



Middle East
Centre

Middle East Centre Annual Report 2011-2012



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Introduction

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In 2011-2012, the second year of the Middle East Centre's existence, the strong foundations established were built upon through expanding and developing infrastructure and research and events activities. The Centre moved into its newly renovated home, high up in Tower 1 in Clement's Inn. This larger office provides superb facilities for Centre staff, Fellows and PhD students, including a growing reference library, meeting rooms and splendid views. Ribale Sleiman Haidar joined the Centre, initially to run the BRISMES Annual Conference, and was then appointed to a permanent position delivering the Centre's core administration. Dania Akkad's promotion to an events and communications role developed both areas, notably with the establishment of the MEC Blog and enhanced communication of Centre work. Dr Aitemad Muhanna and Dr Duha Al-Kuwari joined the Centre as Visiting Fellows, while Professor Amal Shlash joined the Research Group.

The highlight of the year was the BRISMES Annual Conference in March 2012. Over 350 delegates attended to hear 150 papers presented over three days, with William Hague providing a keynote address. The Centre's regular events series featured many outstanding speakers, including Professor Sadik Al Azm, Professor Juan Cole, Professor Roger Owen, Wael Ghonim and Ahdaf Soueif.

Research activities gained momentum during the year. The Centre's first flagship publication, a collected volume of papers on the Arab uprisings edited by Fawaz Gerges, made excellent progress. A funded programme of academic collaboration with Arab universities began with research projects established in Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt and the UAE. Professor Fawaz Gerges published two highly-acclaimed books; *The Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, and *Obama and the Middle East: The End of America's Moment in the Middle East?* Fundraising also began in earnest with successful applications to the ESRC and LSE Annual Fund and the raising of sponsorship for the BRISMES conference. Further applications to funding bodies are underway for research commencing in 2012-2013.

The LSE Middle East Centre builds on LSE's long engagement with the Middle East and provides a central hub for the wide range of research on the region carried out at LSE. The Centre works to develop rigorous research and teaching on the societies, economies, politics, and international relations of the Middle East and North Africa. LSE is one of the world's leading social science institutions and comprises departments covering all branches of the social sciences. The Middle East Centre taps into this expertise to promote both public understanding and innovative interdisciplinary research on the region, with foci on history, political economy, society and international relations. The Middle East Centre was established with support from the Aman Trust and the Emirates Foundation for Philanthropy.

About the Middle East Centre

Objectives

- Promoting open and critical debate about the politics, societies and economics of the Middle East
- Fostering research and training among LSE and visiting scholars and students
- Providing a rich research environment for the development of new scholars
- Establishing and cultivating ties with Middle Eastern institutions
- Stimulating collaboration with scholars in other international institutions
- Disseminating knowledge about the Middle East through Centre lectures, web resources, and publications and through LSE, community and media activities

Constitution and Governance

The Middle East Centre engages in methodologically rigorous research and scholarship. The scrupulous preservation of the Centre's academic independence helps ensure research excellence. In keeping with the tradition of other centres at the LSE, the MEC builds on research excellence and innovation to provide those outside the academic community with solid research on contemporary social, political and economic processes and problems in the region. The LSE Middle East Centre is neither an ivory tower nor a policy think tank. The Centre seeks to develop a world-class research agenda which will be driven not by governments or special interests but by academics and students.

The governance of the Centre is assured by its director assisted by a management group of five other specialists from the LSE, a wider research group of LSE staff, and beyond that the Advisory Board of the Centre. This tiered structure ensures the autonomy of academic decision-making with regard to funders and UK and international political concerns.

People

Centre Director

Professor Fawaz A. Gerges



Fawaz A. Gerges, the inaugural director of the MEC, is a Professor of Middle Eastern Politics and International Relations at LSE. He also holds the Emirates Chair of Contemporary Middle East Studies. Professor Gerges earned a doctorate from Oxford University and MSc from LSE. He has taught at Oxford, Harvard and Columbia, and was a research scholar at Princeton and is a chairholder (the Christian A. Johnson Chair in Middle Eastern Studies and International Affairs) at Sarah Lawrence College, New York.

Professor Gerges' special interests include Islam and the political process, social movements, including mainstream Islamist movements and jihadist groups, Arab politics and Muslim politics in the 20th century, the international relations of the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli conflict, state and society in the Middle East, American foreign policy towards the Muslim world, the modern history of the Middle East, history of conflict, diplomacy and foreign policy, and historical sociology.

Gerges' books include: *Obama and the Middle East: The End of America's Moment in the Middle East?* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); *The Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda* (Oxford University Press, 2011); *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge University Press, 2005); *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* (Cambridge University Press, 2000) and *The Superpowers and the Middle East: Regional and International Politics* (Oxford and Westview, 2000).

Centre Staff



Robert Lowe
Centre Manager



Dania Akkad
Events and Communications
Coordinator



Ribale Sleiman Haidar
Centre Coordinator

Visiting Fellows in 2011-2012

Dr Duha Al-Kuwari

Dr Duha Al-Kuwari joined the Middle East Centre as a Visiting Fellow in February 2012. Her interests lie in the financial economy of Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, particularly the GCC stock exchanges and the private sector. Dr Al-Kuwari is an Assistant Professor at Qatar University.

Professor Saad Jawad

Professor Jawad is an Iraqi political scientist who taught at the University of Baghdad for more than 20 years. His interests include the Iraqi constitution, Iraqi Kurds, the war in Iraq and its effect on the Middle East, and the regional influence of Iraq's neighbours.

Dr Kamil Mahdi

An economist specializing in agriculture, Iraq and the political economy of oil-exporting countries, Dr Mahdi is a former Senior Lecturer in the Economics of the Middle East at the University of Exeter. He is currently writing a book on the political economy of oil and development in Iraq. He is also working to develop research in conjunction with Basra University colleagues on the economic development of Basra province.

Dr Elizabeth Iskander

Dr Iskander's work focuses on the politics, society and law of the Middle East, with particular reference to Egypt. Her research interests include Arabic media, identity politics, minorities in the Middle East, and the role of religion in politics, conflict and media

Dr Aitemad Muhanna-Matar

Dr Muhanna is pursuing post-doctoral research on gender, religion and sustainable human development in Gaza and other parts of the Middle East. Originally from the Gaza Strip, Dr Muhanna has worked for UNRWA, Birzeit University, UNDP and Oxfam.

'My work will help decision makers in the government understand foreign investment so they know the challenges and risks they might face based on current regulations. Therefore, they can make forward-looking decisions about how best to broaden foreign investor participation effectively and successfully.'

- Dr Al-Kuwari on the impact of her work for her native country, Qatar

Management Group

The MEC Management Group is responsible for the oversight and development of the Centre's research agenda under the direction of the MEC Director. The Management Group provides advice on research strategy, general management and resource issues arising across the Centre, and progress on individual research themes and funded projects.

Members

- Dr John Chalcraft, Reader in History and Politics of Empire/Imperialism, LSE
- Dr Steffen Hertog, Lecturer in Comparative Politics, LSE
- Professor Martha Mundy, Professor of Anthropology, LSE
- Dr Kirsten Schulze, Lecturer in International History, LSE
- Dr Hakan Seckinelgin, Senior Lecturer in International Social Policy, LSE

Research Group

The MEC Research Group is drawn from LSE and external faculty members with relevant research interests. The Research Group has an advisory role in respect of the MEC's research themes, priorities and its general intellectual direction.

Members

- Professor Madawi Al-Rasheed, Professor of Anthropology of Religion, King's College London
- Dr Roham Alvandi, Lecturer in International History, LSE
- Dr Amnon Aran, Lecturer in International Politics, City University
- Dr Federica Bicchi, Lecturer in International Relations of Europe, LSE
- Dr Katerina Dalacoura, Lecturer in International Relations, LSE
- Dr Saad Jawad, Senior Visiting Fellow, Middle East Centre, LSE
- Professor Mary Kaldor, Professor of Global Governance, LSE
- Dr Michael Mason, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Geography, LSE
- Professor Sevket Pamuk, Chair in Contemporary Turkish Studies, LSE
- Professor Yezid Sayigh, Senior Associate, Carnegie Middle East Center
- Dr Kirsten Schulze, Senior Lecturer in International History, LSE
- Dr Zhand Shakibi, Lecturer in Comparative Politics, LSE
- Professor Amal Shlash, Bayt Al-Hikma, Baghdad
- Professor Charles Tripp, Professor of Politics, SOAS
- Dr Kristian Coates-Ulrichsen, Research Fellow and Deputy Director of the Kuwait Programme, LSE

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board provides independent, external advice to the Middle East Centre. The Board's role is purely advisory.

Members

- Professor Lisa Anderson, President, American University in Cairo
- Masood Ahmed, Director Middle East and Central Asia, IMF
- Mohammad A.J Al Fahim, Honorary Chairman, Al Fahim Group
- Sheikha Hanadi Nasser bin Khalid AlThani, Managing Director, Amwal
- Dr Bassem Awadallah, Secretary General, Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Hind Bahwan, Chairperson, Bahwan Cyber Technologies
- Dr Maleeha Lodhi
- Azmi Mikati, Chief Executive Officer, M1 Group
- Arif Naqvi, Founder and Group Chief Executive Officer, Abraaj Capital
- Zaki Nusseibeh, Adviser, Presidential Court, UAE
- Ferit F. Sahenk, Chairman, Dogus Group
- Dr Nasser Saidi, Chief Economist, Dubai International Financial Centre
- Professor Avi Shlaim, St Antony's College, University of Oxford

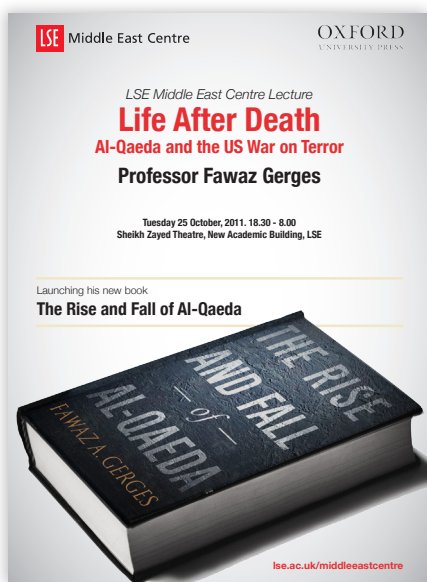
MEC Activities 2011 – 2012

Events Programme

Lecture Series

From signs of potential uprisings in Saudi Arabia to protests in Iraqi Kurdistan and revolts in Egypt, Tunisia and beyond, this past year's MEC lecture series focused on the uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa. Many of the lectures provided the basis for *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World*, an MEC volume scheduled to be published in early 2013.

Held on the LSE campus during the school terms, MEC events have global reach and long lifespan through podcasts and transcripts available on the MEC website and blog. When possible, highlights of lectures are also reported in real time through Twitter (@LSEMiddleEast), allowing interested people who are unable to attend lectures to follow along and send in questions and comments for speakers.



6 October 2011

Framing the Arab Uprisings: A Historical Perspective

Professor Juan Cole, University of Michigan

11 October 2011

Islamist Terrorism and Democracy in the Middle East

Dr Katerina Dalacoura, LSE

17 October 2011

A Saudi Spring of Sand Storms: Signs of Domestic Turbulence

Professor Madawi Al Rasheed, King's College London

25 October 2011

Life After Death: Al-Qaeda and the US war on terror

Professor Fawaz Gerges, LSE

1 November 2011

Gender and Violence in Algeria

Dr Zahia Smail Salhi, University of Leeds

7 November 2011

The Arab Uprisings: mass protest, border-crossing and history from below

Dr John Chalcraft, LSE

8 November 2011

Revisiting the 1973 Arab-Israeli War: Revelations from the U.S. Archives

Dr Roham Alvandi, LSE; Professor Nigel Ashton, LSE; Dr Adam Howard, US Department of State; Dr Keith Hamilton, FCO

24 November 2011

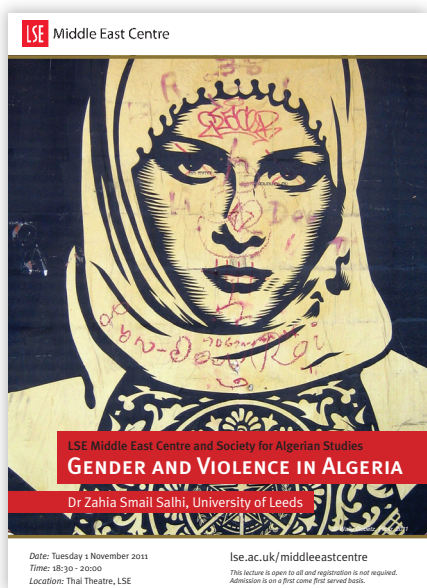
Covering the Arab Spring: Are the Media Getting it Wrong?

Dr Ramy Aly, University of Sussex; Brian Whitaker, The Guardian; Roger Hardy, LSE; Marwan Bishara, Al Jazeera

30 November 2011

Arab Nationalism, Islamism and the Arab Uprising

Professor Sadik Al-Azm, University of Damascus





8 December 2011

The US and the Arab Revolutions

Professor William Quandt, University of Virginia

13 December 2011

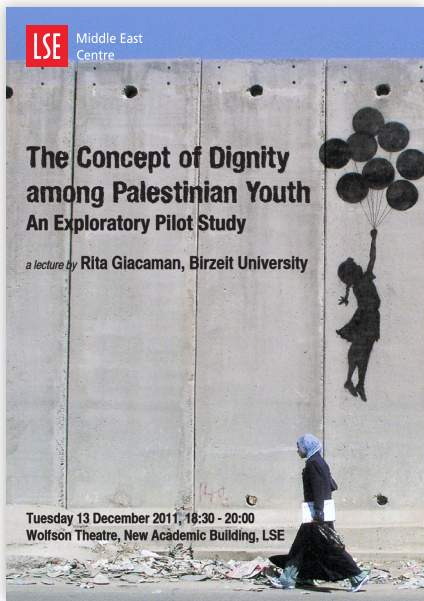
The concept of Dignity among Palestinian youth: an exploratory pilot study

Professor Rita Giacaman, Birzeit University

9 January 2012

The year of Egypt's Second Revolution: the Balance Sheet so Far

Professor Roger Owen, Harvard University



17 January 2012

Engaging Political Islam and the New Realities of the Middle East

Wadah Khanfar, CEO of Integrated Media Strategies and former Director General Al Jazeera

23 January 2012

The Military and the Arab Uprisings

Professor Yezid Sayigh, Carnegie Middle East Center

25 January 2012

Dangers and Demon(izer)s of Democratization in Egypt: Through an Indonesian Glass, Darkly

Professor John Sidel, LSE

31 January 2012

Revolution 2.0

Wael Ghonim



2 February 2012

The Pattern of the Past in North Africa

Dr James McDougall, Trinity College, University of Oxford

6 February 2012

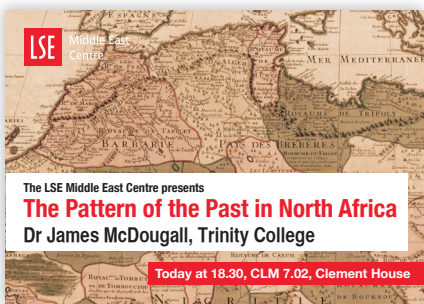
Muslim Cosmopolitanism or Heresy? Lessons for the Aftermath of the 2011 Arab Spring

Dr Carol Kersten, King's College London

13 February 2012

The Islamist Moment in the Middle East: Domestic and Geostategic Implications

Professor Fawaz Gerges, LSE



1 May 2012

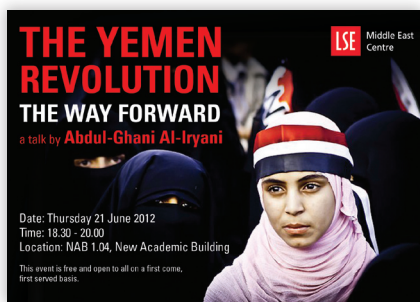
After the Arab Spring: Power Shift in the Middle East

Professor Anoush Ehteshami, Durham University; Dr Amnon Aran, City University London; Roger Cohen, New York Times

9 May 2012

Politics and Power in the Maghreb

Dr Michael Willis, Oxford University



15 May 2012

The Kurdish Spring: State-Society Relations and Dissent in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Dr Nicole Watts, San Francisco State University

31 May 2012

The Egyptian Revolution: Where from, and where to?

Ahdaf Soueif, Egyptian writer and political & cultural commentator

21 June 2012

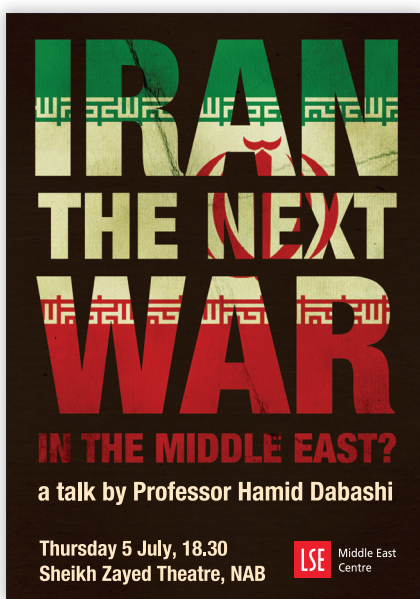
The Yemen Revolution: the Way Forward

Abdul-Ghani Al-Iryani, Independent Political Activist

5 July 2012

Iran: The next war in the Middle East?

Professor Hamid Dabashi, Columbia University



Conferences

7 September 2011

Arab-Iranian Relations: Discourses of Conflict and Cooperation

Relations between Iran and its Arab neighbours have been marked by a complex web and flow of tensions, suspicions and alliances. The Arab uprisings threw these relations into greater flux with severe implications for the whole Middle East region. This timely conference featured leading academics and journalists who explored the impact of recent events on the future relations between Iran and Arab states.

15 September 2011

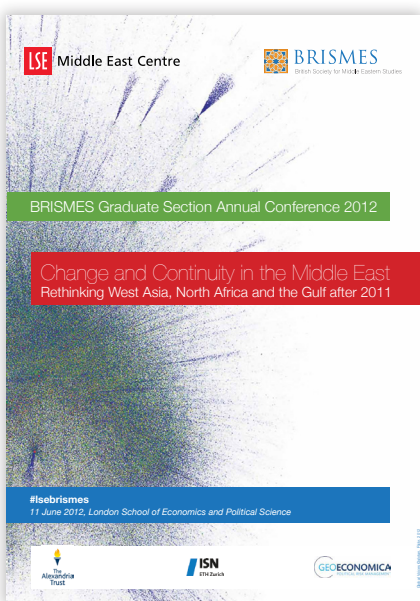
LSE Middle East Centre PhD Students Conference

The LSE Middle East Centre organised its first conference for LSE PhD students conducting research on the region. Many of the presenters had recently returned from conducting fieldwork and shared fresh insights into a range of topical issues, including the uprisings in Egypt.

11 June 2012

BRISMES Graduate Section Annual Conference 2012

After the success of the BRISMES Annual Conference, the MEC hosted the annual conference of the Graduate Section of BRISMES, 'Change and Continuity in the Middle East: Rethinking West Asia, North Africa and the Gulf after 2011'. Over 12 panels, more than 50 PhD students and young researchers presented their views and findings. The conference proved to be the largest BRISMES graduate section conference so far.



26-28 March 2012

BRISMES Annual Conference 2012

The LSE Middle East Centre hosted the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) Annual Conference, *'Revolution and Revolt: Understanding the Forms and Causes of Change'*. Thanks to the participation of more than 350 leading academics, students and experts in the field, the conference proved to be a great success. The Middle East Centre is delighted to have organised this flagship conference at which over 150 papers were presented in 40 panels. This is the second largest annual Middle East Studies event in the world and it was the first time it had been held at LSE. The keynote speakers were William Hague, UK Foreign Secretary, and Professor Ghassan Salame from the Paris School of International Affairs.



Research Seminars

Several new researchers joined the MEC this past year, using the centre as a base from which to conduct their research projects and focus on their writing and connect with a community of Middle East-focused experts. To highlight and connect their projects with stakeholders, experts in their field and LSE PhD and Masters students, the MEC held two seminars which gave researchers a chance to present their work in progress and take focused questions.

13 June 2012

Human Development in Iraq: Challenges and Opportunities

Professor Amal Shlash, LSE Middle East Centre

20 June 2012

Private Sector Development in the GCC

Dr Duha Al-Kuwari, LSE Middle East Centre

Research Workshops

19 May 2011

Democracy in the Arab World

Jointly with LSE IDEAS, the LSE Middle East Centre organised a whole day workshop on the prospects of democratisation in the Arab world. The aim of the workshop was to discuss the prospects of democratisation in the region.

17 April 2012

The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World

A full day workshop for contributors to the MEC book *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World*.

Research Projects

MEC book: *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World*

This volume will be one of the first critically comprehensive books written by leading scholars to examine the meanings and effects of the Arab popular uprisings on local, regional and international politics. A group of outstanding scholars will reflect on the comparative causes and drivers behind the Arab uprisings and the prospects of political transition and pluralistic transformation and consolidation in the region. This will provide a mature set of 'big picture' perspectives of these seminal events from the multi-disciplinary perspective of the social sciences. The book will cross the line between Comparative Politics and International Relations and also include cross-disciplinary perspectives from history, anthropology and sociology. This will ensure that a range of ideas and interpretations will be provided, adding to the book's distinctive value.

The book is being edited by Fawaz Gerges and will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2013. Contributors include: Lisa Anderson; Juan Cole; Charles Tripp; Roger Owen; Sadik Al Azm; and Madawi Al-Rasheed.

Academic Collaboration with Arab Universities

This programme promotes high calibre research by LSE and scholars at Arab universities, supports academic excellence at Arab universities, and strengthens links and knowledge transfer between LSE and Arab universities. Projects are run jointly by an LSE department or centre and an Arab university counterpart. The first round of funding awards was made in February 2012 to the following projects:

Contemporary Challenges Resulting from the Demographic Profile of GCC States: Labour Markets, Migration and National Identity

Government Department and United Arab Emirates University

This project will gather experts in the fields to propose and evaluate policy options to work on a range of themes including: labour market reform, investing in national human capital and identity and deciding what stake to give non-nationals in society. It will make a substantive and original contribution to the academic literature on demographic challenges, labour markets and labour migration in the GCC through a series of workshops, journal papers and an edited volume.

LSE Academic Collaboration with American University of Sharjah

Middle East Centre and American University of Sharjah

One of the central goals of the LSE Middle East Centre is to develop strong working relations with academic institutions in the Middle East. AUS has strong expertise in the field of Middle East Studies. Building on connections established in the autumn of 2011, programme fosters collaborative academic links between the two institutions. As well as strengthening knowledge transfer between the universities, it also encourages high calibre research by LSE post-doctoral fellows and by AUS faculty members.

Transboundary Climate Security: Climate Vulnerability and Human Security in the Jordan River Basin

Geography Department and Birzeit University

This research addresses climate vulnerable rural communities within the national territories of the watershed of the Jordan River (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory), which is perhaps the most physically and politically stressed river basin in the world, critically applying a human security approach. The aim of the research is to develop improved policy responses for climate risk management within the Jordan River Basin through a better understanding of the linkages between climate change, adaptation and human security. The study will examine three core aspects of climate change in the region – climate vulnerability, adaptation to climate change and capacity-building for climate resilience:

The Palimpsest of Agrarian Change

Anthropology Department and American University of Beirut

This project takes comparative case studies from a single small area, southern and eastern Lebanon. The aim of the project is straightforward: to explore the relation between secure, long-term access to land for farming households and their capacity to contribute to local, regional and national 'food security'. Two villages will be compared in depth, but a wider number of cases will be brought in at a more superficial level. The project will make a fundamental contribution to the problem of 'food insecurity' in the Arab East.

Egypt in the Arab Spring: Multidisciplinary Research Perspectives

Middle East Centre and Cairo University

This project promotes high calibre academic exchange between LSE and the Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS) at Cairo University, the oldest and biggest faculty of its kind in an Arab public university. It involves workshops in London and Cairo and the publication of research papers on Egypt in the Arab Spring and democratization. Most participants are PhD students at Cairo University and LSE.

Emirates PhD Support for Middle East Studies Award

The MEC awards annual scholarships to LSE PhD students to help complete their final year. Topics may include any Middle East country and two awards are reserved for Arab nationals. 23 students have been supported so far. Award winners have access to desk space in the MEC and contribute a summary of their research findings to the MEC blog.

Award Winners 2011 – 2012

Perveen Ali

States in Crisis: Sovereignty, Humanitarianism, and Refugee Protection in the Aftermath of the 2003 War in Iraq

Gustavo Barbosa

On Doing/Undoing Gender in Shatila, Lebanon: Becoming a Man Under Institutional Violence

Filippo Dionigi

International Norms and the Changing Conception of Community: the Case of Hizballah

Zeynep Kaya

Maps into Nations? Kurdistan, the Aspirational Territory of Kurds

Mohammed Lakhdar-Ghettas

An International History of US-Algerian Relations (1969-'81)

Dina Makram-Ebeid

Steel Lives under Reforms: An Ethnography of the Everyday Politics of Labour in Helwan, Egypt

Nabila Ramdani

Britain, the United States and the Rise of the Egyptian Nationalist Movement: The Case of the 1919 Revolution

Hedi Viterbo

The Legal Construction of Childhood in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

'I am grateful for the Emirates PhD Support for Middle East Studies Award, which provided the critical support needed for me to complete the final stages of my doctoral research considering whether statecentric conceptions of sovereignty are sufficient for understanding how refugee protection operated in practice in the Middle East following the 2003 war in Iraq.'

- Perveen Ali, Emirates Foundation award winner

Award Winners 2012 – 2013

Samer Abdelnour

Reintegrating Fighters in the Blue Nile, Sudan: From Globalization to Institutional Embeddedness

Hadi Makarem

The Limitations of Neoliberal Reconstruction in Postwar Lebanon: A Study of why Solidere's Reconstruction of Downtown Beirut Failed to Reconcile and Reintegrate Lebanese Society

Manal Massalha

Tales of a resilient hotel' city: Umm-el-Fahem between village and city. Absence of urbanism among the Palestinians in Israel, and its impact on their socio-economic, political and cultural development

Lisa Sezer

Anatolian Capital - the New Business Elites in Turkey

Mohamed Zaki

Uncertain (In)Visibility: Exploring Questions of Class, Sociality and Performance among Gay Cairenes

Kara Akkoyunlu

The Rise and Fall of the Hybrid Regimes: The Cases of Kemalist Turkey and Khomeinist Iran

Ulas Karakoc

A Reinterpretation of the Macroeconomic History of Egypt and Turkey in the Interwar Period

'The Emirates PhD Support for Middle East Studies Award has been an essential resource to carry out a core part of the fieldwork research for my PhD project. I am convinced that quality of the research that I propose in my PhD would have not been the same without the support received throughout this funding scheme.'

– Filippo Dionigi, Emirates Foundation award winner

Communications

Website

MEC staff have spent great time and effort in building, populating and improving the Centre's website. It provides a comprehensive, reliable and attractive source of information on the Centre's goals, governance, people, events and research. There are an average of 9,779 visits to the MEC website per month and an average of 4,332 individuals visit each month. Approximately 40% of these are new visitors. Most lectures are made available online as podcasts and receive an average of more than 2000 listeners per month each. The most popular MEC podcast to date is Hamid Dabashi's lecture of 5 July 2012, 'Iran: The Next War in the Middle East?' The podcast received more than 40,000 hits, making it the most popular LSE podcast in July 2012. (Actual downloads of podcasts are less than the number of hits each podcast receives, possibly by one or more orders of magnitude. It is not currently possible to say how much lower.)



40,000

hits received by Hamid Dabashi's lecture *Iran: The Next War in the Middle East?*

Blog



3,000

views per month

Launched in November 2011, the Middle East Centre Blog offers original social science research on the Middle East as well as transcripts from events, commentary, interviews and photo essays from LSE academics, students, speakers at MEC events and occasional external specialists and correspondents from the region. The blog also features a growing database of Middle East experts at LSE and serves to keep readers informed about the MEC events series. More than 50 unique pieces have been posted in the blog's first year. The MEC blog has an average of 3,000 viewers per month.

Newsletter

The MEC sends out a newsletter at least once a week in term time, featuring details of upcoming events, research and publications as well as job opportunities. In the past year, the number of people receiving the mailing list has more than doubled to 2,000. The average open rate of the newsletter is 35 per cent. This is more than double the projected open rate for other non-profit and academic institutions (16.7 per cent) according to email marketing benchmarks.

subscribers in
2010-2011

900

2,000

subscribers in
2011-2012

Social Media



500
likes



3,200
followers

The MEC is highly visible on popular social media sites and uses these platforms to: highlight research and publications from Centre fellows, LSE academics and students; feed live information from lectures; and connect with other Middle East-focused institutions and organisations. Over the past year, the number of Twitter followers of the MEC has nearly tripled to 3,200. The number of 'Likes' of the MEC on Facebook has increased from 150 to 500.

Speaking engagements and media appearances

Fawaz Gerges regularly delivers public lectures in many countries. He also provides regular commentary to the media on the politics and international relations of the Middle East. He has given more than 200 interviews this year to top news outlets including BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera. This year, his opinion pieces have appeared in many leading newspapers and online publications including *The Huffington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Guardian* and *openDemocracy*. Other Centre staff have spoken at events including public lectures, academic conferences, research workshops and to the media.

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