



Tuesday 7th May 2024

Postgraduate Research IAIS Workshop



University
of Exeter

Institute of Arab
and Islamic Studies

About the Workshop

A chance for our PGR students to showcase their research

At the Institute of Arab & Islamic Studies (IAIS), we recognise the immense value in providing opportunities for postgraduate students to hone their presentation skills and showcase their research endeavours. With this in mind, IAIS has embarked on organising a dedicated workshop tailored specifically for postgraduate students to present their research projects.

First and foremost, the workshop serves as a platform for students to refine their presentation abilities. Effective communication is a vital skill for any academic and/or professional endeavour, and presenting research findings in a clear, concise and engaging manner is essential. Through practicing presentations in a supportive environment, students have the opportunity to receive constructive feedback, refine their delivery techniques, and develop confidence in articulating their ideas – a skill set that will serve them well in their academic pursuits and beyond.

Moreover, showcasing research at a workshop provides students with valuable exposure and recognition for their scholarly contributions. Presenting before peers and faculty members not only validates the significance of their work but also opens doors for potential collaboration and networking opportunities. It allows students to receive insightful feedback from a diverse audience, enabling them to strengthen their arguments, address potential gaps in their research, and consider alternative perspectives – all of which contribute to the overall quality and depth of their scholarship.

We hope that this workshop helps to further foster a culture of intellectual exchange and collaboration with the academic community, both within IAIS but also wider within the university. This interdisciplinary dialogue will not only enrich the students' own research experiences but also promote a deeper understanding of complex issues and encourage innovative approaches to problem-solving.

Workshop Schedule

10:30 – 12:00, Panel 1

- **Riya Al Sanah**, Financial Inclusion under Settler-Colonialism: Housing 48 Palestinians (Discussant Laleh Khalili)
- **Naema Aldaqsha**, Intellectuals in the Diplomatic Corps of the Palestinian Authority & (Mis)Representation of the Subaltern (Discussant Sabiha Allouche)

12:00 – 13:00, Lunch Break

13:00 – 15:00, Panel 2

- **Anil Yildirim**, Whose Politics for Whose Life? From the Politics of Empathy to the Politics of Liberation (Discussant Nahyan Fancy)
- **Yu Lan**, Discord between “Maghrebi Brothers”: Morocco-Algeria diplomatic conflicts and border war, 1962 – 1964 (Discussant Laleh Khalili)
- **Enas Al Nidawi**, An Investigation of the Kurdish Women Movement: Jineolojî Praxis and Epistemology (Discussant Sabiha Allouche)

15:00 – 15:30, Coffee Break

15:30 – 17:00, Panel 3

- **Haitham Numan**, Models of Political Repressions and Their Impact on Activists’ Communication Behaviour: Evidence from Iraq and Lebanon (Discussant Allan Hassanian)
- **Ahmed Shahbaz**, The Evolving Dynamics of the GCC States’ Investment Diversification Strategy (Discussant Jonathan Githens-Mazer)

Speakers Details & Abstracts

Riya Al Sanah

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Abstract:

Financial Inclusion Under Settler-Colonialism: Housing 48 Palestinians

Emerging scholarship on the political economy of debt and housing markets within the Palestinian context is yet to address the case of 48 Palestinians (commonly referred to as Palestinian citizens of Israel, PCI). My current research strives to fill this gap by examining Israeli “financial inclusion” policies targeting PCI. Exploring these policies’ historical development, neoliberal character and implication for the Palestinian housing sector can shed light on the broader themes of class formation and financialisation under regimes of racial domination in general and Israeli settler-colonialism in particular.

As holders of Israeli citizenship, 48 Palestinians face a specific form of marginalisation that differs from Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and those living in refugee camps outside historical Palestine or in the diaspora. Their experience of Israeli colonialism is significantly mediated through their access and incorporation into Israel’s financial, housing, and labour markets. In the last two decades, increasing access credit and the doubling of granted mortgages have become a central mechanism of such incorporation. Yet despite the specificity of their situation, it is not disconnected from, global dynamics of finance capitalism.

My project situates 48 Palestinians within theoretical work on financial markets, debt, inequality and marginalisation, exploring questions of how their socio-political reality is shaped by global capitalist dynamics and a regime of racial domination. I hope to explore how attention to financial systems can help shift the debate away from a framework of exceptionalism that pervades scholarly research on Palestine and help contemplate future trajectories of resistance for Palestinians.

My project integrates quantitative and qualitative research methods including: content analysis of primary and secondary Hebrew, Arabic, and English sources including court cases and Israeli governmental plans and policies. Semi-structured interviews with policy makers, mortgage lenders, creditors, and indebted 1948 Palestinians between the ages of 20-45, who are the prime target of Israeli mortgage lenders and creditors.

Naema Aldaqsha

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Abstract:

Intellectuals In The Diplomatic Corps of the Palestinian Authority & (Mis)Representation of the Subaltern.

This transdisciplinary research project analyses the process by which Palestinians who belong to politically subaltern groups ended up serving in the diplomatic corps of the Palestinian Authority, the political vision of which ignores the political vision of the subaltern. The change of the Palestinian National Charter after the emergence of the Palestinian Authority made the people of Palestine see the people who work for the Palestinian Authority as traitors. The project examines this process of employment of these people to find out what it entails: specialization, depoliticization, deradicalization, or co-optation. For this purpose, the project examines a number of diplomats, and using prosopography to map their political and socioeconomic milieu, and critical discourse analysis to scrutinize their intellectual and affective development.

The case study, which incorporates pre- and post-Oslo diplomats, will include individuals whose personal history shows they had been committed to representing the politically subaltern Palestinians, but by the time they got specialised and professionalised, they started to be representative in the diplomatic corps of the Palestinian Authority, which entailed shifts in their political position. The data sources are academic and non-academic writings, such as newspaper articles, journalist reports, produced by and on the case study group. This will also include how the Palestinian media as well as the Israeli media portray them before and after getting appointed as diplomats by the Palestinian Authority. Prosopography, interviews and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are the methods of this research. A comparative critical analysis of the discourse and language of the data sources and the interviews will take place to examine whether, how and why the co-optation process took place.

Anil Yildirim

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Abstract:

Whose Politics for Whose Life? From the Politics of Empathy to the Politics of Liberation

While one plane safely evacuated 162 pets from Afghanistan during the collapse of the Republic and the Taliban takeover (Bancroft, 2021), another ascending plane witnessed the tragic sight of Afghan people desperately seeking refuge, dropping from its wings meters above the ground.

Whilst news agencies were reporting 'European people with blue eyes and blond hair being killed every day' (Bayoumi, 2022) in the Russian invasion, which have been unanimously condemned by the entire political and judicial structures of Europe, the genocide being live-streamed in Palestine could not get any significant opposition.

These events underscore historical moments that, once again, highlight how some lives are deemed more valuable than others. This article contends, when viewed through Agamben's ontological lenses and Foucault's genealogy, that the Western conceptualization of human life holds significance only within certain geographic locations and for specific populations, while excluding others.

The argument posits that even the discourse of dehumanization is not aimed at the Global South but serves the purpose of eliciting emotional responses from the Global North, shaping perceptions of their actions as either positive or negative.

The concepts of Foucault's Biopolitics or Agamben's Thanatopolitics, which concern the management and the value placed on life, seem to be applicable solely to the Western hemisphere, whereas the global south is perceived through the lens of Mbembe's Necropolitics, rooted in a colonial memory. Although the terms 'human' and 'rights' may sound universal, their application differs significantly. This article sheds light on the Western administration of life, shortcomings of the politics of empathy, and, heeding Hannah Arendt's warnings, delves into the politics of liberation.

Yu Lan

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Abstract:

Discord between “Maghrebi brothers”: Morocco–Algeria diplomatic conflicts and border war, 1962–1964

This article assesses the origins, causes, and consequences of the deteriorating Morocco–Algeria relations in the early 1960s, during which a war broke out between the two countries near the Saharan borders. The study begins with analysing the role of colonial legacy and decolonisation processes in the two countries’ early stages of state-building. The pre-independence backgrounds laid the foundation for two ideologically contrasted regimes in the Maghreb---the Alaouite monarchy in Morocco and a leftist republic in Algeria.

The article then explores the two countries’ diplomatic orientations and domestic challenges in the early 1960s. While the Moroccan King Hassan II pursued closer ties with the Western countries, Ben Bella’s FLN government in Algeria enthusiastically exported its revolutionary rhetoric and sought leftist partners globally. As ideological divergences widened, both countries faced prominent domestic opponents and accused the other of supporting them. These elements, alongside the two countries’ border disputes and a Moroccan irredentist notion supported by ultra-nationalists in Rabat, resulted in “the Sand War” between Algeria and Morocco in 1963.

The article analyses the war’s significance from two angles: first, how the two regimes capitalised upon the war to tackle political dissidents, thus solving their ruling crisis; second, how the two countries’ ideological partners intervened, which substantially led to a ceasefire and the withdrawal of the Moroccan military in the disputed Saharan territories. Finally, the article concludes that the Morocco–Algeria conflict was not simply a border dispute but a systematic ideological and power contention during the Cold War’s internationalisation. Also, the conflict further soured the two countries’ bilateral relations and foreshadowed their long-lasting competition and containment, which had a far-reaching impact on the Maghreb political ecology.

Enas Al Nidawi

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Abstract:

An Investigation of the Kurdish Women Movement: Jineolojî Praxis and Epistemology

In recent years, Jineolojî, gained prominence as a staple of Western imaginations of Kurdish women and the Kurdish Women Liberation Movement. Jineolojî as a women liberation practice and theory is moored to Kurdish nationalism despite becoming meaningful through transregional, inter/transterritorial and transnational networks of feminist solidarity. This form of feminism makes itself prevalent through various forms of revolutionary pedagogy, known as perwerde, academic publications, media, loose networks of solidarity, and social organizations. The Kurdish Women Movement, and Jineolojî, became an alluring image to the West about the Orient (Eskandari, 2018) and Middle Eastern women ingrained in gendered-stereotypes specific to a geographical location and context (Dean, 2019). My research aims to go beyond these images to examine modes in which Jineolojî intervenes in the everyday experiences of Kurdish women in general, as well as other women involved in Jineolojî on one hand, and of Kurdish women as subjects and agents of nationalism, race, and gender liberation on the other hand. My research aims to study how Jineolojî is embraced, experienced, and contested by Kurdish women, women from other ethnicities, and men exposed to Jineolojî.

I will address these questions by conducting multi-sited research in Bakûrê Kurdistanê (Kurdish: Northern Kurdistan or Kurdistan of Turkey) and Başûrê Kurdistanê (Kurdish: Southern Kurdistan, commonly known as Kurdistan of Iraq- KRI or The Kurdish Regional Government- KRG) where Jineolojî praxis is implemented, its perwerde (pedagogy/education) is delivered, and its epistemology developed and disseminated in territories where Kurdish Women live across the nation-states of Turkey and Iraq, which are the sites my fieldwork. In so doing, this research will contribute to the literature on Kurdish Women and Middle East Studies (Kurdish Studies), radical democracy practices and grassroots movements from the global South, indigenous women movement/feminism, praxis, and theory of alternative grassroots polities. To understand the paradoxes and puzzles involved in this complex and mediatized field, there needs to be a thorough, ethnographically-driven field work to analyse: i) how and by what means Jineolojî praxis is delivered where it is actively operating; how is Jineolojî received, appropriated, experienced and challenged in the local contexts of Bakûrê Kurdistanê (Kurdish: Northern Kurdistan or Kurdistan of Turkey) and Başûrê Kurdistanê (Kurdish: Southern Kurdistan, commonly known as Kurdistan of Iraq- KRI or The Kurdish Regional Government- KRG) where it is most visible; ii) In what manner is Jineolojî evolving and instituting a defragmented form of knowledge/social sciences centred around women's agency and their involvement in a women-led, radical grassroots liberation movement positioned within state-specific and interterritorial Kurdish contexts? This movement endeavors to establish itself as a decolonial or anti-colonial entity tackling issues pertaining to gender, race, and grassroots liberation located at the periphery of the global order (Mohanty, 2003).

Haitham Hadi Numan, Ph.D. in Philosophy of Public Relations

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Abstract:

Models of Political Repressions and Their Impact on Activists' Communication Behavior: Evidence from Iraq and Lebanon

This study aims to examine the various forms of repression and their impact on the communication behavior of activists who use mass media and interpersonal communication. The research focuses on Iraqi and Lebanese activists who participated in the protests in October 2019. The study conducted interviews with 19 Iraqi and 19 Lebanese activists to explore the different models of repression and their relationship with use and gratification theory. The findings of the study revealed that the activists' motives and preferences of communication channels impacted their communication behavior due to the effects of repression. The research also identified nine models of political repression that the activists have experienced.

Ahmed Shahbaz

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Abstract:

The Evolving Dynamics of the GCC States' Investment Diversification Strategy

The research addresses the evolving dynamics of the GCC states' investment diversification strategy in an era of systemic change. With a focus on Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the research aims to investigate the shift from traditional Gulf-US relations to a more business-oriented, diversified approach marked by increased engagement with emerging economies from the BRICS and N-11 countries. As per the WSA framework, the study will interpret the changing global economic order, the “shift in economic gravity from the Atlantic to Eurasia” and its impacts on the GCC states' investment choices. We will explore in the research if the emergence of alternative economic hubs, such as in Asia has prompted these states to take a more diversified investment and trade policy.