

CULTURAL PRACTICES AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE ARAB WORLD



history, remembrance and transformation processes in the Middle East + North Africa

SQU ARE

juuis Qualitative Research Encounters Schweizer Treffen für qualitative Forschung Rencontres suisses pour la Recherche qualitative nochti svitzeri sulla Ricerca qualitativa nscunters svitzers per la Retschertga qualitativa

International Workshop

Representations of Change: Time, Space, and Power In Qualitative Research On the MENA Region and Europe

February 22 – 24, 2018 Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies (CNMS) Philipps-Universität, Marburg, Germany







Universität Zürich[™] Since the start of the 21st century seemingly uppredictable change, in all its different guises, has fueled the preoccupations of academic and non-academic publics. The financial crisis, the 'Arab Spring', protest movements in southern Europe, the rise of Daesh and right-wing populism, as well as the environmental crisis all make it very difficult to rely on Francis Fukuyama's theory of 'end of history', which now seems to merely reflect the euphoria of liberal elites following the collapse of the Soviet Union (1992). Such examples of historical assessments should teach us to be cautious of blind spots when we write about our times.

The 'turning points', 'crises', 'revolutions', 'transitions' and 'transformations' being announced and debated on a regular basis only represent the most visible elements of the conceptual and theoretical apparatus that economists, political and social scientists, as well as scholars from the humanities, deploy to grasp a wide array of social, political, economic processes of the past 20 years. The grand narratives they refer to in order to decide which elements are relevant for understanding change are often out of touch with empirical inquiry. Furthermore, theories describing individualization, modernization, secularization and for instance, offer democratization. broad schemes of interpretation and generalization, but the coherence and strength of their philosophical underpinning only gives a limited account of the intricacies of observable situations.

For example, nowadays, many consider the events in Egypt and Syria, heralded as revolutions and moments of fundamental change by many scholars in 2011, as yet another example of the region's supposed resistance to change. The situation seems to have reversed to the familiar scenarios of autocratic regime rule or political violence/war. Likewise, many recent processes in Europe, most spectacularly the Brexit, appear to observers to be a return to national paradigms that were thought obsolete. Endorsing such assessments is not neutral. They have their own impact on the social and political environment. Statements on change, or lack thereof, are always performative. They have effect on the configurations even when they pretend to merely describe them. They have deep implications on the way regions are being represented, which in turn can impact political and economic relations.

In a previous workshop (*Snapshots of Change: Assessing Social Transformations through Qualitative Research*) that took place at the University of Zurich in 2015, we focused on the methodological tools researchers can develop to study change. This new workshop, entitled *Representations of Change: Time, Space, and Power in Qualitative Research on the Mena Region and Europe* and to be held at the Philipps-University Marburg, intends to reflect more closely on the webs of power affecting both the researcher and 'the researched' when they intend to represent change.

This workshop is jointly organized by the Research Network *ReConfigurations* (funded by the BMBF), the Leibniz-Research Group *Figures of Thought | Turning Points* (both CNMS, Philipps-University Marburg), and *SQUARE* (University of Zurich).

<u>Registration required! Please register until February 15, 2018</u> <u>with Nohoud Yousef: seklerec@staff.uni-marburg.de</u>

Organization Committee:

University of Marburg (main conveners): Dr. Felix Lang and Dr. Christoph H. Schwarz University of Zurich: Dr. Yasmine Berriane and Dr. Aymon Kreil

Thursday, 22/02/2018

CNMS, Deutschhausstraße 12, Room 00A26 (ground floor)

17.15	Arrival / Registration at Marburger Hof
18.00	Public Roundtable: Representations of Change
	Shana Cohen (Dublin University)
	Rachid Ouaissa (Philipps-Universität Marburg)
	Ulrich Winter (Philipps-Universität Marburg)
	Chair: Felix Lang, Christoph Schwarz
20.30	Opening Dinner for workshop participants (presenters are invited; Restaurant Edlunds, Markt 15, 35037

Friday 23/02/2018

Marburg)

Ketzerbach 63, Marburg, Room 00/0110 (ground floor)

10.00 Introduction (Yasmine Berriane, Aymon Kreil, Felix Lang, Christoph Schwarz)

10.30	 1 Panel: Revolution as Social Change (Char: Steffen Wippel; discussant: Jamie Furniss) Veronica Ferreri: Inhabiting "a state of permanent loss". Between the Syrian Revolution and the refugee crisis Carl Rommel: Through time, across space. Towards a spatialized ethnography of Egypt's (counter-) revolutionary transition
12.00	Coffee Break
12.15	2 Text Session: (Chair: Christoph Schwarz) Shana Cohen: Transforming Social Action into Social Change
13.15	Lunch Break
15:00	3 Panel: Arts and Social Change (Chair: Malte Hagener; discussant: Friederike Pannewick) Nandi Chinni Kumar: Filming the Change: The Turning Point of Arab Cinema after Arab Spring Radwa Khaled: Independent Art and Transformation in Egypt
16.30	Coffee Break

17.00	Movie Session
	CNMS, Deutschhausstraße 12, Room 00A26 (ground floor)
*	Movie: I am the people / انا الشعب ; discussion with director Anne Roussillon, via skype
20.00	Dinner (Dromedar Restaurant, Am Grün 1, Marburg; presenters are invited)

Saturday 24/02/2018

Ketzerbach 63, Marburg, Room 00/0110 (ground floor)

9.00	4 Panel Discussion: Concepts of Change (Chair: Perrine Lachenal; discussant: Karin Ahlberg)
	Yasmine Berriane, Aymon Kreil: Contested Terminologies of Change: Ethnographic perspectives on the uses of "Empowerment" in Morocco and Egypt
	Luca Aneschi: Narratives of Change and Leadership Transition in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
10.30	Coffee Break

10.45	5 Panel Discussion: Conceptualizing the Revolution (Chair: Hala Ghoname, discussant: Shana Cohen) Shaima Magued "January 25th in the Egyptian scholarship between "a revolution" and "anti-state plot" Karin Ahlberg: Undesirable change and uncomfortable outcomes – reflections from fieldwork amid the post- 2011 tourism crisis in Egypt
12:15	Coffee Break
12.30	6 Conclusions / Wrap up (Yasmine Berriane, Aymon Kreil, Felix Lang, Christoph Schwarz)
13:00	Farewell Lunch