

14th SeSaMO Conference

PATHS OF RESISTANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

University of Turin (Italy)

31 January–2 February 2019



SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

TITLE: Far from the eyes, far from the agenda? Political parties and activism in the MENA: between innovation, resistance and resilience

CONVENOR(S): - Giulia Cimini
- Gaia Gondino

ABSTRACT:

Seven years since the “Arab Uprisings,” declining turnout rates and low levels of trust among ordinary citizens towards political institutions depict a general mistrust regarding formal politics in the MENA region. Although political parties played a marginal role during the upheavals, they nonetheless gained relevance once the ‘transitions’ began and represent key interlocutors in policy-making and as further actors of (re)production of political and social (in)stability.

The panel is interested in investigating how political parties have been transforming – or not – into vehicles of citizen mobilization and representation, as well as in scrutinizing how their willingness and ability to aggregate and put forward bottom-up interests affect the potential for democratic transition, consolidation or even regression.

To what extent political parties or coalitions channel public expectations of political change in a context of democratic transition, backsliding or authoritarian resilience? In what ways old political elites try to re-institutionalize their networks and new ones reshape the political scene? Whose interests do they purport to advance or defend?

Hence, we seek original papers that elaborates on new, renewed or long-standing parties in the above contexts and that contribute theoretically, empirically and/or methodologically to understand the different trajectories of change and continuity.

Contributions are invited from different disciplines including Political Science, Anthropology, Sociology, History and Area Studies.

We welcome papers in English and French.

CONVENOR'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Giulia Cimini is Teaching Assistant of Political Science at Università L’Orientale of Naples, where she has recently defended her PhD in International Studies. She previously collaborated with “StreetPol: Participatory challenges from Tunisia to Oman,” funded within a SIR Grant and worked at the EU-Spring Project on “Democracy and Citizenship Rights in North Africa after the Arab Awakening”.

Gaia Gondino is a PhD student in Social and Political Change at the University of Turin and Florence. She is also conducting a co-supervised doctoral research thesis with the University of Paris Nanterre and the ISP - Institut des Sciences sociales du Politique.