” combines both a multimedia project shown a year earlier and unedited video footage from the demonstrations in the days leading up to the artist’s death. The combination of these two elements at the Biennale allows for the simultaneous presentation of Basiony as an artist, an activist, and ultimately a martyr. Much of the work presented in this exhibition draws upon the technologies that we  have come to associate and celebrate as one of the emancipatory elements of the “Arab Spring.” However, in this paper I suggest that the emphasis on Basiony’s martyrdom throughout the exhibition threatens to restrict our reading of his work to the tragic events leading to his untimely death. This also raises larger questions about our restrictive expectations and perhaps dated understanding of artistic production within the context of contemporary uprisings, many of which can be traced to Nahda discourses and the earlier revolutions of the 20th century. Ultimately, I argue that the staging of Basiony’s work within such a context allows for a certain co-option that utilizes art as a tool in the counterrevolution.

**Zakia Salim**, Sociology & Women’s Studies, Rutgers: “A New Feminism? Gender Dynamics in Morocco’s February 20th Movement”

Much has been made of Morocco’s stability, and its youth disengagement from politics. The February 20thmovement took many by surprise. During the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings several virtual conversations were taking place about bringing the Arab Spring to Morocco. The fall of both regimes triggered demands for protests on February 20th, 2011, the date that became the name of the movement.  The calls first appeared on YouTube showing signs of new gender arrangements and cultural politics. This was not simply because of the alternation of colloquial Arabic (darija) and Tamazight (berber) languages. Rather, it was the young men and women’s alternating voices and faces that were indicative of new gender dynamics among the February 20th activists.

The February 20th movement shows new modes of engagement with feminism, despite a striking absence of feminist organizations from the movement of protest. Nevertheless, and in sharp contrast with most accounts that posit the irrelevance of feminism for Moroccan youth’s identifications and political subjectivities, I argue that feminism has not only penetrated the social imaginary of a new generation of activists, but has also informed their practices. What kind of tension does this appropriation of feminism by the youth of February 20thbring about with traditional feminist circles? Does this high visibility of women in February 20th indicate the rise of a *new feminism*?

**Anthony Shenoda,**Department of Anthropology & Religion, Leiden University College: “Miracles as an Otherworldly Modality of Power: Some Thoughts on Coptic Christian Negotiations of Islam, Revolution, and Change in Egypt”

Drawing on two years of ethnographic fieldwork among Coptic Orthodox Christians in Cairo, Egypt, this paper explores the ways in which miracle narratives empower Copts. I argue that the miraculous is the idiom through which a good deal of Coptic life, politics, moral conceptions, ethics, and religiosity are expressed. Miracle narratives among contemporary Copts, therefore, are the lens through which I examine the complex negotiations of a religious minority’s navigations of national and territorial belonging. The assumption among many pious Copts is that their daily survival in an Islamic Egypt is entirely dependent on the relationships they are able to forge with saintly intercessors. Successful affinities with the saints, a matter often manifested in miraculous interventions, are interpreted as giving Copts the moral upper-hand within the religious and even political topography of Egypt. This makes miracles a particularly powerful means by which Copts make claims to Egyptian national and territorial belonging. Miracle narratives are also a key component of Coptic historical accounts, which typically follow a genealogy of Coptic history that understands divine presence as a fundamental aspect of human history rather than as a series of collisions with an otherwise independent horizontal flow of human time.  This divine presence has been instantiated and made immediate through the abundant circulation of the miracle stories. An important question that arises here is: What is at stake in framing Coptic historiography and engagement with the Egyptian nation in terms of the miraculous? I end the paper by reflecting on how the power of miracles is operative in revolutionary Egypt as Coptic negotiations of their place in the Egyptian nation continue to be fraught with anxieties.

**Rebecca L. Stein**, Anthropology, Duke University: “Viral Occupation:  Social Media, Israeli Sovereignty, and the Camera”

The Israeli military occupation is full of cameras – cameras of varying kinds, deployed to varying political effect.  One finds them in the hands of nearly all of the occupation’s numerous constituents; the Israeli army, whose film unit dates to the early decades of the military occupation; Palestinian residents, activists, and NGOs operating within the territories; Israeli human rights groups and anti-occupation activists; and organized film units of Israeli settlers.  In addition to their public relations application, cameras are variously employed for means of surveillance, deterrence, activism, humanitarian witnessing, warfare, security, and what the state deems counter-insurgency. As in other geopolitical contexts, video documentation is the political media of choice for these highly divergent populations, circulated via social networks.  Video documentation is deemed not merely an advantage within this theater but a necessity – the sine qua non for evidential cum political claims, this despite the debates about video veracity that almost always ensue, often fueled by charges of technical manipulation or politically motivated editing. Of course, filmic mediation has a long history in this context – one that can be traced to the early years of the Zionist settler national project in Palestine.  In turn, as Ariella Azoulay has argued, photographs and photographic archives – particularly those in Israeli state hands – have long been implicated in the continuation of this political project (even as, Azoulay proposes, they may be integral to its undoing).  Attention to this history requires a cautious assessment of the impact of digital cameras on the military occupation – or rather, a tempering of any insistence on “newness” in this regard.  The project becomes one of cautiously considering what new technologies have ushered in, even as one considers how such technologies were preceded, enabled, and now remediate those that came before.   This essay will focus on the use of digital video cameras by Israeli human rights organizations -- videos of Israeli rights' abuses in the occupied Palestinian territories, aimed for circulation chiefly among Jewish Israeli audiences.  Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork among these organizations and a close reading of their videography, I will consider the extent to which new camera technologies are changing the political fabric and possible future of the occupation.

**Ted Swedenburg**, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Arkansas: “Egypt’s Music of Revolt, 2011: From Sayyed Darwish to DJ Amr Haha”

This paper argues that, while the interest in Arab culture aroused in the West by the “Arab Spring” is cheering, the nature of the media coverage is not.  International coverage of the music culture of the “Arab Spring” has focused mostly on hip-hop. This excessive focus on “revolutionary” Arab hip-hop has meant that other sorts of music that were important in the events of the “Arab Spring” were mostly ignored. The focus on hip-hop also involved an imposition of Western models on oppositional Arab culture and too easy a vector of identification. In addition, Western coverage of Arab revolutionary music was misleading in its understanding of hip-hop as a kind of “soundtrack” to unfolding events. Taking the eighteen days of struggle at Tahrir Square as my focus, I argue that other forms of music were much more significant for the Egyptian Revolution than hip-hop, and that they served a much different function than as a soundtrack. Instead, they were embedded within the social movement, and were either songs that were part of a revolutionary repertoire already known by audiences, or were composed on the spot. The purpose of the music was to move crowds to an affective state. I focus on three examples of music performed at Tahrir that was from the revolutionary repertoire “Old Port Said” by the group El Tanbura, from Port Said; Sayyid Darwish’s “Aho Da Lli Saar” (This Is What Happened), a song from the 1919 revolution, as performed by Alexandrian “alt” band Masar Egbari; and Rami Essam’s performance of “Al-Gahsh ’Aal Lil-Hmar” (The Foal Said to the Donkey), a poem written by Ahmed Fouad Negm, the lyricist for the revolutionary singer of the 60s, 70s and 80s, Sheikh Imam. I discuss as well Rami Essam’s famous song "Erhal" (Leave), composed at Tahrir and based on the slogans of the revolution. I conclude by discussing an oppositional musical trend to follow, post-revolution, “*mahragaan*” (or, “*techno sha‘bi*”), the new musical trend of Cairo’s popular quarters—electronic, autotuned, rooted in *sha‘bi* rhythms, irreverent and satirical, and not likely to be squelched by a Muslim Brotherhood government.

**Abbas Vali**, Department of Sociology, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul: “The Politics of the Transition to Democracy and the Subordinate Identities in Iran”

The botched presidential elections in June 2009 resulted in a protest movement questioning the credibility of the electoral process and its outcome reinstating the incumbent president in office with a large majority. The Green Movement, as the protest movement is called in the popular political discourse in Iran, used the vocabulary and idiom of democratic theory to criticize the government’s conduct of the elections and express the popular demand for free and fair elections. The Green Movement was effectively suppressed by a massive use of juridical and extra-juridical violence as it began superseding its initial critical limits by targeting the legitimacy of the Islamic regime, its constitution and leadership. Although state violence was instrumental in the suppression of the movement, there were nonetheless other reasons for the quick decline of popular protest, related mainly to its social structure, ethnic formation and political representation. The movement was largely confined to the urban middle classes with a modern secular outlook in Tehran and a few large cities populated predominantly by ethnic Persians. The industrial working class and the urban poor in the country at large did not join the Green Movement, nor did the bulk of the active population in the Azeri, Kurdish, Arab and Baluchi communities in the provinces take part in the movement. The active refusal of the ethnic communities to join forces with the protest movement in the Persian heartland was more than a simple aberration, given their persistent and widely recognized opposition to the ruling  Shi‘i theocracy in the past three decades.  Rather, it signified the ethnic limits of political pluralism and representation in the discursive formation of the democratic opposition to the Islamic regime in Iran, a political paradox rooted in their approach to democracy, national identity and citizenship. But political forces and tendencies in the democratic opposition to the Islamic regime, both Islamist and secular, while acknowledging the persistence of the “ethnic issue” in the core of their politics, refuse to attribute it to their conceptions of democracy, pluralism and national identity. The ethnic issue, they maintain variously, resides in the political culture of the ethnic communities, in the “anomalous” developments in ethnic consciousness and secessionist politics encouraged by the repressive and exclusionary policies of the Islamic regime since the revolution. This paper aims to address this paradox in relation to the representations of Kurdish identity and rights in the discourse of the Iranian opposition after July 2009. It argues that the ethnic limits of democratic representation and participation are grounded in essentialist conceptions of democracy, pluralism and national identity. An “inclusive” democratic political process capable of representing “ethnic difference” and rights should abandon essentialist constructions of Iranian national identity, sovereignty and citizenship, adopting more radical approaches to political pluralism and participation.

**Jeremy Walton,**Georgetown Center for Contemporary Arab Studies: “Politicizing Practice or Practicing Politics? Turkish Negotiations of Liberalism, Secularism and Islam”

A provocative tension has defined the domestic politics of Islam and secularism within Turkey in recent years.  On the one hand, the governing AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) has spearheaded a policy of ‘openness’ (*açılım*) on the part of the state to minority identities and communities within Turkey, including religious communities.  On the other hand, the period of rule of the AKP has been marked by increasingly vociferous debates over the power and appropriate place of Islam within the Turkish public sphere.  In this paper, I analyze and trace this tension between liberal discourse about religion in Turkey and the rising temperature of public argument over Islam and its relation to politics.  On the basis of ethnographic research with a variety of Islamic civil society organizations located in both Istanbul and Ankara, I argue that the very concepts of ‘Islam’, ‘religion’, and ‘secularism’ in Turkey achieve different articulations and definitions in the civil and political spheres.  While secularism and Islam are counterpoised and rendered as incommensurable ideologies within the Turkish political sphere, they frequently coincide and animate each other within the domain of Turkish civil society and its institutions.

**Bassam Yousif**, Department of Economics, Indiana State University: “Economics and Revolution”

This study seeks to provide a socio-economic context—and, tentatively, a rationale—for the political events that have overthrown leaderships and governments across the Arab World since 2011. Accordingly, medium to long term patterns in economic growth, employment, urbanization, poverty and inequality (among other relevant socio-economic variables) are studied. The results of the research cast doubt about the instant explanations and inferences that have been put forward about the ‘causes’ of these ‘revolutions’ or the related ‘crisis’ in governance in the Arab World.