

CALL FOR PAPERS

Workshop: Security Provision in West Asia and North Africa in times of Social and Political Change

November 26-27 2015

Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies, Marburg, Germany

Amongst the various demands of the thousands of people who took to the streets in West Asia and North Africa since late 2010, one common theme has been an end of arbitrary police violence and corruption. Throughout the uprisings and in an attempt to contain the growing insecurity, people started policing in the absence of police. Prominent examples are the *liğān ša‘biya*, the popular committees, in Egypt and in a different shape and outreach in Syria or in Yemen. Yet even before the uprisings, non-state actors have policed territory in spaces of limited statehood, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, or the People’s Protection Units in Syrian Kurdistan.

To this regard, the findings in a recent survey on popular security perception in Yemen (Soudias & Transfeld 2014) are all the more curious.¹ Although people in most of the country’s governorates consider police work to be either ineffective or entirely absent, they seem to generally call for more police presence despite their often-bad experiences. While these observations are fairly recent phenomena in West Asia and North Africa, they are not new in a global context. Müller’s (2012) study on policing in Mexico City’s poor neighborhoods demonstrates that local residents do not abandon state institutions as security providers, despite their predominantly negative perceptions about and encounters with the police.² Higazy’s (2008) case study on Nigeria investigates the interaction between the state, vigilantes, and militias.³ Here, non-state security actors, mostly militias, cooperate with the police in order to legitimate their claims and use of violence. This is corroborated by residents claiming that local militias do a better job than the police in security provision.

This workshop aims at conceptualizing these ambivalent relationships in comparative perspective, addressing the different ways in which boundaries and relations between

¹ Soudias, D., & Transfeld, M. (2014). Mapping Popular Perceptions: Local Security, Insecurity, and Police Work in Yemen *Policy Report* (Vol. 3). Sana'a: Yemen Polling Center.

² Müller, M.-M. (2012). Addressing an Ambivalent Relationship: Policing and the Urban Poor in Mexico City. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 44(2), 319-345.

³ Higazy, A. (2008). Social Mobilization and Collective Violence: Vigilantes and Militias in the Lowlands of Plateau State, Central Nigeria. *African Journal of the International African Institute*, 78(1), 107-135.

military, police and civilian worlds are reshaped today. We wish to gather papers dealing with the following themes:

- Relations between state and non-state security providers
- Appropriation of space, territoriality and social control for security provision
- Upholding or introducing new socially defined norms of discipline and behavior
- Intersectional approaches: gender, class, ethnicity and age perspectives of security provision and use of violence
- Markets of violence and economy of violence
- Discourses and narratives on 'legitimate violence'
- Methodological issues that arise in i.e. comparative case designs, data collection and access

Advocating an agency-informed perspective, we encourage to look at the following actors:

- Non-state security actors that substitute/support the role of the state in security provision without wanting to undermine the state (e.g. popular committees, vigilantes)
- Non-state security actors that want to challenge the state in spaces of limited statehood, or who seeks to rule where the state is unable to govern (e.g. militias such as Amal and Hezbollah in Lebanon; Shia militias in Iraq)
- Non-state (security) actors that may intend to destroy state structures in order to establish new ones (e.g. National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad, ISIS, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)

As the workshop intends to bring together scholarship in a transregional and interdisciplinary perspective, scholars working on regions 'outside' West Asia and North Africa will be present at the workshop as panel discussants. This shall deepen existing conceptual tools for the phenomena in question and perhaps allow for thinking new ones.

Submissions & Schedule

The workshop will be held on 26-27 November 2015 at the *Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies*, Marburg University. Abstracts (max. 500 words, plus short resume) should be submitted in English, elaborating on sources, outlining key questions, and methodology. Accepted panelists will be notified by 15 June 2015. Full papers shall be submitted by 31 October 2015.

Abstracts should be sent to *plachenal@mms.h.univ-aix.fr* and *soudias@uni-marburg.de* **by 22 May 2015.**

Funding

Travel and subsistence expenses will be covered.

Organizing Committee

Anne-Linda Amira Augustin (CNMS, Marburg University)

Prof. Dr. Thorsten Bonacker (Center for Conflict Studies, Marburg University)

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