



Council for British Research in the Levant

The Arab Uprising: Researching the Revolutions

Amman 22 /23 September 2014

The Council for British Research in the Levant is pleased to open a call for papers for a workshop to be held in Amman on 22 and 23 September, 2014 on the broad topic of the Arab Uprising. From the end of 2010, a series of unexpected popular uprisings have spread across North Africa and the Middle East. The dramatic unfolding of events has disrupted the region in new and disturbing ways, including uprooting people both internally and across borders, transforming existing migrants into refugees and constraining the movement of mobile populations. Some events, as in Egypt and Tunisia, have been largely peaceful, with political transitions under the mediation of the army. Other events have been brutal, with a witnessing of force of arms and violent suppression of the opposition in Libya, and now also in Syria. These diverse crises have resulted in significant political turmoil, humanitarian emergencies, and regional political crises as the burden of hosting displaced people becomes overwhelming.

This workshop will provide a space for interested researchers pre and post-doctoral to critically engage with the evolving contemporary crises across the Middle East and North Africa focusing in particular on the nature of popular uprisings and democratic transformation as well as the challenges surrounding the mass displacement of people. Some of the conceptual questions which might be addressed include: what can we generalise about recent changes across the region? How much national/ regional specificity is required? Do events since 2011 mark an end to contentious notions about "Arab exceptionalism", the persistence of authoritarianism and the "Arab street"? What can we learn from these events about "democratic transition" in the region? What can we learn about the comparative experiences of Islamist, liberal and secular radical currents? What issues of gender emerge from national and regional developments? Methodological and ethical questions might also be addressed and include: how have the Arab uprisings been reported and researched, and what are the implications for academic practice? What methods are appropriate for data collection and analysis of mass movements for change? How can researchers in the social sciences mobilise insights from oral history and narrative methods in understanding experiential aspects of the uprisings? Is there a place for "action research"? What risks are acceptable for researchers during episodes of conflict?

Please send proposed paper titles and abstracts of no more than 250 words to CBRL@britac.ac.uk by April 30th. We will notify participants whether their paper has been accepted by the end of May.

The conference fee is £100, with a discounted rate of £50 for student participants. The fee will cover attendance at the conference, including lunches during the conference and the conference dinner.

The CBRL is able to provide a limited number of travel and accommodation bursaries for postgraduate student participants. If you would like to be considered for a bursary please include this request when submitting your abstract, together with a brief note confirming your current status.