

XVI Convegno SeSaMO

Università degli Studi di Cagliari  
Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali

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SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

**TITOLO/TITLE:** Urban history of mobility in MENA region: migrations, ecologies, spaces, temporalities (XIX-XXI)

**PROPONENTE/I – PROPONENT/S:** LUCIA CARMINATI; GABRIELE MONTALBANO

**ABSTRACT (1500 parole/words):**

Despite the obvious importance of migration in the urban contexts of North Africa and the Middle East in the modern age, urban history and the history of mobility and migration have not always spoken to each other. An interest in the impact of colonial regimes in urban planning and social geography has often prevailed (Wright 1991; Piaton 2016; McLaren 2018; Dumasy 2022), in part neglecting the question of urban contexts as revealers and producers of both social and spatial mobility (Foucault 1984). Moreover, studies in the North African and Middle Eastern contexts have rarely been conceived within an unifying framework, in spite of pleas to do so (Clancy-Smith 2011; Arsan, Karam, and Khater 2013).

A new historiographical interest, in which this panel fits, aims to propose a history of mobility by investigating the connection between migratory phenomena, urban spaces, ecologies, and regimes of historicity (Tabak 2008; Lafi 2023). From the 19th century onwards, urban areas in the MENA region have witnessed major changes related to mobility and also to the presence of economic, social, and colonial marginalities (Biancani 2018; Fuhrmann 2020; Paonessa 2021; Montalbano 2023; Carminati 2023). The chosen chronology encompasses the era of political reforms (like Tanzimat in Ottoman areas), the implementation of colonial hierarchies in most of the MENA region up to the decolonization processes and the postcolonial political regimes. Through a perspective on mobility within the urban scale it is possible to analyze the different regimes, passages and changes that do not coincide necessarily with the classical chronology of the political and diplomatic history.

The interest is to investigate cities as nodes of national as well as transnational and global networks. It is in city neighbourhoods that communities, minorities and economic and social divisions take concrete shape. At the same time, it is within urban spaces where national, class, gender and racial categories can be subverted, criticised, reconfigured. The methodological approach of this panel is to avoid considering the relation of these categories as a simple interaction of undiscussed blocks but, on the contrary, it focuses on the mutual hybridization of the concepts of time, space, and (social, racial, gender) identities. Urban spaces are not here understood as a mere setting of historical and social events but as an active part of a complexity in which all the different elements are related and built together (Rau, Roger 2020).

The analysis of marginality and daily-life is intended as a privileged perspective to underline the spatialized social practices of urban MENA contexts. Even though our main academic interest concerns history, this panel aims to be an open space of

discussions and exchanges among scholars from different social sciences such as (but not exclusively): historians, anthropologists, geographers, sociologists.

We welcome papers (in Italian, English or French) that cover, study or deal with the following themes:

- Forms of urban marginality
- Relationship between urban neighbourhoods and the urban, national, global context
- (re)production of spatial and social boundaries and divisions
- impact of infrastructure and exploitation in urban social geography
- sites of hybridisation, conflict and subversion
- production of alternative urban geographies to institutional ones
- ecologies of urban spaces
- relationship between urban spaces and public health ideas or practices
- proposals or practices of urban modernisation
- regimes of historicity and temporality across urban contexts

Arsan, Andrew, John Karam, and Akram Khater. "On Forgotten Shores: Migration in Middle East Studies and the Middle East in Migration Studies." *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East and North African Migration Studies* 1, no. 1 (2013): 1–7.

Biancani, Francesca. *Sex Work in Colonial Egypt: Women, Modernity and the Global Economy*. London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2018.

Carminati, Lucia. *Seeking Bread and Fortune in Port Said, 1859-1906: Labor Mobility and the Making of the Suez Canal*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2023.

Clancy-Smith, Julia A. *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800-1900*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Dumasy, François. *Tripoli coloniale: histoire sociale et économique d'une ville sous domination italienne*. Rome: École Française de Rome, 2022.

Foucault, Michel. "Space, Knowledge, and Power." In *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow, 239–56. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

Fuhrmann, Malte. *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: Urban Culture in the Late Ottoman Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Lafi, Nora. "Daily Life Spatialities and Temporalities of Religion in Ottoman Tunis: Reflections on the Complexity of Urban Religious Landscapes." *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 25, no. 1 (2023): 309-33.

Montalbano, Gabriele. *Les Italiens de Tunisie. La Construction d'une Communauté Entre Migrations, Colonisations et Colonialismes (1896-1918)*. Rome: Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2023.

McLaren, Brian. *Architecture and Tourism in Italian Colonial Libya: An Ambivalent Modernism*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006.

Paonessa, Costantino. *Italian Subalterns in Egypt between Emigration and Colonialism (1861-1937)*, Louvain: PU Louvain, 2021.

Piaton, Claudine. *L'isthme et l'Égypte au temps de la compagnie universelle du canal maritime de Suez (1858-1956)*. Paris: IFAO du Caire, 2016.

Rau, Susanne, and Richard Roger. "Thinking Spatially: New Horizons for Urban History." *Urban History* 1, pp. 1-12.

Tabak, Farouk. *The Waning of the Mediterranean 1550-1870: a Geo-Historical Approach*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.

Wright, Gwendolyn. *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

**PROFILO ACCADEMICO DEL/DELLA/DEI/DELLE PROPONENTE/I – SHORT BIO OF PROPONENTS**

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