

Abstracts

Abouziane Daabaji

"أزمة تمثيلية المرأة المغربية في الدوائر العليا الاقتصادية والسياسية"

بالرغم من انها تشكل نصف المجتمع المغربي، تظل تمثيلية المرأة في مناصب المسؤولية جد محدودة و لا ترقى للمستوى المنشود مما يشكل عائقا تنمويا على مستوى البنائين الاقتصادي و الديمقراطي بالمغرب. خلال السنوات العشرين الماضية، اتخذت الدولة مبادرات و إصلاحات تشريعية، الى جانب وضع أطر استراتيجية واعتمادها لزيادة تمثيل المرأة، بما في ذلك مناصب صنع القرار. بيد أن النتائج تعكس ترسيخا صارخا لفوارق التمثيلية بين الجنسين.

عموما الأرقام تظل صادمة، في المغرب، هناك حوالي 12.3 مليون امرأة في سن العمل (15 سنة فأكثر) أي بزيادة قدرها 2.5 مليون نسمة عما كانت عليه في عام 2000. وهم يعيشون أساسا في المناطق الحضرية (60.3%)، وأكثر من نصفهم أميون (52.6%) وأقل من الثلث (32.9%) لديهم دبلوم.

وتعكس هذه الأرقام على التصنيف الدولي للمغرب فيما يتعلق بقضايا التمييز بين الجنسين، حيث يحتل المرتبة 133 من بين 142 بلدا في عام 2014، في حين كان يحتل المرتبة 129 في عام 2013 و 127 في عام 2010. ويحتل المرتبة 135 في المشاركة الاقتصادية للمرأة، و المرتبة 116 من بين 128 بلدا لفعالية سياسات وتدابير تمكين المرأة اقتصاديا، والمرتبة 24 من أصل 30 بلدا على مستوى سياسات وآليات لدعم ودعم ومواكبة الأعمال التجارية النسائية ذات الإمكانيات العالية، مما يجعل المغرب واحدة من الثقافات المحافظة من حيث قبول الدور الاجتماعي والاقتصادي للمرأة في المجتمع.

ويكاد يجمع العديد من المراقبين على أن الأنشطة الاقتصادية و السياسية للمرأة لا تزال مركزة في الأنشطة ذات قيمة مضافة ضئيلة في سوق العمل. وهن ضحايا للتمييز في الأجور. وأولئك اللاتي تلقين تعليما أكثر تعرضا للبطالة. الشركات الخاصة لا تحترم غالب الالتزامات الواردة في قانون العمل. ولا تزال الوظيفة العمومية على مستوى القيادة والريادة ذكورية جدا، كما أن وصول المرأة إلى مناصب صنع القرار جد محدود.

تسعى الورقة البحثية الى رصد عوامل ضعف وصول المغربيات للمناصب العليا بالشكل الذي يضمن مبدأ تكافؤ الفرص والمناصفة في تحمل المسؤولية.

من الناحية النظرية سنعتمد على دراسة وثائقية للأبحاث و التقارير ذات صلة بالموضوع. أما من الناحية الامبريقية فستكون من خلال دراسة كيفية إجراء حوالي ستة عشر مقابلة لنساء فاعلات في المجالات الاقتصادية، الاجتماعية والسياسية. الهدف هو رصد وتحليل مختلف الفرضيات التي تنظر لواقع أزمة تمثيلية المرأة المغربية في المناصب العليا.

Allison Finn

"Coloniality and Complicity in Feminist Research and Activism"

Both scholarship and activist practice have demonstrated the detrimental impact of ongoing coloniality on the female body and Arab women's movements. However, Western interventions – via the American university, the international non-governmental organization, the foreign researcher, and the ubiquitous call for proposals – also alter forms of feminist knowledge production, community organizing, and community formation in Lebanon and the Arab region. There is a critical lack of investigation on the intersections of coloniality and feminist activism itself, and the interwoven power dynamics of belonging, insider identity, and outsider status within Lebanese feminist

spaces. This paper interrogates the relationships between activism, feminism, and coloniality within Beirut's feminist community organizing and knowledge production. How does the presence of foreign researchers, activists, organizations, and funding change the landscape of feminist activism in Beirut? How do these power dynamics intersect with other forms of privilege – class, race, and education – within activist and civil society circles? When Arab feminism is discursively and materially linked to negative Western influence, how can feminist activists do their work on the ground without contributing to legacies of coloniality and local and global forms of heteropatriarchy? Through conversations with activists and researchers, document analysis, and personal reflection, I explore how – as researchers and activists with intersecting insider and outsider identities – we can design and pursue our work in ways that dismantle, rather than reinforce, the power structures we seek to overcome. Is it possible to transcend coloniality? In addressing this question through the lens of Beirut's feminist activism and research communities, this paper provides few concrete answers, but instead seeks to spark discussion and exchange of tactics, resources, and critique.

Allison Finn & Nay El-Rahi

“Why Are We Still Here? The Gaps in Feminist Advocacy for a Sexual Harassment Law in Lebanon”

While there have been significant media and scholarly reports on the successful passage of the family violence bill in 2014, efforts to criminalize sexual harassment in Lebanon have received far less attention. Little work has been done to understand which tactics and methods have been “successful” and which have failed or reinforced existing hierarchies of state control and hetero-patriarchy. While lobbying for legislation is just one aspect of the anti-harassment movement in Lebanon, the failure to pass an sexual harassment law raises a painful question: after years of civil society's awareness campaigns, legal advocacy, and activist interventions, why are we still here?

Our proposed study asks why civil society efforts to criminalize sexual harassment in Lebanon have not yet resulted in a law. Via a comprehensive mapping and gap analysis of past and existing initiatives and a reading of the current status quo, we highlight the work that feminist activists and groups have already done, and investigate what is still lacking. Rather than focus solely on legal reforms, we seek to understand the intersections of feminist activism, legislative change, and public mobilization. We analyze the accomplishments and gaps in the following areas: grassroots awareness raising, institutional capacity building, and advocacy for legislation. We explore the type of feminism(s) deployed in this process, to identify the feminist political practices that are to be replicated in the future. The analysis will look to the seven years of activism and civil society efforts that resulted in the 2014 passage of the law criminalizing family violence; and will aim to apply lessons learned and identify opportunities from this process to be used in further lobbying and non-legislative interventions. While critique is inherent to the project of feminist activism, scholarly or not, this paper seeks to give credit where it's due

and to embrace feminist principles of collaborative genealogies, assess the gaps, and collaboratively produce recommendations to move forward.

Angela Kahil

“Angela Jurdak Khoury: A Historical Perspective of Political Feminism in Lebanon”

My paper deals with a historical perspective of women activism in the Arab world through the study on the first Lebanese woman diplomat in Lebanon, Angela Jurdak Khoury, born in 1915, first secretary of the consul of Lebanon in Washington between 1945 and 1966 and the first one, otherwise the only woman of the Lebanese delegation to the UNO in 1945 (with Charles Malek and Sobhi Mahmassani). Angela Jurdak Khoury died in 2011 and she embodies the image of the active, ambitious woman, the pioneer of the feminization of the Lebanese political and sociocultural life.

Through the example of Angela Jurdak Khoury, it is a question of thinking the position and status of women in the Lebanese society, the possible emergence of a social feminism, as current of modernization of Lebanon towards a liberal society, as well as a political feminism, as current of emancipation and empowerment of women as the actresses of the Lebanese social and political life.

So, several questions can be asked:

1- What was the role of Angela Jurdak Khoury in the elaboration and the consolidation of the relations between Lebanon and the United States?

2- What was the role and the influence of Angela Jurdak Khoury within the Lebanese delegation to the UNO in 1945 with Charles Malek?

Theme 1: her promotion as woman and as diplomat in Lebanon: context, condition and diplomatic program

Theme 2: the negotiation with Charles Malek and Sobhi Mahmassani and the representatives of the UNO

3- What was her role and her influence in the elaboration and the implementation of the Committee of the UNO on the status of women in 1946?

Theme 1: the feminist commitment of Angela Jurdak Khoury

Theme 2: the diplomatic role in the discussions to draft the Charter of women rights

4- What is the academic background of this woman which constitutes an essential intellectual background to understand her convictions which guided Angela Jurdak Khoury throughout her career?

Theme 1: a student at the AUB. AUB as convenient frame to the emancipation?

Theme 2: a woman pioneer in research in sociology

Asli Karaca

“Women’s Politico-Religious Dissent and Transgression in Egypt and Turkey (1995-2016)”

In line with the conference’s main question, what feminism can accomplish, this paper seeks to answer how women respond to increasing religious-traditionalism and

authoritarianism in Egypt and Turkey. Specifically looking at the 'politico-religious' issues when actors use a religious discourse, the paper searches for the capacities of women's movements for increasing and embodying women's politico-religious power. For example, how has the Islamic reform in personal status law, specifically the khul', influenced women's politico-religious power and subsequent reform attempts, coupled with the strict surveillance conditions in Egypt? How much capacity have Islamic feminists in Egypt had to accomplish reform and change in society? On the other hand, how have Islamist women in Turkey responded to Islamist-rooted AKP's stronger hold of power after 2008 and to the increased conservatism and authoritarianism? The paper especially studies 'dissenting' and 'transgressing' women, borrowing the distinction from Flavia Monceri (2012). I argue that the concept of visibility of dissent captures dissenting and transgressive acts of women in broader public space in authoritarian and patriarchal contexts more fittingly than 'participation' or 'power of presence' (Bayat 2007) concepts in social movement literature.

Secondly, adapting Linda Woodhead's (2007) typology on religion's relation to gender, the paper links the dissenting and transgressing acts respectively with reformative and transformative capacities of women. The findings are based on personal interviews, participant observation, and collection of published, broadcast and online sources in Cairo over six months in 2014 and in Istanbul, Ankara, and Bursa between over a period of fifteen months between 2013 and 2016.

Ayesha AlRifai

"Safe or unsafe, abortion must be controlled: Reproduction as a space for contestation"

Whether by law or by social order control of abortion continues to gain consensus in Palestine including within the healthcare system and by healthcare providers. In this paper, I argue that criminalization of abortion in Palestine and other barriers to women human right to health are all forms of gender-based violence, namely sexual violence that is equally legitimized by society and State and reinforced by Israeli colonial tools of aggression. Abortion as a question of public health and social justice remains largely neglected in Palestine. This neglect stems in an amalgamation of socio-political and economic reasons that have rendered this crucial subject trivial in the policymaking, women activism and judicial spheres, amongst others. Consequently, abortion laws remain incredibly restrictive to women, even when they manage to overcome legislative hurdles the issue remains riddled with compounded stigmatization, pseudo-religious shaming and unsafe clandestine abortion in clinics.

My account is structured around the reproductive justice concept that sees the realization of reproductive rights not as a standalone goal, but part of a continuum of social justice issues, making it inseparable from the realization of other social and economic rights.

Guided by this understanding, I conducted a qualitative study using focus group discussions with health care providers and social workers and experts meetings with senior service providers and policy makers in; health, gender and law. The study showed that healthcare system and providers breach basic human rights of women as right

holders by withholding information about available abortion services at the first place. Hence women car seekers rarely go to health institutions for abortion simply because they don't know about where they can get an abortion. Furthermore, women have no clue about; post-abortion psychosocial counselling services, emergency contraception for unwanted pregnancy prevention, or about incomplete spontaneous abortion. Participants' accounts of women experiences with abortion reveal important legal, extralegal and procedural barriers to women access to dignified abortion depriving them from their basic human right to health and justice, and subjecting them to State and societal sexual violence in the form of controlling their sexuality and bodies by forcing them into unwanted experiences of reproduction.

Beverly Metcalfe and Charlotte Karam

“Re-imagining Radicalism’s: Islamic Feminism(s), Social Change and Development in New Middle East”

This paper contributes new understandings on how Islamic feminism has been a mobilizing force in social, political and economic change. It traces Islamic feminisms' history, and the relevance for women's global transnational movements and networks. We address commentator's criticism about the movement but stress it interlinks with the myriad of social democratic movements that are uniting marginalized groups in all regions of the global economy. Unlike previous scholarship, the research tries to broaden out the analysis of women's activism in the Gulf regions where the Arab Spring tensions have been less visible and also less resisted. We argue Islamic feminism is influencing the nature of economic development models in the ME. We argue for greater assessment of contemporary ME scholars to challenge neo-liberal governance and economic goals, and re-imagine development premised on Islamic ideas and thinking. We develop a theoretical concept of 'feminizing fiqh' as a tactic for informing contemporary thinking on economic and political governance. We argue that Islamic Feminisms critique and writings have an important role in shaping Islamic economic development theorizing, and has the potential to re-imagine new agendas for social development. The paper advances new understandings of women's economic and social roles by integrating organization, development management and Islamic feminist theorising and how revolutionary changes in the New Middle East have been supported by women's leadership. The argument reveals the significance of Islamic feminism as part of broader transnational organizing relations to eradicate social inequalities and empower women in ME states. We aim to champion and acknowledge Arabic philosophy and heritage in informing economic change and political reform, in states where Shar'ia constitutions are prevalent. Our aim is to acknowledge different feminisms, to promote the diversity of feminist actors who advocate social justice. We stress that Islamic feminist social actors and their ideas are integral to elevating the distinctiveness and relevance of Islamic forms of governance and economic capacity development in the global political economy.

Carmen Geha

“Sectarian Power-Sharing and the Myth of Women Political Empowerment in Lebanon”

Sectarian power-sharing is path dependent upon patriarchal structures which create institutional patterns with deterministic properties when it comes to women’s political participation and representation in Lebanon. While the under-representation of women in national institutions is not unique to the case of Lebanon, characteristics of sectarian power-sharing carry insurmountable obstacles to women seeking to access national political institutions. I argue that sectarian power-sharing imposes specific structural obstacles to the political representation of women which have gone entirely unaddressed in programs by organizations focusing on democracy promotion through the empowerment of women. I explore this myth of the political empowerment of women in Lebanon using a sample of ongoing and past programs that aim to teach women to be “empowered.” I based the theoretical critique of such programs using data from semi-structured interviews with a sample of 45 women who have undergone such programs. Whereas sectarian path dependence on patriarchy has been greatly recognized, such programs that teach women to be empowered remain ill-fitted at best and harmful, or dis-empowering, at worst. The myth of women’s political empowerment in Lebanon faces in reality a clash with patriarchal political structures that manifest in accessible decision-making spheres, masculine and aggressive political rhetoric, and institutionalized sexism which prevent women – no matter how “empowered – from reaching public office. Well intended individuals and institutions would be better off working on removing structural obstacles rather than on teaching women to be more empowered.

Connie Carøe Christiansen

“Gender equality and Islamic family laws – a transnational approach”

Islamic family laws are notorious in the societies where they are put into effect, but also in the European and US public context, for expressing and perpetuating inequality between women and men. Within recent decades a variety of organizations, centers, and individual researchers who are questioning long-reigning approaches to Islamic family laws and their inherent gender inequality have emerged in networks transgressing a range of countries within and beyond the Arab region.

Previously, it was a general assumption among feminist researchers and other critical voices that a confrontation with inequality should be based on secular grounds. Feminist claims would therefore also be based on the assumption that the promotion of gender equality in the Arab region would occur in social and political contexts for which religious beliefs and practices would – increasingly – be irrelevant. This assumption was connected with another modernist assumption – that religion for Muslim populations in Arab countries would slowly but surely lose its prominence in everyday life. We know today that this expectation or assumption was at best wishful thinking, and most likely misguided.

This paper presents a recently initiated collaborative research project which seeks to map transnational social movements inspired by Islamic feminism and promoting gender equality in Islamic family laws in the Middle East/North Africa region. The project will explore the potential of these movements in creating legal reform and social change. It will examine the literature and resources surrounding innovations in interpreting Islam that point to greater gender equality, and discuss the methods and messages of Islamic scholar-activists, and it will outline the possibilities for reform through the transnational social movements of these scholar-activists. The project will also include three country case studies – Morocco, Egypt, and Lebanon – in order to examine specific conditions underlying recent reforms of national family law and to compare the impact of transnational social movements in pushing for greater gender equality in Islamic family laws.

Cynthia El Khoury and Sara Wehbe

“Baynetna or Mish Baynetna: Inclusion and Prioritization of the Health of Trans Feminine Individuals in Lebanon”

The tenets of feminism and intersectionality emphasize the disruption of mainstream, “traditional,” binary, and patriarchal constructs of recognition, power, and gender. To avoid and/or mitigate a crisis of feminism in the Arab public sphere, the inclusion and prioritization of trans feminine individuals (including transgender women) is essential. In the region, trans bodies are subject to scrutiny at best and grave harm at worst; movement through and across borders requires transgression of rigid norms and reliance on xenophobic and transphobic global policies. Trans feminine individuals in Lebanon are resilient despite high rates of physical and sexual assault, suicide ideation, abuse, discrimination, unstable housing, poverty, transphobia, and un- or under-employment. In Lebanon, there is no NGO that solely or adequately addresses the unique health needs of transgender people. We therefore adapted and pilot-tested a peer-facilitated group intervention, originally developed in Los Angeles, California for transgender women, to the Lebanese context. With the exception of the Principal Investigator and Research Director, all project staff were members of the trans feminine community. Using the ADAPT-ITT Model, adaptation took place through community advisory board meetings, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews (April – October 2016). Pilot-testing (n=16) of the adapted intervention, “Baynetna,” took place February – March 2017 and yielded promising results regarding HIV testing, gender affirmation, mental health symptoms, and community connectedness in addition to confirmation that war event exposure impacts mental health. The project concludes with result dissemination events and recommendations for long-term sustainability within the political and hegemonic context of instability.

Doris H. Gray

“Transitional Justice in Tunisia: The forgotten victims. Six years after the uprising, who are the winners and the losers?”

Since the 2011 uprisings, Tunisia has taken several major steps to address historic, systematic human rights violation perpetuated by the two post-colonial regimes of Habib Bourguiba (1956-1988) and Zine el Abidine Ben Ali (1988-2011). The National Constituent Assembly adopted a Law on Establishing and Organizing Transitional Justice in 2013. A year later, the Truth And Dignity Commission (IVD) began its work and victims, with the help of civil society associations, submitted their dossiers until 2016. Of the 65,000 dossiers, 15,000 came from women. The 2013 Law charged the commission with addressing reparations, accountability, institutional reform, vetting and national reconciliation. However, the adoption of an “administrative reconciliation law” in September 2017, threatens Tunisia’s hard-won fledgling democracy because it grants impunity to civil servants who were implicated in corruption under Ben Ali and allows them to return to positions of power. It will also obstruct investigation into the systematic corruption that prevailed in Tunisia and prevent courts from ruling on human-rights violations – making those aligned with the previous regime the winners of the revolution.

In spite of these setbacks, Tunisia is the first Arab Muslim majority country where civil society associations and collective action have resulted in a process that tackles its past state-sanctioned torture. In spite of the fracture nature of women’s rights associations, the transitional justice process has included women victims. Not included are indirect victims, relatives of former detainees. This research is based on personal interviews with hundreds of indirect victims, conducted in 2017, throughout Tunisia. Among those interviewed were children – now adults - of former detainees who frequently resent the political and religious activism of their fathers – primarily supporters of the Islamist Ennahda movement. Because their martyr-like status, they cannot speak openly about their disagreements, creating enormous internal conflicts. Due to their father’s imprisonment, they were expelled from schools, from job training, had no access to university and now join ranks now with the forgotten, disenchanted, unemployed youth that six years ago ushered in the most promising change in the Arab world – the losers of the revolution.

Fatimaezzahra Belfakir

“Parliamentary Performance of Moroccan Women: Study on Sociological Profiles and Legislative Role”

The importance of this paper relates to the development of research on gender and participation in public sphere.

In spite of feminist movements’ efforts, the results of the last session of the local and municipal elections held in the Kingdom of Morocco indicate that there is a low percentage of women's participation, whether by voting or participation, or by the

nomination of candidates in municipal councils. Therefore, the academic question comes to share with the politics its problem and to try to find scientific answers to a phenomenon with many prejudices.

This study aims to analyze the political representation of Moroccan women within the Moroccan parliament between 2007-2017 by focusing on the interpretation of sociological factors specific to the weak political participation of women in decision-making at the level of the various organs of the legislative establishment, whether in the Chamber of Counselors or the Chamber of Deputies.

This study is based on three **hypotheses** that the political representation of Moroccan women within the Moroccan Parliament links to social, cultural and political determinants, and there is a correlation between the effectiveness of parliamentary performance and the gender of the parliamentarian, whether male or female. Furthermore, the limits of political representation within the Moroccan Parliament are relating to the ideology of the political party and its place within the political decision.

The study used the analytical and statistical **methodology**. In this research, we relied on two methodological approaches:

Firstly, Methodology of the study of the sociological profiles of women deputies, and therefore we will analyze the characteristics of women members of the House of Representatives from the analysis of the content of the parliamentary professional Individual deputation cards documented within the Department of Parliament. The analytical process based on the study of professional and career profiles and the political and cultural ones through:

Educational qualifications, Party affiliations, Age, Gender, Percentage of women in parliament by year, Percentage of men in parliament by year.

Secondly, Analyzing the role and background of parliamentary participation through a series of focused meetings based on a register of questions and interviews which aims to complete the first phase of research. In addition, to determine the nature of the prevailing parliamentary and political culture and if there is a common interest in women's issues that will be a common horizon between political and intellectual components of Representative's House

The value added by answering these question, this research becomes a summary of **the results** by analyzing of the socio-economic determinants and cultural determinants that affect the success of women's legislative role and the obstacles that women's performance.

Fatima Moussawi and Mona Khneisser

“Public Policy & Sexual Violence in Lebanon: Questioning Public/Private Binaries”

Women's increased assertive presence as players and actors in public life has contributed in subverting the public/private divide that once relegated women to the private realm. Yet, despite their assertive claim on the public sphere, women often experience discriminatory and exclusionary practices in public, within educational institutes and within their workplace. When in public, women's personal space is frequently invaded by

whistles, comments and even physical assault. Educational institutions as well as workplaces are particular public sites where women face discrimination and harassment. As a result, women's use of space has been profoundly affected by their association of certain public spaces and times with incidences of SH and violence. These practices serve to delimit women's equal right to public space free from discrimination, violence and threat, and to obstruct women's productivity, job satisfaction and psychological well-being. However, while women may predominantly associate public spaces with threats of violence, the *private* realm equally presents threats to women's well being. Lebanese civil society was able during the last three years to advocate effectively for the statement of several policies that address major gender issues following long years of consistent social activism and legal follow-up. However, the legal framework in Lebanon still falls short of ensuring women's right to protection and equality. Among the partial victories achieved after more than twenty years of struggle from civil society organizations and many unfortunate casualties, was the 'Domestic Violence Law 293' passed in 2014. The law, however, still falls short of protecting women from violence. This year, and after a long advocacy and campaigning process by ABAAD organization, parliament abolished the law that allows a person who committed rape to escape the punishment if he marries the victim. However, this policy step neglected other aspects of the legal framework that fail to protect minors from early marriages and sexual abuse. Recent legislative efforts are also exerted towards drafting sexual harassment policies. Minister of State for Women's Affairs drafted a law on sexual harassment that was approved by the cabinet on the 8th of March 2017, coinciding with the International Women's Day, and is currently in the hands of the parliament. While representing a marked step forward in addressing sexual violence facing women and the weakness of legal provisions to tackle this social issue in Lebanon, proposed legislations often fall short of protecting marginalized and vulnerable groups (e.g. domestic workers), and of presenting a comprehensive understanding and approach to systemic violence facing women. This legal panorama raises questions on decision-makers' response to social demands raised by civil society activists, and on the systemic limitations within which gender advocates can operate (e.g. personal status laws).

Fidaa Chehayeb

"Breaking the Silence"

It is common practice in Lebanon, as abroad, to talk about gender-based violence as distinct phenomena in different areas. For example, we talk about discrimination in the workplace, sexual harassment on campuses, marital rape, and domestic abuse. Such separation doesn't serve to advance the feminist cause of social justice because it fragments and obscures our understanding of gender based violence within the broader phenomenon of institutional misogyny. Fragmentation means dissolution, and dissolution means silencing and annihilation. Who is served by this fragmentation and silencing of gender-based aggressions? Patriarchal institutions: religious, political, and cultural. They are the underlying oppressive system which is concealed when acts of gender based violence are considered separate and detached. Certainly, discussions of different

manifestations of gender-based violence are crucial in our fight against social injustice. Domestic violence, rape, and harassment are means to an end, such that there are different means which serve the same purpose. The end, whether the perpetrators are aware of it or not, is the preservation of the status quo, of a patriarchal, malevolent structure. The means are multifarious, but it is crucial to understand that they all operate through a form of silencing, and they all are legitimized and reinforced by institutionalized misogyny. In this paper, I draw on the notion of epistemic injustice to argue that the various manifestations of gender based aggressions especially in the Arab societies, have a common operating principle: silence, i.e. the silencing of women's voices. I call into the discussion incidents such as the recent one with the silencing of minister Moueen Mirebi of the journalist Linda Mshaleb, the backlash against the abolition of article #222 and many others. Silencing is a pervasive and pernicious means of preserving an oppressive system. First, silencing is pervasive: it not only means the rejection or exclusion of women's voices. It also means the devaluation and discrediting of those voices through dishonor, humiliation and shame. Just as much, it means women's unequal share of power in the social, economic, political, and legal institutions. Second, silencing is pernicious. It is a means of coercive control. It is the subversion of women's rights to autonomy, privacy, freedom, and self-determination. It is time to break the wall of silence.

Ginger Feather

"Entering a Post-Feminist Phase and the Rise of Youth Social Justice Movements?"

Feminism has been criticized as elitist, disregarding male supporters, and hyper-focusing on feminist causes to the disregard of other marginalized groups. Some have even argued we are perhaps entering a post-feminist period, where marginalization knows no gender. This project, undertaken by an unapologetic feminist takes a self-reflective look inward at the priorities and agendas of feminist organizing – whether secular or Islamic feminist -- to explore, which categories of marginalization (marital status, class, race, sexual orientation, and gender identity) do not make the feminist agenda in Morocco and Tunisian activism. Based on interviews with youth social justice organizations, non-feminist human rights organizations, as well as feminist associations across Tunisia and Morocco (2012-2017), I argue the necessity of feminist associations expanding their inclusivity of other social activists and advocacy to other marginalized groups or risk being seen as artificial in their attempt to break down power hierarchies. Finally, I consider the divisive effects of competition over donor dollars within women's associational organizing.

Hanane Darhour

"Gender Quota Reforms in Morocco and the Politics of Sidelining"

The rapid expansion of electoral gender quotas in the past decades has been met with considerable scholarly attention. Yet, there has been little empirical work examining the reasons for gender quota reform, the mechanisms used to reform electoral gender quota

over time and the opportunities these mechanisms create for an increased substantive participation of women MP. This paper aims to explore the mechanisms the political decision makers of Morocco use to reform electoral gender quota over time and the reasons behind the almost flat trajectory of women's representation outside the national list in Morocco. As it aims also to evaluate the possibilities of gender quota implementation and reform to permanently break the barriers preventing women from achieving equal political representation. Possible explanations for why male elites respond to calls for reform of the gender policies but at the same time reproduce the mechanisms by which they wield and maintain power are provided.

Helen Mary Rizzo

“Redefining Masculinities in Anti Gender Based Violence Initiatives”

Notions of responsibility are intimately tied to conceptions of masculinities and femininities in both collective and individual practices. Projects for gender justice and women's empowerment imply masculine responsibility in formulating the problem and suggestions for reform, but men, while deemed responsible, are often not directly targeted by women's-rights organizations in their awareness and conscious-raising campaigns and projects to promote gender equality, particularly in the area of gender based violence (GBV). This project examines Cairo-based initiatives and groups working to end public space sexual harassment and GBV to see if it is necessary to invoke “traditional masculinist modes of responsibility...” in order to change men's perceptions, behavior and public opinion. The implications of not directly addressing the role of men and masculinities in projects for gender justice need to be examined especially in authoritarian contexts where the space for civil society has been severely curtailed, especially in Egypt since 2013. Until gender (masculinities and feminities) is fully addressed, particularly in the area of gender-based violence (GBV), such projects will most likely not be successful in the long term. This research discusses how and if various groups working to end GBV in Egypt, particularly public space sexual harassment, deal with masculinities and engage men in an authoritarian political context based on field work (in depth interviews with staff and volunteers, content analysis of reports and other written materials and observations) with independent initiatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national and international organizations based in Cairo. More specifically, the findings will explain why men have been active participants as staff members and volunteers in anti-sexual harassment campaigns particularly and how some of these groups are trying to reconceptualize masculinity and masculine responsibility in ways that are not traditionalist nor patriarchal.

Hend F. Alawadhi

“Killing Joy, Making Space: The Feminist Politics of Comicskilljoy”

In her book *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), Sara Ahmed introduced the term feminist

killjoy to describe the negative space that feminism occupies in contemporary discourse. “The feminist killjoy” she writes, “‘spoils’ the happiness of others; she is a spoilsport because she refuses to convene, to assemble, or to meet up over happiness. In the thick sociality of everyday spaces, feminists are thus attributed as the origin of the bad feeling, as the ones who ruin the atmosphere...”

In this paper, I look at the presence of the feminist killjoy in popular webcomics from the Arab world, focusing specifically on Comicskilljoy (kharabesh nasawya). Created by Beirut-based Maia Hel in March 2017, the series is distributed via a Facebook page that has already garnered more than 11,000 likes, usually receiving hundreds of shares for each post. Hel repurposes pop art images found on the internet—often featuring variations of the melodramatic “damsel in distress” theme—and superimposes them with feminist messages in Arabic. By thus imbuing the images with new meanings, she gestures towards the killjoy’s ability to “to make room for possibility, for chance.” In a description of her work Hel writes that the “comics aim to expel from my body the patriarchal venom I am injected with everyday.” Comicskilljoy addresses ongoing and pressing social issues in the Arab world that affect the everyday realities of women: toxic masculinity, patriarchy, sexism, colorism, microaggressions, harassment, and even poor road infrastructures. Recent posts respond to the social media campaign #metoo, and the controversial events in Egypt following Mashrou’ Laila’s concert.

I seek to examine the significance of Comicskilljoy, tracing reactions and sharing patterns, and exploring how its circulation opens up meaningful spaces of encounter and exchange. A close-reading of this project will also allow me to consider a range of broader questions: In what ways has the rise of comics, graphic novels and other visual means of expression following the popular uprisings intersected with ongoing feminist issues? What are the measures of effectiveness concerning feminist meme production and political cartoons? How can popular culture and humor function as a form of political resistance against heteronormative and hegemonic structures in the Arab world?

Isabel Käser

“Militant Femininity: a gendered analysis of the PKK’s liberation ideology”

For the past five years we have heard and read much about the Rojava Revolution, how the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)’s sister party PYD and its armed wings the YPG/YPJ have managed to liberate Syria’s northeast to establish what the party’s de-facto leader Abdullah Öcalan penned as *Democratic Confederalism*. Women have been at the center and forefront of this battle; both in northern Syria as well as eastern Turkey, where this struggle originated. The party’s liberation ideology is highly gendered, with a clear understanding of who the ‘free woman’ is, not only on the battle field but also as a ‘militant’ in the revolutionary society that is being built behind the front lines. Together with Öcalan, the women of the Kurdish Freedom Movement have over the past forty years created and are living and implementing what I call a ‘militant femininity’; a clearly set out blueprint of what women have to do in order to liberate themselves and others. The learning and living of this militant femininity is a highly militarised process, tightly

linked to party (PKK) education, where women learn of their oppression, how to overcome it and contribute to this new non-state nation, either as armed fighters, or politicians and activists.

Based on data collected during a year of ethnographic fieldwork in the Kurdish Middle East (2015-2016), this paper discusses the mechanisms that create and police this new femininity that is so integral to the liberation project of the PKK. Existing literature on nationalism and feminism suggests that women often serve as markers of the (post-)colonial nation state, having assigned distinct roles and symbols to present the 'modern' nation (Kandiyoti 1991). However, the two '-isms' are not per se mutually exclusive, instead nationalist movements simultaneously open spaces for women (Al-Ali & Pratt 2011). To understand the potential of these spaces it is crucial to ask what kind of feminism and what kind of nationalism is being practiced to examine at what point nationalist or liberation struggles open spaces for women, and how those spaces are used. Conceptually, this paper highlights how the case of the PKK-led Kurdish women's movement allows us to complicate on-going discussions around feminism, nationalism and militarism. I argue that the PKK offers an alternative to many women and that women truly are at the forefront of many of the battles currently being led in the region. At the same time the project of *Democratic Confederalism* and its liberation ideology remain deeply gendered, with the 'free women' being an important but strictly policed and essentialised marker of the aspired 'non-state nation'.

Inas Abdelwahed

"Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Lebanese Newspapers: A Content Analysis"

Feminism has been widely used as a lens to explore social and political issues. Feminist theory analyzes the portrayal of gender roles and the inequities that results from such assigned roles. One key aspect of gender roles can be seen in the discourse around sexual and reproductive health. Mass media depictions of gender roles may be one indicator of the position of women in society. We undertook a content analysis of articles related to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) found in 10 Lebanese newspapers between 2015 and 2017. Articles were obtained from the Knowledge to Policy Center at the Faculty of Health Sciences of the American University of Beirut. A total of 89 articles were found on SRH in that time period. Findings indicated that only one of the article was targeted at men as a primary audience, suggesting a norm assigning responsibility for reproduction to women. Furthering this norm, the articles related to SRH of refugees (11.2% of the articles) focused primarily on controlling fertility rates and concerns around maternal birth complications of the refugees. About 1/3 of the articles addressed gender-based violence; of these, 93% used terms such as "domestic violence", "sexual harassment" and "spousal rape". There was a lack of victim blaming in articles around sexual harassment and sexual assault. Women's autonomy over their bodies was addressed through articles on sexual health and sexuality, which constituted around 21.3% of the articles. The discourse was progressive for the conservative culture of Lebanon as these articles advocated for sexual education in schools and LGBT rights. Some topics were not addressed, including but not limited to unwanted pregnancies and abortion. Overall, the thematic analysis suggests a

patriarchal view of women. The feminist discourse can be seen in the absence of victim blaming and promoting women's autonomy. There is a need to shift media discourse on women's health topics to be more gender neutral.

Jade Moussa

"Queering the Middle Eastern Queer: On How the Western Queer Discourse Limits the Queer Arab Man's Identity"

Western queer discourse is visibly being adopted as a central ideology within queer circles of the Levant and the Middle East. However, the culture clash is stark in terms of lived experiences and expectations among those different spheres, especially as queer identity in the Arab world is not as clear-cut and individualistic as in the West. After defining the terms queer and western, this essay considers the consequences of adopting these ideologies and their effects on the Arab Man's identity, and asks whether they liberate and validate queer Arab men. To answer the question, the essay will argue that the Western concepts of queerness create more rigidity in identity formation, and by consequence increase stigma against the Levantine Queer community. Based on qualitative data, the essay analyzes ethnographic and sociological sources, and personal experiences, and discusses the concept of coming out in the larger scheme of western queer expectations. It criticizes the concept of individuality in these spheres, where the person comes before the concept, as they lack the ethological studies necessary to understand their effect on Levantine queer bodies. The essay argues that there is a contradiction between Western concepts of identity assertion and the familial ties prevalent in the Arab world, which is aggravated by looking at socio-semantics and the interplay of Western queer vocabulary and Levantine society.

Common queer terminology exacerbates stereotypes, hence causes queer Arab men to rebuff them, for fear of prejudice and social ostracism. By consequence, it concludes that Western queer discourse fails at offering the perks of claiming an identity in a society rife with communal ties, and congeals identities rather than promoting fluidity. This imposition of ideologies affects their reality negatively, and distorts queer Arab men's realities as the region lacks any societal infrastructure to adapt. While progress has been made in general, the essay underlines the limitations of this ethnographic research, and insists on the need to establish statistical and empirical studies.

Jennifer Nish

"Rhetorical Genres and the Limits of Feminist Activism: Can a Selfie Be a Feminist Act?"

This presentation asks what rhetorical analysis can contribute to our understanding of feminist activist participation. Through the example of the "activist selfie," I explore whether taking and sharing self-portraits can serve feminist, activist purposes, and how such uses of the genre can be positioned within the context of other gendered discourses and in relation to rhetorical processes such as identification and disidentification. Using

examples from a variety of feminist campaigns, I first discuss activist selfies as a rhetorical genre and then ask what kind of work such photos might do for participants. From the perspective of rhetorical genre theory, the photo campaigns raise interesting questions about form and content. Activist photo campaigns often include several key aspects of selfie construction, such as the portrait composition and attention to markers of identity and place. However, popular understanding of selfies as narcissistic and superficial forms of representation contrasts with the ideal orientation of feminist and activist rhetorics. A number of activist campaigns have used these photos, likely because of their relatively low barriers to participation and ability to serve multiple functions for both participants and organizers. Presumably, these photo campaigns aspire to shape public conversation, build solidarity, and foster community in relation to a feminist issue. My presentation will ask (1) whether, how, and to what extent these photos can be considered an example of the selfie genre and (2) what the uses and limits of such campaigns are for feminist activism.

Joseph Alagha

“Radicalized Women: Social Movements & Collective Action”

This article is based on three decades of ethnographic research conducted in Lebanon, while I relied on discourse analysis of relevant sources to comprehend similar phenomena elsewhere. The controversial and timely subject of female radicalization via suicide operations has received a lot of attention, but hardly on the pedagogical level, especially those related to national struggles. The framing of the argument rests on the understanding of self-sacrifice or “martyrdom” in relation to dignity, honor, and symbolic capital. I employ Castells’ conceptualization of social movement as “purposive collective actions whose outcome, in victory as in defeat, transforms the values and institutions of society.” In line with this analysis, relative deprivation theories stress that: “a group member engages in collective action any time that she or he is acting as a representative of the group and where the action is directed at improving the conditions of the group as a whole.” Thus, self-sacrifice could be classified as an altruistic act aimed at furthering collective action. The gender aspect is highlighted because my interest is in understanding the mindset of female suicide bombers in relation to their male counterparts when it comes to national resistance and liberation struggle. In this setting, the sociological distinction between feminine and masculine roles simply disappears since both genders contribute on par – in the service of a collective action for a common cause – through an “act of war” or *bellum justum* (just war tradition). Thus, collective action seems to justify “why a person might forgo his or her personal interests and choose instead to take actions designed to the ingroup as a whole.” This article gives an overview of women who engage in suicide operations in combat (targeting soldiers) and noncombat (targeting civilians) situations, mainly in Lebanon and the Middle East, but with heuristic social comparisons to the Far East. My finding is that the pedagogy of martyrdom seems to rest on two main pillars: (1) symbolic and religious capital (honor, dignity, nationalism); (2) agency:

empowerment in selecting the time and place to defy and face a superior enemy, thus attempting to balance the lack of capabilities.

Kamile Dincsoy

“Negative Gendered Effects of Turkey’s Asylum Regime”

Gendered effects in refugee studies often refer to two problems: the non-recognition of gender related persecution as ‘persecution’ within the sense of the Geneva Convention and the lack of gender-sensitive asylum reception and protection processes. In addition, sexual and gender based violence against refugee women is often neglected due to the invisibility of refugee women in the daily life and the difficulties of collecting data among refugees. With these issues in mind, this paper puts issues of gender discrimination at the forefront and explores Turkey’s asylum regime and different forms of sexual and gender based violence that asylum seeker and refugee women face during their journey and on their arrival to Turkey. This paper is based on in-depth interviews with 18 women and LGBTQ individuals from different nationalities including Uganda, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran as well as interviews with eleven professionals from NGOs such as managers, translators and social workers. Focusing on the asylum experiences of women and LGBTQ individuals, we find that Turkey’s asylum system does not accept gender based persecution as a reason to claim asylum except for LGBTQ individuals’ claims. Regarding reception conditions, neither UNHCR nor Turkey’s official asylum application processes provide support to women and LGBTQ people, on the contrary they expose them to sexual and gender based violence during application or their journey to satellite cities in Turkey. Sexual and gender based violence against women and LGBTQ individuals may come from different parties and even from state officials in the satellite cities. The application process itself is difficult to access and not gender sensitive. Satellite cities do not meet women and LGBTQ asylum seekers’ needs and further expose them gender based violence as they cannot access work permits or any other socio-economic support. Most of our respondents dropped out of the asylum process because of the requirements in-built in the process, such as living in satellite cities. Finally, this paper highlights some recommendations towards a gender sensitive reception process in Turkey.

Liina Mustonen

“Performing ‘successful femininity’: social distinction in Egypt”

The paper sheds light to the ways in which certain globally dominating representations of a woman were appropriated, or instrumentalized in the Egyptian context in the aftermath of the Egyptian Revolution in 2011. In particular, the paper illustrates how during the recent political struggle in Egypt a certain segment of the Egyptian society associated gendered consumer goods to certain values, such as woman’s liberation and freedom, and vocally advocated for their version of Egypt. Based on my lengthy fieldwork in Egypt between the Egyptian Uprising in 2011 and the aftermath of the military coup d’etat, the

paper discusses certain gendered discursive and material practices that were used for establishing societal divisions, local hierarchies and categories of superiority. Following Abu-Lughod's (1998, 7) suggestion that we should explore how dichotomies of modern and nonmodern; Western and nonwestern have been produced and reproduced in the postcolonial context, I interrogate how gender (the ways in which gender is being performed) functioned as a tool of social distinction during the politicized era that followed the Egyptian uprising. In particular I interrogate these representations of Egyptian lifestyle magazines. These representations allow us to think further about what other scholars have called the post-feminist landscape in the so called Western world and the new feminist subject – "the new perfect" (McRobbie 2015), or as described by others, the shift towards neoliberal feminism (Fraser 2013; Rottenberg 2013), that is, feminism that replaces collective action by individualism or one's individual revolution (instead of collective revolution). My work fills an important gap in the research on "Middle Eastern Women" as it looks at the representations of the so called "liberal", "secular" or "emancipated" women in Egypt on the one hand, and the ways in which they perform gender on the other. The recent period in the Egyptian contemporary history (between the revolution in 2011 and the military coup d'état 2013) provides a context for the exploration of these aforementioned discourses that manifested themselves through gender.

Maha Aboraya

"التناول الإعلامي لظاهرة البويات في المجتمع الكويتي: مقارنة نسوية"

يشهد عالمنا المعاصر تغيرات اجتماعية متلاحقة، أدت إلى تحولات جذرية في بنية المجتمعات، برزت في الأنماط السلوكية لطبقات وفئات المجتمع؛ الأمر الذي صاحبه بروز أفكار ومفاهيم وقيم بديلة، وممارسات انتشرت في الأونة الأخيرة، وأخذت في التزايد إلى حد قد يبدو معه من الصعب التحكم فيها، وتعد مشكلة البويات (المسترجلات) إحدى تلك الممارسات اللافتة للأنظار، والتي لا يمكن إغفال ما تتصف به كظاهرة من حساسية كبيرة فمناقشتها بحاجة لتفهم من قبل كافة المعنيين في المجتمع.

وتحاول هذه الورقة البحثية مقارنة هذه الظاهرة الاجتماعية المعقدة من زاوية التناول الاعلامي لها في الصحف الكويتية، بغية التعرف على كيفية تعاطي المجتمع الكويتي معها، ومدى قبوله بهن من عدمه، ومعرفة إلى أي مدى يعانين من التهميش والإقصاء، وهل توجد نظرة دونية إليهن، وماسبب مثل تلك النظرة إن وجدت، وأين تجد جذورها .

ويمكن لفهم ظاهرة البويات من منظور نسوي استخدام مقارنة منهجية تعمل على دمج عناصر التأويل والذاتية والعاطفة والتجسد داخل عملية بناء المعرفة والفهم العميق، كما يمكن

أن نستفيد من بعض منظورات " ما بعد الحداثة" في علم الاجتماع؛ تلك التي تعتبر العلاقة بين البنية والفعل جوهر نظرية هذا العلم، وأخص بالذكر في هذا الصدد نظرية "التشكيل البنائي" "Structuration Theory" عند " أنتوني جيندز A. Giddens"، وقد طرح تفسيراً لظاهرة البويات من خلال مفهومات: الجنسانية وثقافة الانحراف الفرعية (Deviant Subculture) الانومي والاعتراب للوقوف بصورة جلية على فهم وتفسير الظاهرة.

مما سبق يتضح أن الدراسة الراهنة تستهدف تسليط الضوء على تجارب بعض النساء، واللاتي يُطلق عليهن "البويات"، بدراسة أبعاد الظاهرة في المجتمع الكويتي وتداعياتها، وتجارب البويات أنفسهن أو من تعامل معهن، وتصورات الآخر لسلوكياتهن وكيفية التعامل المجتمعي مع الظاهرة، وفق ما يسفر عنه تحليل مضمون كفي لعينة من مقالات الصحف الكويتية.

Maissam Nimer

"Understanding the production and reproduction of gender inequalities in Lebanon: case of a scholarship development program in an elite higher education institution"

Access to education to women is generally believed to lead to women's higher earnings and occupational mobility. However, while access to resources plays an important role in giving women access to power and higher status in society, it has not been sufficient in Lebanon. Indeed, despite the high access to education among women, their access to labour market is lagging.

This paper examines the production and reproduction of gender inequalities from a sociological standpoint with reference to a longitudinal qualitative case study of a group of scholarship students in the context of a prestigious university in a 'neopatriarchal' society, characterized by politically and economically dependent capitalism but in which women's primary role in the community and family remains as one of homemaker and mother.

Its findings are based on repeated semi-structured interviews (covering biographies, university experiences and future plans) with a representative sample of the scholarship students.

Family socialization (depending on the social context) appears to play a role in differentiating by gender through level of control of free time and types of expectations towards their children. This, in turn, reflected on university experiences and future projects of students. As such, though this program succeeded in giving a chance to women from underprivileged backgrounds to receive private elite education, gender inequality remained powerful. Some women could not grasp this opportunity to increase their level of social capital, improve their chances of access to the job market and elevate themselves socially.

To understand the cases in which reflexivity or 'dispositions to resist' emerged, we examined the articulation and the weight of a complex set of intersecting previously constructed dispositions, which constitute the originary habitus.

These results allow us to understand gender inequalities by highlighting that the family background and prior experiences (such as school trajectory and experience with

diversity), combined with socialization at university appear to influence the dispositions of students to develop and maintain critical reflexivity. This study thus provides a better understanding of the process of reflexivity from a feminist perspective.

Meriem El Haitami

“Islam and ‘Feminism’ in Morocco: Towards a Decolonial Praxis”

The feminist interpretive movement in countries like Morocco gained momentum over the last 25 years thanks to emerging modernist and liberal epistemologies. Such trend, side by side with the growing influence of feminism, helped shake the long-anchored systemic hierarchies, giving way to the emergence of a female intellectual, political, and religious subjectivity. This paper therefore explores the interactions between the proliferation of Islamic knowledge and social agency. It seeks to contextualize and to critically examine the developments of ‘Islamic feminism’ in Morocco and how Muslim feminists situate their praxis within local imperatives and how feminist theology- a still developing conversation- can move in trajectory from theory building to social movement building to foster grassroots transformations and what are the promises and limitations thereof. One main issue to be discussed is whether we can speak of an Islamic feminist ‘movement’ in the context of Morocco, especially that Islamic feminism as a ‘trend’ primarily engages in knowledge production and intellectual activism rather than challenging systemic order with disruptive repertoires of actions. This paper takes particular interest in exploring the interplay of Islamic feminism and the state’s security mechanisms in the context of the current socio-political transition(s), and how it positions itself in relation to the state’s efforts to (re)appropriate the ‘religious field’ by defining ‘public Islam’ and determining its ‘legitimate’ actors, and whether it is possible to speak of an Islamic feminism outside of the state’s political projects. This paper further seeks to explore the practical implications of Islamic feminism and its possibility to serve as a catalyst for collective action through the creation of ‘alternative’ spaces where religious knowledge and subjectivity are reframed, de-centered and negotiated.

Menna Agha

“Finding a place for the Nubian feminist”

This paper arises from doctoral research on gender, places and displacement, especially the case of Egyptian Nubians. In 1964, indigenous Nubians were displaced from their original land into modernised settlements built by the Egyptian state. Their disenfranchisement in their new life has led them into diaspora, in which they struggle with political, racial and economic problems. Nubians have formed what Manuel Castells calls a ‘network society’. They have revived Nubia in the form of associations and cultural organisations in Egypt, and overseas, this network has preserved the names of their villages, their cultural practices. However, it did not sustain their heritage of matriarchy

The resettlement process has changed the gender contract within the Nubian community, the hegemony of the Egyptian national -and later the religious- institutions have turned Nubians into patriarchy. Consequently, Nubian women are excluded from the public sphere. My survey shows The adversity within the Nubian society towards feminist thought, which leads Nubian women to suffer from gender discrimination in addition to the racial and ethnic discrimination that comes with being a Nubian in Egypt.

From my position as a scholar, a Nubian, a woman and a feminist, I try to understand the phenomenon of exclusion within the public sphere. To find a framework in which both my struggles for my feminist self and my Nubian self-are mutually inclusive, I look for spatial tactics and alternative territories from which a Nubian woman can retrieve her statues. This research is mostly sourced from feminist and postcolonial literature, especially Afrocentric feminist thought, where Ideas such as the Matrix of domination help explain the overlap in the axis of oppression, to help chart a nonhierarchical system.

Niels Spierings

“A gender lens on the support for democracy and Islam among the public of 14 MENA countries”

When the Arab Spring more or less swept across the Middle East and North Africa and regimes starting toppling, Western and local actors alike feared the rise of Islamist groups through democratic elections. Particularly, it was feared that such a change would impact women’s position in the region.

This fear uniquely ties into an observation on the comparative MENA public opinion literature. The literature on democratic attitudes in the MENA shows very mixed results regarding gender’s and gender equality attitudes’ impact on democratic support. However, the literature lacks an explanation for these differences. In this paper, I argue that a gender lens might provide the missing link by considering how different groups in MENA societies, depending on the State-Religion-Gender Equality relations, might assess the advantages and risk of electoral democracy differently.

In short, I propose that the possible fear for state Islamization through elections in former socialist or ‘state feminist’ countries (e.g. Egypt, Tunisia) might explain why women and people in favour of gender equality are less supportive of democracy there, but not in patrimonial Islamist countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia). In other words, I argue the diversity within the MENA region in terms Islam’s and gender equality’s institutional position needs to be acknowledged.

Additionally, I will take an intersectional perspective by considering whether these patterns are also shaped by the public’s religiosity. For instance, among citizens who are in favour of gender equality as well as strongly religious (i.e. ‘Muslim feminist’) such a fear for Islamist might be considerable less manifest vis-a-vis among secular feminist citizens, because the former experience Islam more emancipatory.

Empirically, I will combine up to 50 public opinion surveys from the Arab Barometer and World Value Survey projects. These data cover 14 MENA countries (2001-2014) and in

each data on gender equality attitudes, support for democracy and religiosity is present. These data will be complemented with macro-level information on the institutional situation with regard to democracy, religion, and gender equality as well as the likelihood of Islamist parties grasping power after democratization. Context dependency is modelled via cross-level interactions.

Patrick Haddad

“Friendship as a Way of Life: Foucault, Queer Friendship, and Rabih Alameddine’s Koolaidis”

In this paper, through a reading of *Koolaidis: The Art of War* by Rabih Alameddine, I argue that Foucault's "Friendship as a Way of Life" can be relevant politically as a way of thinking of queer kinship outside the structure of the NGOized "community". Foucault, writing in the gay leftist magazine *Gai Pied*, theorized on the political possibilities of 'friendship' in "Friendship as a Way of Life" which I argue is meant to present an alternative to the commercialization of the gay male community in Paris.

Following that, through a comparison between the Lebanese Civil War and the "AIDS epidemic" in The States, Alameddine posits that these two events are similarly traumatic for gay men in Lebanon.

I believe that *Friendship as a Way of Life: Foucault, AIDS, and the Politics of Shared Estrangement* by Tom Roach can help us understand how we can view the "AIDS epidemic" as a shared traumatic event which can provide political possibilities of personal alliances and friendships (in the Foucauldian sense), and thus similarly how the Lebanese Civil War can provide the same circumstance for LGBTQI+ people in Lebanon.

Finally, I will be discussing Didier Eribon's chapter "Friendship as a Way of Life" in his book *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self* in light, and in reference to, Foucault's essay and Alameddine's book, to formulate an understanding of Beirut as a site where new queer kinship ties can be formed outside of the coercive or otherwise unquestioned NGO interventionism.

Rim Saab

“Politically Engaged Women from Different Corners of the Arab World: Is There a Common Profile?”

The present research examines the profile of politically engaged women from different Arab countries using secondary public opinion data. The analysis is based on data from the third wave of the Arab Barometer (2013-14), namely from Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Kuwait. We analyze the sociodemographic and ideological profile of women who report an interest in politics, women who vote and women who engage in collective action (e.g. protest). In particular, we look at age, education, income, marital status, employment, religiosity, support for democracy, support for secularism, and attitudes toward women's rights. Preliminary results indicate some similarities and some differences between the various Arab countries, but also between women who vote and women who take collective action.

Rola El-Husseini

“Gender and Sectarianism: Women’s Political Representation in Iraq and Lebanon”

Most Arab countries have adopted a variation on the same state-feminism approaches to respond to pressures from grassroots civil-society organizations and external actors. This state-feminism generally takes the form of quotas in elected bodies, the appointment of women to cabinets, and legislation that seeks to advance women’s rights. Following the Arab uprisings, some states experimented by doing away with state feminism, however, this effort proved to be disastrous and gender quotas were quickly reinstated.

Following the removal of quota systems, the decline in female representation at the executive and legislative levels demonstrates the fragility of women’s representation in the Arab state apparatus. The implementation and effectiveness of state-feminism in the Arab world has been linked to the larger trajectories and motivations of the various regimes. The greatest successes for state-feminism approaches are associated with stable, non-sectarian, and non-fragmented regimes.

In contrast, this paper examines women’s political representation in Iraq and Lebanon, countries where the political system is divided along sectarian and ethnic lines. The recent history of both states includes a formalization of sectarianism in politics, or political sectarianism defined as “the institutionalization of social differences through governmental policy.” While both Iraq and Lebanon have witnessed increased protests aimed at dismantling sectarian institutions, there have been no real changes after the Arab uprisings.

Female representation in Iraq and Lebanon also remains dismal in comparison to other Arab countries. While Iraq has maintained a quota system for women’s representation in the legislature since the 2003 U.S. invasion, the status of women in politics in Iraq remains almost equivalent to that of Lebanon, a similarly sectarian environment with no quota system. Therefore, the sectarian states provide an example of a context in which quotas seem to have had very little transformative effect, probably because women’s allegiance to their sect under these conditions is more immediate and consuming compared to their concern for class or gender positioning.

Sabah Ikhmayees

“The Implications of Gender Quota in Palestine as a conflict-torn, Divided Society”

Women’s political representation is essential and urgent to achieve comprehensive political development. The United Nations declared that women’s participation in development is a necessity through effective participation in the decision-making process and called the governments around the world to increasing women’s participation in decision making to reach at least 30% (Beijing Platform for Action 1995).

Some Arab countries followed this track and introduced gender quota after a long period of women’s exclusion and marginalization. However, still there is controversy about the quota system and its application in many countries, especially countries that suffer from wars and occupation, for example Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine especially in the context

of rooted patriarchal system. Gender quota in Palestine was introduced at the national and local level in 2005. Gender quotas are constitutionally preserved and there is constant confirmation of verbal support. However, with the presence of traditional norms and fragile political situation the success of gender quota and women's representation remains uncertain.

There is a lack of in-depth stories of implementation of gender quota. This case study focuses on Palestine as a conflict country. It examines the gender quota and reserved seats provision to increase women's political representation. Qualitative studies suggest women's mobilization is central to implementation gender quota, but has not been tested cross-nationally. Drawing on information gathered through documentary analysis and interviews with key actors and women's activists in Palestine, the presentation goes beyond numerical aspects of Palestinian women's political representation in decision – making. My study reveals the efforts made by Palestinian secular women's movement and its allies to introduce Gender quota law in the Palestinian legislative level and the local level from 2002-2005 including the discussions and legislative council sessions and the political-religious context. The paper concludes with reflections about the reception of the present state of gender quotas by the actors involved in terms of its substantive and symbolic impact.

Salam Al-Mahadin

“A Tale of two Jordanian Videos: De-Feminising Israeli Occupation”

In August 2017, an obscure video began circulating among a group of feminists in Jordan. Filmed in the US a few years before, the 30-minute roundtable discussion features a recently-deceased prominent Jordanian feminist deliberating several women's issues with two Israeli academics and a pro-Israel Jewish US senator as part of a transnational initiative launched back in 2012 to promote “peace and dialogue” in the MENA region. Shock soon gave rise to practical concerns; what would be the impact of the video on women's movement in Jordan, where accusations that female activists were pandering to western and Israeli agendas never go out of fashion? This bleak prospect meant we had to brush aside our political and ethical concerns and refrain from posting it on social media. Indeed, we chose to contain it as much as possible. In this paper, the video will be juxtaposed with an earlier one, made by a number of students of the deceased academic about sexual harassment, courting a lot of controversy when it was leaked online in 2011. Drawing upon insights from affective-discursive approaches, this paper is an attempt to adopt the two videos as a point of departure for exploring the nexus between (trans)national feminism and colonialism and their juridico-discursive and ethical implications within the Jordanian context. By teasing out the silent/excluded colonial undertones of the roundtable discussion, the authors challenge the hegemony of feminist constructs in sites of multiple oppression where several ‘subject positions’ seemingly vie for “victimhood.” Gender, the authors argue, should be analyzed within a wider web of power constructs where being a colonial subject is a more pressing concern than any affinity colonized and colonizing feminists feel with each other.

Samar Kassis

"رابطة نساء اسرن من اجل الحرية": الواقع والامكانيات والتحديات

يرتبط تأسيس "رابطة نساء اسرن من اجل الحرية" بمفهوم سياسي نضالي واجتماعي يسعى الى مقاومة الاستيطان الكولونيالي الصهيوني، ومقاومة التغيرات التي طرأت على المجتمع الفلسطيني ومفاهيمه السياسية والثقافية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية بعد توقيع اتفاقية اوسلو. حيث تؤمن الاسيرات السياسيات الفلسطينيات المحررات بأهمية الفعل الجمعي وتأثيره على المقاومة والتغير وتحقيق العدالة.

تسعى هذه الورقة الى تحليل وتفسير واقع وامكانيات "رابطة نساء اسرن من أجل الحرية" والتحديات التي تواجهها في ظل تغيرات ما بعد اوسلو الذي ادى الى ضيق الفضاء العام الفلسطيني. ستطرق الورقة الى الاسباب التي ادت الى إنشاء الرابطة بالتزامن مع الواقع الفلسطيني المتشردم، وما هو دورها كحركة جماعية احتجاجية هدفها التغير وإعادة البناء، وما هي الصعوبات التي تواجهها؟

تستند الدراسة منهجيا على تقنية المقابلات الفردية المعمقة التي تعطي المساحة والحرية في الاجابة وتسمح بفتح المجال واسعا لطرح افكار وتجارب تهم التحليل. سيتم عقد عدد من المقابلات المعمقة مع الاسيرات المحررات اللواتي اسسن هذه الرابطة واخرى انتسبن اليها مع مراعات الانتماءات السياسية والتنظيمية، والعمر النضالي واختلاف التوزيعات الجغرافية في مناطق الضفة الغربية وشرق القدس. تنطلق هذه الدراسة من الافتراض ان الاسيرة المحررة الفلسطينية تعاني من اقصاء في الفضاء العام الاجتماعي والذي بدوره يشككي من ضعف، حيث بات اسير الاستعمار الاسرائيلي وسياسات السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية والقطاع الخاص. ادى هذا الوضع لتصدي الاسيرات المحررات للواقع والاحتجاج عليه، وذلك عن طريق إنشاء حركة سياسية واجتماعية لتغيير الواقع ومقاومته والدفاع عن الحقوق .

تكمن اهمية الدراسة في تركيزها على فئة من النساء الفلسطينيات، وهن الاسيرات المحررات اللواتي تم عزل معظمهن من الحياة العامة واهمال تجاربهن ونضالهن، حيث كان له تأثير على حياتهن السياسية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية. كذلك معظم الادبيات تركز بشكل كبير على تجربة الاسيرات المحررات داخل السجون الاسرائيلية وهناك القليل جدا الذي كُتب حول الاسيرات المحررات ونضالهن كحركة اجتماعية بعد التحرر. ومن اهم الملاحظات الاولى التي تم استنتاجها، أن السبب الاساسي الذي قاد الاسيرات المحررات لتشكيل الرابطة هو تغير البنية الاجتماعية والسياسية التي اهملت تجاربهن واحتياجاتهن. وأنها ترفض اي مساعدات مالية من اي جهة لأن الممول سيفرض اجندته على أنشطة الرابطة والتي تتنافى مع مبادئها وافكارها السياسية والاجتماعية. وايضا تحاول الرابطة نشر الوعي بحقوق المرأة الفلسطينية المناضلة عن طريق استخدام وسائل الاعلام المرئية والمسموعة ومواقع التواصل الاجتماعي.

Sara Shaker

"Egyptian Adult Comics: A Place for Untold Gender Stories in Egyptian Society"

Few scholars have examined the presence of women writers and artists particularly in the newly emerging field of adult comics in post-revolutionary Egypt. As Trina Robbin (2001) argues, comics gave space for women who felt marginalized by male dominated societies. Today, women use the medium of comics to establish a feminist reclamation of storytelling, writing the narratives of women onto the face of a male-dominated art form, applying and developing a gender/feminist perspective to the comic medium (Chute, Hillary 2010). Nevertheless, the notable presence of women in the Egyptian comic scene has been often neglected. It is interesting to note how famous graphic & comic female artists such as Doaa Al Adl, Dina Mohamed, Rania Amin, Hanan Al-Kararji, Farah Shafie,

and Shirin Hanai employed distinctive features of both manga and Arabness to redefine and rearticulate the meaning of sexual identities.

In the comic realm, magazines like *Al-Shakmgia*, *TokTok*, *Qahera*, *Lamis* empowered both men and women to tell their stories of sexuality and break the “culture of silence” through an art form that employs a visual-literal lexicon. It is important to highlight that the above-mentioned comic magazines do not simply illustrate/demonstrate the role played by women and activists during the 25th January revolution in 2011 & 30th June in 2013; instead it offers an alternative representation of women in households. In these comics, one can see the pedagogical process of conscientization that leads women to reject established rationalizations of sexual behavior.

Accordingly, this paper attempts to examine the following research questions:

- To what extent does the Egyptian adult comic medium expose new forms of gender sexualities and roles?
- How do Egyptian adult comics move beyond the concepts of masculinity, femininity, manhood, and womanhood?

Based on the preceding discussion, this paper is going to be divided into three main sections. The first section highlights the importance of studying Egyptian comics in the academic field, focusing on the above-mentioned comics. The second section elaborates how artists utilized the comic space to show how women and LGBT use their sexuality to actually resist both patriarchal and state authority rather than to re-inscribe it. The third section utilizes critical discourse analysis and critical visual methodologies to explore visual depictions in comics.

Sarah Boukhary

“Daesh, or the Islamic State of Ultrapatriarchy: What Kind of a Gender Order Is in the Making?”

The enslavement of Yazidi women by Daesh marks one of the most calamitous sexual violence catastrophes of our modern days. However, and despite the fact that sexual violence crimes committed against Yazidi women received worldwide attention, most of this attention was in the form of superficial media coverage seeking to simply describe and narrate how Daesh militants have been enslaving them.

This paper therefore seeks to bring about a gendered analysis of the sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) manifestations of Daesh, with the objective of analyzing how this transnational terrorist group is constructing a gender social order by discursively defining what ‘femaleness’ should be, while simultaneously inflicting patriarchy as the apex of a hegemonic social order. The production and maintenance of the patriarchal social order that is constructed by Daesh will be studied in this research as constituted by social situations such as household life and thoroughly defined roles of women; social institutions, such as media and education; and social structures, meaning the gender relationality subjugating women vis-à-vis men.

Feminist critical discourse analysis, which revolves around “demystifying the interrelationships of gender, power, and ideology in discourse” (Lazar, 2007), will be adopted as a main methodology in this research paper primarily since it is explanatory rather than simply descriptive of analytic methods of discourse.

Such a critique implies, in this study, a central focus on the nexus tying how Daesh uses its ideology and doctrine in perpetuating its SGBV pattern as well as in constructing a new gender social order.

In addition, and since the sexual violence committed by Daesh is only one side of the story, I demonstrate in this paper that it is equally important to shed light on Daesh’s other abuses of gender-based nature committed against women conforming to, and living under, Daesh’s constructed social order. I also argue that a narrow emphasis on sexual violence in this particular context is leading to the simplification and even disregard of the many other forms of gender-based violence and inequality that affect women. In this context, this paper will provide a detailed insight of which manifestations of SGBV women living in the ‘Caliphate’ face, and how these manifestations ultimately feed into the patriarchal social structure that Daesh is constructing.

Sarah ElMasry

“From Cairo to Beirut: The demise of cross-national feminism”

When reading the history of the feminist and women’s movements in Egypt and Lebanon during the 20th century, the linkages and the connections between the mobilization in the two countries are notable. Despite the different political contexts, the socio-economic realities, and the issues and demands raised, the two movements had similar progression and paths that often crisscrossed. They exchanged experiences, learnt and shared mobilization tactics, visits by prominent feminists and letters and memoirs recounting experiences of the mobilizations. Feminist ideas, books, articles, and essays traveled from Egypt to Beirut and back. Even the famous “veiling” and “unveiling” debates happened concurrently in both movements and with reference to common writers and feminist figures. The manifestation for this intersection goes as far back as 1929 with the creation of regional and cross-national such as the Arab Women's Union; a union that aimed at bringing together Arab nationalists and leftists. Following the establishment of such networks and entities, conventions and meetings for Arab women took place around the newly chartered countries of “Mashriq” to coordinate women’s demands across the Arab world. The first Arab Women’s Conference in Cairo in 1944 which focused on increasing women’s political participation attests to that. However, the two movements diverged and each became much more concerned with their respective local context; Egyptian feminists post-Nasser period and Lebanese feminist during and post the civil. This divergence transpired without a return to a shared or coordinated agenda until the Arab uprisings. Once again elements of activism found in women’s mobilization traveled back and forth between Cairo and Beirut, but with no possibility for a cross-national exchange on the horizon. Through conducting archival research as well as qualitative interviews with feminist activists and figures from the women’s movements in Egypt and Lebanon, this

paper seeks to explore the model of cross-national feminism that once existed between the two countries. It will attempt to find answers for what caused the divergence? and why are the Egyptian and Lebanese feminists unable to establish the connections they once had despite operating under similar challenges and repressive regimes?

Saskia Glas

“Why does Support for Gender Equality Vary Between Arab MENA Countries? The Role of Personal Religiosity and Political Opportunity Structures”

In public debates and quantitative studies, the Arab Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is often presented as a homogenous area in which support for gender equality is largely absent due to patriarchal religious socialization.

Veering away from this simplistic Orientalist narrative, this study addresses how and why support for gender equality varies between citizens and different MENA countries. To this end, a context-dependent agentic-socialization framework is developed and tested. At its core, this framework proposes socialization is (a) complex and (b) context-dependent. Various aspects of religiosity are expected to impact support for gender equality (in education and politics) differentially. Moreover, open opportunity structures allow their inhabitants to express agency and dissociate from dominant patterns. For instance, MENA countries that are more democratic and leave more space for civil society are expected to shape their citizens' support for gender equality and religiosity's impact.

Empirically, this study uses the PRiME dataset – which combines the three most recent waves of the World Values Survey and the two most recent waves of the Arab Barometer – and includes over 50,000 respondents in 39 surveys covering 14 MENA countries between 2001 and 2014. These data are supplemented with existing country-level indicators – for instance V-Dem's civil society indicators and Freedom House's democracy and freedom of press data – as well as newly-developed indices, for instance the institutionalization of Islam. Multilevel analyses are conducted to empirically test the theoretical explanations.

The results firstly show that inhabitants of more open political opportunity structures on average support gender equality in education and in politics more than citizens of more oppressive governments. Also, although religious service attendance reduces support for gender equality, more devoted citizens are found to support gender equality in education more than the less devoted. Also, in more open MENA polities, devoted citizens support political gender equality more. These results support the context-dependent agentic-socialization framework; MENA inhabitants are not solely or univocally passively socialized by patriarchal religious views but actively engage with other interpretations, provided these are not banned by closed opportunity structures.

Shereen Abouelnaga

“Civil society, Social Movements and Collective Action”

This paper investigates the concepts of precarity and misrecognition that have come recently to characterize the gendered subject in the MENA region. Although originally ‘precarity’ is a concern of social studies and economics it has become recently part of cultural studies as well. It is defined as “that politically induced notion in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death” (Butler, 2009). The drifting apart of gender justice and social justice goals have generated grave consequences: the utter misrecognition of gender based violence. However, recognizing and acknowledging precariousness are not enough tools to protect endangered lives. It is “the apprehension of grievability” that could pave the way for “the apprehension of precarious life” (Butler, 2009). It is the equivalent of what Nancy Fraser calls ‘redistribution’ without which recognition does not mean anything. To remedy injustice, Fraser provides two approaches. The first one is affirmative which is “aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them; while the second is transformative and effective since it aims at “restructuring the underlying generative framework” (Fraser, 1995). The latter could subvert the paradigm of misrecognition and the dominant mood of ordinariness towards all forms of gender based violence: refugees, LGBT, Yazidi women, Coptic women, and the list is endless. From within this theoretical framework, - that does not resort to the all too abstract term of patriarchy- this paper attempts to highlight what could be done to redress the present gap of recognition in the academic field, i.e., feminist and gender scholarship, and the cultural representations (oral history, testimonies, images, documentaries...etc.). Cultural vision and academic scholarship are two indispensable public spaces that enable producing (and disseminating) a direly needed knowledge to remedy injustice and inequality. Re-visiting and re-visioning feminist scholarship is a corollary of practicing grievability over misrecognition. This paper attempts to understand and identify the mechanisms of misrecognition and the means to recognition; hence, the possibility of restructuring the generative framework through rigorous grievability.

Yasmin Shafei

“Beyond the Public Sphere: Female Voices from the ‘Margins’”

In attempting to answer the question, “what can feminism accomplish?”, it is important to first understand, and challenge, the dominant theoretical and methodological underpinnings in the study of gender roles and representations. This study will explore the use of literary texts as vital historical sources of female voices and, ultimately, of gender constructs. By focusing on the literary works of three of the leading Arab women writers, ‘Aisha Taymur, Malak Hifni Nassif and Mayy Ziyadah, the study will highlight how literary works were a powerful mode of self-expression through which women discussed and

debated both women's and national issues. These works essentially offered women a space for activism in lieu of the male-dominated public sphere. Gender constructs were thus taking shape in the literature of Arab female writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, just as the male intellectuals were dominating the public sphere. The works of these women illustrate the need to broaden our definition of activism, moving beyond the political leaders of women's organizations, and focusing equally on the daily actions, writings, and lives of women.

Before women became active in the political realm, they were already challenging gender boundaries within their own homes and communities. Unfortunately, women's activities outside the political realm have often been considered as either marginal or auxiliary, failing to make their way into traditional historical writing. It is within this non-political realm that the study of women's literature can make a major contribution to understanding women's history. Literary texts can provide vital alternatives to the master narratives of history, narratives in which male-dominated and institutional history are paramount.

Female literature is relevant primarily because it provides an alternative interpretation of the role of women in the public domain and because it provides the feminist discourse with significant female images and methods of portrayal. Awareness of how these themes and distortions permeate writings on women and affect perceptions is indispensable for further analysis and scholarly research on women and gender in the Arab world. What is needed is the production of new feminist knowledge that critically engages perceptions of women and gender and takes into account the inclusion of women's experiences outside the public-private dichotomy.