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PATHS OF RESISTANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

TITLE: Urban practices of resistance and contention in Lebanon before and after the civil war

CONVENOR(S):

- Rosita Di Peri
- Daniel Meier

ABSTRACT:

The use of spaces, especially urban spaces, has played a central role in the recent history of Lebanon: demonstrations, strikes, protests, sit-ins or even confrontations have been constant elements in many cities of the country and not only in the main ones. These urban spaces, which have been the scene of hard fights during the civil war, have also played a crucial social role because here, over the years, interesting experiences of resistance arose. They had assumed various forms: cultural as well as intellectual, social or political resistance/contention. Urban spaces have become places where communitarian power, and especially that linked to the control of the life of individuals in some geographical spaces, has been constantly challenged through practices that, in the vast majority of the cases, were non-violent. These practices have been able to bring alternative discourses, messages and practices that impacted spaces but also political practices related to these spaces. Just to mention the permanent sit-in in Martyrs' Square in Beirut after the assassination of Rafiq Hariri in 2005, or the movements for the preservation of cultural heritage or, even, the practices of resistance that arose during the waste crisis of 2015.

The panel, therefore, welcomes papers that critically look at those practices of daily and physical resistance (Bayat 2012) (to the community / confessional system, to neoliberal planning practices, to environmental crises, etc.) that have emerged in Lebanon especially on the post-civil war period but also looking at their connection with the pre-war period as well as the dominant instrumentalisation of public spaces by traditional political actors.

CONVENOR'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Rosita Di Peri is assistant professor in Political Science and International Relations at the University of Turin, Department of Culture, Politics and Society. Her research interests are democracy and authoritarianism in Middle East with a focus on Lebanon and the relations between power and tourism in the Mediterranean region).

Daniel Meier is currently visiting Professor at Laval University (Quebec-Canada). He received his PhD in political science from the Graduate Institute in Geneva and was granted with a postdoc from the University of Oxford. He conducted extensive fieldwork in Lebanon and Iraq focusing on identity and through the lens of border politics.