Panel 27: **Migration and Transnational Governance**

Friday 18, 11.15-13.15, Auditorium Giancarlo De Carlo

Convenors: **Laurie Brand** (University of Southern California), **Tamirace Fakhoury** (Lebanese American University)

This panel seeks to explore the concept of "transnational governance" in the Arab world using the prism of migration. Research on Arab political systems has generally focused on the state and local level dynamics of domestic politics. Little attention has been dedicated to transnational approaches to governance, to understanding the effects of the "complex interdependence" between the domestic and transnational on state policies. In this panel, we conceptualize the impact of migration on transnational governance as having a two-part, mutually reinforcing dynamic: How Arab states have sought to "govern" their Diasporas; and how diasporas have in turn sought to influence governance in the sending states. We are concerned with the extent to which governance practiced at different levels and shaped by the twin discourses of "citizens abroad" and the "state of origin" affects Arab state institutions and policies. Overarching questions that we aim to address include: 1) How is the very existence of a diaspora reflected in the political institutions and structures of the origin state? And how has the existence of a diaspora led, intentionally or unintentionally to the adoption of particular policies? 2) How have Arab states sought to leverage or 'discipline' their Diasporas, and how have these efforts been reflected in institutional settings? 3) How have Diaspora communities and organizations sought to challenge or support the sending state's leadership or regime? 4) When Diaspora activists have sought to erode or unsettle authoritarianism in their state of origin, what forms does their 'politics of contention' take and through which means (media, protest movements, campaigns, lobby, advocacy) is it articulated? 5) What are the implications of state Diaspora policies and Diaspora politics for assessing political change, especially in the countries most deeply affected by the recent Arab uprisings?

Paper givers:

1) **Laurie Brand** (University of Southern California), *Arab Diasporas and Home State Political Development: theorizing the relationship*

   Only in the last ten years have analysts of migration turned their primary focus from economic push-pull factors to a host of more political factors that not only influence migration decisions, but also play a role in shaping the migration policies of both states of origin and host states. Among these works, increasing numbers have explored the range of institutions that states establish to maintain ties with their diasporas. This paper attempts to move the empirical and theoretical exploration one step further by initiating an investigation of the ways that the very presence of communities abroad may have influenced various forms of political development in the MENA region. The paper will draw from both primary and secondary research on the historical relationship of the Tunisian, Algerian, Lebanese and Jordanian diasporas with their homelands and will place this against the backdrop of (largely, but not exclusively) post-independence political developments in order to construct a framework for understanding the mechanisms of diaspora impact on sending state political

development. The results of the research should have broader implications for understanding the potential political role of Arab diasporas in the on-going Arab uprisings or associated political transitions.

2) **Tamirace Fakhoury** (Lebanese American University), *The politics of contention beyond borders: invisible politics or politics with consequences? The case of Egyptian transnational mobilization in 2011*

This article explores whether and if so how political contention articulates itself in the post-2011 Middle East through the lens of transnational flows. More specifically, it looks at the role of Arab immigrant communities in reshaping governance, through the use of the paradigmatic case study of Egyptian communities in the United States (USA). The article draws on the juncture of the 2011 Egyptian uprising and maps the transnational practices in which Egyptian activists in the USA engaged to sustain a scope of political interaction with their home settings. Between 2012 and 2014, I conducted a total of 30 semi-structured interviews with key Egyptian anti-regime activists in the 2011 uprising across the USA with focus on the Bay area in California. My informants were academicians, professionals, activists and representatives of Egyptian transnational social movements and Egyptian-American associations who participated in the Egyptian protests either digitally or on the ground. I proceed as follows. I map out the most relevant fields of action that frame the ways in which Egyptian communities in the USA participated in the 2011 uprising between January 25 and February 11, and during its direct aftermath. I analyse the types, functions and impact of such transnational political flows. Drawing on Itzigshohn et al's categorization of transnational political practices as broad or narrow (1999), I assess their relevance for challenging Egypt's political sphere. The conclusion broadens the debate in that it problematizes whether and if so how transnational immigrant contention matters in challenging modes of governance in the post-2011 Middle East. Key findings are that transnational political flows constitute powerful conduits for information dissemination and for accessing external policymaking spheres. They constitute arenas where discursive and "non-territorialized" forms of political membership are forged. They further act as 'relief valves' that help to eschew the restraint structure of the "homeland" when costs of repression rise. Still, geopolitical, national and institutional constraints limit their potential for political change.

3) **J.N. C. Hill** (King's College), *London Reassessing Social Linkage: The Limits of the EU's Appetite for Democracy Promotion in the Maghreb*

The aim of this paper is to add analytical depth to Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way's (2010) celebrated model for explaining regime transitions by critically engaging with their sub-dimension of social linkage. It draws on Morocco to explore and assess their claim that the more people a country shares with the EU the better democracy's prospects are there. Most immediately, Morocco remains a competitive authoritarian system despite the large numbers of its citizens living in Europe. Moreover, the EU evinces a profound disinclination - born, in part, of a determination to contain North African migration to Europe – to pressure either regime into introducing any reforms which might destabilise

them. Far from being the anodyne category of connection Levitsky and Way present, social linkage is a set of highly politicised and increasingly controversial processes which have failed to stimulate greater democracy in Morocco, and are tempering the EU's desire to put more liberalising pressure on the countries of the Maghreb. By charting and detailing these anomalies, the paper hopes to identify ways in which the explanatory power of their model can be enhanced.

4) **Nicole Hirt** (GIGA Hamburg), **Abdulkader S. Mohammad** (ILPI Oslo), *Torn between an autocratic homeland and an authoritarian host regime: Investigating the political space of the Eritrean Diaspora in the Arab World*

Over one million Eritreans are residing and working in Arab countries, and in contrast to diaspora Eritreans living in democratic environments, we know very little about their opinions and behaviour in regard to the homeland regime and its demands. However, one fact that distinguishes them from their compatriots in the West is that they do not enjoy political asylum, but depend on a work contract in order to maintain their residence permits. This makes them vulnerable to the demands of the transnational Eritrean institutions, which issue vital documents and provide a social community for those who actively support the regime or at least fulfil their obligations.   The paper seeks to explore if, how and to which extent diaspora Eritreans in the Arab world can avert the coercive activities of their government and to which extent Arab states' policies have been empowering or disempowering diasporic contention.

5) **Peter Seeberg** (University of Southern Denmark), *Migration and Transnational Governance in the Context of a Failed State – the Case of Libya*

The fall of Muammar Qadhafi left Libya with a state-building project, which needed to take the peculiarities of a "stateless society" into consideration. The ideals concerning the state of the Green Book by the late dictator, which to some degree had been realized, had resulted in a relatively small bureaucratic entity, which in its administrative makeup differed from the large bureaucracies seen elsewhere in the region. While initially the efforts paid off, unfortunately a political disaster ensued. The internal conflict in Libya, led to increasing migration: large numbers of Tunisian and Egyptian labour migrants left Libya, while transit migration through the country continued, heading for Europe. In addition, due to the threatening internal situation, significant numbers of Libyans have migrated to the neighbouring countries and to Europe – and from there seek to influence the political development in Libya. At the same time the displaced legitimate government and the militia power house in Tripoli, are attempting to gather support among the Libyan diaspora to secure leverage for an anticipated showdown about Libya's the political future. The contribution will be based on data from Libyan media and official sources,   think tanks, NGO's and organizations working in Libya, and interviews with Libyans in exile.

6) **Carmen Geha** (American University of Beirut), *Exploring Lebanon's No State Policy Towards Syrian Refugees*

The Syrian conflict has now entered its fifth year bringing unprecedented havoc both to Syria and to its neighbouring countries. Lebanon has been host to the largest number of Syrian refugees that have fled violence and persecution into a country with already weak infrastructure and political instability. This paper argues that Lebanon's policy towards refugees can be characterized as a "no policy" and that this stance stems from the perils of Lebanon's power-sharing system owing it to Lebanon's own civil war slogan of "no victor no vanquish." This research presents a new conceptual framework for exploring Lebanon's response to Syrian refugees by linking this response to the state-level institutions and the nature of Lebanon's political system. I argue that Lebanon could not have taken an active measure to respond to Syrian refugees due to internal deadlocks within the system and its incapable public administration. This conceptual undertone goes against much of the current policy and donor debates that the Lebanese government can and should better respond to the needs of Syrian refugees. By linking refugee response to Lebanon's power-sharing system this paper will argue that without a change in politics there can be no change in policies towards the Syrian crisis and that this will continue to wreak humanitarian, social, economic and security challenges for both Syrian and Lebanese communities. The paper relies on a qualitative methodology that will triangulate findings from three sources: review of reports by international and local organizations on Syrian refugees in Lebanon; empirical findings from communities hosting Syrian refugees; and theoretical knowledge of Lebanon's history in power-sharing agreements. The innovative contribution to knowledge will be two-fold: in analyzing Lebanon's response or lack thereof towards Syrian refugees; and in bridging the knowledge between refugee studies and state-level institutional analysis. In the final analysis, the case of Lebanon and Syrian refugees can be a quandary for analysing how state structures and political agreements could or would affect immigration issues in the Middle East and beyond.