

## MOULAY HICHAM BEN ABDALLAH

Moulay Hicham Foundation for Social Science Research on MENA

### BIO

Hicham Ben Abdallah received his B.A. in Politics in 1985 from Princeton University and his M.A. in Political Science from Stanford in 1997. His interest is in the politics of the transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

He has lectured in numerous universities and think tanks in North America and Europe. His work for the advancement of peace and conflict resolution has brought him to Kosovo as a special Assistant to Bernard Kouchner, and to Nigeria and Palestine as an election observer with the Carter Center. He has published in journals such *Le Monde*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *Pouvoirs*, *Le Débat*, *The Journal of Democracy*, *The New York Times*, *El Pais*, and *El Quds*.

In 2010 he has founded the Moulay Hicham Foundation which conducts social science research on the MENA region. He is also an entrepreneur with interests in agriculture, real estate, and renewable energies. His company, *Al Tayyar Energy*, has a number of clean energy projects in Asia and Europe.

PROFESSOR MOHAMMAD-MAHMOUD OULD MOHAMEDOU

Deputy Director and Academic Dean of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and Visiting Professor at the Graduate Institute, Geneva

### **Revisiting Transitology as Democratising Theory**

In the wake of the 'Arab Spring', contemporary analyses of democratisation processes have tended to be minimally historical and have lacked a comparative dimension. For all its insights (and shortcomings), the language of transitology has been eschewed, and scant attention paid to it both by actors in the region and observers alike. The research and insights gathered from the 1960s to the 2000s on the transition processes in Latin America, South-western Europe, Southeast Asia and Eastern and Central Europe are, however, highly relevant to contemporary transformations in the Middle East and North Africa to understand the complex charting of courses towards democracy, including the role and place of the media. The absence of an ideal type, universally-downloadable transition process is not in and of itself a weakness of the category of transitology. What is more important, ultimately, is the resort to this area of social sciences as roadmap and benchmarking of democratic progress. The value of transitology is that it introduces scientific categories to understand layered societal developments, back-and-forth institutionalisation dynamics, and the (re)building of politics.

### BIO

Dr Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou is Deputy Director and Academic Dean at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and Visiting Professor in the International History and Development departments at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, as well as Visiting Professor in the doctoral school at Sciences Po Paris. He was previously Associate Director of the Harvard University Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research in Cambridge, former Foreign Minister of Mauritania, Director of Research of the International Council on Human Rights Policy, and Research Associate at the Ralph Bunche Institute at the United Nations in New York. He has published *Understanding Al Qaeda: The Transformation of War* (2008, 2011), *Contre-Croisade: Origines et Consequences du 11 Septembre* (2004, revised edition 2011), and *Iraq and the Second Gulf War: State-Building and Regime Security* (1998, 2002). He is completing a book on neo-authoritarian incursions in the civilian world and the novel forms of globalisation, and another on Transitology, based on a GCSP Report of the same name. He has contributed chapters to *Violent Non-State Actors in Contemporary World Politics* (2010), *Rethinking the Foreign Policies of the Global South — Seeking Conceptual Frameworks* (2003), and *Governance, and Democratization in the Middle East* (1998); and authored monographs and essays on democracy, foreign policy, terrorism, law, and conflict analysis. His research focuses on transnational terrorism, the transformation of warfare, transitions to democracy, and Middle Eastern and North African socio-political developments and contemporary conflicts.

PROFESSOR MICHAEL J. WILLIS

Director of the Middle East Centre, St Antony's College | University of Oxford |

### **Self-Conscious Exceptionalism? Tunisia's Ennahda Movement in Comparative Regional Perspective**

Much of the media and academic attention that Tunisia's transition has attracted has focused on the role played by the country's main Islamist movement, Ennahda, particularly after it became the largest political party in the National Constituent Assembly after elections in October 2011 and became the leading force in the interim government of 2011-13. The bulk of this attention has focused on the party's ideology, behaviour and interaction with other political actors and forces within Tunisia. Only a few studies comparing Ennahda with other Islamist movements in the region have begun to appear. This paper intends to address this issue not only by comparing Ennahda with other Islamist movements in North Africa but, more importantly, looking at how Ennahda has viewed the experiences of other Islamist movements and to what extent this has shaped its own trajectory. Of particular interest are the experiences of the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) in Algeria, the Party of Justice and Development (PJD) in Morocco and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Drawing notably on interviews with senior Ennahda figures since the 1990s, this paper shows that Ennahda has been very aware of these other experiences, has criticised and distanced itself from some of them and drawn positive lessons from other whilst always emphasising the uniqueness of the Tunisian context and thus Ennahda itself.

#### BIO

Professor Michael J. Willis is Director of the Middle East Centre at St Antony's College at the University of Oxford. Before coming to Oxford in 2004 he taught politics at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco for seven years. His research focuses on the politics, modern history and international relations of the central Maghreb. His most recent book is *Politics and Power in the Maghreb: Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco from Independence to the Arab Spring* (Hurst & Co and Oxford University Press, 2012) He is also author of *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History* (New York University Press 1997). He conducted research in Tunisia both before and after the revolution of 2011 with a particular focus on opposition to the Ben Ali regime.

DR. CORINNA MULLIN

Research Associate, Department of Politics and International Studies | School of  
Oriental and African Studies |

DR. IAN PATEL

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, International State Crime Initiative (ISCI), School of  
Law, | King's College London |

**Contesting Transitional Justice in Tunisia:  
Hegemonic Justice and Non-institutionalised Resistance**

This paper addresses transitional justice initiatives in Tunisia as they interact with revolutionary sentiment and commitment on the ground. Methodologically, it treats transitional justice as a site of contestation, involving transnational and domestic modes of power as well as non-institutionalised forms of resistance. Despite the myriad formal initiatory efforts, this paper will argue that Tunisia's institutionalised transitional justice process has thus far failed to achieve accountability for former regime abuses and transformative redress for victims. The paper critically assesses the mechanisms by which the transitional justice regime has come to establish itself in Tunisia as well as the various conflicts that have arisen between revolutionary and transitional justice imperatives as a result. Having "mapped" transitional justice initiatives in Tunisia, this paper concludes by considering acts of resistance and critique of transitional justice by various non-institutionalised actors, in particular as expressed in the new media sphere.

BIOS

Dr Corinna Mullin is a visiting Assistant Professor of International Relations at the University of Tunis as well as a Research Associate in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). She has researched and published extensively on the causes and implications of the 'Arab spring' uprisings, focusing in particular on international dimensions.

Dr Ian Patel is Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the International State Crime Initiative (ISCI), School of Law, King's College London. His research interests include constitutionalism and critical approaches to national security law.

PROFESSOR GEORGE JOFFÉ  
Research Fellow, POLIS, CIRMENA | University of Cambridge |

### **Government-Media Relations in Tunisia: A Paradigm Shift?**

The removal of the Ben Ali regime from power in Tunisia raised a series of fundamental questions relating to the future role and structure of the country's media. The need for a new structural relationship with government was accompanied by changes in patterns of ownership and the development of a new narrative about the function that the media were to fulfil. None of this occurred in isolation, however, and as new concepts of the place of media inside a pluralistic political scene emerged, government too had to adjust to new realities about its relationship with the media in a participatory political system in transition. The issues which this paper – and, indeed, this project – addresses are how these concepts have developed and have been translated into reality and why those processes have developed in the way that they have.

The learning processes involved have proved to be more difficult than at first imagined, especially for the government elected in October 2011. Quite apart from the issue of the media, the environment in which it has operated has become steadily more difficult – a factor which, of course, has had its reverberations, both on the media as such and on its relationship with government. The key events in this respect have been the election itself and the consequences of Ennahda's victory, the assassinations of two prominent political activists – Chokri Belaid in February 2012 and Mohamed Brahmi in July 2012 – and the Assembly's approval of Tunisia's new constitution in January 2014. Alongside these events and, of course, connected with them has been the worsening security environment caused by the growth in salafi-jihadi extremism and Tunisia's declining economic fortunes.

This has not, however, been the only problem. Perhaps the most difficult issue has been the way in which media-government relations have developed. It had been assumed by professionals in the press, television and radio that the media-to-government relationship experienced under the former regime, in which the media served as the obedient handmaiden to government, would be abandoned, to be replaced by a genuinely free communications and information space which would be automatically respected and encouraged by government as well. In reality, the new tripartite coalition government, dominated by Ennahda, quickly realised the utility and desirability of a media subservient to government behest and therefore proved to be singularly reluctant to undertake the structural and legal initiatives necessary to preserve proper freedom of information and communication.

Thus, rather than creating an autonomous public media sector for radio and television, it retained control by vesting them in the prime minister's office whilst those private sector companies formerly in the hands of the presidential Trabelsi family were vested in the ministry of finance. In effect, the new government troika interpreted its popular mandate as allowing it to exploit the media as its own vehicle for popularising its message. In short, it emulated practices of its predecessor by justifying such action as an entitlement of government. In reality, by acting in this way, it revealed its own inexperience and anxieties about media freedom, and its fears over the dissemination of opposition to its

actions and ideological views. It was also clear that the arbitrary practices of authoritarian rule had not been eradicated and that the media were seen as a useful tool in a political struggle, rather than as an essential vehicle of public participation in the construction of a new political order in Tunisia.

## BIO

George Joffé teaches international relations of the Middle East and North Africa for the MPhil course at the Department of Politics and International Studies in the University of Cambridge. Previously he was the deputy-director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London. He also founded and is the co-editor of the *Journal of North African Studies*, the only peer-reviewed English-language journal on the North African region and the official journal of the American Institute of Maghrib Studies. His research interests include the modern history of North Africa and security issues in the Mediterranean.

FATIMA EL-ISSAWI

Research Fellow, Polis/Department of Media and Communications | LSE |

### **Regulatory media reform: The Tunisian experience: a successful example?**

Regulatory reform of Tunisia's national traditional media could be considered as an example of success within the context of the troubled political transitions in the so-called Arab spring countries. Regulatory reform has brought about significant changes within a media industry that used to be highly repressed and closed. However, reform remains fragile, prey to tough political pressure and polarization. In place of the security apparatus, the judiciary is playing a major role in media repression. In this paper, I will present a detailed analysis of Tunisia's media regulatory reform and the challenges it currently faces. I will draw a comparison with the media reform in the so called Arab Spring countries and which to a large extent are attempting to follow in the footsteps of Tunisia. Finally, I will investigate how these reforms are impacting the daily practices of Tunisian traditional journalists. The data used in this paper are based on fieldwork conducted within the project "Arab Revolutions: Media Revolutions" which investigates the changes in values and practices of traditional Arab journalists under political transitions.

### BIO

Fatima el-Issawi is a fellow at POLIS, the journalism and society think tank in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics (LSE). She is leading the research project on 'Arab revolutions: Media Revolutions' looking at the transformations in the Arab media industry under transitional political phases within the current uprisings. She has over 15 years of experience in covering the Middle East for international media outlets. She also works as an independent journalist, analyst and trainer in the Arab world.

DR. MARC JANSSEN  
Expert for the European Union

### **The building of independent media regulation in post-revolutionary Tunisia**

A year after its long postponed establishment, the HAICA, the independent media authority, has laid out the first foundations of effective media regulation in Tunisia. Within a contentious political and media environment, the HAICA faces the simultaneous struggles to educate all its stakeholders to the basic tenets of independent media regulation, to structure, discipline and organize a media landscape still in transition, and to consolidate its own legitimacy. This presentation will address these three challenges, by setting them in their political and cultural context.

#### BIO

Marc Janssen earned a PhD in political science at the University of California, Los Angeles - UCLA in 2006. He received his BA at the Université Libre de Bruxelles in Journalism & Communication and his MA in political science at the Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs at Syracuse University, New York. He has been a Teaching Fellow at UCLA, the Center for American Politics and Public Policy in Washington, DC and at the University of Kent – Brussels School of International Studies. His areas of research and teaching were institutional politics, political rhetoric, constitutional theory and democratic governance.

His professional experience includes the French department of the BBC World Service in London and the Democratic National Committee in Washington, DC. He was spokesperson and a senior advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium from 1994 to 1999, overseeing the communication department. Member of the Board of the Belgian Public Radio and Television (RTBF) from 2004 to 2007, he was appointed, at the end of 2007, for a five-year term to the presidency of the CSA, the regulatory authority for television and radio in French-speaking Belgium. He was, from 2011 to 2012, president of the REFRAM, the network of media authorities from 27 members of the Francophonie.

He is now a consultant at Wagner-Hatfield, based in Brussels, specializing in media regulation, law and policy.

ALEXIS ARTAUD de la FERRIERE

PhD Candidate, Education Department | University of Cambridge |

DR. NARSEO VALLINA-RODRIGUEZ

International Computer Science Institute - | UC Berkeley |

### **The scissors and the magnifying glass: Internet governance in the transitional Tunisian context**

As the importance of online media content grows in Tunisia, and as internet infrastructure increasingly supplants or overlaps with traditional telecommunication systems, the issue of internet governance has become a key component in understanding the media environment. This study investigates the structures undergirding the governance of the internet within the context of political transition in Tunisia. These structures are identified as legal, institutional and architectural.

Legally, we consider the co-existence of texts voted under the previous regime which limit online freedoms with recent broad guarantees in favour of free speech and personal data protection voted under the new constitution. De jure and de facto, what powers does the Tunisian state retain for litigation against speech, mass surveillance and censorship?

Institutionally, we consider the evolving role of state agencies and the particular nature of private-public partnerships in this domain. We aim to analyse the obligations of ISP's towards the state in order to maintain their operating licences, and the conflictual relationship between state offices - especially between the semi-private ATI, the newly-emergent ATT, and the Ministries of Technology and Interior.

Finally, we look at network architecture. This is the underlying structure that allows the internet to function: the physical support, functional organisation and configuration, principles and procedures. While the form of such architecture remains largely invisible to most internet users, whose connections are mediated by user interfaces; it is a key feature of how a public or private body can govern online territories within its borders. Bruno Latour (1988) describes the shaping of such networks as "politics by other means", and the policy implications of this technical side of the internet for free speech and surveillance has been analysed by numerous scholars. (Musiani, 2013; Lessig, 1999; DeNardis, 2009).

The combined functions of these three structural levels (which are not necessarily coordinated) regulate the entire online landscape within the country including what users can see and do, how responsibilities and rights are distributed, and how economic activities are coordinated. Crucially, these three levels also influence each other. Analytic approaches which focus on one to the neglect of the others not only miss crucial elements of internet regulation, but also ignore the intrinsically holistic structure of the internet. Since the mid-1990s the Tunisian internet has also been characterised by functional differentiation: the presence of a network of functionally distinct subsystems (Wagner, 2011). This allows the overall system to better respond to variations in the environment, but also reflects a wider strategy of governance compartmentalisation established under the Ben Ali regime, which devolves responsibility and accountability away from the central government while also incapacitating individual offices from amassing enough power to act autonomously from other nodes in the system.

## BIOS

Alexis Artaud de la Ferrière is a final-year PhD Candidate in the Education Department at the University of Cambridge, and Associate Researcher, field research, for the Cambridge-Al-Jazeera Media project – the case of Tunisia.

His PhD examines the political position of teachers during the War of Independence in Algeria. His work in Tunisia focuses on the structure of internet freedom since the ouster of Ben Ali, including regulation, public access and surveillance, and issues of security. He is a member of Darwin College, and an associate doctoral fellow at the Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain in Tunis.

Narseo Vallina-Rodriguez has been a PhD student in the Computer Laboratory, at the University of Cambridge under the supervision of Professor Jon Crowcroft since February 2009. In 2012, he was awarded with a Qualcomm Innovation Fellowship. He is a member of the Networks and Operating Systems group, which is a subdivision of the Systems Research Group, and member of Fitzwilliam College, in which he is an active member of the graduate community holding different positions in the MCR committee between 2010 and 2012. His research is mainly focused on mobile systems optimizations (see related work) but he is also involved on Signpost project.

He obtained a B.S./M.S. in Telecommunication Engineering from the University of Oviedo, Spain, in 2007. His M.S. Thesis was completed at the University of Cambridge as a visitor student working on Huggle Project (August 2006-February 2007), also under the supervision of Professor Jon Crowcroft. His work in Huggle was awarded with Honors Mentions by the University of Oviedo.

After graduating in 2007, he moved to Barcelona as an intern in Telefonica Internet Research Group with Dr. Pablo Rodriguez where he was working on IPTV performance on Wi-Fi and Multipath Video Streaming for 10 months. After that experience, he joined Vodafone R&D (UK) with David Pollington in the Devices Team working on Intelligent Services design.

He also completed an internship at Deutsche Telekom Labs, TU-Berlin, with Dr. Pan Hui. Between July 2011 and September 2011, and June 2012 to October 2012, he also completed two fruitful internships at Telefonica Research with Dina Papagiannaki and Yan Grunenberger.

DR. EZZEDDINE ABDELMOULA  
Manager of Research, Al-Jazeera Centre for Studies

### **Media and Political Change in the Arab Setting: A Critical Perspective**

The successive waves of democratization that swept the world in the last quarter of the twentieth century generated a vast amount of literature describing, analysing and investigating the prospects of this global phenomenon. Different theoretical approaches emerged to explain the dynamics and processes of democratization in many parts of the world. Among the major narratives that shaped our understanding of the relationship between media and politics are: modernization, structuralism, and transition theories. A critical assessment of the literature on democratization shows that we are left with two significant gaps: First, there is a general tendency to ignore the Arab world, which remained largely under-researched. The very little attention that has been given to this region finds its roots in the wrong perception that this part of the world is exceptionally changeless (the Arab exception). Second, there is a complete silence on the role of the media in political change. For, the media have always been seen as an integral part of political systems within which they operate. Regardless of the nature and structure of political systems, the function of the media is to consolidate and preserve them.

This paper looks at the media-politics relationship in the context of the Arab spring, with special emphasis on the Tunisian case. It tries to develop an analytical framework to better understand the political transitions in the Arab setting, away from the tradition of the “Arab exceptionalism” and related terminology. This cannot be done without taking the growing role that the media have played during the protest movements and continue to play in the aftermath of the revolutions into account. In doing so, this contribution seeks to enrich and add new dimensions to the current debate on the changing relationship between media and politics in the Arab world.

#### BIO

Ezzeddine Abdelmoula, Manager of Research at Al Jazeera Centre for Studies. He holds a PhD in politics from Exeter University, a Master of International politics from SOAS, London University, and a Master of political philosophy from La Sorbonne, Paris. He edited *The Al Jazeera Decade* book (2006); *Academic Research on Al Jazeera: a guide for PhDs, Masers & books 1996-2012*; and translated “The Al Jazeera Effect” into Arabic (2010). Abdelmoula’s research papers and book chapters include: “The Western Perspective on Modernity”, *Islamiyatul Ma’arifah* (1996); “A Non-systemic Approach to the Media-politics Relationship in the Arab World”, *Journal of US-China Public Administration* (2011); “The Role of the Media in Tunisia’s Revolution, in *The Tunisian Revolution: Causes, Contexts and Challenges* (2012); “Al-Jazeera & Televised Revolution: The Case of Tunisia”, in *The Handbook of the Arab Spring: Reflections on Democratization* (upcoming).

DR. ANNE ALEXANDER

Post-Doc, CRASSH/ Digital Humanities Network | University of Cambridge |

### **Revolution and counterrevolution in the Egyptian media: reflections in comparison with Tunisia**

This paper explores the impact of the 2011 Revolution on the media in Egypt from two perspectives. It analyses the struggles within media institutions to shape both the content of their output and the working practices of journalists and media workers, and the battle to change the media from outside by multiple actors within the wider revolutionary process, in particular the efforts of revolutionary activists to develop media organisations of their own as they encountered increasing hostility from the mainstream media organisations. I argue, however, that these contrasting perspectives need to be considered within a broader theoretical framework which breaks down mechanical dichotomies between 'state' and 'private' ownership and 'old' and 'new' media forms, and offer a series of potential comparisons and contrasts with the post-revolutionary media environment in Tunisia.

BIO

Anne Alexander is the co-ordinator of the Cambridge Digital Humanities Network, a network of researchers at the University of Cambridge who are interested in how the use of digital tools is transforming scholarship in the humanities and social sciences. This transformation spans both the content and practice of humanities research, as the diffusion of digital technologies opens up new fields of study and generates research questions which breach traditional disciplinary boundaries.

DR. LUISA GANDOLFO

Faculty Member, Department of Sociology, | University of Aberdeen |

**'Spect-acting' the Revolution: Artifying Tunisian Political Discourses**

*'Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society.*

*Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.'*

- Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (1992), p. 5

The union of art and politics presents two halves of one whole that shares a purpose: resistance and recollection. In the context of the Tunisian revolution, the memory of what has occurred in both the present uprising, as well as in the interim decades since independence in 1956 has shaped aspirations for the Tunisia that will emerge from the revolution. When the uprising commenced in 2010, Tunisia was at the forefront of the cultural resistance discourse: the rap of El Général was joined by cartoons, dance, theatre, street theatre and street art, which afforded a medium through which to conduct the political discourse on an artistic level.

The significance of the cultural medium is measurable through the state response: from the arrest of musicians such as Klay BBJ and Weld El-15 in 2013, the destruction of exhibits by artists such as Nadia Jelassi and Mohamed Ben Slama in 2012, and the response to the viral clips featuring *The Harlem Shake and Happy (We Are From...)* in 2013, the cultural suffuses the political and vice versa,

as the dialogue leaves the online medium and is represented on the walls and streets, and the spectators become 'spect-actors.' In the case of dance, the impetus emerges from unease that little has changed and the performance represents a physical and nuanced area of contestation between secularists and the conservatives, as exhibited during the March 2012 performance of 'Art Solution'

on Avenue Habib Bourguiba by Bahri Ben Yahmed, who was informed that 'the streets do not belong to you anymore.' Utilizing the theories of Halbwachs, Geertz, Turner and Boal, this paper will explore the representation of resistance, revolution and shifting identities through the medium of contemporary artistic practices in Tunisia.

BIO

Luisa Gandolfo completed her MLitt in Middle East Security at the University of Aberdeen and Ph.D. in Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter. To date, her research has focused on faith, socioeconomic change, and national and political identities in Jordan, Israel/Palestine and Tunisia. Currently, Luisa is engaged in research concerning the religious and cultural aspects of conflict and peace-building in Palestine/Israel.

FABIO MERONE  
PhD Candidate | Ghent University |

### **Enduring class struggle: beyond Political Islam and the fight for identity**

As the constitution was voted and approved on January 2014, Tunisia seemed to have finally accomplished the transitional period toward a democratic political system. Three years had passed since the beginning of the Tunisian uprising, with different and sometimes conflicting outcomes. While the result of the constitutional process was a sign of radical change compared to the authoritarian path of the state-building, a sign of continuity is an ongoing degree of repression, especially since a new Islamic radicalism appeared. Like in the past, the main issue for democratization was if and how to deal with the emergence of Islamism. The traditional Islamic party (Nahda) accepted to play the game of the institutions and compromise with the opposition secular parties, accomplishing a long process of integration of a middle class excluded from power since independence. The process of urban revolt, though, in parallel with the liberalization of the public space gave birth to a new radical Islamic subject: Ansar al-Sharia. The way part of society and the political elite reacted to this phenomenon is similar to the way did act the Ben Ali's regime at the beginning of the nineties. Does the ideological struggle between Islamist and seculars hide a social class one? I argue that in order to be democratized, the process of state and nation-building must accept a degree of Islamization, through which society make sense of modernity. The salafization of certain areas of the country proves that a part of society is still excluded from participation. I highlight how the process of building up of the liberal institutions failed in including a part of the society, especially the ones belonging to the lower class. Salafism expressed a social frustration and indirectly shows how the issue of Islamism overlap with the broader issue of social inclusion/exclusion.

BIO

Fabio Merone is a PhD candidate at Ghent University doing research on the evolution of Islamism in Tunisian democratic transition; he has been based in Tunisia for over 10 years and is currently working with Dr Frederic Volpi (St Andrews University) on a project entitled, 'Tunisia as a 'secure state': Salafism and post-revolutionary politics in the aftermath of Arab authoritarianism.'

DR. ROXANE FARMANFARMAIAN

Principal Investigator, University of Cambridge-Al-Jazeera Centre for Studies Media Project, CIRMENA, Affiliated Lecturer, POLIS | University of Cambridge |

## **What is Private, What is Public, and Who Exercises Media Power in Tunisia? A hybrid- functional perspective.**

What is the function of the media in post-2011 Tunisia? As Tunisia undergoes a systemic socio-political change, this study aims to explore what role the media is playing in the process. Likewise, it sets out to determine how changes in the media sector itself can illuminate how the process of democratisation is proceeding in Tunisia. The media provides knowledge, message, and reach across a nation, and hence is a critical instrument of the political sphere. How have channels and papers inherited from the past adapted? How is 'public' now being defined? How is the sector changing its own professional practices in the face of a liberated public sphere, and how are media owners responding to market shifts and new faces in the government? These and other questions seeking to understand changes in Tunisia's 4th estate over the three years since President Ben Ali was ousted, will be analysed through the lens of hybrid theory. As the process of adapting past practices and institutions to new ideological aspirations takes place in Tunisia, hybrid theory offers a means to observe the multiple elements contributing to that process – seeing them as non-linear, intersecting, at times harmonious, and at others, interrupting democratic processes as competing elites – including government officials, political parties, media owners, international investors – attempt to capture state power. Breaking the post-revolution years into a transition and a transformation period provides a framework for analysing the evolution of four separate but related groupings within the media sector: the public (national radio, television, TAP; HAICA, and professional organizations including the Syndicate for Tunisian Journalists); the private (radio, television, web-magazines, production and advertising companies, rating agencies, print); the semi-public (previous media holdings of the Ben Ali family and associates seized and held by the government post-2011); and the professional journalism community. Analysis reveals that the development of the sector is reaching a critical stage, in which business and political elites are contesting idealist professional elite groups inside and outside the government, for control over media ethics, law and practice. The outcome of this contest will have significant impacts on Tunisia's ability to avoid a stage of static hybridity, and move toward full democracy – as genuine media liberty and democratic processes are highly correlated.

### BIO

Roxane Farmanfarmaian directs the University of Cambridge –Al-Jazeera Media Project and is Principal Investigator of the Media in Political Transition research programme. She is an affiliated lecturer at POLIS, where she teaches the International Relations of the Modern Middle East, Media, and Energy Security. She obtained her PhD in international and political studies from the University of Cambridge, as a Donner Scholar of Atlantic Relations, where she also received her MPhil; her BSc in Near East Studies was awarded by

Princeton University. She is the author of *Blood and Oil: A Prince's Memoir of Iran, From the Shah to the Ayatollah* (Random House 2005), and edited *War and Peace in Qajar Persia: Implications Past and Present* (Routledge 2008). She was editor of the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* from 2002-2005, and is a founding member of the Centre of International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa (CIRMENA). In 2012 she was the first Visiting Fellow to the Al-Jazeera Centre for Studies in Doha.

SAMAR SAMIR MEZGHANNI  
PhD Candidate, | University of Cambridge |

## **Media and Political Narrative in post-revolution Tunisia - Civil Society and Media Capacity Building: Partnerships reinforcing citizenship**

The new political, civic and social environment that the revolution has relatively brought in Tunisia opened spaces for ideas to be expressed and circulated with less governmental censorship. Media and civil society were two sectors facing oppression and control in the country for decades.

In the last three years, the growth and development of both sectors have been intertwined. The intersection between civil society work and the media sector in Tunisia is particularly salient in the function and role they recently started to play: media and civil society platforms and tools are now owned by citizens permitting them to report stories and make them. The audience, the producers and the reporters have moved to the public sphere where media and civil society organizations are monitoring, assessing and contributing to the political transition in the country. People, rather than a political icon such as Bourguiba or Ben Ali, became the headlines of newspaper stories, the TV and radio shows and the social media content. They became the message that media corporations and civil society organizations are trying to voice.

Several partnerships were therefore built between the two sectors in the last three years, making the lines between the two actors less obvious. Community radios, citizen journalism and blogging became popular practices in both institutions. The exchange of tools and ideas between media and civil society organizations is reinforced with shared capacity building programs where media corporations and CSOs merge efforts to reinforce citizenship.

The intersection between media and CSOs and the focus they both put on people as the producers, the actors, the consumers and the message are in the centre of a continuous negotiation of powers shifting to the public sphere.

### BIO

Samar Samir Mezghanni is a Tunisian writer with two records in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the youngest writer in the world in 2000 and the most prolific writer in the world in 2002. She has written over a100 short stories for children and published 14 books. Some of her stories were turned into a TV program for children produced in Cairo.

Samar has received awards and certifications for her work from different Princes and Presidents foundations and associations. She was classified as one of the most influential Arab women in 2013 and one of the most important young leaders in the Arab region in 2012. She is a member of various International and regional NGOs and on the Arab Thought Foundation Advisory Board. She worked with the British Council and the United Nations as a consultant on civil society and youth programs.

Samar obtained a Masters in Communication and Culture at the University of Birmingham and is now a PhD candidate in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge.

RORY McCARTHY

DPhil candidate Oriental Studies, St Antony's College | University of Oxford |

### **Ennahda, free speech and the protection of the sacred**

Since the 2011 uprising Tunisian citizens have been jailed for what they have said, written and sung in what became a crisis of free speech. Many among the Tunisian elite held the Islamist movement Ennahda responsible for seeking to impose an ideological constraint on society. Ennahda claims its commitment to democracy and to freedoms have been reinforced by the two decades of repression it suffered under the Ben Ali regime.

Yet simultaneously the movement articulates clear limits to the freedom of expression, in the name of protecting the 'sacred'. This paper argues the protection of the sacred and the defence of an Arab-Islamic identity have become the key pillars for an Islamist movement that is undergoing an awkward evolution in the democratic context of the new Tunisia while trying to maintain the unity of a movement made up of diverse opinions.

Ennahda's political project is ambiguous and seeks to marry a commitment to democracy with a recasting of Islamic norms as cultural values. Key elements of this project are now enshrined in Tunisia's new constitution.

### BIO

Rory McCarthy is researching a DPhil at Oxford University on Islamist activism in Tunisia. He has published in the *Journal of North African Studies* on Tunisian secularism and is the author of a book on the Iraq war, *Nobody Told Us We Are Defeated: Stories from the New Iraq*.

CYRINE AMOR  
PhD Candidate, | Goldsmith University |

### **Social media in transitional Tunisia: A new information landscape?**

The common framing of new media as source of radical social and political change has been challenging traditional conceptualizations within media studies over recent years. The intensely publicised role of social media at the onset of the Arab uprisings has served to support at times overly linear perspectives on the relationship between media, technology and socio-political change. The debate on the role of social media in countries such as Tunisia and Egypt at the beginning of the revolution has been scrutinised in detail, although not necessarily fully resolved. However, their contribution to the post-revolution context has been a less prominent feature in relation to a rather ambiguous picture that the subsequent phase in some of these countries may depict. This paper aims to contextualise the role of social media during the highly politicised transitional period in Tunisia. It is based on research undertaken as part of a doctoral thesis on social media use in Tunisia in 2011-2013, with specific focus on social networking site Facebook. The study combines qualitative and quantitative elements of online research and in-depth interviews with a sample of thirty social media users. The paper presents some of the research findings from this study and assesses the new communicative opportunities provided by social media to citizens in their everyday media practices. Whilst these unquestionably exist, the nature of the change they can be understood to contribute to, needs to be better qualified and framed. The presentation focuses in particular on the information landscape during the transitional period, from the perspective of 'ordinary' social media users. It asks what individuals make of the opportunities to inform themselves and form their opinions on issues of socio-political relevance, and whether networked media's participative opportunities may be altering what is traditionally understood as audience.

### BIO

Cyrine Amor is an Associate Lecturer and AHRC-funded PhD candidate at the Department of Media and Communications, Goldsmiths (University of London). Her thesis centres on everyday social media practices in the post-revolution context of Tunisia. She is interested in the implications of new media for an understanding of 'ordinary' citizens' power in relation to socio-political change, and how mediated boundaries between private and public, individual autonomy and group authority, are negotiated in different cultural settings. Before joining the academic world, Cyrine worked in script development at the UK Film Council, and as media researcher and analyst at Screen Digest. She holds a BA in Film & Video from the London College of Communications (University of the Arts London) and MA in Media & Communications from Goldsmiths.

ZOE PETKANAS

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### **Women, Politics, and Media since the Revolution**

Until 2011, there was only one public image of women in Tunisia, defined by characteristics perceived by Bourguiba and Ben Ali to embody the modern Tunisian state. Secular, visible, and economically and politically productive, the Tunisian woman was upheld as the standard of female emancipation and empowerment in the MENA region. But this image was a product of careful and relentless state manipulation and machination, and then instrumentalized to achieve the state's political goals. Using state-initiated legislation, Bourguiba and Ben Ali forged scripts of nation and state building on women's bodies, cloaked in the vaunted language of emancipation. Access to public life, and the ability to exercise political and civil rights, insofar as they existed within heavily managed spaces, was predicated on conformity to this image. Those who fell outside of it, namely Islamist women were politically and publicly marginalized.

The uprisings of 2011 lifted the lid of authoritarianism, dissolving the repressive mechanism that had supported the artificial political space engineered by the state. The introduction of political pluralism allowed for the re-emergence of Islamism as a political force alongside a number of other political ideologies. Out of this process came the democratization of the public view of women, revealing multiple public conceptions of Tunisian femaleness, embodied most presciently by the forceful presence of *Nahdhawia* female politicians in the Constituent Assembly.

Gender has featured heavily in the social and political discourse since 2011. It became a litmus test for political parties and figures to prove their commitment to 'progressivism', and featured as the dividing line between conservative and progressive, Islamist and secular. This dynamic has a historicity in Tunisian politics, as women have repeatedly been utilized as repositories of national identity in the name of state consolidation.

These political shifts were accompanied by equally seismic changes in the media, as it too democratized in the wake of the collapse of a controlling authoritarian state. The proliferation of form and content within the media provided platforms for previously hidden perspectives. The emergence of talk shows in particular allows for open and public debate about the changing nature of the new Tunisian state and a popularly conceptualized Tunisian identity. This paper will explore the ways that historical paradigms of gender and political identity feature in this new form of televised media, through subversion, reinforcement, and embodiment of these norms.

### BIO

Zoe Petkanas is a PhD candidate in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge, working under the supervision of Professor George Joffé, as a Cambridge Overseas Trust Scholar. In 2012, she obtained a Master of Philosophy (Distinction) in International Relations from Cambridge as the George Washington University's Bender Fellow. Previously, she graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of

Arts in International Affairs, with a concentration in the Middle East and North Africa, and a minor in Political Science from the George Washington University. In the past, she has independently researched the barriers facing secular women in the 2011 Tunisian elections for the Constituent Assembly, microcredit and women's empowerment in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan as a George Gamow Research Fellow, and in establishing a new econometric definition of global ultra-poverty with the Institute of International Economics at the George Washington University. She has also worked as Director of New Media and Communications for a progressive American political organisation, as a research consultant for Microfund for Women, and with an organisation responsible for social service dissemination to urban Iraqi refugees in Jordan.

KAYLA BRANSON  
Risk Advisory Group

**Islamist cyber-activity: Contesting the message, redefining the public**

In this paper I argue that Islamist groups use social media as a counter-space to challenge the prevailing secular media narrative in Tunisia and redefine the public sphere. Since the 2011 uprising, these groups have brought Islam into the public and redefined a space previously circumscribed under the secular state project of the former regime.

While Islamists have increased their activism, the secular message remains dominant. This discursive marginalisation leaves many groups seen, but not heard, in the media. Drawing on the theories of Henri Lefebvre on space and contentious politics, I demonstrate how perceptions of media exclusion give rise to Islamist online activism. Semi-structured interviews with Islamist and Salafist activists and media professionals inform this analysis.

The Salafist Ansar al-Sharia movement serves as a case study to unpack the role cyber-activism plays in giving voice to the resistance and redefining the public. This case study examines how the Salafist current uses the Internet to challenge the narrative and mobilise on the ground. It goes even further to access how the ideology itself serves these ends.

This article also finds that Islamist activists' online contestation depends on the extent to which their ideology accepts, tolerates and navigates Tunisia's ever present secular political system. Contention is greatest where the disjuncture between public engagement and discursive marginalisation is strongest.

BIO

Kayla Branson is an Associate with The Risk Advisory Group where she focuses on political and security risk in North Africa. She holds an MSc in Middle East Politics with Distinction from the School of Oriental and African Studies and a BSc (Hons) from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service.

OMAR SAYFO  
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### **Web Animation as a Liberal Space for Political Criticism: the Case of 'Captain Khobza'**

Most probably as result of their assumed innocence and fictiveness, animated cartoons were a platform for social and to some extent political criticism in Ben Ali's Tunisia. 'Tunis 2050', a locally produced animated sitcom series which debuted in 2010, became one of the most popular productions in this regard. However, despite appearing on a private television channel, the makers of 'Tunis 2050' were wary not to cross any red lines that might provoke censorship.

In more recent times, however, modern forms of computer animation and increasing access to the Internet has liberalised both animation production and distribution, offering newcomers an opportunity to bypass traditional hierarchies in the media. Since the beginning of the uprising in Tunisia in e 2011, a significant number of individuals and small groups have become involved in producing web-based animated cartoons to reflect on local and regional tensions and to express criticism of politicians.

With more than 250.000 followers on Facebook, 'Captain Khobza' is one of the most significant projects in this regard. Atelier 216, the creative group behind 'Captain Khobza', has been narrating the political transitions in Tunisia since the beginning of the uprisings. After toppling Ben Ali, some of their short animations were also presented on Hannibal TV, creating a hybrid between online and offline media. Though 'Captain Khobza' is now shown exclusively online, it retains its popularity by releasing new episodes on a regular basis. The business model of Atelier 216, which is based on affiliations and collaboration with non-governmental organisations, continues to enable 'Captain Khobza' to remain a relatively liberal space for expressing political and social criticism.

#### BIO

Omar Adam Sayfo is a PhD student at Utrecht University and a Visiting Researcher at the Centre of Islamic Studies at Cambridge University. His main research field is media and politics in the Arab world. His current research focuses on identity politics in Arab animated cartoons. He is also a lecturer of media economics at the University of Debrecen (Hungary) and author of a number of popular articles on Arab media and politics.