

Fifth World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES-5)
Seville, Spain, 16-20 July 2018

Proposal for Preliminary Panel

Title:

**The Making of the Washington Consensus in the Middle East and North Africa.
Negotiating international assets, debts and power (1979-91)**

Disciplines:

History, Economic History, Historical Sociology, International Relations

Organizer:

Massimiliano Trentin, Assistant Professor, Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Bologna, Italy, massimiliano.trentin@unibo.it

Chair:

To be named after the selection of papers

Discussants:

Duccio Basosi, Assistant Professor, University Ca' Foscari, Venice, Italy

Mauro Campus, Assistant Professor, University of Florence, Italy

Panel Summary

The panel aims at investigating the politics of the negotiations on international debts and assets that took place in the Middle East and North Africa during the 1980s.

The 1980s were marked by a long series of defaults, moratoria on repayment, renegotiations of existing loans and negotiations on new loans. Since the second half of the 1980s, such complex phenomenon has passed down onto history under the label of the "international debt crisis". Among Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia, this was the case as for the Middle East and North Africa as well. Though almost all states were involved in the process, the crisis concerned in particular Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria.

A wide literature has dealt with the subject, with renewed interest since the beginning of the "great recession" in 2008 and the "Arab uprisings" of 2011. Most of such literature, however, suffers from two main (interrelated) flaws: on the one hand, there are only a few case studies based on archival research; on the other, it most works assume that creditor/debtor negotiations necessarily had to end with the creditors' upper hand. However, history is rich with cases that prove that debtors can either have it their way, or force creditors to compromise. It appears necessary, thus, to investigate the negotiations empirically, in order to observe the playing out of the respective strengths and weaknesses of creditors and debtors in the specific conditions of the 1980s.

The panel seeks to gather scholars who have engaged with numerous archives from creditors, debtors and international organizations, with a broad approach that keeps account of the interactions of various factors in determining the final outcome of the negotiations concerning the Middle East and North Africa: negotiating assets and liabilities, negotiating skills, existence or lack of alternatives, and the role of language and the public opinion.

The panel is part of an on-going project, funded by the Italian Ministry of Education and University

Research (MIUR, Prin 2015), and based at the Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Bologna. The project will have allowed a thorough reconstruction of a crucial process of the international relations of the recent past, with possible useful policy-relevant indications for our time.

Practical Information

- Proposals must include a title, an abstract and five keywords. Abstracts should be between 300 and 400 words.
- Accepted languages are English and French (WOCMES working languages).
- Proposals must be sent in both Word and PDF formats to (organizer(s) name(s) and mail address(es).
- The deadline for proposals submission is September 30, 2017.
- Authors will be notified of acceptance on or before October 20, 2017.
- Further information about WOCMES-5 is available at <http://www.tresculturas.org/wocmes18/>