

EWIS 2019 Call for Papers

International Political Economy and the Middle East: Beyond Mutual Neglect

Workshop Convenors:

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Much current literature predominantly studies the Middle East from a security perspective. Unfortunately, this tends to reproduce an image of the region as a 'basket case' of sorts, shifting our analytical efforts towards an examination of the essence of 'Middle Eastern exceptionalism'. There is thus surprisingly little that approaches the Middle East from an International Political Economy (IPE) perspective. As a result, the political economy of the region tends to be dominated by area studies scholars, who do not necessarily show much interest in wider IPE questions. Yet, because of its cross-cutting nature and its pluralist orientation, the field of IPE is in many respects the ideal ground on which a 'fertile academic Mesopotamia' might be built, as Valbjørn put it.

This workshop seeks to provide a forum for the emerging community of scholars who have been, directly or indirectly, challenging this mutual neglect between IPE and Middle East scholarship. It thus has two specular aims. On the one hand, it aims to 'de-orientalise' the Middle East within IPE, by showing how theoretical frameworks that have emerged within the latter can fruitfully be deployed to make sense of transformations and continuities in the region: from constructivist to feminist IPE, from institutionalist to post-structuralist approaches, from postcolonial theory to uneven and combined development. On the other hand, the workshop also seeks to 'provincialise' IPE, making it more sensitive to the specificities of each region, and to their relational nature. Such a move demands the abandonment of often Eurocentric assumptions concerning the spatially uniform effects of global phenomena, from international regimes to transnational corporations to globalisation.

We are interested in questions including, but not limited to, the following: How is the Gulf's increasing power projection transforming the global political economy? What does economic integration in the Arab Gulf, and its crisis, tell us about IPE theories of regionalism? How can everyday IPE capture the rise of consumerism throughout the Middle East? How can the region be integrated within the emerging non-Eurocentric histories of global capitalism?

Similarly, themes to be addressed might include, but also go beyond, the following:

- Beyond Eurocentrism: the Middle East and the histories of global capitalism
- The politics of numbers and the Middle East
- The sources of IPE theory: thinkers from the Middle East and their contributions
- Origin, transit and destination: the Middle East in global migratory flows
- Hubs, flows and infrastructures: the IPE of logistics in the contemporary Middle East
- The regional and global rise of the Gulf: the IPE of financialised oil
- Transnational solidarity after the Arab uprisings: the IPE of resistance in the Middle East
- International organisations in the Middle East: agents of neoliberal transformation, agents of authoritarian continuity?
- Foreign meddling: traditional and emerging powers in the IPE of the Middle East