

TRUMP AND THE MIDDLE EAST



**DEAKIN
UNIVERSITY
BURWOOD**
29 - 31 OCTOBER 2018

**MIDDLE EAST
STUDIES FORUM**



ADI
ALFRED DEAKIN INSTITUTE FOR
CITIZENSHIP AND GLOBALISATION

une
University of
New England

Donald Trump's presidency has added a new layer of complexity to the politics of the Middle East, and South and Central Asia. In withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal, moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem, defunding the UNRWA and endorsing Saudi efforts to isolate Qatar, the Trump administration has reversed key US policy conventions established in the region over decades. But many of these new threads in US politics are deeply familiar to the Middle East: as a bastion of populism and authoritarianism, the region is no stranger to erratic and populist leadership as well as large-scale public protest. It is in this context that the Middle East Studies Forum convenes its biannual conference in order to discuss recent developments and new trajectories in Middle Eastern and South Asian politics and International Relations.



Follow us on Twitter at @mesf_deakin.
The event hashtag is #trumpME

MESF is grateful to the School of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences at the University of New England for its generous support for the Religious Extremism in South Asia panels.



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HOUSEKEEPING

The conference will be held on Level Two of Building BC at Deakin University's Burwood campus. The building is at the Burwood Highway end of the campus, near tram stop 63 and Campus Entrance 2. See page 47 for a campus map.

The conference dinner (registration essential) will be held at Aghajoon Restaurant, 14 Burwood Hwy, Burwood at 6pm on Tuesday 30 October. The restaurant is a 5-10 minute tram ride from the university campus. Take the number 75 tram towards Docklands, and get off at Stop 58, Warrigal Rd.

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRS

The Middle East has witnessed critical changes in the recent past. Unfortunately, these have not been changes for the better. Well-entrenched fault lines have been further solidified and new ones have emerged.

Authoritarianism, a defining feature of politics in the region, has become even more pronounced. Ruling regimes appear to have taken the lesson of the Arab uprisings to heart and opted for brazen suppression of dissent, lest efforts to pacify dissent be seen as a sign of weakness. Nowhere is this trend more blatant than in Turkey. Once celebrated as a success story for the Muslim Middle East finding a balance between Islam and democracy, the sharp turn towards authoritarianism has presented practical and conceptual challenges.

Sectarianism has emerged as a serious destabilising force in the region. While sectarian tension is not new, its scope and reach throughout the region is a new phenomenon with significant implications for the way we conceive the region and also for policy makers. While Daesh, blamed widely for instigating sectarian conflict, may no longer be a viable fighting force in Syria, the fire of sectarian hatred it fanned has now spread widely. This is a new fault line with significant implications for the region, especially for a weak state such as Afghanistan, which is yet to recover from decades of conflict.

In inter-state relations, the new sectarian fault line reinforces the Saudi–Iran rivalry that dates back decades. This rivalry has become overt and venomous, overshadowing regional relations. The Saudi desire to isolate Iran has emerged as the priority concern for its foreign policy, overshadowing other concerns such as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. The

Saudi-Iran rivalry has opened the way for a Saudi-Israeli rapprochement and a redoubling of Iran's commitment to Hizbullah in Lebanon and other client partners in the region. The Saudi-Iran fault line has become ever more difficult to bridge.

Protracted conflicts have become a familiar feature as inter-state rivalries have been transposed onto civil conflicts. Wars in Syria and Yemen are fuelled by regional interests and intervention, resulting in a humanitarian crisis with no end in sight.

The Middle East is experiencing a tumultuous time under the watch of President Donald Trump. While the Trump presidency did not create the issues noted above, it has contributed to the intensity and speed of the downturn. President Trump's desire to undo the achievements of his predecessor led to significant policy reversals, including the withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal.

MESF is proud to be hosting this conference in association with the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (UNE) to explore the complexity and nuances of the many challenges facing the Middle East and South Asia.



*Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh
Chair, Organising Committee*

Religious extremism is amongst the most pertinent challenges to state and society in the contemporary world. While it is a global phenomenon and the subject of considerable academic scholarship and journalistic inquiry, in South Asia challenges posed by religious extremism manifest in decidedly different and deadly ways.

Whether in the form of suicide attacks led by the Taliban against the Shias and other religious minorities in Pakistan, mob lynchings of Muslims carried out by Hindu extremists in India, or rising Buddhist–Muslim clashes in Sri Lanka, few challenges divide communities, inspire radicalism, create violent conflict as fervently as religious extremism does throughout the region. The question is why? By hosting some of the latest research on these matters this conference aims to capture some of the answers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Brasted', with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end.

*Professor Howard Brasted,
Convenor, Violent Religious Extremism in
South Asia stream*

SCHEDULE

OCT 29: PhD WORKSHOP DAY 1

9:00 **REGISTRATION AND COFFEE**

9:30 **OPENING REMARKS** | North 1

Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, Deakin University

Dr Dara Conduit, Deakin University

9:45 **ALT-AC CAREERS: POLICY RESEARCH AND THE THINK-TANK WORLD** | North 1

Chair: Dr William Gourlay, Deakin University

Dr Adel Abdel Ghafar, Brookings Institution

10:45 **MORNING TEA**

11:15 **HOW SHOULD I CHOOSE WHERE TO PUBLISH?** | North 1

Chair: Dr Zahid Shahab Ahmed, Deakin University

Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, Deakin University

Dr Patrick-Jean Guay, Deakin University

12:00 **HOW TO TURN YOUR PHD INTO A BOOK** | North 1

Chair: Dr David Tittensor, Deakin University

Dr James Barry, Deakin University

Dr Dara Conduit, Deakin University

1:00 **LUNCH**

1:45 **CONCEPTUALISING AND DESIGNING NEW RESEARCH** | North 1

Chair: Dr James Barry, Deakin University

Professor Anita Weiss, University of Oregon

2:30 **SURVIVING THE PHD: TIPS AND TRICKS FROM RECENT GRADUATES** | North 1

Chair: Dr Dara Conduit, Deakin University

Dr Hanlie Booysen, Victoria University of Wellington

Dr Niamatullah Ibrahim, Deakin University

3:30

AFTERNOON TEA

4:00

PROFESSORIAL PANEL DISCUSSION: RESEARCHING THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA IN 2018: FUTURE DIRECTIONS | North 1

Chair: Professor Ihsan Yilmaz, Deakin University

Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, Deakin University

Professor Anita M. Weiss, University of Oregon

Professor Samina Yasmeen, University of Western Australia

5:00

WORKSHOP CLOSE

OCT 30: CONFERENCE DAY 2

8:30 **REGISTRATION AND COFFEE**

9:00 **OPENING REMARKS** | North 1

Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, Deputy Director (International) of the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Middle East Studies Forum Convenor

Professor Howard Brasted, Co-Director Asia-Pacific Centre, University of New England.

9:15 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS: END OF THE SPRING? THE DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST POST-ARAB SPRING** | North 1

Chair: Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, Deakin University

Professor Fethi Mansouri, Director, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation and UNESCO Chair, Comparative Research on Cultural Diversity and Social Justice

10:15 **MORNING TEA**

10:45 **PARALLEL SESSIONS 1 & 2**

PANEL 1: US FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST | North 1

Chair: Dr Rebecca Barlow, Deakin University

Dr Scott Burchill, Deakin University

Supporting Secularism or Radical Islam? US Foreign Policy towards the Middle East

Dr Ian Nelson, The University of Nottingham, Ningbo

Something New in the Offing, Or a Case of More is Less: Wilsonianism in the Trump Era

Sonia Qadir, University of New South Wales

Islamophobia, Trumpism and the End of Empire

Safiullah Taye, Deakin University

The US State-Building Letdown in Afghanistan

PANEL 2: VIOLENCE AND NON-STATE ACTORS | North 3

Chair: Dr Raihan Ismail, Australian National University

Samantha Kruber and Stephanie Carver, Monash University
Al Shabaab's Troubled Relationship with Foreign Fighters: Internal and External Determinants of Foreign Fighter Membership Patterns

Professor David Romano, Missouri State University
Sub-State Actors and Trump's Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Case of the Kurdish Forces in Iraq and Syria

Associate Professor Sarah Phillips, The University of Sydney
The Uncountable Cost of Trump's Air Wars

Associate Professor Mehmet Ozalp, Charles Sturt University
The Trump Card: Failure of US policy in Syria

12:45

LUNCH

1:30

PROJECT LAUNCH: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL ACTORS IN THE SYRIAN AND AFGHAN PROXY WARS (CARNEGIE CORPORATION) | North 1

Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, Dr Zahid Shahab Ahmed and Dr Dara Conduit

1:45

PLENARY SESSION AND OPENING OF THE VIOLENT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN SOUTH ASIA STREAM | North 1

FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN SOUTH ASIA: WHAT PROSPECTS EXIST FOR PEACEFUL RESOLUTION IN THE FUTURE?

Chair: Professor Samina Yasmeen, University of Western Australia

Professor Anita M. Weiss, University of Oregon

2:45

AFTERNOON TEA

3:00

PARALLEL SESSIONS 3,4 & 5

PANEL 3: THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT | North 3

Chair: Safiullah Taye, Deakin University

Samah Sabawi, Victoria University
Trump's Ultimate Deal and the Way Forward in Israel/Palestine

Anas Iqtait, Australian National University
The Fiscal Dimensions of the Palestinian Authority's Foreign Policy Response to Trump's Jerusalem Decision

Dr Binoy Kampmark, RMIT
Matters of Recognition: Donald Trump on Jerusalem

Dr Ihab Shalbak, University of Sydney
Donald Trump and the Palestinian Question

PANEL 4: AUTHORITARIANISM AND CONFLICT | North 1

Chair: A/Prof Sarah Phillips, University of Sydney

Marika Sosnowski, University of Melbourne

Diplomacy and Legitimacy: The Astana Ceasefire Negotiations and the Development of Rebel Governance in Syria

Dr Hanlie Booysen, Victoria University of Wellington

Qatar's Gamble on the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood

Associate Professor Hossein Esmaeili, Flinders University

Independent Judiciaries and their Relations to Democracy in the Middle East

Azadeh Davachi, Deakin University

Dilemmas of the Iranian Women's Movement in the Post-Trump time: Challenges, Obstacles and Strategies

PANEL 5: VIOLENT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN SOUTH ASIA 1 | Executive 1

Chair: Professor Howard Brasted, University of New England

Professor Samina Yasmeen, University of Western Australia

Comparing Narratives of Jamaatud Dawah

Shafi Mostafa, University of New England

Bangladesh: A Fertile Ground for Daesh's Recruitment

Felix Pal, Australian National University

Ram Was a Prophet Too: Religious Pluralism as a Technology of Hindu Nationalist Supremacy

5:00

DAY 1 CONFERENCE CLOSE

6:00

CONFERENCE DINNER, AGHAJOON RESTAURANT

14 Burwood Hwy, Burwood

Aghajoon restaurant is a 5-10-minute tram ride from the university campus. Take the number 75 tram towards Docklands, and alight at Stop 58, Warrigal Rd.

Note that pre-registration for the conference dinner is essential

OCT 31: CONFERENCE DAY 3

9:30

REGISTRATION AND COFFEE

10:00

MORNING TEA

10:30

PARALLEL SESSIONS 6 & 7

PANEL 6: THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST | North 3

Chair: Dr Ben Rich, Curtin University

Dr Kumuda Simpson, La Trobe University
Climate Change and Complex Insecurities in the Middle East

Mohsen Solhdoost, University of Queensland
Israel & Saudi Arabia, Strange Bedfellows

Dr Adel Abdel Ghafar, Brookings Institution
EU-Egypt Relations in an Age of Uncertainty

PANEL 7: IDENTITY POLITICS IN IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN | North 1

Chair: Associate Professor Benjamin Isakhan, Deakin University

Dr James Barry, Deakin University
Sunni Elites and the Politics of Identity in Iran

Dr Niamatullah Ibrahimi, Deakin University
Religion, Politics and Ethnic Identities in Afghanistan 2001-2017: The Case of Sunni Hazaras

Mahmoud Pargoo, Australian Catholic University
A disenchanted Islam: the outcome of the four decades of Islamization in Iran

12:00

LUNCH

12:45

BOOK LAUNCH: REMAKING THE MIDDLE EAST (PENGUIN) BY ANTHONY BUBALO

Launched by Dr Susan Carland, Monash University

Copies of Remaking the Middle East will be available for purchase during lunch on October 30 and 31

1:15

PARALLEL SESSIONS 8, 9 & 10

PANEL 8: CHANGE IN THE ARAB GULF STATES | North 3

Chair: Dr Dara Conduit, Deakin University

Dr Ben Rich, Curtin University

Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: The Best Defence is a Good Offence?

Dr Raihan Ismail, Australian National University

Transnational Networks of Salafi 'Ulama: Contestation and Cooperation

Dr Zainab Abdul-Nabi, The University of Sydney

Differences Between Al Jazeera Arabic and Al Jazeera English's Representation of Bahrain's Uprising

PANEL 9: THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICS IN LEBANON, SYRIA & IRAQ | North 1

Chair: Dr Sanaz Nasirpour, Deakin University

Yasmin Chilmeran, Monash University

Women's Civil Society Organising in Post-2003 Iraq

Firas Naji, University of Sydney

Post-ISIS Iraqi election results – new era or false dawn?

Radwan Ziadeh, Arab Center Washington DC

Trump's Syria Policy

Associate Professor Ben MacQueen, Monash University

Plus ça change? An Analysis of the Effects of Proportional Electoral Reform in Lebanon's 2018 Parliamentary Elections

PANEL 10: VIOLENT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN SOUTH ASIA 2 | South 1

Chair: Professor Samina Yasmeen, University of Western Australia

Dr Stuti Bhatnagar, University of Adelaide

Social Media and Hindu Extremism in India

Rebecca Devitt, Monash University

Buddhist Extremism, Social Media and Hate Speech in Sri Lanka

Imran Ahmed, University of New England

Religion, Extremism and the State in Pakistan: Colonial Continuities and Modern Paradoxes

2:45

AFTERNOON TEA

3:15

PARALLEL SESSIONS 11 & 12

PANEL 11: MIDDLE EASTERN MINORITIES, INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND ITS REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS | North 1

Chair: Scott Patton, University of Melbourne

Scott Patton, University of Melbourne

The Kurds and their Politics: Diasporic Interpretations of the Political Paradigm

Dr William Gourlay, Deakin University

From Kobane to Kirkuk: Minorities in Syria and Iraq between the US, ISIS and Regional Players.

Dr Costas Laoutides, Deakin University

External Involvement in the Kurdish Separatist Movements in Iraq and Iran

PANEL 12: VIOLENT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN SOUTH ASIA 3 | North 3

Chair: Dr Zahid Shahab Ahmed, Deakin University

Professor Anita M. Weiss, University of Oregon

The Potential of Non-State Actors to Counter Violent Extremism in Pakistan:
Innovative Efforts to Promote Interfaith Harmony and Understanding

Dr DB Subedi, University of the South Pacific

Religious Extremism and Neo-Nationalism in Sri Lanka: Perspectives on Buddhist-Muslim Relations and Co-Existence

4:45

CONFERENCE WRAP UP | North 1

Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh, Deakin University

5:00

CONFERENCE CLOSE

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Professor Fethi Mansouri

End of the Spring? The Democratic Challenge in the Middle East Post-Arab Spring

The Arab Spring defied Western theoretical assumptions that the Middle East was incapable of political change through popular uprisings. Seven years after the euphoria of these tectonic events, the current situation across the Middle East seems to suggest that the earlier discourse on the 'democratic deficit' across the region seems to have regained its stronghold on political analysis and media commentary. But as this paper will argue, to understand why the political events in various Arab Spring countries have unfolded in the divergent manners they did, we must account analytically for the socio-political conditions needed for successful transitions in post-revolution states.

The paper will focus on Tunisia as a case study where the political transition has thus far defied the odds (a progressive new constitution, a consensus approach to politics, and successful general elections at the local, legislative and presidential levels). Yet, nascent Tunisian democracy still faces serious challenges relating to ongoing political instability in the region, ideological struggles around transitional justice, economic problems, and difficulties in reforming some of the key institutions in particular around local governance, constitutional institutions and the sustainability of key social support funds.

Professor Mansouri holds the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Research on Cultural Diversity and Social Justice and an Alfred Deakin Research Chair in migration and intercultural studies. Professor Mansouri is the Director of the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University. He is the editor of the Journal of Intercultural Studies, founding editor-in-chief of the Journal of Citizenship and Globalisation Studies and founding co-editor of the International Journal of Social Inclusion. Since 2010, Professor Mansouri has been serving as an expert advisor to the UN on cultural diversity, and intercultural relations. He also sits on the advisory boards of various government agencies and NGOs including the Victorian State government and the Australian Intercultural Society respectively.

His recent books include The Multicultural Challenge (ed, 2015); Interculturalism at the Crossroads (ed, 2017); and Women and Migration (eds, 2017). Professor Mansouri's 2004 co-authored book Lives in Limbo: Voices of Refugees under Temporary Protection was short-listed for the 2004 Human Rights Medals and Awards.

Professor Anita M. Weiss

Foundations of Religious Extremism in South Asia: What Prospects Exist for Peaceful Resolution in the Future?

Extremism based on religious identity and religious fervour is not a new phenomenon in South Asia. While we can trace conflicts based on religious identity back hundreds of years, to make sense of how we might be able to exit from this pervasive quagmire of conflict in the subcontinent today, this paper focuses on Pakistan. It begins by looking at how the Pakistani state has sought to construct a Muslim identity so as to unify its population. This has had implications for its relations with India (i.e., the trope that Pakistan ‘must liberate’ Kashmir because they are Muslim brothers and sisters), the creation of Bangladesh and, most importantly, its own identity – what does it mean to be a citizen of Pakistan? The analysis also addresses how other countries of the Indian subcontinent are not without their own challenges of how religious extremism has wreaked havoc upon their societies including ‘safronization’ within India, the rise of religious extremism in Bangladesh, and the many migrants and displaced persons we see in South Asia who are outside of their countries of origin due to religious intolerance, including Muslim Rohingya victims of intolerance fleeing Myanmar into Bangladesh. This paper also addresses local efforts underway throughout Pakistan to build on identities that are based on ethnicity and other cultural values, not religion.

I argue that these kinds of activities will prove to be key in mediating the culture wars that religious extremism has fomented, and ultimately will contribute to prospects for peace not only within Pakistan but also between Pakistan and its South Asian

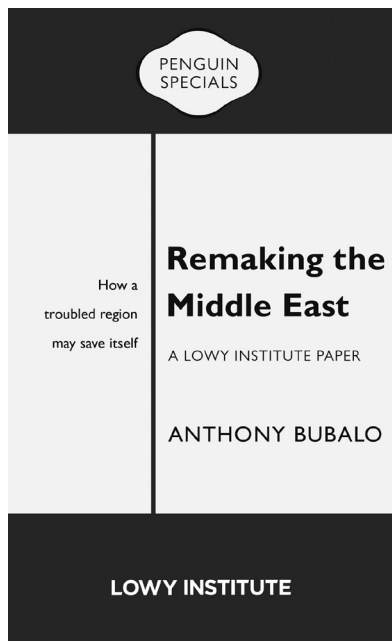
neighbours. Lived social realities exist today in South Asia somewhere between the different layers of religious extremism and violence on the one hand and ideals of tolerance and peace on the other. It is in recapturing South Asia’s syncretic identity that holds the greatest promise to bring people together and foment unity and shared values in the subcontinent.

Anita M. Weiss received her doctorate in sociology from UC Berkeley and is Professor of International Studies at the University of Oregon. She has published extensively on social development, gender issues, and political Islam in Pakistan.

Her recent books include Development Challenges Confronting Pakistan (co-edited with Saba Gul Khattak, Kumarian Press, 2013), Pathways to Power: the Domestic Politics of South Asia (co-edited with Arjun Guneratne, Rowman & Littlefield, 2014; South Asia edition published by Orient BlackSwan 2014) and Interpreting Islam, Modernity and Women’s Rights in Pakistan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; South Asia edition published by Orient BlackSwan, 2015), which analyses how distinct constituencies in Pakistan are grappling with articulating their views on women’s rights.

She has just returned from six months in Pakistan on a Harry Frank Guggenheim research fellowship conducting interviews for her current book project, Countering Violent Extremism in Pakistan: Local Actions, Local Voices. Professor Weiss is a member of the editorial board of Globalizations, has been a member of the Research Advisory Board of the Pakistan National Commission on the Status of Women, has been Treasurer and Vice President of the American Association of Pakistan Studies, and is on the Executive Committee of the Religion and International Relations as well as the IDSS sections of the International Studies Association. She recently stepped down, after seven years, from being Department Head of International Studies at the University of Oregon.

BOOK LAUNCH



Anthony Bubalo

Anthony Bubalo is a Principal at Nous Group working primarily in public policy consulting with a focus on national security. Before joining Nous, Anthony was a member of the founding staff of the Lowy Institute, establishing its Middle East program and publishing research on, among other things, linkages between the Middle East and Asia, Islamism, democratisation and terrorism. He went on to become the Institute's research director and deputy director. He remains a regular commentator on Middle Eastern politics and global affairs for the Australian and international media. Anthony was also an officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for 13 years. During that time, he served as a diplomat in Saudi Arabia and Israel, was an analyst with the Office of National Assessments, and was speechwriter to Australia's foreign and trade ministers.

Remaking the Middle East (Penguin/Lowy Institute, 2018)

By Anthony Bubalo

Launched by Dr Susan Carland

Not since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire has the Middle East been convulsed by so many events in such a short period of time. Uprisings, coups and wars have seen governments overthrown, hundreds of thousands killed, and millions displaced. Parts of the region have become ungoverned or ungovernable. Refugees and terrorists have become the Middle East's most noteworthy exports.

In *Remaking the Middle East*, Anthony Bubalo argues that the current turmoil is the result of the irrevocable decay of the *nizam* – the system by which most states in the modern region are ruled. But if you look hard enough it is possible to spot 'green shoots' of change that could remake the Middle East in ways that are more inclusive, more democratic, less corrupt and less violent. Such an outcome is not inevitable, but with so much commentary focused on what is going wrong in the region, it is also important to identify what may well go right.

Dr Susan Carland

Dr Susan Carland is an academic, author, and social commentator. She has a PhD from Monash University's School of Social Sciences, where she is the director of the Bachelor of Global Studies. Her first book, *Fighting Islam*, was published by Melbourne University Publishing in 2017. She has another book slated for publication by MUP in 2019, is co-editing a book for Brill and contributing to a book published by Springer, both to be published in 2019. In 2017, she presented on a panel at the United Nations in Geneva as a guest of The Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement. Susan hosts the SBS quiz show *Child Genius*, is a regular Friday panellist on ABC TV's *News Breakfast*, and hosted the ABC Radio National Series *Assumptions*. She has appeared on *7:30*, *Lateline*, *Q and A*, *The Project*, *The Drum*, *The Agony Series*, and *Home Delivery*.

HIGHLIGHTED PANELS

PANEL 8

CHANGE IN THE ARAB GULF STATES

The six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are currently undergoing a turbulent period of political and socio-economic transformation. Plunging oil prices have led to economic reforms focused on enhancing revenues, reducing subsidies and growing the private sector, notably without enhanced political representation. At the same time, some Gulf states are using their sovereign wealth to influence politics elsewhere in the region, including in Syria, Libya and Yemen. The 2017 diplomatic and economic boycott of GCC member Qatar and the rise of Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed Bin Salman have introduced a further element of unpredictability to the regional political climate in the Gulf. This panel will consider a number of current challenges facing the Arab Gulf states, including Sunni-Shi'a sectarianism, transnational Salafism, the rise of a more belligerent Saudi foreign policy and the continuing impact of the Arab uprisings.

Dr Ben Rich

Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: The Best Defence is a Good Offence?

In his presentation, Dr Ben Rich, a researcher of Saudi Arabian politics, will discuss recent developments in Saudi foreign policy and their wider implications for regional security. In particular, he will focus on the historically divergent bellicosity of the Salman administration under the auspices of Prince Mohammad Bin Salman. Of particular note have been a number of developments in the past three years, including the unprecedented GCC military intervention into Yemen, the artificially orchestrated Qatari diplomatic crisis, and the kidnapping of Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri. In each instance, the Saudis have displayed a worrying tendency towards recklessness that has generated numerous unforeseen and destabilising consequences for the Gulf region.

Biography

Dr Ben Rich focuses his research on Middle Eastern affairs, political violence and international relations. He researches Saudi affairs, military policy and power politics in the Persian Gulf, as well as a range of topics relating to terrorism and insurgency. Ben's most recent work is his book *Securitising Identity: The Case of Saudi Arabia* which looks at the Saudi state's

continual use of ultra-conservative religion as a tool for state legitimacy over the past four centuries.

Dr Raihan Ismail

Transnational Networks of Salafi 'Ulama: Contestation and Cooperation

Salafism has received scrutiny as the main ideological source for violent extremism propagated by jihadi groups. However, Salafism is not a monolith: it contains numerous streams. An understanding of all such streams is crucial to understanding the socio-political dynamics of Muslim societies that Salafism influences. Besides Salafi jihadis—those who sanction violence—there are two other broad trends of Salafism: quietist and activist. Quietist Salafis endorse an apolitical tradition. Activist Salafis advocate peaceful political change. Each stream is led by 'ulama, seen as the preservers of Salafi traditions.

The quietist and activist 'ulama are vigorous agents affecting Muslim societies in the Arab world. This paper analyses the transnational networks of Salafi Sunni Muslim 'ulama, encompassing principally Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It examines how these networks of conservative 'ulama have been developed and sustained, while taking into consideration the contest between their alternative political

persuasions: activists versus quietists. The paper evaluates the impacts of local and regional circumstances on the transnational Salafi 'ulama networks. It examines how these networks are fostered or destabilised by these interactions, resulting in contestations and negotiations over Salafi religious and political identities.

Biography

Dr Ismail is a lecturer at ANU's Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies. She is the co-adviser of CAIS's undergraduate program and teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses.

Her research interests include Islam, political Islam, Sunni-Shia relations, women in Islam and Middle East politics. Dr Ismail has presented at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, the Crawford Australian Leadership forum 'Global Realities' and the Canberra Writers Festival, as well as other academic and non-academic events. Dr Ismail has co-convened political Islam seminars series since 2015 for various government departments and agencies, including AGD and Defence. Dr Ismail is the author of *Saudi Clerics and Shia Islam*, published in 2016 by Oxford University Press. She is currently working on a book project on the transnational networks of Salafi clerics in Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Dr Zainab Abdul-Nabi

Differences Between Al Jazeera Arabic and Al Jazeera English's Representation of Bahrain's Uprising

This paper utilises framing theory and the Peace Journalism model as evaluative criteria to empirically analyse how Al Jazeera Arabic (AJA) and Al Jazeera English (AJE) covered Bahrain's uprising during the Saudi-led military intervention from March 14th to June 1st 2011. The quantitative findings conclude that the news stories and features of both channels were dominated by War Journalism framing. However, AJE presented Peace Journalism frames and characteristics more than AJA. This paper indicates that the absence and low percentages of Peace, People, Solution and Truth-Orientated frames in AJA have led to the promotion of sectarian narratives, representing Bahrain's protests as a special case that does not relate to the Arab Spring uprisings and neglecting protesters' peaceful means as well as their calls for unity between Shias and Sunnis. On the other hand, AJE's critical representation

of the Saudi military intervention and the moderate presence of Peace Journalism criteria in its coverage have made it stronger than AJA in challenging sectarian narratives and propaganda. This paper draws on the AJE-produced documentary film, *Shouting in the Dark* as a model that reflects how 'reflexivity' and Peace Journalism orientations are able to create a more accurate framing of the conflict.

Biography

Dr Abdul-Nabi completed her PhD in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney. Zainab's areas of expertise are interdisciplinary and include peace studies, Middle East politics, journalism and mass communication. She has published her latest research articles in the journals *Global Media and Communication*, *Arab Media & Society* and *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*. From 2014 onwards, Zainab has taught Arabic language, and journalism and media studies courses at the University of Sydney and University of New South Wales.

PANEL 11

MIDDLE EASTERN MINORITIES: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND ITS REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

CONVENER: SCOTT PATTON, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

This panel will explore the contemporary issues faced by the Kurds' and their associated minorities. From ISIS' attacks against the Yazidis to the 2017 Iraqi Kurd's independence referendum, local and international forces have deliberately and inadvertently exacerbated issues within the region. Scott's interviews with the Kurdish diaspora explore how the Kurds see their relationship with their representative political groups. By discovering what they believe to be the pros and cons of their assumed representation it is possible to determine what the Kurds perceive to be their greatest political strengths and weaknesses, locally and internationally. William will analyse how the US's support of minority groups has transformed them into non-state actors. He then looks at the US withdrawal from the region and how the larger state actors again took control and left the non-state actors in a precarious position. Finally, Costas analyses how the Kurdish autonomous movements in Iran and Iraq were influenced by external and regional powers. He will focus on the motives for the external actors' involvement, the influence of proxies during the Cold War to the formation of the Kurdish autonomous region, and their influence during the recent Kurdish independence referendum and the US's currently changing foreign policy.

Scott Patton

The Kurds and their Politics: Diasporic Interpretations of the Political Paradigm

To represent their interests, the Kurds organised political groups to address all their cultural and political grievances. While the plurality of political groups each claim to facilitate this objective and represent the will of the Kurds, their numerous disagreements highlight their ideological disparities, which frequently contradict each other and, subsequently, the actual demands and desires of the Kurds. As their ideological divide has grown, the wider international impact of the animosity between the groups has caused further consternation for the Kurdish community. The support, indifference, or vehemence the groups have faced are often a result of the complex nature of their internal relationships. To ascertain the levels of support these groups enjoy throughout the Kurdish diaspora, numerous interviews were conducted. After examining the common themes and arguments prevalent throughout

the interviews, the political groups' effectiveness and levels of support can be gauged. The results of this research make it possible to ascertain how accurate the political groups' claims are and how closely the Kurdish community's expectations of these groups align with the rhetoric of the groups. It also allows insight into how the Kurdish diaspora thinks the groups can improve to better represent their constituents.

Biography

Scott Patton is a third-year PhD candidate in the Asia Institute, The University of Melbourne. His research area is Middle Eastern studies, with a particular focus on ethno-nationalism and contemporary history. Scott's research is centred on Kurdish political groups, which includes their history, ideology, and their interactions with not only other Kurdish groups, but also other state-based political groups and organisations that impact these groups.

Dr William Gourlay

From Kobane to Kirkuk: Minorities in Syria and Iraq between the US, ISIS and Regional Players

In 2014, ISIS' atrocities against Yezidis in northern Iraq, and its advance on the Syrian-Kurdish enclave of Kobani, prodded the reluctant Obama administration into action in the Middle East. Using Kurdish fighters as proxies against ISIS saved the US from committing boots on the ground, but shifted the geopolitical terrain in favour of certain non-state actors in northern Syria and Iraq. This paper examines the emergence of Kurdish, Yezidi and Assyrian non-state actors in recent years and how they figure within US foreign policy. As state control diminished amid war and political disruption, Kurdish and other ethno-political actors capitalised on circumstances to advance their own causes and entrench their political projects during the international campaign against ISIS. Analysing these dynamics, this paper assesses whether these non-state actors were viewed by the US as proxies or as long-term allies. US support extended to military hardware but little political support. Regional states Turkey and Iraq have now reasserted their dominance at the expense of minorities – Yazidis in Sinjar and Kurds in Kirkuk – while the US has taken a back seat. The fate of minority political actors remains uncertain, subject to the vagaries of US policy in the region.

Biography

William Gourlay is a researcher at the Middle East Studies Forum at Deakin University and teaches politics and international relations at Monash University. His PhD at Monash examined notions of identity and citizenship among the Kurds of Turkey. His writing on politics in Iran and Turkey and on the Kurdish issue has appeared in academic journals, edited collections and a range of newspapers and websites. He has previously worked as a teacher, editor and journalist in the UK, Turkey and his native Melbourne.

Dr Costas Laoutides

External Involvement in the Kurdish Separatist Movements in Iraq and Iran

This paper analyses the external involvement of regional and major powers in Kurdish separatism in Iraq and Iran. It is argued that the Kurdish cause has been used as a proxy for clashes between international actors in the Middle East for a long period of time and the current situation resembles this historical trend. The paper is separated into three parts. Part One analytically distinguishes the motives of external involvement into instrumental reasons on the one hand and affective reasons on the other. Instrumental motives are international political considerations, short-term and long-term economic motives, domestic motives and short-term military gains. Affective involvement includes reasons of justice, humanitarian considerations, ethnic, religious or ideological affinity. Part Two, analyses the Kurdish struggle as a proxy during the Cold War and until the creation of the Iraqi Federal Government with reference to the involvement of major powers as well as regional actors. Part Three analyses recent developments in Kurdish separatism in Iraq and Iran in light of the 2017 referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan and well as the recent hardening of US foreign policy in the region.

Biography

Dr Costas Laoutides is a Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Deakin University. His research focuses on separatist conflicts and the relationship between causes and political accommodation. Drawing on comparative separatist case studies he investigates how political violence is invested with elements of collective identity and territoriality, thus transforming the dynamics of human relations within the conflict. He has published three books: *Self-Determination and Collective Responsibility in the Secessionist Struggle* (Routledge/Ashgate 2015), *Territorial Separatism in Global Politics: Causes, Outcomes and Resolution* (Routledge 2015, co-edited with Damien Kingsbury), and *Myanmar's 'Rohingya' Conflict* (Hurst/OUP 2018, co-authored with Anthony Ware).

ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

Dr Adel Abdel Ghafar

EU-Egypt Relations in an Age of Uncertainty

The US-led liberal international order is undergoing fundamental change with implications for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. President Trump's 'America First' rhetoric combined with inconsistent and shifting policy on the region has meant that MENA countries have increasingly looked to deepen their relationships with partners such as Russia, China and the EU. Egypt has sought to increase its economic and security engagement with the EU and other partners. In an increasingly chaotic Southern Mediterranean region, the EU has also looked to Egypt as a stable and reliable partner to cooperate on regional challenges. Based on a study conducted by the author for the European Parliament, this research examines some of the key drivers of EU-Egypt relations, and investigates its prospects and challenges over the next decades. The study argues that the EU's economic and security engagement with Egypt should not come at the expense of supporting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It also argues that EU programmatic assistance to Egypt should focus on youth, women, education, and entrepreneurship. Finally, the study also argues that the EU's engagement could be more successful if member states are more unified in their approach towards Egypt.

Biography

Dr. Adel Abdel Ghafar is fellow in the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution and at the Brookings Doha Center, where he was previously Acting Director of Research (2016–2017). He specializes in political economy and his research interests include state–society relations and socio-economic development in MENA. Dr. Abdel Ghafar has consulted for DFAT on political, economic, and security issues pertaining to MENA. He holds a Ph.D from the Australian National University. He is the author of *Egyptians in Revolt: The Political Economy of Labor and Student Mobilizations 1919–2011* (Routledge, 2016) and is the lead editor of *The Middle East: Revolution or Reform?* (Melbourne University Press, 2014). His commentary has been published in *The New York Times*, *Foreign Policy*, *Al Jazeera English*, and *Open Democracy*, among other outlets.

Anas Iqtait

The Fiscal Dimensions of the Palestinian Authority's Foreign Policy Response to Trump's Jerusalem Decision

President Trump's announcement of the United States' recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel sparked widespread international criticism and protest, but general approval in Israel. In response, the Palestinian Authority (PA) pushed to internationalize the moribund peace process by taking to the United Nations, and advocating for a multilateral international mechanism to replace the United States as the sole mediator. This paper explores the limitations of the PA's internationalization strategy by shifting the focus from Israel and international actors, to the PA's fiscal structure. By examining the evolution of the PA's fiscal skeleton, this paper sets the ground for exploring links between the PA's fiscal structure and foreign policy. Taking into account the absence of functional sovereignty, rentierism, and the PA's revenue generation record, the paper utilizes a theoretical framework of fiscal sociology and international relations theory. Findings highlight that aid and indirect taxes, that are collected and processed by Israel (clearance revenue) on behalf of the PA, represent on average 80 percent of the PA's total revenue. Furthermore, in recent years, a shifting fiscal dependency from aid toward clearance revenue and other indirect taxes controlled by Israel have dictated new parameters to the PA's internationalization strategy.

Biography

Anas Iqtait is a PhD Scholar at the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, Australian National University, where he also lectures on the political economy and business dynamics of the Middle East. His research focuses on the political economy of governance and international relations in the Arab World. He has worked previously in Palestine with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Oxfam, and the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and served as a Research Fellow at Birzeit University in 2017.

Professor Anita M. Weiss

The Potential of Non-State Actors to Counter Violent Extremism in Pakistan: Innovative Efforts to Promote Interfaith Harmony and Understanding

Violent extremism has manifested in myriad ways over the past decades in Pakistan. In response, the Pakistan state and military have sought to counter this extremism through different strategies. However, these have been fraught with problems, and the violence continues, sometimes escalating with such agitations as those by Khadim Hussain Rizvi and his Tehreek Labbaik Pakistan in November 2017. More importantly, many non-state actors are engaging in various kinds of social negotiations and actions to lessen the violence and recapture indigenous cultural identity and religious values.

This paper is part of a book project, *Countering Violent Extremism in Pakistan: Local Actions, Local Voices*, and addresses one of many local efforts currently underway to counter violent extremism in Pakistan. Based on ongoing research being conducted between 2017 and 2019, it focuses on innovative ways that religious leaders and practitioners, throughout the country, are promoting interfaith harmony and mobilizing their constituencies and others in these efforts. These include efforts to mobilize communities in the event of an attack, to educate communities about other faiths, to revise syllabi at madrasas and other religious schools. The paper also questions the impact such efforts are having on countering extremism in Pakistan.

Biography

Anita M. Weiss received her doctorate in sociology from UC Berkeley and is professor of International Studies at the University of Oregon. She has published extensively on social development, gender issues, and political Islam in Pakistan.

See page 15 for Professor Weiss' full bio and details of her keynote address

Dr Arshi Saleem Hashmi

Changing Dynamics of Religious Extremism: Rise of Religiously Motivated Urban Violence in India and Pakistan

Religiously motivated violence in the form of communal riots in India and sectarian violence in Pakistan has been a dominant factor inciting hate against the minorities. The new dynamic now being experienced is urban youth being mobilized in the name of religion. These youth are otherwise relatively educated, live in cities, practice religion and are professionals. These young "normal" people find motivation following their leaders and indulge in committing acts of violence against the "other". In India, with the rise of BJP under Modi and the political space that RSS Sanghis has acquired, has resulted in violent expression of their commitment to the cause of Hindutva. Pakistan on the other hand, while dealing militarily with the Taliban (who happen to be Deobandis), have ignored the fact that a larger population of urban youth following the Braelvi school of thought has managed to acquire social and political space. This has resulted in mass mobilization by the leaders of Sunni Braelvis in the cities in the name of the Prophet (PBUH). These young mobilized city-dwellers have proved to be extremely intolerant of other sects and minorities, particularly Ahmedis. In both countries, unlike old extremists, the new extremists prefer to participate in democratic politics, yet believe in violently convincing the other. This paper is significant for understanding the changing dynamics of extremism in both countries that are weakening the democratic order of the post-colonial South Asian states. It is also significant as the threat is within and unlike traditional India-Pakistan conflict, it endorses the ideological hardening that makes both states vulnerable to ideologically driven mass mobilization of young urban extremists, thus making it extremely difficult to establish peace in the region.

Biography

Dr Arshi Saleem Hashmi specializes in religion and violent conflicts, peace studies and conflict resolution. She is an Associate Professor and currently heads the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at National Defence University Islamabad. She has been South Asia Leadership Fellow for Counter Terrorism Studies at Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Yale World Fellow at Yale University, Kodikara Fellow and Rotary International Peace Fellow. Dr. Arshi is a member of Women without Borders (WwB) Vienna and its project Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE).

Azadeh Davachi

Dilemmas of the Iranian women's Movement in the Post-Trump Era : Challenges, Obstacles and Strategies

In May 2018 US President Donald Trump withdrew from the Iranian nuclear deal in the latest episode of the new president's wrecking-ball approach to the Middle East. This breaking of the deal with Tehran has rightly been much cause for alarm among scholars of the Middle East. One important question is how Iran will now adjust its approach to its internal challenges, including its social movements and activists.

In this paper I will argue that growing tensions in the region have empowered Iranian conservatives. As part of the ideological battle against Trump's US, Conservatives are likely to use the opportunity to target and exert greater pressure on the women's movement.

The paper therefore investigates the challenges and obstacles faced by the Iranian women's movement in the Trump era, proposing strategies to engage Iranian women actively in the social movement in order to curb the Conservatives' ability to suppress women and to take advantage of the tensions in the region. It concludes that Iranian women's rights activists must find strategies to reduce the risk of being marginalized and targeted as a result of regional and internal tensions.

Biography

Azadeh Davachi is a researcher and women's rights activist examining Australian-Iranian immigrant women at Deakin University. She has undertaken social and political activities since the late 1990s, including in the Islamic students' association, being a member of the One Million Signatures Campaign and a member of the Feminist School advisory board. I have written on the issue of women and gender in Iran in Persian and English in *BBC Persian*, *Radio Zamaneh*, *Shahrvand*, *New Vision*, *Eureka Street*, *OpenDemocracy* and *The Conversation*. She is currently a member of the Iranian women's movement museum advisory board and the Victorian Green's women's network. She has published four books including two collections of poetry and two collections of articles, all in Persian.

Associate Professor Ben MacQueen Plus ça change? An Analysis of the Effects of Proportional Electoral Reform in Lebanon's 2018 Parliamentary Elections

The May 2018 parliamentary elections in Lebanon were touted as a landmark moment, not only because of the return of voting after nearly a decade of political paralysis, but also due to the introduction of a new proportional electoral law (Law No. 44). This new law, supported by the majority of Lebanon's major parties, was hailed as key to overcoming the political gridlock through a move from bloc vote plurality to proportional representation. In addition, it was seen as a panacea to the dominance of Lebanon's establishment parties and families.

However, this paper will argue that Law No. 44 does not represent a fundamental, or even substantive, change to the Lebanese electoral system. Instead, it serves to further perpetuate the elite cartel model of governance that has defined the country's politics since independence. Through an analysis of voting patterns and results as well as electoral financing, this paper will highlight the continuing patterns of exclusion of new parties and candidates, and the further reification of politics in Lebanon around the six establishment parties.

Biography

Associate Professor Benjamin MacQueen is Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations at Monash University.

Dr Ben Rich

Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: The Best Defence is a Good Offence?

See pages 18-19 for panel details

Dr Binoy Kampmark

Matters of Recognition: Donald Trump on Jerusalem

This paper considers the US policy on recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the opening of the US embassy on the occasion of the establishment of the State of Israel. More importantly, it examines the way in which the Trump administration engaged the subject in opening the embassy, noting areas of contention and policy imperatives, as well as the timing of the move in relation to Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Iran nuclear file announcement. US congressional debates leading up to the issue of recognition, and Trump's own specific response to the issue, are also considered, suggesting that the picture, as ever, is more complex than it seems.

Biography

Dr. Binoy Kampmark lectures in the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, RMIT University, is contributing editor to *CounterPunch* and former Commonwealth Scholar, Selwyn College, Cambridge.

Dr Costas Laoutides

External Involvement in the Kurdish Separatist Movements in Iraq and Iran

See pages 20-21 for panel details

Dr DB Subeidi

Religious Extremism and Neo-Nationalism in Sri Lanka: Perspectives on Buddhist-Muslim Relations and Co-Existence

Sri Lanka's transition from civil war to peace has been conflated with the rise of religious extremism and neo-nationalism. Buddhism is the dominant religion in Sri Lanka with about 70 percent of the population following Theravada Buddhism, followed by 16 percent Hinduism, eight percent Islam and about eight percent Christian. While Sinhala Buddhism was favoured by the state in the past when the "Sinhala Only Act" of 1956 made Sinhala the official language of the country, there has been a forceful resurgence of Buddhist religious nationalism, which has been inherently violent. The recent rise of radical and, at times, violent religious movements led by Buddhist organisations, including Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), has resulted in racial and faith-based hatred and violence primarily against Muslims but also Christian minority communities. Focusing on the resurgence of Sinhala Buddhist ideology and contentious political mobilisation in Sri Lanka, this paper critically examines why and under what circumstances countries emerging from armed conflicts experience the rise of religious extremism and neo-nationalist discourse and what impact it will have on inter-religious co-existence. The findings presented in this paper are drawn from interviews conducted in northern and eastern Sri Lanka between March and June 2018.

Biography

DB Subeidi has a PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of New England, Australia. Currently, he is a Lecturer in the School of Government, Development and International Studies at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. His research interest focuses on state—society relationships, with particular focus on dynamics of radicalisation, violent extremism, social cohesion and peace in South and South East Asia. His recent publications include *Combatants to Civilians* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) and *Reconciliation in Conflict-Affected Communities* (co-edited work), (Springer Publication, 2018).

Professor David Romano

Sub-State Actors and Trump's Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Case of the Kurdish Forces in Iraq and Syria

At the time of his election, many Kurds appeared surprisingly optimistic regarding President Trump and his new administration. They appeared to hope that a President expressly intending to upend "the establishment", "international conventions" and "the status quo," might likewise prove willing to upend longstanding American policy towards the establishment of one or more independent Kurdish states.

To what extent and under which possible scenarios might a Trump-led United States significantly break with past US policies towards the Kurds? How would support for Kurdish aspirations in one part of Kurdistan impact policies towards the other parts of Kurdistan and the states these areas are located in?

Biography

David Romano holds the Thomas G. Strong Chair in Middle East Politics at Missouri State University. His work has appeared in journals such as *International Affairs*, *The Oxford Journal of Refugee Studies*, *Third World Quarterly*, *International Studies Perspectives*, *The Middle East Journal*, *Middle East Policy* and *Ethnopolitics*. He is the author of *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement* (Cambridge University Press, 2006—also translated into Turkish and Persian) and the editor, along with Mehmet Gurses, of *Conflict, Democratization and the Kurdish Issue in the Middle East* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). He writes a weekly political column for *Rudaw*, an Iraqi Kurdish newspaper. Dr. Romano was also the recipient of the 2015 Missouri Governor's award for teaching.

Felix Pal

Ram Was a Prophet Too: Religious Pluralism as a Technology of Hindu Nationalist Supremacy

In the twilight of the twentieth century communal violence in India began to acquire a sharpened political salience. In response, social scientists sought to emphasise the syncretic character of many Indian intercommunal interactions. Highlighting sharing and synthesis within folk religious traditions, these scholars rejected the communal logic fast colouring Indian public debate. While a powerful rebuke to communal antagonism, this work has not explored how syncretism can also be a tool of division. Who syncretises? Who is syncretised? How does Indian syncretism reflect power differentials between Hindu and Muslim communities? In this paper, I argue that syncretic discourses can be shrewdly manufactured by instrumentalist political brokers seeking to publically legitimise communal activities. Drawing on my fieldwork in New Delhi with the Muslim Rashtriya Manch, the Muslim wing of the militantly Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), I explore how religious syncretism can operate in the service of violent religious extremists. By examining how the RSS promotes Islamisation of Hindu nationalist theology among Manch members, I critique the uncritical placement of religious extremism within orthodox religious traditions. When we question this placement, we can begin to realise the reactionary and conservative potential of religious syncretism in India.

Biography

Felix Pal commenced his PhD candidature in the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University in 2017. He is currently based in New Delhi, conducting fieldwork for his dissertation. In 2015 he completed a BA (Islamic Studies) at the University of Melbourne, and in 2016 a BA (Hons) (Asia Pacific Studies) at the Australian National University. Felix's current research asks why Indian Muslims join the Hindu nationalist movement. More broadly his research interests revolve around diverse contemporary Muslim responses to resurgent Hindu nationalism in India.

Firas Naji

Post-ISIS Iraqi election results – new era or false dawn?

In June 2014, one-third of Iraqi territory – including Mosul, Iraq's second largest city – fell under ISIS control, which represented a major threat to Iraq's existence as a united nation-state. However, despite ending this threat and taking measures against the ramifications of the Kurdistan referendum for independence in October 2017, serious challenges still overshadow Iraq's future. Iraq remains a contested field for the Saudi-Iranian regional rivalry, and for the looming conflict between Israel and Iran, especially following Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. This paper analyses the results of the 2018 Iraqi election, as an indicator of which pathway Iraq is heading towards: ethno-sectarianism or strengthening its overarching national identity. Selections of media interviews with political leaders of the main election coalitions representing the main communal and cross-communal groups, are analysed using discourse analysis in relation to their national sentiments. The election results indicate significant breaches of the ethno-sectarian political framework that dominated the Iraqi political scene since 2003. The election results of the examined political alliances are interpreted to detect the future directions of Iraq's internal dynamics, and the regional implications of these dynamics.

Biography

Firas Naji is a Master of Art (Research) candidate in the Department of Arabic Language & Cultures at the University of Sydney. He is currently in final stages of writing his thesis entitled "Partners in the Homeland – Communal Diversity, Cultural Hegemony and National Identity in Iraq 1958-1963". He presented a paper entitled "Iraq from the Sykes-Picot Agreement to ISIS- A Critical Postcolonial Perspective" to the 2016 The Future of the Middle East conference at Deakin University, and another paper (in Arabic) entitled "Post ISIS Iraq – A Conflict Over Identity or Conflict of Identities?" submitted in 2017 to a conference organised by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies of the University of Baghdad.

Dr Hanlie Booysen

Qatar's Gamble on the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood

Why did Qatar support the opposition Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (SMB) in the Syrian uprising? Existing literature describes Qatar's foreign policy as a textbook example of hedging, i.e. to pursue opposing positions in order to reduce risk. However, hedging does not adequately explain Qatar's significant support for the SMB in the early stages of the Syrian uprising. Another possible explanation might be that Qatar and the SMB share a similar worldview. However, though Qatar supports the SMB, the MB in Egypt, and Hamas in Palestine, Qatar does not share in these movements' revivalist interpretation of Islam. In contrast, Qatar shares in Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi doctrine. In the proposed paper, I will argue that Qatar acted as a rational political actor in its support for the SMB. In doing so, I will show that Qatar, as president of the Arab League, succeeded in rallying Arab support for actions against Libya and Syria that resonated with the Western-led international community, and that (for a limited time) the SMB succeeded in presenting its moderate policy on governance as a plausible alternative to Bashar al-Asad's one-party state.

Biography

Hanlie Booysen has a PhD in Religious Studies from Victoria University of Wellington. Her dissertation explains the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood's moderate political platform, against the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. In her former career as a South African diplomat, Hanlie served in Jordan (1993-1997), Palestine (2000-2004), and Syria (2009-2012). Other research interests are: the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Political Islam, and the Arab uprisings. Hanlie lives in Plimmerton, New Zealand.

Associate Professor Hossein Esmaeili

Independent Judiciaries and their Relations to Democracy in the Middle East

Establishing and promoting the rule of law and democracy in the Middle East has been an ongoing strategy within and outside the Middle East for many decades. One important element of the rule of law, as well as a democratic system in any country, is an independent judiciary where the rights of people are protected and the power of the government is confined to the constitution and the legal system. In countries based on a democracy, in Europe, Australia, and elsewhere, independent judiciaries protect the rule of law against political pressures. In most Middle Eastern countries, there is no well-established and effective judicial system to protect civil rights and to control political powers and pressures. There are, however, working legal systems, separation of power to some degree, and some important theoretical bases for independent judiciaries.

This paper will first analyse the importance of independent judiciaries in systems based on the rule of law and democracy. This paper will then review the status of judicial independence in the Middle East, particularly in major countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey. It will be suggested that the tradition of independence of the institution of law and the independence of judicial systems and judges must be promoted in the Middle East in order to establish effective legal systems based on the rule of law.

Biography

Hossein Esmaeili, LLB (University of Tehran) MA in Criminal Law and Criminology (Tarbiat Modares University/Tehran), LLM (UNSW), PhD (UNSW), is an Associate Professor of Law at Flinders University. He has previously taught at the Universities of New South Wales, New England and Western Sydney. His key teaching interests include International Law, Property Law, Equity and Trusts, Immigration and Refugee Law, and Islamic Law. He has published extensively on Islamic and Middle Eastern law. His latest book is *The Rule of Law, Freedom of Expression and Islamic Law* (co-authored with Irmgard Marboe and Javaid Rehman, Hart Publishing 2017).

Dr Ian Nelson

Something New in the Offing, or a Case of More is Less: Wilsonianism in the Trump Era

President Barack Obama's decision to abstain from UNSC Resolution 2334 (23 December 2016) marked a turning point in American diplomacy towards the Middle East. Not only did Washington's stance effectively reiterate the validity of UN Res 242 (1967) —centrally, the illegality of the Israeli occupation and settlement building in the territories captured during the Six-Day War,— it also appeared to constitute a departure from the customary trilateralist negotiating template —bilateral Arab-Israeli talks, unilaterally overseen by the US— characterising peace efforts since the Camp David summit hosted by Jimmy Carter in 1978.

This paper argues that these developments, enacted on the eve of the transition of power from Obama to the president-elect, Donald Trump (a figure already touched by controversy after a presidential campaign promise to move the American embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem), have not only laid down the foreign policy-making gauntlet for the incoming Republican administration, but also defined the changing political contours of US identity towards the Middle Eastern region. Moreover, the paper explores how the US shift might be perceived in the historical framework of Woodrow Wilson when compared with the directness of Trump by its global allies and opponents alike.

Biography

Dr Ian Nelson is an Assistant Professor in Transnational History and Politics, School of International Studies, The University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China. After taking a BA (Hons) in Social Policy and Administration, and an MA in International Relations at The University of Nottingham, he was awarded a PhD at Durham University (Ustinov College), School of Government and International Affairs, the Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. Before moving to China, he taught at The University of Nottingham, United Kingdom.

Dr Ihab Shalbak

Donald Trump and the Palestinian Question

Upon his election Donald Trump announced his ambitious initiative, the Deal of the Century, to solve the Palestine/Israel conflict once and for all. Although the parameters of Trump's deal are not clearly discernible, the geopolitical shifts in the region made it possible for his administration to exercise the utmost pressure on the Palestinians to force them to accept whatever is on offer. In this context, even the usually compliant Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas called Trump's deal 'the slap of the century.' In this paper, I look at the implications of, and reactions to, Trump's two major decisions in relation to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict: the decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem and the cutting of funding to UNRWA. I argue that the two decisions aim to dissolve the Palestinian question rather than solve it. In this sense the decisions are a continuation of a long history of failed attempts to diminish and side-step the Palestinian people. In the current instance, the bluntness of Trump's approach, combined with the changing geopolitical circumstances, have undercut the normative and conceptual framework that has underpinned Palestinian political moves since the early 1970s. The question that remains is, will the American pressure drive the Palestinians to come up with their own creative solutions, as they did in their successive uprisings, or drive them to despair?

Biography:

Dr Ihab Shalbak is a Visiting Research Fellow and lectures in human rights and social justice at the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Sydney. Previously Ihab worked as a senior research and policy officer at the Race Discrimination Unit of the Australian Human Rights Commission. Ihab completed his PhD 'The Birth of Think Tank: Theory, History and Politics in the Long American Century' at the University of New South Wales in 2015.

Imran Ahmed

Religion, Extremism and the State in Pakistan: Colonial Continuities and Modern Paradoxes

The growth of religious intolerance and violence in Pakistan is pre-eminently seen as the outcome of the cynical political manipulation of Islam in response to domestic, international and regional factors during the dictatorship of General Zia ul Haq. This paper proposes an alternative perspective. It suggests that the origins of religious extremism in Pakistan has colonial foundations. It argues that colonial rule reconstructed religion for the management and control of the modern state and that this process of reconstruction has continued unabated in postcolonial Pakistan. Religious conflict, sectarianism, the formation of exclusivist communal identities, and the rise of religious nationalism were all hallmarks of colonial India and the outcome of British policies of divide and rule. This paper suggests that little has changed and that religious extremism in postcolonial Pakistan has been the result of the maintenance of colonial assumptions about religion and the continuity of the same state technologies to manage religion.

Biography

Imran is a PhD candidate in History at the University of New England. His research interests lie in the study of religion and politics in Pakistan. He has published articles on the constitutional politics of Islam in Pakistan in journals such as *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* and *The Round Table: Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*.

Dr James Barry

Sunni Elites and the Politics of Identity in Iran

The Sunni population of Iran is geographically dispersed and ethnically diverse. However, since the 1990s, a number of political entrepreneurs have attempted to create a Sunni bloc in the Iranian parliament to lobby for Sunni causes. These MPs have primarily, but not exclusively, been of Kurdish origin, although they have directly tried to reach out to other Sunni groups, particularly Turkmen, Baluch and Lari people. In this way, they have tried to create a sense of Sunni-ness that crosses ethnic, geographic, class and religious differences. The Iranian government has approached this movement with caution, at times arresting its activists when they are deemed to cross red lines, while at other times placing heavy restrictions on its members. In this paper, I will examine the phenomenon through three main case studies: the activism of former MP Jalal Jalalizadeh, and the unofficial spiritual leadership of Maulavi Abdolhamid Esmailzahi, and the discourse around the growth of Salafism in some Sunni districts.

Biography

James Barry, PhD, is an Associate Research Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute of Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University. Barry is an anthropologist specialising in ethnic and religious identity in Iran. His book, *Armenian Christians in Iran: Ethnicity, Religion and Identity in the Islamic Republic* was recently published by Cambridge University Press. He is currently working with the Chair of Islamic Studies at the Alfred Deakin Institute, and has published research in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Third World Quarterly*, *Iranian Studies* and the *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*.

Dr Kumuda Simpson

Climate Change and Complex Insecurities in the Middle East

Since the 2011 Arab uprising, there has been an increased interest in examining how climate change may affect the Middle East region. The World Bank has declared the region one of the most vulnerable to drought and rising temperatures. Energy security will be a key issue, with some predicting a decline in fossil fuel demand over the next decades. Likewise states in the region face severe water scarcity, dependency on agricultural imports, political corruption and authoritarianism, a youth bulge and rising youth unemployment, civil wars, terrorism, and geopolitical tensions.

This paper will argue that climate change effects must be included in risk assessments of the region in the coming decades, presenting unique challenges for the Trump Administration. The lack of a clear US strategy when it comes to the region, and President Trump's denial of climate change, suggest that these risks will not be given adequate attention. This has troubling implications as energy security, food and water security, and political and social stability are all interconnected. Each of these systems in the Middle East region is under increasing strain and a failure or collapse in any one system could have a cascade effect across the region.

Biography:

Dr Kumuda Simpson is a lecturer in International Relations in the Department of Politics and Philosophy at La Trobe University, Melbourne. She has published on a range of issues, including American politics and regional security issues in the Middle East. Her book *America's Nuclear Diplomacy with Iran* was published in 2015. She is currently working on a second book, which looks at the security implications of global climate change. She is a regular commentator on ABC Radio and local radio stations, and a regular columnist for *The Conversation* and the Lowy Institute's *The Interpreter*.

Mahmoud Pargoo

A disenchanting Islam: the outcome of the four decades of Islamization in Iran

The Islamic revolution in Iran was a reaction to secularization of the Shah regime and an attempt at de-secularization of the society and the state. After four decades of striving towards an Islamic polity, however, the Islamic state in Iran has given rise to an Islam that is secular at its foundations. Ontologically, it is based on a world without God and His intervention. Its universe has the same entities as other secular conceptions of the world. The natural and material forces are the master drivers of the world and casualty is understood scientifically. At the end of the chain of casualty there is only a deistic ultimate cause. No supernatural entities are considered 'really' instrumental in the nature and thus, they are not accounted for in the everyday calculations and planning of the state. This cosmology is purely materialistic and worldly. In this paper, I will argue how the revolution has unexpectedly given rise to this secular worldview and helped to undo the old conceptions of an active, all-encompassing, and omnipotent God by focusing on the theories of the most important thinker of the revolution Murtaza Motahhari.

Biography

Currently a PhD candidate at Institute for Social Justice (Australian Catholic University), Mahmoud Pargoo works on the intersection of Shia fiqh and secularization in Iran in his thesis titled "Paradoxes of secularization and Islamization: the case of post-revolutionary Iran". Mahmoud has been a lecturer at University of Sydney teaching "Islam and Democracy in the Muslim World" and his most recent academic paper is published in *Islam and Muslim and Christian Relations* (2017) titled "Expansion and Contraction of Scripture: The Ritual (Im)purity of Unbelievers According to Shī'a jurisprudence". His in-depth comments on current affairs of the Middle East have been published in Washington-based *Al-Monitor* and *Lobellog*.

Marika Sosnowski

Diplomacy and Legitimacy: The Astana Ceasefire Negotiations and the Development of Rebel Governance in Syria

The emerging literature in the field of rebel governance offers many interesting insights into how and why armed groups with statebuilding aspirations use violence, develop institutions of governance and seek legitimacy through diplomacy. While notable research has discussed many important aspects of rebel diplomacy and legitimacy, scholars working in this field have not yet focused on the knock-on effects that the involvement of armed rebel groups in ceasefire negotiations has on their legitimacy and the ramifications of this for local governance efforts. This article fills this gap by examining how the 2017 Astana negotiations for a ceasefire in Syria affected the legitimacy of a number of rebel groups. Focusing on the dynamics of the negotiation process that led to the announcement of four de-escalation zones, the project draws on interviews with members of Syrian opposition groups involved in negotiations, literature in the field of rebel governance and diplomacy, policy documents and media reports. I argue that for armed groups with statebuilding aspirations, ceasefires signed in international fora such as Astana offer an important opportunity to insert themselves into international politics and the state-based system. However, perceived international legitimacy can also create ruptures between groups at the local level thereby influencing their use of violence against each other and civilians as well as the development of governance structures.

Biography

Marika Sosnowski is a PhD candidate in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne and an admitted lawyer. Her research, with Dr Bart Klem, looks at how ceasefires impact wartime social order, with a particular focus on Syria. Over the past five years, she has worked as a researcher on a number of development projects in the Middle East including with communities in northern Syria that aimed to engage local council, police and judicial actors. She has also written about the region for numerous publications and is a regular media commentator.

Associate Professor Mehmet Ozalp **The Trump Card: Failure of US Policy in Syria**

Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the United States, and by extension Western policy on Syria, was tentative, unclear and seemed to change course over the course of seven-year conflict. Their primary counterpart, Russia on the other hand has followed an open and consistent policy: declare Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime the legitimate government of Syria, always support his regime to ensure it doesn't collapse, and morally justify its involvement as a struggle against terrorism. Under Barack Obama's administration, the US consistently stayed out of direct involvement in the Syrian conflict. Busy with the Iraq exit, Obama missed the window of diplomatic opportunity in the crucial early months of the Syrian uprising in 2011. When violence started, Obama elected to provide limited military support to opposition groups, hoping they could muster enough power to dismantle Assad without success. Trump opted for a more active policy but restricted it to the elimination of ISIS in Syria and supporting Kurdish YPG forces. Yet in April 2018 Trump declared US would pull out of Syria. This paper will chart the series of events and the US actions and announcements related to Syria to uncover US policy shifts and uncertainties in Syria before and during Trump era.

Biography

Associate Professor Mehmet Ozalp is one of the most prominent Muslim community leaders in Australia. He is a scholar, public intellectual, community leader and author serving the community since 1992. He is an Associate Professor of Islamic studies and the Director of the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation which he founded at Charles Sturt University. He is the founder and Executive Director of ISRA (Islamic Sciences and Research Academy of Australia). Under his leadership ISRA pioneered teaching Islam as a faith tradition at the tertiary level with Islamic studies courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Mohsen Solhdoost **Israel & Saudi Arabia, Strange Bedfellows**

Israel and Saudi Arabia (KSA) have had no official diplomatic relations since the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948. KSA not only participated in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973, but also refused to recognize the state of Israel, continued backing Palestinian rights to sovereignty, and demanded Israel's withdraw from all Arab territories occupied in 1967. In 2009, KSA rejected US pleas to improve ties with Israel, reiterating that the core issues: "the border of a future Palestinian state, the fate of refugees, water disputes and the future of Jerusalem" must be fully resolved as preconditions. Despite unfulfilled preconditions, the two states disclosed the onset of diplomatic linkages in 2015. The growing alignment of two unlikely allies, endorsed by the Trump administration, begs the question: what put the two enemies on the path towards alliance? In this paper, I use Role Theory and the method of narrative analysis to examine how KSA and Israel, the two members of a dyad (ego-alter), continued to stay in a conflictual relation before 2015 sudden reorientation. Then I argue that the strategic interaction in the process of role location created a limited state of détente between KSA and Israel, hence their reorientation.

Biography

Mohsen Solhdoost is a PhD candidate in the School of Political Science and International Studies at University of Queensland. His dissertation aims to explore why states create or contribute to the evolution of non-state armed groups when there is a high likelihood that there will be some blowback issues.

Having completed his undergraduate studies in Iran, Mohsen participated in postgraduate programs on IR at UN University in Japan (2008), Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Transformation (2009), and Fordham University in USA (2010). He also completed an MA in Literature (2012) and an MA in International Relations (2013).

Dr Niamatullah Ibrahim

Religion, Politics and Ethnic Identities in Afghanistan 2001-2017: The Case of Sunni Hazaras

Since the 2001 US-led military intervention, Afghanistan has experienced an upsurge in old and new forms of identity politics. While the country continues to be seen either through the prism of colonial-era tribal and conservative politics or more recent conceptions of power rivalries among the country's major ethnic groups, smaller ethno-cultural groups have also embarked on processes of redefining their collective identities, challenging the dominant narratives and categories and creating new forms of collective identities and belongings.

This paper will seek to shed light on this process through a detailed study of an ongoing effort at redefinition of a new ethno-religious identity: the Sunni Hazaras of Afghanistan. Focusing on the National Council of the Sunni Hazaras of Afghanistan, it will explore how a new generation of activists seek to carve out a new identity between the predominantly Shia and historically-marginalised Hazaras on the one hand, and the predominantly Sunni and Farsi speaking Tajiks, on the other. Drawing on extended field work and interviews with Sunni Hazara activists, the paper will explore how the roles of religion, language, and myths of origin change as markers of collective identities as they interact with broader processes of institutional and social change in contemporary Afghanistan.

Biography

Niamatullah Ibrahim is an Associate Research Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation of the Deakin University. He has recently completed his PhD at the Australian National University and is the author of *The Hazaras and the Afghan State: Rebellion, Exclusion and Struggle for Recognition* (London: Hurst & Co. 2017), and a number of other articles, research papers and book chapters.

Radwan Ziadeh

Trump's Syria Policy

Former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's speech at Stanford University in January 2018 outlined US policy toward the Syrian war. He indicated that Washington is not contemplating a military withdrawal from Syria. Defense Secretary James Mattis had indicated earlier too that the US cannot repeat prior mistakes it made in Iraq. But weeks later and soon after Tillerson's firing, Trump announced that he will withdraw his troops from Syria, signalling disarray in Trump's policy on Syria. This applies too to his decision to strike the Syrian regime after the use of chemical weapons in Idlib in 2017 and then in Douma in April 2018, when Trump undertook a limited response twice but did not appear to see the need for a strategy in Syria. Tillerson's speech seemed no more than a wishlist.

The current administration does not seem to understand the negative repercussions from the absence of a comprehensive strategy, past and present. The US decision to focus on defeating IS has neglected the need for a political solution, the US approach of arming and supporting the YPG may allow the Kurds to try to secede, which, in turn, would lead to the dismemberment of the country. This contradicts the administration's stated goal of preserving Syria's unity and territorial integrity.

Biography

Radwan Ziadeh is a senior analyst at the Arab Center – Washington D.C, founder and director of the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies in Syria (www.dchrs.org); and co-founder and executive director of the Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Washington, D.C (www.scps.org). Since the Syrian uprising started on March 15, 2011 he has been involved in documenting ongoing human rights violations in Syria, including testifying at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva twice and in front of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission in the US Congress.

Dr Raihan Ismail

Transnational Networks of Salafi 'Ulama: Contestation and Cooperation

See pages 18-19 for panel details

Rebecca Devitt

Buddhist Extremism, Social Media and Hate Speech in Sri Lanka

This paper will examine the resurgence of Sinhalese Buddhist extremist groups in Sri Lanka and how these groups exploit social media to spread Islamophobia and incite violence. Recent attacks against Muslim minorities in the towns of Kandy and Ampara were triggered in part by hate-speech-filled social media posts spread by groups such as Bodu Bala Sena (otherwise known as BBS or Buddhist Power Force). Since the end of the Sri Lankan Civil War in 2009 there has been an increase in support for Sinhalese Buddhist extremist groups who have targeted Muslim minorities. Groups such as BBS have adopted the rhetoric and language of the global anti-Muslim movement which has gained increased momentum in South Asia.

Debate around the place that Sinhala Buddhism holds within Sri Lanka and the fears that it is under threat by Muslim minorities is at the heart of understanding the recent attacks and the rise in popularity of groups such as BBS. Sinhala-Buddhist extremist groups such as BBS have large followings on Facebook and recent polling results in the 2015 parliamentary elections in which the BBS political wing received a small proportion of the vote suggests that such groups are gaining mainstream appeal and consolidating political influence. The spread of an anti-Muslim narrative through social media platforms is a fairly new phenomenon and this paper seeks to explore the motivations for this institutionalised Islamophobia by examining how social media has been weaponised by groups such as BBS and Sinhala Ravaya.

Biography

Rebecca Devitt holds a Masters of International Relations and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Melbourne. Rebecca has a research interest in the rise of Buddhist Extremism and Hate Speech in South Asia with a focus on Sri Lanka and Myanmar and will be presenting a paper titled 'Nationalism, Race and Religion in Myanmar' at the International Political Science World Congress in July 2018. Rebecca has previous work experience in international relations, and American and Australian politics, and currently teaches in International Relations at Monash University. Rebecca has previously taught American and Australian politics at ACU and the University of Melbourne.

Safullah Taye

The US State Building Letdown in Afghanistan

Using two forms of input and output legitimacy, this paper examines the United States' state-building approach in Afghanistan following the 2001 intervention. The sitting government in Kabul, which was established on the basis of an obscure power-sharing model that was designed through the direct mediation of former Secretary of State John Kerry, is yet to achieve any substantial form of legitimacy since its establishment in 2014. The terms of the previous government under President Karzai were no better. In such context, this paper evaluates the extent to which the absence of governmental legitimacy can be linked to the interventions of the international community, especially the United States. It argues that the Afghan government's perennial paralysis and legitimacy deficit is largely due to the United States' unclear approach in Afghanistan and the region. It suggests that a more inclusive political paradigm that reflects the socio-political realities of Afghanistan, rather than a paternalistic short-term western vision, is key to achieving governmental legitimacy.

Biography

Safullah Taye is a PhD scholar at Deakin University, researching sub-national aid allocation within the fragile state of Afghanistan. His previous studies were in international politics, energy and resources and international humanitarian action. He has appeared on and published with *Aljazeera* and he is a regular commentator at International Peace and Security Centre.

Samah Sabawi

Trump's Ultimate Deal and the Way Forward in Israel/Palestine

This year, as Palestinians commemorated 70 years of dispossession and erasure, news networks broadcast on split screens, with footage on one side depicting thousands of unarmed Palestinian protesters in Gaza being met with Israeli live fire, while the other side showed American and Israeli elites dressed in designer labels and drinking champagne, celebrating the opening of the US embassy in Jerusalem. The stark contrast between the two realities left many wondering what will be next for Palestinians and Israelis, especially given the presence of the amalgamation of absolute power, and the absence of strong international bodies able and willing to enforce basic international law and human rights. This paper will address the possible outcomes of Trump's aggressive policies in regard to Israel/Palestine and will make recommendations as to what needs to be done in order to ensure a future where Israelis and Palestinian can finally have a peace with justice, freedom and dignity for all.

Biography

Samah Sabawi is policy advisor for leading Palestinian think tank and Policy Network Al-Shabaka, an award winning playwright, author, poet, cultural ambassador for Melbourne Theatre Company and Multicultural Arts Victoria and a PhD candidate at Victoria University. Her play *Tales of a City by the Sea* was selected for Victorian Certificate of Education Drama Playlist, won two Drama Victoria awards and was nominated for Green Room Award's Best Independent Production. Sabawi co-edited *Double Exposure: Plays of the Jewish and Palestinian Diasporas*, winner of Patrick O'Neill Award and co-authored *I Remember My Name*, winner of Palestine Book Awards. Her new play *THEM* was selected for the MTC 2018 Cybec Electric season and will be staged in Melbourne in 2019.

Samantha Kruber

Al Shabaab's Troubled Relationship with Foreign Fighters: Internal and External Determinants of Foreign Fighter Membership Patterns

The relationship between Al-Shabaab and its foreign fighters has been tumultuous, with periods of active recruitment followed by rifts and purges. This paper will seek to provide context to this relationship by considering the tactics, targeting and recruitment strategies of Al-Shabaab between 2006 and 2017. By exploring the recruitment trends that Al-Shabaab have exhibited during this timeframe, as well as the contribution of Al-Shabaab foreign fighters throughout this period, the paper offers some hypotheses as to why the flow of foreign fighters has been inconsistent. This paper engages with the existing body of foreign fighter research, as well as primary source material released by Al-Shabaab, including its official social media posts and its English-language magazine. This article argues that the flow of foreign fighters to Somalia between 2006 and 2017 was erratic, with stages of significant foreign fighter entry followed by low recruitment levels and the mass exit or, in some cases, forced removal of foreign fighters from the organisation. This article identifies some of the factors that influenced these recruitment shifts and will contribute to the growing body of work on foreign fighters.

Biography

Samantha Kruber is a PhD candidate and Teaching Associate in Politics and International Relations at Monash University. She holds a BA(Hons) in International Relations from Monash University. Her PhD research focuses on state support for foreign fighter movements. Samantha's research interests include terrorism and insurgency, proxy wars, international relations and Middle East politics. Prior to beginning her PhD, Samantha was an adviser to the Chair of the Australian Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

This paper will be co-presented with Stephanie Carver

Professor Samina Yasmeen

Comparing Narratives of Jamaatud Dawah

Policy and academic analysis of militancy and extremism in Pakistan predominantly focuses on the actions of terrorists, and counter-insurgency moves made by the government. Such focus ignores the fact that the process of radicalisation and extremism is closely intertwined with narratives that potential and existing supporters of militant organisations are exposed to on a consistent basis. The main strategists of these organisations, the narrators, construct stories (narrations) that encourage the audience (potential and existing recruits) to undertake actions designed to achieve an ideal state (the end result of struggle). The narratives are not independent of the national and international context and can shift as the preferences of the narrators change due to a multiplicity of factors.

The narratives of Jamaatud Dawah on jihad and social welfare present a clear picture of altered goals, and actions required of supporters of the group. Hafiz Saeed as the main ideologue and leader of JuD, occupies a significant position in this respect. His discussion of the need to engage in jihad, identification of those responsible for this struggle, and the kind of struggle needed has both reflected and shaped the narratives of JuD. This paper will explore the shifting contours of his views on jihad, and by extension participation in the social welfare space, by comparing the ideas presented in Tafsir Surah Tauba, Tafsir Syrah Yusuf and Khutbaat-t-Qadasiyya. The paper will aim to demonstrate that the narratives of jihad have shifted as the regional and global context has changed for Pakistan with it gradually being isolated by the United States. The paper will also explore the implications of the altered narratives for JUD's participation in the political space in Pakistan.

Biography

Professor Samina Yasmeen is Director of the Centre for Muslim States and Societies and lectures in Political Science and International Relations in the School of Social and Cultural Studies at the University of Western Australia (UWA). Professor Yasmeen is a specialist in political and strategic developments in South Asia (particularly Pakistan), the role of Islam in world politics, and citizenship among immigrant women.

Associate Professor Sarah Phillips The Uncountable Cost of Trump's Air Wars

The number of US counter-terrorism airstrikes roughly doubled between 2016 and US President Trump's first year in office in 2017 – an upward trend that looks likely to continue. The question of whether such strikes (mostly conducted using drones) reduce either the number or intensity of terrorist incidents is one of the biggest debates in terrorism studies today. One side of the debate highlights the ability of the strikes to disrupt the organisational capacity of terrorist groups, thereby limiting their ability to do harm. The other emphasises the civilian casualties and delegitimisation of local governments the strikes can cause, both of which may drive radicalisation and thus 'blowback' on the United States and its allies. Understandably, both sides attempt to quantify the number and nature of the casualties (civilians or militants) as evidence of their strategic in/effectiveness as a counter-terrorism tool. However, both sides tend to draw contrasting conclusions from similar evidence. Statistical studies also seem to show that airstrikes could either increase or decrease the threat of terrorism. This paper explores what we can – and cannot – know about the counter-terrorism effects of airstrikes, and asks what not knowing means for Trump's air wars?

Biography

Sarah Phillips is an Associate Professor in the Department of Government and International Relations at The University of Sydney. Her research is based on years of fieldwork in the Arabian Peninsula and Horn of Africa, and offers a critical perspective on security, development and terrorism, exploring the politics of state-building interventions, non-state governance, and post-colonialism. Sarah is the sole author of two books, with a third forthcoming (2019), and is published widely in top-tiered academic journals, including *African Affairs*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Journal of International Development*, and *International Affairs*.

Dr Scott Burchill Supporting secularism or radical Islam? US foreign policy towards the Middle East

US foreign policy towards the Middle East, and the Islamic world more generally, has tended to favour radical Islamists over secular governments. This is in direct contrast to the public face of US diplomacy which has long been cast as an existential struggle against radical Islamists in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan and elsewhere. This paper explains why the US favours radical Islamists wherever it can and what this tells us about the driving forces behind US foreign policy in the region and beyond.

Biography

Dr Scott Burchill is Senior Lecturer in International Relations in the School of Humanities & Social Sciences at Deakin University. Before joining Deakin University in 1990 he was a political officer in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Indochina & Europe desks) in Canberra. He has taught at the University of Melbourne, Monash University and the University of Tasmania. He has also been a visiting lecturer at the Peacekeeping Centre at the Australian Defence Force Warfare Centre in Newcastle and the Army Command and Staff College in Queenscliff. Since 1999 he has also lectured at the Australian Defence College in Canberra.

He is the author of *The National Interest in International Relations Theory* (Palgrave, London 2005), and co-editor of and contributor to *Theories of International Relations*, (5th edition, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2013), *Global Crises And Risks* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne 2008) and *Australia in the World* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne 1996).

Scott Patton

The Kurds and their Politics: Diasporic Interpretations of the Political Paradigm

See pages 20-21 for panel details

Shafi Md Mostofa

Bangladesh: A Fertile Ground for Daesh's Recruitment

Bangladesh, the third largest Muslim country in the world, is beginning to be depicted as a hub for Islamist militancy, which is attracting media as well as academic examination. Yet, Islamic militancy is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. Indeed, a number of Islamic militant groups that have been operating in Bangladesh since the mid-1990s. Islamic militants are reported to have killed around 156 people in the country between March 1999 and January 2005. On 17 August 2005, the country was deeply shocked by a series of 459 bomb attacks that took place in 63 out of 64 districts of the country. Islamic militancy clearly exerts an obvious and present danger to Bangladesh. The latest attack at the Holy Artisan Café, which killed at least 20 foreigners in the diplomatic zone of the capital Dhaka on 1 July of 2016, and a failed attack, just six days after the café attack, which killed two people (including one police at Kishorganj district outside Dhaka), bear testimony to the presence of Daesh and the severity of the militant challenge in Bangladesh. This study uses qualitative research methods to explore how Bangladesh has become fertile ground for Daesh's recruitment and who have been radicalized and how. It seeks to examine how Daesh is impacting on and exploiting religious beliefs, which religious groups are being targeted and, in its efforts/strategies towards the recruitment of members, how is Daesh's religious message distinct from other militant organisations in Bangladesh.

Biography

Shafi Md Mostofa has been an outstanding student at Dhaka University, Bangladesh's leading university. He stood class first in his Honours and Masters examinations. He received prestigious awards for his outstanding academic results, including the Khaleda Monzoor-e-Khuda Memorial Gold Medal for the highest marks awarded to a MA student in 2012. That potential was recognised by the University of Dhaka when it appointed him a lecturer in world religions in that same year. He currently holds an Assistant Professorship in the same department and pursues his PhD from the University of New England with a prestigious IPRA scholarship. To date he has published six refereed articles and has another refereed article forthcoming.

Sonia Qadir

Islamophobia, Trumpism and the End of Empire

Islamophobia and the rise of Trump-ism is most commonly understood to be a problem that only impacts Muslim minorities living in Western countries, and is a symptom of the media's role in spreading of negative views about Muslims and Islam. This paper argues that Islamophobia is not simply about how Muslims are portrayed but is implicated in the broader crisis of post-Cold War liberal order that Trump represents. Our paper addresses the question of the relationship between liberalism (and neo-liberalism), Islamophobia, and the new imperial assault on, and machinations in, the Middle East. We examine the relationship between the Trumpian discourse of 'take our country back', the post-Cold War liberal political order, and how this has affected Trump's war cabinet's assault on what Noam Chomsky has called the US's "most strategic prize in world history": the Middle East. Our paper examines the intellectual and political resources and possibilities that now exist for imagining the Western liberal order in contravention of the Islamophobic assault on the Islamic world. In this light we also examine the presence of the non-white, culturally unassimilable, rights bearing subject as a political problem for Western liberalism. Finally, we interrogate the relationship between neo-liberal economic policies, the Western-supported authoritarian autocracies of the Middle Eastern region, and the ongoing deployment of vulgar neo-orientalism and Islamophobia.

Biography

Sonia Qadir has an MA in Liberal Studies from New School for Social Research in New York and a BA-LLB from Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), and is a recipient of a Fulbright Masters Scholarship, Australia Awards Fellowship(s) and UNSW Scientia Doctoral Scholarship. She has worked extensively in the legal and development sector in Pakistan, and served as Visiting Faculty at LUMS. She has been actively involved with various grassroots activist organizations, and is a founding member of a leftist feminist group in Pakistan. She is a PhD student in "Security, Precarious Populations and the Neoliberal Age" at the University of New South Wales, Department of Law.

Stephanie Carver

Al Shabaab's Troubled Relationship with Foreign Fighters: Internal and External Determinants of Foreign Fighter Membership Patterns

The relationship between Al-Shabaab and its foreign fighters has been tumultuous, with periods of active recruitment followed by rifts and purges. This paper will seek to provide context to this relationship by considering the tactics, targeting and recruitment strategies of Al-Shabaab between 2006 and 2017. By exploring the recruitment trends that Al-Shabaab have exhibited during this timeframe, as well as the contribution of Al-Shabaab foreign fighters throughout this period, the paper offers some hypotheses as to why the flow of foreign fighters has been inconsistent. This paper engages with the existing body of foreign fighter research, as well as primary source material released by Al-Shabaab, including its official social media posts and its English language magazine. This article argues that the flow of foreign fighters to Somalia between 2006 and 2017 was erratic, with stages of significant foreign fighter entry followed by low recruitment levels and the mass exit or, in some cases, forced removal of foreign fighters from the organisation. This article identifies some of the factors that influenced these recruitment shifts and will build on the growing body of work on foreign fighters.

Biography:

Stephanie Carver is a current PhD candidate at Monash University. She holds a Masters degree and BA(Hons) both from Monash University. Her research focuses on the security-development nexus and illicit activity and the state reconstruction process in Somalia. Her PhD considers state formation as a result of piracy off the coast of Somalia.

This paper will be co-presented with Samantha Kruber.

Dr Stuti Bhatnagar

Social Media and Hindu Extremism in India

The BJP was elected in 2014 with hopes for a development oriented socio-economic agenda and a robust foreign policy, yet, soon after the election the fear and apprehensions regarding its Hindu nationalist ideology resurfaced. Cultural nationalism calling for the revival of a Hindu nation has had significant ramifications for the non-Hindu populations in India and instances of Hindutva influence are evident in institutional appointments, free rein to radical groups and an increase in violence against religious minorities in India under the guise of cow vigilantism and religious conversions. The party and its associated Hindu nationalist groups have benefited from the strong parliamentary position and in addition to the traditional print and TV mediums that have reflected a strong bias towards these policies, social media is now a crucial method for propaganda. The BJP's election campaign itself relied heavily on social media to promote the party's message and present an acceptable and often exaggerated image of its leaders, particularly Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Since 2014, social media has become an active tool to deepen polarisation and spread misinformation campaigns about religious minorities and their disregard for "Hindu" traditions and values. This paper will highlight the increase in religious extremism in India since 2014, focusing specifically on the political use and abuse of social media in propagating and intensifying religious differences.

Biography

Stuti Bhatnagar has a PhD (completed in January 2018) and specialises in Indian foreign policy, especially the role and rising influence of think tanks in India. The research on think tanks is part of a larger focus on the evolution of foreign policy institutions in India and Indian foreign policy directions. Additionally, Dr Bhatnagar is interested in political dynamics that drive India-Pakistan relations and India's changing foreign policy interests in the South Asian region. In addition to research, she has been working as a research assistant and tutor at the Department of Politics and International Studies (POLIS) at the University of Adelaide, teaching courses on global politics, South Asian politics and environmental politics. Currently, she is an Adjunct Fellow associated with the School of Social Sciences at the University of Adelaide.

Dr William Gourlay

From Kobane to Kirkuk: Minorities in Syria and Iraq between the US, ISIS and Regional Players

See pages 20-21 for panel details

Yasmin Chilmeran

Women's Civil Society Organising in Post-2003 Iraq

In international spaces, organisations and discourse, there is an increasing emphasis on the role of women in peace-building efforts. This is in part due to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. UNSCR1325 (and seven subsequent resolutions constituting the 'Women, Peace and Security' agenda) emphasise the importance of the presence of women in post-conflict recovery. In turn, this emphasis shapes the projects, funding and framing of the relationship between international organisations (particularly UN-affiliated bodies) and local civil society. Civil society organisations (CSOs) are often tasked with implementing development, humanitarian and other peace-building projects funded by international organisations and donors. This paper draws on PhD research on women's civil society organising in Iraq to examine local-global relationships and how they affect women's participation in peace building on the ground. Using key informant interviews and primary source material from Iraqi CSOs, this paper analyses examples of local civil society projects to illustrate the strength and limitations of women's organising in the post-2003 Iraqi context. These examples provide insight into the struggles that local actors face in negotiating both global and local expectations about Iraq's future and the role women can play in that future.

Biography

Yasmin Chilmeran is a PhD candidate at Monash University, and part of Monash's Gender, Peace and Security Centre (GPS). Her PhD research focuses on women's civil society organising in Iraq after 2003. She is also working on Monash GPS's Linkage project on gender provisions in peace-processes, providing research assistant support on the MENA cases in that project. Her previous Masters research was on women's civil society organisations in Jordan and the impact of international gender norms.

Dr Zainab Abdul-Nabi

Differences Between Al Jazeera Arabic and Al Jazeera English's Representation of Bahrain's Uprising

See pages 18-19 for panel details

ABOUT THE ORGANISING COMMITTEES

The Trump and the Middle East conference is organised by the Middle East Studies Forum at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship & Globalisation at Deakin University. It was made possible by generous support from the Alfred Deakin Institute, and help from a small army of ADI research assistants.

Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh (Conference convenor)

Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh is Research Professor in Middle East and Central Asian Politics at Deakin University (Australia) and Deputy Director (International) of the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation. He held a prestigious ARC Future Fellowship (2012–2016) on the Role of Islam in Iran's Foreign Policy-making and recently completed a Qatar Foundation project on Sectarianism in the Middle East. Professor Akbarzadeh has published extensively in this field.

Dr Zahid Shahab Ahmed

Dr Zahid Shahab Ahmed is a Research Fellow at Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalization, Deakin University in Australia. Prior to joining Deakin University, he was an Assistant Professor at the Centre for International Peace and Stability, National University of Sciences and Technology in Islamabad. He is the author of *Regionalism and Regional Security in South Asia: The Case of SAARC* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

Dr Dara Conduit

Dr Dara Conduit is an Associate Research Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute, Deakin University working on authoritarianism and oppositions in Iran and Syria. Her work has been published in the *British Journal of Middle East Studies*, *The Middle East Journal*, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* and *International Community Law Review*. Her book *The Muslim Brotherhood in Syria* will be published with Cambridge University Press in 2019.

Mr Safiullah Tāye

Safiullah Tāye is a PhD scholar at Deakin University, researching on sub-national aid allocation within the fragile state of Afghanistan. His previous studies were in international politics, energy and resources and international humanitarian action. He has appeared on and published with *Aljazeera* and he is a regular commentator at International Peace and Security Centre.

THE SOUTH ASIA STREAM ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Professor Howard Brasted (Stream convenor)

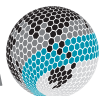
Howard Brasted is Professor of history and Islamic studies at the University of New England, Australia. Developing a research interest in South Asia and Islam at Edinburgh University, where he completed a PhD in 1974, he went on to serve as the long-term Secretary of the South Asian Studies Association (1984–2002) and editor of its refereed journal *South Asia* (1984–2001). He has written widely on the themes of nationalism in South Asia, Islam in the modern world, and American imperialism. His recent publications include 'The Political Economy of Pakistan's "War on Terror"' (2015), and 'Whither Pakistan: the Failure of Constitutional Road Mapping?' (2018)

Mr Imran Ahmed

Imran is a PhD candidate in history at the University of New England. His research interests lie in the study of religion and politics in Pakistan. He has published articles on the constitutional politics of Islam in Pakistan in journals such as *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* and *The Round Table: Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*.

Dr Zahid Shahab Ahmed

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ABOUT THE ALFRED DEAKIN INSTITUTE

The Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation is an internationally recognised and highly regarded social sciences and humanities research institute.

Researchers in the Institute create cutting-edge knowledge about citizenship, diversity, inclusion and globalisation which informs scholarship, debate and policy.

It has a vibrant research environment supporting excellence, innovation and collaboration among theorists and problem-

oriented researchers who look at critical and contentious social issues. Members are supported through mentoring and training schemes, particularly early career researchers and doctoral students.

The Institute hosts a number of research networks, including The Middle East Studies Forum, which provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and international collaboration, helping to strengthen our local and global partnerships.

ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST STUDIES FORUM

The Middle East Studies Forum (MESF) is a network of world-class researchers and educators hosted by the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University in the field of Middle East and Central Asia studies and languages. MESF manages a number of high-profile international grants and teaching initiatives, regularly hosts international and national events and seminars, and runs a biannual Middle East studies conference.

MESF is convened by Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh. We are a collaborative network open to researchers, research students, policy-makers, media professionals and anyone interested in the region. We are well-placed to conduct and collaborate on high-profile international research and teaching initiatives relating to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

MESF focuses on the following topics in relation to contemporary Middle East and Central Asia:

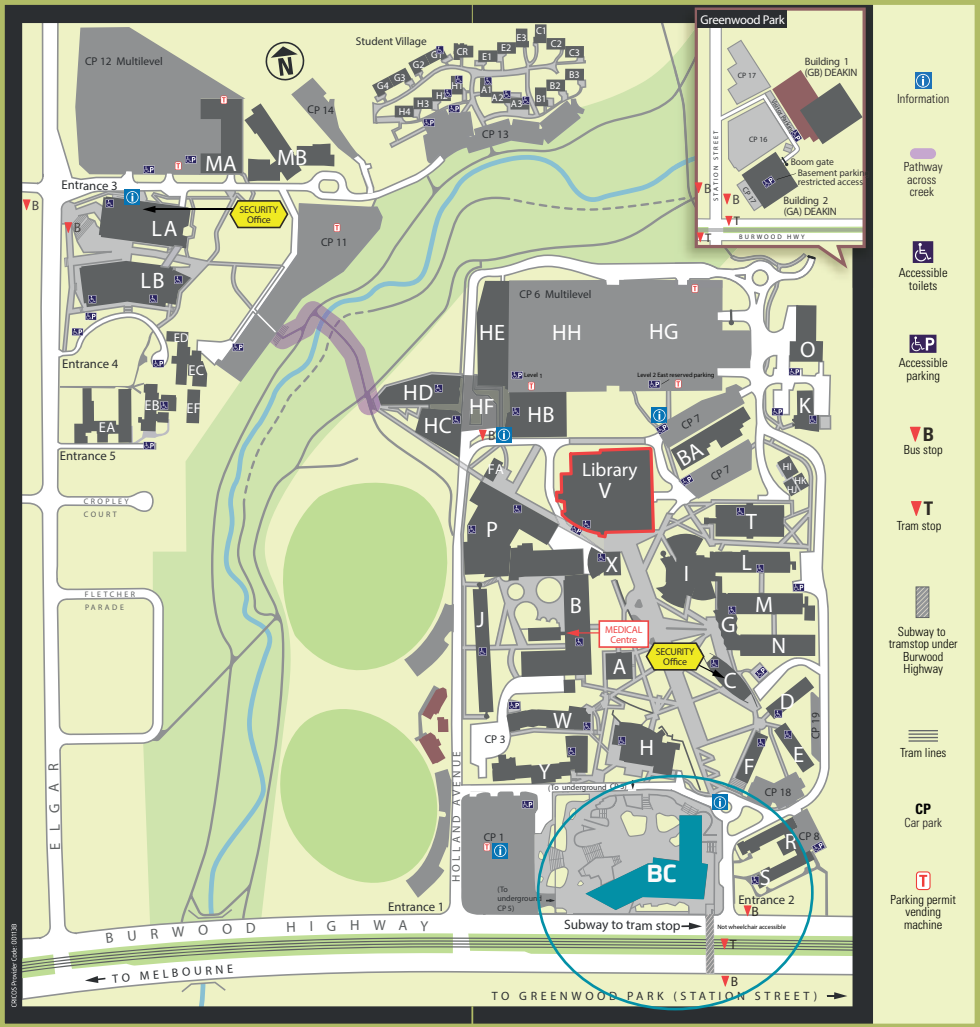
- International Relations, security and foreign policy dynamics

- The rapidly changing nature of civil society and democracy
- The emergence of sub-state groups
- Defining the 'Middle East' and examining how it has been constructed and understood in the 'West'
- The role of minorities and women across the regions
- The complex and overlapping histories of the region and its myriad languages, cultures and political movements
- Utilising interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies as the basis for understanding the complexities of the region.
- The need for innovative teaching and the supervision of higher degree work in the field.



Follow us on Twitter at @mesf_deakin. The event hashtag is #trumpME

MAP OF DEAKIN UNIVERSITY BURWOOD



THE EVENT WILL BE HELD ON LEVEL 2 OF BUILDING BC

NOTES



mesf.org.au

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