

14th SeSaMO Conference

PATHS OF RESISTANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

University of Turin (Italy)

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SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

TITLE: Trajectories and Perspectives of Activism and Resistance.

History from below and Subaltern Politics in the Middle East and North Africa

CONVENOR(S): - Patrizia Manduchi
- Gennaro Gervasio

ABSTRACT:

The 'Arab Uprisings' of 2010/11 literally shook the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and challenged old paradigms in the scholarship about the Region. Consolidated practices of resistance against hegemonic powers have been reshaped since then, while new forms of activism and fresh narratives have been produced.

These dynamics are not totally new, as they form an important part of the modern and contemporary MENA's history, which since the nineteenth century has witnessed the flourishing of diverse social and protest movements, such as workers, peasants, students, women, independent intellectuals and artists, and other marginalised groups.

In spite of this, many studies - even when focused on the recent uprisings - keep a strong stress on top-down political dynamics, often obscuring emerging political subjects and new spaces of activism; or they are limited to the analysis of the present and underestimate the historical links and the long tradition of political resistance and opposition in the MENA countries.

This panel aims at filling this gap and amend this persistent perspective in the scholarship, by looking at current dynamics at play from an interdisciplinary perspective, which pairs the study of history from below with the diverse actions of civic activism against authoritarian regimes, what can be termed as 'subaltern politics', following a Gramscian suggestion.

Papers will feature case studies ranging from Egypt up to other MENA countries and will be aimed at emphasizing continuities and breaks in trajectories of counter-hegemonic practices and discourses. We welcome papers in English, French and Italian.

CONVENORS' ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Patrizia Manduchi is Associate Professor in History of the Islamic Countries at the Department of Social Sciences and Institutions of the University of Cagliari, where she teaches "Contemporary Arab World". Among her research topics: History of contemporary political thought in the Arab world; Political resistance and opposition in the MENA countries; Islamic fundamentalist thinking; Muslim migrations in Europe and inclusion policies. Among her current research projects, there is the dissemination of Antonio Gramsci's thought in the political and cultural debate in the MENA.

Gennaro Gervasio is currently teaching History and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa in Roma Tre's Department of Humanities. Previously, he has been the Director of the Centre for Middle East and North African Studies at Sydney's Macquarie University (2009-11), and he has been teaching and researching in Cairo from 2011 until 2016. His research interests include: secularism and Marxism in the Arab world, and civic activism and social and protest movements in the MENA.