



Report on 'Exploring an Agenda on Active Citizenship'

This conference was co-sponsored by the Asfari Institute and the Arab Studies Institute (Beirut, 20-22 February)

Introduction

This February 2015 conference commemorates the fourth anniversary of the revolts that began in Tunisia in the final days of 2010 and rapidly spread to nearly half the countries of the Arab region. The revolts provided a stellar example of the power of citizen engagement as millions of people took to the streets and toppled long-time authoritarian regimes or leaders, changing perceptions of the “Arab Street” for good. Four years later, where are those millions? How do we understand and assess their successes or failures in achieving their demands for freedom, dignity and social justice? Do we know enough about the historical roots of civil society activism in the region to ascribe cause-and-effect in regard to these events? What are the medium and long-term prospects for the future of citizenship participation in the public sphere, given the current realities? What are the factors that give rise to hope in some countries or open the pit of despair in others?

The conference does not claim to assess the Arab uprisings as such. Rather, it aims to shed light on the dynamics of civil society and citizen activism in the region, and to promote an understanding of the historical, political, economic and legal factors affecting this activism. It also aims to gather collective wisdom as to the short-and long-term potential for continued citizen engagement, fill knowledge gaps, assist the Asfari Institute to develop its research agenda, and point the way to future programming.

Below is a report detailing the proceedings that took place throughout the three-day conference, drawing a wide array of practitioners and scholars based both within and beyond the region. The cross-cutting theme of the conference was to interrogate normative understandings of civil society in the Arab region, moving beyond tired tropes and methodological approaches that have largely emanated from mainstream knowledge production. The conference papers were broken down into six topical themes: civil society in the Arab region today; the morning after revolt: civil society vs. civil society?; the exercise of citizenship and collective responsibility; the rulers and the ruled: cultural and legal paradigms; collaboration and networking; and a future agenda.



What is the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship?

The Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at AUB was established to support the development of an informed and engaged citizenry and to promote increased openness, transparency, and accountability at all levels of associational life in the Arab region. It interprets civil society and citizenship broadly and inclusively and aims to foster fruitful dialogue that builds knowledge on traditional and innovative forms of associational life and encourages an active and engaged citizenry across the region on the basis of freedom of expression and association.

The Asfari Institute was launched with the [Inaugural Conference New Spaces of Civil Society Activism in the Arab World on 23 May 2013](#). This second conference is the first in a planned series of annual conferences on topics of citizenship and civil society and is an integral element of the Asfari Institute's interdependent program of evidence-based and policy-oriented research, education, and collaboration with like-minded partners in Arab and international civil society and academia.

What is the Arab Studies Institute?

The Arab Studies Institute is a not-for-profit organization that produces knowledge on matters related to the Arab world and its relations. It serves as an institute in its own right and as an umbrella organization for five other subsidiaries: the [Arab Studies Journal](#), [Jadaliyya](#), [Quilting Point](#), [FAMA](#) (Forum on Arab and Muslim Affairs), and [Tadween Publishing](#).

[The tweets that appear below are not direct quotations by the presenter. They are paraphrased in real time and might not always reflect accurately the intention of the speaker. The video that will be released provides the actual words that are paraphrased herein. This report was put together by the Arab Studies Institute's Nour Joudah and Samia Errazzouki.]

Follow [this link](#) for the conference's schedule along with a list of speakers. The Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship's [Twitter account](#) also features highlights from the conference under the hashtag [#AICC2015](#)



Welcome and Opening Session

Fateh Azzam, Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, AUB

Bassam Haddad, Arab Studies Institute, George Mason University, United States

Ahmad Dallal, Provost, AUB

The conference began with a welcome and opening session led by Fateh Azzam, Bassam Haddad, and Ahmad Dallal. This opening session set the tone for the conference, highlighting important guiding questions and themes that the conference participants returned to during the closing session. Ahmad Dallal began the session alluding to the inaugural conference that took place May 2013, under the theme of "New Spaces of Civil Society Activism in the Arab World." (The full report from the inaugural conference can be [found here](#)). Dallal underscored the importance of building institutional partnerships with civil society in the region, pointing to the Asfari Institute's own experiences and future endeavors.

Noting the conference's coinciding dates with the fourth anniversary of the uprisings in the Arab region, Fateh Azzam moved toward drawing the lines between the impact of the uprisings on the region and reinterrogating the shifting roles of the average citizen in civil society in the Arab world. Azzam echoed Dallal's call in building institutional bridges, especially between civil society practitioners and scholars who are based in the region or focus heavily on it. Azzam discussed the Asfari Institute's goals under this light, concluding with encouraging and welcome the public's participation during the conference. Bassam Haddad concluded the welcome and opening session asserting that this conference is "not just another conference on civil or citizen engagement." Rather, Haddad pointed to this conference as a unique opportunity to develop more critical methodological tools to examining the shifting contours of citizen involvement. Haddad also underlined the conference's stated goal of producing new and engaged knowledge production on civil society in the Arab region.



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Opening remarks beginning with @fatehazzam, introducing both @4Bassam and Ahmad Dallal, @AUB_Lebanon provost #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Dallal revisiting our inaugural conference last year. Read a report about the inaugural conference here: jadaliyya.com/pages/index/11... #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Dallal concludes his opening remarks by underscoring importance of partnerships with civil society #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO





The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @fatehazzam begins opening remarks with a brief overview of the impact of the revolutions in the MENA region #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @fatehazzam asks what is the role of the citizen in civil society in the Arab world? #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @fatehazzam discussing how the @AsfariInstitute was established and the institute's goals. Learn more: aub.edu.lb/news/2012/Page... #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @fatehazzam emphasizing the goal of building bridges between civil society actors and scholars within and beyond the region #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @fatehazzam welcoming the public's participation and suggestions throughout the 3-day conference #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @4Bassam taking the mic now and thanking the participants who came from across the world for this conference #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @4Bassam "This is not just another conference on civil or citizen engagement." #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @4Bassam emphasizing "need to develop critical tools to explain changing context of citizen engagement for purpose of making a difference"

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @4Bassam discussing one of the primary goals of the conference, including knowledge production on civil society #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @4Bassam emphasizes the two faces of “civil society”...how some groups use it for furthering exclusionary/elitist politics #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @4Bassam concludes opening remarks, wrapping up the welcome and opening session. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



Panel 1: Civil Society in Arab Region: Concepts and Case Studies (1)

Chair: Fateh Azzam, Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, AUB

Civil society: Theoretically ambitious and practically misused in the Middle East, by Lina Suleiman, KTH Royal Institute for Technology, Sweden; and Michael Schultz, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Towards a Maghribi civil society (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria), by Ammar Djefal, Universite D’Alger 3, Algeria

Redefining the civil society scene in Jordan, by Heba Al Nasser, Chatham House, United Kingdom; and

Mohammad Qasem Al-Hamad, Juman for Civil Society Empowerment, Jordan

The first panel of the conference centered around two specific case studies in the Maghrib region and Jordan, and a paper that broadly assessed theoretical approaches to civil society in the Middle East that alludes to Tunisia and Palestine as examples. After Fateh Azzam introduced the panel and its participants, Lina Suleiman and Michael Schultz presented their paper, focusing on how (primarily Western) donors perceive civil society in the Middle East and the main consequences of these perceptions. One of the consequences Suleiman and Schultz honed in on was policy-making decisions that result from donor perceptions and the need to move beyond the metanarratives of these perceptions, such as the pervasive dichotomies of civil society/state, public/private, etc. Suleiman and Schultz concluded their paper by calling for more uniquely defined political terms of civil society and recollecting that a form of civil society exists and is relevant in all contexts.

Ammar Djeflal was the next presenter, delivering one of the conferences' few papers that examines the Maghrib region more closely. Djeflal began his paper by going into a general overview of the delineations of Maghribi civil society as they stand vis-a-vis the state, focusing on the politically marginal civil society organizations, such as human rights organizations. Djeflal highlighted how among the most active civil society organizations in the Maghrib, including Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, are women's rights organizations. Djeflal concluded his paper by deploring the lack of openness and cooperation across Maghribi civil society, calling for greater solidarity among organizations within individual countries as well as across the Maghrib in general.

Mohammad Qasem Al-Hamad and Heba Al Nasser were the final presenters of the panel, presenting a paper that focuses on the Jordanian civil society landscape. Al-Hamad began by pointing out the growing presence of civil society organizations which continue to increase due to the Jordanian government's lax requirements on what is needed to establish an organization. This provided a segway into Al-Hamad's overarching point of complicating the basic premises of state-civil society relations in Jordan, especially in how they relate to the state's goals. Heba Al Nasser carried on from this point, presenting research that examines the terms used to define civil society organizations in Jordan and the need to redefined these terms not just in Jordan, but across the region as well. Al Nasser alluded to hummus as a way of illustrating the research problem, comparing the ways hummus is used to broadly define Arab cuisine with the normative terms and understandings of Arab civil society. Al Nasser concluded by arguing that many of the organizations labeled as being part of civil society in Jordan do not necessarily identify themselves as comprising a broader civil society, especially in the ways these organizations work *with* local communities rather than *on* them.



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Now beginning "Civil Society in Arab Region: Concepts and Case Studies" featuring Lina Suleiman, Ammar Djeflal, and Mohammad Qasem Al-Hamad

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

. @fatehazzam begins introductory remarks for the first panel. Click here for full schedule and speaker information jadaliyya.com/pages/index/20...

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Schultz discussing how donors perceive and frame civil society in the Middle East, and the consequences of these perceptions #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Schultz delves into general overview of paper, which also looks at the policy-making decisions that result from donor perceptions #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Suleiman raising the point of interrogating the historical context of metanarratives on civil society as concept #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Suleiman discussing dominant theoretical assumptions regarding civil society #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Suleiman tracing how metanarratives on civil society have led to dichotomies: civil society vs. state, public vs private, etc. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Suleiman calling for defining civil society in political terms and how civil society is relevant in all societal contexts #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Schultz briefly delving into research finds from case studies in Tunisia and Palestine #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Djeffal discussing the varying strands of civil society organizations in the Maghreb region #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Djeffal outlining politically marginal civil society organizations in the Maghreb region, highlighting human rights organizations [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Djeffal highlighting the active role of women's rights organizations in the Maghreb in comparison with other civil society groups [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Djeffal calling for greater openness and solidarity across Maghribi civil society [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Al-Hamad discussing the abundance of new organizations & popping up of new ones everyday, minimal requirements needed to establish [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Al-Hamad complicates premise of civil society in Jordan, connection to the kingdom and state's goals, & vocabulary used. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

@HebaAlNasser now presenting research on redefining civil society orgs in Jordan #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@HebaAlNasser using hummus as food rep across world for Arabs, same as large NGOs for civil society. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@HebaAlNasser discussing the emerging organizations trying to redefine scene in Jordan and across region. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO





The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@HebaAlNasser many orgs in Jordan trying to change scene are often led by activists, names derived from culture, non-profit #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@HebaAlNasser many of these orgs don't self-identify as civil society, use simple approach, and work WITH and not ON communities. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@HebaAlNasser many of these new orgs working to redefine the scene are working together, using social media, and engaging locals #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@HebaAlNasser says there are also risks, including that some projects can turn into one-man shows. Asks "what is the potential?" #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @fatehazzam wrapping up first panel on "Civil Society in Arab Region: Concepts and Case Studies" with broader questions. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO

Panel 2: Civil Society in Arab Region: Concepts and Case Studies (2)

Chair: Rania Masri, Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, AUB

Civil Society and Political Movements in Egypt: From Neglect to Stabilization and from Leadership to Stigmatization, by Dina El-Khawaga, Arab Reform Initiative

The Political Economy of Social Change: from the moral economy of the peasants to the "Arab Spring" in Egypt, by Dina Mansour, The Arab Council for the Social Sciences

Framing the Discourse and Priorities of the Palestinian Youth Movement in the West Bank, by Ayman Yousef, Arab American University, occupied Palestine

Sharing Power or Continued Status Quo? The Trials and Tribulations of the Disability Rights Movement in Lebanon, by Maha Damaj, AUB

The second panel of the conference also fell under the theme of "Civil Society in Arab Region: Concepts and Case Studies," with two papers focusing on the Egyptian case study and the other two focusing on Palestine and Lebanon. After Rania Masri's introductory remarks, Dina El-Khawaga began presenting her paper which looked at Egyptian civil society and their relations with political movements, taking a comparatively historical approach. El-Khawaga delved into her research methods, which included a number of interviews with civil society actors in Egypt. El-Khawaga pointed to generational shifts among civil society actors as one of the main changes that Egyptian civil society is contending with. The generational shifts paired with the deep structural changes wrought on by the political economic context of privatization have been some of the main factors that have led to changes in state-civil society relations in Egypt. Dina Mansour also presented on Egypt, building up on El-Khawaga's political economic approach. Mansour, taking a similarly historical approach, traced the changes of what drove calls for revolution in Egypt, comparing the 1952 Revolution with the January 25 2011 Revolution. In both cases, Mansour highlighted the links connecting peasant societies with forms of political mobilization under the shadow of political economic policies in Egypt. Based on interviews, Mansour underscored the importance of basic economic rights for ordinary Egyptians and the demand for those rights as catalysts for revolutions in Egyptians.

Ayman Yousef was the third presenter of the panel, delivering his research observations on aspects of the Palestinian youth movement based off findings collected through organizing focus groups in the West Bank, despite the difficulties of access to conducting research in Palestine. Yousef shed light on some of the difficulties the Palestinian youth face in their activism, such as setting priorities in the face of political divisions. Yousef delved into the factors that have shaped the Palestinian youth movement, pointing to various social mobilizations around political issues as critical to youth formations, such as the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement and mobilizations against the Apartheid Wall. Gender imbalances also figured heavily in Yousef's presentation, where he highlighted the fact that despite the prevalence of women in Palestinian campuses, they are not wholly represented in student councils.

Maha Dumaj was the final presenter of the panel, taking a closer look at the disability rights movement in Lebanon, which has its roots in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Dumaj contextualized the growth of the disability rights movement as one that emerged around issues resulting from the civil war in Lebanon and called for greater inclusion. It was during the 1990s that laws emerged in Lebanon that began defining the terms of disability, creating an opening for more public discussion on the principle of rights. Yet despite the laws, Dumaj highlighted how even twelve years later, only twenty percent of people with disabilities had actually registered with the government. This brings to the forefront the consequences of the law, which confined the issue of disability rights to a question of services and welfare rather than access and space.



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

2nd panel "Civil Society in Arab Region: Concepts and Case Studies (2)"
now beginning, with @rania_masri introducing speakers #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

El-Khawaga presenting "Civil Society and Political Movements in Egypt:
From Neglect to Stabilization and from Leadership to Stigmatization"

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

El-Khawaga begins by asking and reflecting on state and civil society
relations in Egypt #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO





The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

El-Khawaga discussing her research and interviews conducted with civil society actors in Egypt, highlighting generational shifts [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

El-Khawaga contextualizing civil society shifts in Egypt within political economic context of privatization, structural adjustment [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Dina Mansour now presenting on "Political Economy of Social Change: from the moral economy of the peasants to the 'Arab Spring' in Egypt "

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Mansour asks who and what motivated calls for revolution in Egypt; important to take a historical approach [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Mansour comparatively assessing 1952 Revolution in Egypt with 2011 [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Mansour citing James C. Scott in drawing links between peasant societies and political mobilization [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Mansour juxtaposing political economic policies with patterns of labor workers' mobilization in Egypt [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Mansour highlighting data collected from interviews demonstrating the importance of economic rights for ordinary Egyptians [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



Habib Battah
@habib_b

"There have been many revolutions in Egypt" says [@ACSS_org](#) Dima Mansour; priority has been economic, not political rights [@AsfariInstitute](#)

@AsfariInstitute · 23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Ayman Yousef starting his presentation now from the 2007 political division between Hamas and Fatah. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Yousef's presentation on Palestinian Youth Movement based on observations of actions as well as focus groups. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Yousef explains that of largest challenges for Palestinian youth today is setting priorities given political division. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Given difficulty of access, Yousef's research focuses on the West Bank, particularly Palestinian universities & student movements. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Yousef: Though women are half of students on Palestinian campuses, still make up very small minority of those on student councils. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Yousef: protests against internal political division, Nakba 2011, and other events were critical to current youth formations. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Yousef: the increase of youth, women's, and other initiatives are growth of "soft power" base. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Yousef: popular or civil resistance in Palestine has expanded to include organizing against Apartheid wall and using [#BDS](#) as tool. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Yousef: activism to remove Israeli goods from supermarkets must be studied/is as critical to developments as macro-politics. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Maha Dumaj: "Sharing Power or Continued Status Quo? The Trials and Tribulations of the Disability Rights Movement in Lebanon" [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Dumaj: disability rights movement actually started during and around issues of the civil war in Lebanon in late 70s/early 80s. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Damaj: the call of the disability rights movement was a call for inclusion, and challenged power relations. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Damaj: the early 90s saw the passing of laws defining disabilities, and opened discussions on principle of rights. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Damaj: In 2000, disability rights advocacy work was also supported by many civil society groups. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Damaj: Law 220 required representative committee, however, it left power structure unchanged and stigma unchallenged. [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Damaj: National committee deflated momentum of national disability rights movement. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Damaj: 12 years after law passed, only 20% of people with disabilities had registered with government/committee. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Damaj: the law limited much of the disability rights conversation to services and welfare as opposed to access and space. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Damaj: to bring about change in power balance, innovative tools are needed from civil society actors and rights movements. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO

Panel 3: Civil Society in Arab Region: Concepts and Case Studies (3)

Chair: Bassam Haddad, Arab Studies Institute, George Mason University

The Structural Transformation of Palestinian Civil Society, by Tariq Da'na, Birzeit University, occupied Palestine

Between Neglect and Interference: The Impact of Foreign Policies on the Development of [Arab] Civil Society: the Case of Syria, by Leila Hilal, New America Foundation, United States

The Past and Future of Syrian Civil Society, by Salam Kawakibi, Arab Reform Initiative

The second day of the conference began a panel examining concepts and case studies of civil society in Palestine and Syria. Bassam Haddad introduced the panelists, after which Tariq Dana began presenting his paper that looks at the transformations of civil society in Palestine. Dana highlighted the Oslo Accords as a defining moment for Palestinian civil society, with the pre-Oslo civil society structured more around mass movements, such as women's movements. After Oslo, however, this introduced what Dana described as a political framework for civil

society no longer structured around a mass liberation movement. This shift in the post-Oslo period was marred by a discursive shift among Palestinian NGOs, leading to a greater centralization of power led by certain individuals. Dana critiqued the depoliticization of Palestinian civil society as a form of disempowerment which tempers down political demands and modes of resistance.

Salam Kawakibi was the second presenter, putting forth a general overview of Syrian civil society in the past and visions for the future. Kawakibi began by providing a summary of the landscape and history of civil society in Syria as well as the newly emerging civil society groups. Kawakibi highlighted the differences in socioeconomic status among civil society groups as a way of distinguishing certain groups from others, critiquing the dominant perceptions of civil society that fails to incorporate a classed understanding of how certain civil society groups are socioeconomically exclusive. Leila Hilal built upon Kawakibi's paper on Syrian civil society by looking more closely at how external policies and funding have shaped perceptions of and within Syrian civil society. Hilal asserted the need to distinguish between different sources of foreign funding, looking at how geopolitics determines the uses and interests of foreign funding. Hilal concluded her paper by contextualizing the transformation and perceptions of Syrian civil society within the phases of the uprising, pointing to how these perceptions began taking shape under the Bush administration's democracy promotion program.



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@4Bassam introducing the last panel for today, focusing on case studies from and on Palestine and Syria. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@tariqndana from Birzeit University will be speaking on "The Structural Transformation of Palestinian Civil Society" #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@tariqndana: pre-Oslo civil society was based in mass movements such as women's movements. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@tariqndana Oslo introduced a conditional political framework for civil society not based in a national liberation movement. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@tariqndana: this shift of frameworks involves an internal discourse shift in Palestinian NGOs to global solutions. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@tariqndana: NGOs have also led to a concentration of power to certain personalities and inward capacity building focus. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@tariqndana: depoliticization (re-politicization of another kind) in civil society in Palestine is also form of disempowerment. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



Ala'a Shehabi
@alaashehabi

Depoliticisation through NGOs is the same as disempowerment where political demands & resistance are downplayed #Palestine #AICC2015

 @AsfariInstitute · 23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Salam Kawakibi now starting presentation on "The Past and Future of Syrian Civil Society" #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Kawakibi giving a historical perspective on shifts and phases of what defined civil society in Syria. #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

. @salamkawakibi delving into socioeconomic differences present in Syrian civil society #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@salamkawakibi giving an overview of the newly emerging civil society groups in Syria #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



Habib Battah

@habib_b

We mistake "cocktail society" for civil society in [#Syria](#) says [@salamkawakibi](#) on foreign NGO support/events; many people left out [#AICC2015](#)

@AsfariInstitute · 23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. [@salamkawakibi](#) concluded his talk discussing points about Syrian civil society in potential negotiations [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Leila Hilal now presenting on "The Impact of Foreign Policies on the Development of [Arab] Civil Society: the Case of Syria" [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Hilal on foreign funding of civil society groups in the region as being seen as a "necessary evil." [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Hilal arguing for the need to identify and manage differences between various sources of external funding [#AICC2015](#)

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Hilal making a point about the role of geopolitics in determining the use and interests of external funding #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Hilal highlighting the transnational character of Syrian civil society #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Hilal juxtaposing the phases of Syrian civil society with the phases of the uprisings #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Hilal discussing democracy promotion program under the Bush administration and its impact in shaping legitimacy of groups in Syria #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Hilal interrogating assumptions regarding the impact international aid had on Syrian civil society #AICC2015

23 DAYS AGO



Panel 4: Citizenship in the Arab Region: Concepts and Case Studies (1)

Chair: Sami Attallah, The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies

Egyptian Citizenship and Arab Solidarities: Changing Dynamics After January 25th, by Omneya Ragab, researcher and writer; and Asmaa Naguib, Zyara Egypt

Religion, Democracy and Women in Egyptian textbooks before and after 2011, by Patrycja Sasnal, Polish Institute of International Affairs and Jagiellonian University

A Tale of Two Trade Unions: How contrasting historical legacies have dictated the roles and actions of trade union federations in post-revolutionary Tunisia and Egypt, by Leila Kabalan and Mark Bracher, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, AUB

The fourth panel of the conference continued under the theme of "concepts and case studies" with closer looks at civil society in Egypt and Tunisia. After Sami Attallah's introductions, Omneya Ragab and Asmaa Naguib presented their findings on concepts of Egyptian citizenship as they related to regional solidarities. They uncovered the contradictions between how the state defines citizenship in Egypt and the ability to be in solidarity with Arab

causes, drawing out the shifts that have cemented these contradictions. Among the causes for these shifts is the rise of the Morsi government and the subsequent replacement with the Sisi regime as driving a discursive shift on Arab solidarity in Egypt. Examples of this are the counter-revolutionary discourse pointed to the participation of Syrians and Palestinians in the Raba'a Square demonstrations and the blame placed on Hamas for the Sinai attacks. Ragab and Naguib called on the need to understand how Egyptians define their domestic roles and duties in order to situate the shifting sense of Egyptians' solidarity with regional issues. Patrycja Sasnal's paper echoes the theme of conceptions of citizenship in Egypt, looking more closely at the contents of Egyptian textbooks before and after the 2011 uprising. Sasnal argued that the importance of looking at textbooks lays in their ability to present a certain historical narrative during moments of political change. Sasnal drew a distinction between the three main branches of the Egyptian education system as being either international, national, or under the auspices of Al-Azhar. Despite these branches operating under the same umbrella of education in Egypt, they drastically differ in how they present information in textbooks, especially with regard to religion, women, and notions of democracy and citizenship. Sasnal presented images from these textbooks during her presentation that demonstrate how the events of 2011 led to changes to the contents of textbooks, especially in how women are historically represented.

The final paper of the panel by Leila Kaban and Mark Bracher took a comparative approach in situating the role and legacies of the labor movements in Tunisia and Egypt. Bracher began by painting a historical picture of the role the Tunisian labor movement, mainly the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT), during various stages of state formation starting from independence. In understanding the historical legacies of the labor movement, it sheds light on the labor movement's relations with the regime, Islamist movements, and other factions of political and civil society. The role of the military in Egypt stands in contrast with the case of Tunisia, especially in how the labor movement mobilized and shaped practices of citizenship. The panel concluded with questions, one of which called on the need to move beyond defining citizenship as solely being about duty to the state and to include the state's duty to citizens as a way to delve into deeper issues of citizenship.



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Happening now, presentation on "Egyptian Citizenship and Arab Solidarities" as part of first panel on Day 2 of #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Point that the state-sanctioned duties of citizenship is becoming less amenable to be in solidarity with Arab causes. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Important to highlight turning points in identification with Arab causes in Egypt #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Presenter exploring how #Morsi government and #Sisi's coming to power shift place of Arab solidarity in Egyptian public discourse? #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

How rumors of Palestinians and Syrians joining Rab'a demonstrations were mobilized as part of counter-revolutionary discourse. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

In wake of Sinai attacks, "terrorists" became Hamas and Hamas became Palestine in dominant discourse of Egyptian media. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

How identification of Egyptian citizens w/ Arab issues shift last 4 years?
Need shed light on issue & understand role domestically #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Next presentation is on "Religion, Democracy, and Women in Egyptian Textbooks before and after 2011" #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Why look at textbooks? Can be an important barometer of political change, in sense of codifying a particular historical narrative.
#AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

[#Egypt](#) education system is 3 tiers: International, National, al-Azhar. Differences in textbooks is stark re what is covered & how. [#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Presenter focused on "religion" "women" and "notions of democracy and citizenship" in Egyptian textbooks. [#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

In post-2011 [#Egypt](#) much new content re "democracy" added into [#textbooks](#), with special emphasis on role of [#military](#). [#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Which women are highlighted in Egyptian history textbooks has changed since 2011. [#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Next presentation compares trade unions in post-2011 Egypt and Tunisia. [#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Long political legacy of Tunisian labor movement, especially UGTT and its relation to different stages of state formation. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Difference in legacies btwn Egyptian & Tunisian labor movements crucial in understanding their relationship to regime, Islamists, & others.

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Diverse legacies of military involvement in Tunisia & Egypt vital to understanding labor mobilization in citizenship practices. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Sami Attallah of @LCPSLebanon now making comments on presentations from Panel 1 of Day 2 at #AICC2015.

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Is citizenship only about duty to the state or must it include duty of state to citizens? How does question help us get deeper. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



Panel 5: Citizenship in the Arab region: Concepts and Case Studies (2)

Chair: Hind Ghandour, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia

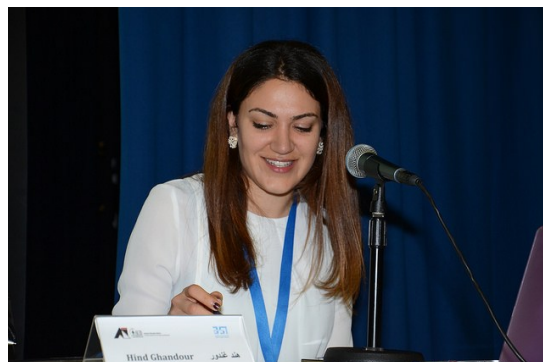
Framing and Claiming Citizenship in the GCC, by Ala'a Shehabi, University of Lund, Sweden

Saudi Arabia and the Concept of Citizenship, by Florence Borot, IRIS Sup – L'école des Relations Internationales de l'IRIS, France

The fifth panel of conference brought in a focus on the Gulf, with papers that looked at concepts of citizenship in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Saudi Arabia more specifically. After Hind Ghandour's introductory remarks, Ala'a Shehabi began presenting her paper on the terms that frame citizenship in the GCC, alluding to Kuwait and Bahrain as examples. Shehabi interrogated the dominant notion that in Bahrain, for example, nationality is something that the king bestows and contrarily revokes. Shehabi highlighted what she described as the "Unpeople" of the GCC--political dissidents whose citizenships have been revoked due to their political views and activism. Shehabi historicized conceptions of citizenship in the GCC by looking at how they took shape under the shadow of British control through the establishment of protectorates in the Gulf. Highlighting the factor of political economy, Shehabi delved into how citizenship in the GCC entails a degree of economic exclusion, and as such, requires looking at the theory and practice of citizenship in the GCC as something beyond a "royal prerogative" but needs the incorporation of political economic terms. Shehabi shifted to Dr. Ali Al-Dairy, who is a Bahraini living in exile in Lebanon after his citizenship was revoked. Al-Dairy recounted his experiences and process that led to the revocation of his citizenship, pointing to how his story is widely shared among politically active Bahrainis. Al-Dairy concluded his talk by calling for greater accountability in Bahrain irregardless of the regime's longevity.

Florence Borot's paper on conceptions of citizenship in Saudi Arabia was the final presentation on the panel. Borot prefaced her presentation by drawing comparisons with French secular conceptions and theories of citizenship, concluding that the commonality is that citizenship is the highest form of national privilege. Borot traced how

conceptions of citizenship in Saudi Arabia are built upon the feeling of belonging in a certain territory, pointing to the centrality of the Saudi Arabian political structure and system in defining concepts of citizenship. The panel concluded with an engaging debate among the panelists and audience on conceptions of citizenship as something that extends beyond questions of identity or passport holding. Comments argued for gearing the conversation on what are the particular contours of citizenship as opposed to debating whether or not there is citizenship.



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Florence Borot presenting on “Saudi Arabia and the Concept of Citizenship” and @alaashehabi on “Framing and Claiming Citizenship in the GCC”

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

2nd panel of the day has begun with Hind Ghandour’s introductions of the panelists. @alaashehabi beginning with paper on citizenship in GCC

22 DAYS AGO



Nour Sdoud
@nsdoud

.@alaashehabi complicating the idea that nationality in bahrain is something that can be bestowed or revoked by king. #AICC2015

 @AsfariInstitute · 22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@alaashehabi highlighting the “Unpeople” of the GCC, political dissidents whose citizenships have been revoked #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @alaashehabi delving into how concepts of GCC citizenship were crystallized under British control as protectorates #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @alaashehabi explaining process of citizenship in GCC as one that entailed a degree of exclusion, including economic exclusion #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@alaashehabi on theory & practice of citizenship in GCC as a “royal prerogative” and need to think in political economic terms #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@alaashehabi discussing the performativity of GCC citizenship across the Gulf #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @alaashehabi citing future economic challenges in GCC and the shifts conceptions of citizenship will incur #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

. @alaashehabi concludes her paper, shifting to Dr. Ali, a Bahraini living in exile in Lebanon after his citizenship was revoked #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Dr. Ali Al-Dairy begins presentation explaining story and experience of Abdulrahman Al Bakr #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Dr. Ali Al-Dairy on the destruction of citizenship in Bahrain; identifying himself as an activist for citizenship #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Dr. Al-Dairy recounting his experiences fleeing Bahrain in exile and arriving in Lebanon in 2011 #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Dr. Al-Dairy concludes talk on citing the longevity of the Bahraini regime and the need for accountability #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



Ala'a Shehabi

@alaashehabi

Dr Ali Al@dairy71 spoke about what it means to have ur citizenship revoked as punishment for being part of a struggle for equality #AICC2015

 @AsfariInstitute · 22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Hind Ghandour reflecting on @alaashehabi and Dr. Al-Dairy's papers and how they relate to reframing concepts of citizenship #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Florence Borot now presenting on "Saudi Arabia and the Concept of Citizenship" #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Borot highlighting how citizenship is the highest form of national privilege #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Borot tracing concepts of citizenship with identity and feelings of belonging tied to a certain territory #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Borot examines political structure and system in Saudi Arabia as it relates to defining concepts of citizenship in the country #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Borot situating recent social movements and mobilizations in Saudi Arabia within the broader question of citizenship #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Panel on concepts of citizenship in the Gulf wrapping up with Hind Ghandour's comments, now on to Q&As #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Dina El Khawaga and @alaashehabi encouraging expanding concepts of citizenship past passport holding, identity, etc. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@ziadaburish: conversation should be about more than if there is citizenship, but what are the contours of citizenship. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

In response to question re: citizenship not always being positive, @alaashehabi discusses political economy of citizenship. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



Panel 6: Citizenship in the Arab Region: Concepts and Case Studies (3)

Chair: Omar Dewachi, AUB

Mechanisms for Activating Citizenship in Iraq, by Ali Al-Masoodi, Baghdad University, Iraq

Organic Citizenship: the Case of Iraq, by Abdul Hussein Shaaban, author and human rights activist

Empowering Women in Public and Political Life in the MENA region: Reflections on the potential (and limits) of action research as ethos, methodology and practice, by Suzanne Hammad, International NGO Training and Research Center, United Kingdom; and Tamara Alkhas, British Council, Jordan

The final panel under the theme of "concepts and case studies" included a closer look at Iraq and a paper that broadly examined the role of women through the lens of action research. Omar Dewachi introduced the <https://storify.com/jadaliyya/report-on-the-arab-studies-institute-and-asfari-in>

panelists, after which Ali Al-Masoodi began presenting his paper on citizenship in Iraq. Al-Masoodi framed his presentation under the light of historical process of developing notions of Iraqi citizenship as it relates to state formation and statecraft. Abdul Hussein Shaaban echoed Al-Masoodi's presentation on Iraqi citizenship by sharing his observations on the usages of citizenship, identity, and nationality in Iraq. Shaaban argued that while many individuals may hold multiple identities, this does not necessarily translate to nationality or citizenship.

The panel concluded with a paper by Suzanne Hammad and Tamara Alkhas who presented on the utility of action research as a way of better understanding the political role of women in the Arab region. Hammad and Alkhas concluded that the importance of action research lays in its ability to capture the varying perspectives of practitioners. They highlighted that one of the main conclusions from their findings is that the women in the groups they worked with believed that action research is distinct from other research methods since it adds greater value to their approaches and has transformative effects. Hammad concluded by mirroring Bassam Haddad's introductory remarks during the welcoming session in how this form of research can emerge as an innovative tool for civil society in the Arab region.



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@Khanabat (Omar Dewachi) is introducing the speakers: Ali Al-Masood, Abdul Huseein Shaaban, and Suzanne Hammad. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Panelist Al-Masoodi now beginning to discuss "Mechanisms for Activating Citizenship in Iraq." #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Al-Masoodi giving a historical perspective on the development of the idea of Iraqi citizenship. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Dewachi emphasizing Al-Masoodi's point that our understanding of citizenship is tied to the development of the state/statecraft. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Shaaban starting his talk by sharing observations on usages of citizenship, identity, nationality, etc. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Shaaban explains that many individuals hold multiple identities, but this does not always translate to nationality or citizenship. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Research asks the extent to which action research ethos & methodology can be a tool for empowerment in civic and political life. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

This research is important because it captures the activists/practioners own perspectives and insights; encourages praxis. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

One of the main findings is that women believed that action research is distinctive, adds value, and has transformative effects. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Hammad: "Can Action Research be an innovative tool for Arab civil society?" - recalling @4Bassam's call during opening remarks.
#AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Dewachi (@Khanabat) puts forth multiple elements of citizenship as panel closes and moves to Q&A. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



Panel 7: Examinations from Different Lenses

Chair: Sami Ofeish, University of Balamand, Lebanon

The Arab Graphic Arts in the context of the current revolutions: a journey in the margins, by Marwan Al-Allan, University of Philadelphia, Jordan

The Arab Spring and the Economic Alternatives: Society organizing itself, by Wael Gamal, Journalist and Researcher

The Presence of Social Sciences in Arab Civil Society Organizations, by Rima Majed, AUB

During the seventh panel of the conference, presenters delivered papers under the theme of "examinations from different lenses." To begin, Wael Gamal highlighted how the various slogans of the uprisings, which touched on economic, social, and political issues, indicated distinct connections between the Arab region and the global system. Honing in on the Egyptian example, Gamal pointed to the protests in Egypt one of the ways in which politics and economics were linked, despite the regime's attempts at imposing a distinction between what they perceived as being strictly political and strictly economic. Echoing earlier presentations that looked at civil society in Egypt through the lens of political economy, Gamal argued that labor unions in Egypt were front and center in terms of addressing important issues and the possible alternatives to economics in Egypt. An example of one of

these alternatives are cooperatives, which Gamal traced back to 1910, indicating how they have endured major transformations from being a tool of democratizing the governance of production to a means of state control, primarily over peasants. Gamal demonstrated how cooperatives were transformed during the uprisings, when workers and farmers emerged as leaders of cooperatives. Yet when workers look toward the law and judiciary in order to address their grievances, it was clear that workers were left abandoned by a system that was prioritizing the "political" over the "economic."

The panel then turned to Rima Majed's presentation on civil society's usages of social sciences, pointing to the prevalence of an imbalanced relationship between academia and civil society in the Arab world. Majed pointed to the fact that most research produced by civil society organizations does not include the participation of academics, as an example of the rupture between academia and civil society in the region.



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Up next, [@waelgamal](#) at [#AICC2015](#) on "Economic Alternatives"

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Economic, social, and political slogans of the uprisings demonstrate clear link btwn Arab world and international system. [#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

In [#Egypt](#), uprisings demonstrated clear link on part of protesters btwn politics and economics. [#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Regime responses to uprising in [#Egypt](#) was very defensive re protecting the division between "the political" and "the economic" [#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

What happened in [#Egypt](#) provided several alternatives re economics.
[#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Unions were at forefront of highlighting key issues and alternatives re economics in [#Egypt](#), says [@waelgamal](#) in [#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Long history of cooperatives in [#Egypt](#), saying back to 1910.
[#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Historical transformation of cooperatives in [#Egypt](#) from democratic governance of production to state-control of peasants. [#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

1967: creation of company that produced 60% of Egypt seed needs. Company ultimately privatized, normalized relations with Israel.
[#AICC2015](#)

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

In midst of uprising, workers & farmers took direct ownership of co. & managed it for two years making profit & addressing needs. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

In #Egypt, workers turned to law & judiciary to address grievances. But to no avail given corruption. #AICC2015

22 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Political parties have completely abandoned worker & peasant issues, privileging "political issues" over "economic issues" #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

In #Egypt, demonization of worker and peasant demands as parochial demands rather than national demands. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Rima Majed at #AICC2015 presenting on social sciences in the Arab world and whether/how civil society utilize it.

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Need to attend to asymmetric relationship between academia and civil society. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Most research studies publish by civil society orgs not conducted by academics. Important to explore why and what it says. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Question to @waelgamal from @ziadaburish about what "economic alternatives" look like in practice given our historical context. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

In #AICC2015, @waelgamal stresses need to create space in which we can think through "economic alternatives." They don't exist b/c no space

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

As Day 2 of #AICC2015 comes to end, heated debate/discussion about responsibility of social scientists and universities toward civil society

21 DAYS AGO

Panel 8: The Rulers and the Ruled

Chair: Sbeih Sbeih, Birzeit University

Post-Revolution: Civil society and the democratic transformation in Egypt, by Mohamed Elagati, Arab Forum for

Alternatives, Egypt

Explaining the Constraints on Civic Activism in Libya: Appraising the 2011-2013 Case of Constitutional Development, by Carmen Geha, AUB

Beyond 'Business as Usual': Regime-Society relations in Jordan four years after 2011, by Ziad Abu Rish, Ohio University, United States

The eighth panel of the conference focused on the theme "the rules and the ruled" with papers that examined Egypt, Libya, and Jordan. Mohamed Elagati turned his focus on the post-revolution period in Egypt, highlighting an opening that created space for alternative sources for news. Elagati qualified that assertion by pointing to how this opening was still managed by state processes regarding the laws of registration, ensuring that power remain relatively entrapped. Carmen Geha's paper brought the discussion to Libya, primarily looking at the role of civic activism in developing the constitution from 2011 to 2013. Geha indicated how this process and its actors were victims of predatorial politics, citing the assassination of three people who were involved in this process through their civil society work. The role of civil society in Libya was especially important in this process because of the atmosphere under the preceding regime when political parties were banned. Geha argued that her paper was largely driven by the incorporation of history and the presence of weak state institutions in order to paint a more accurate picture of the civil society landscape in Libya. This was also exemplified in the data collected during her research, namely that an astounding ninety-one percent of her respondents believed that civil society plays a major role in "rebuilding Libya."

The panel concluded with Ziad Abu-Rish's paper, which examined regime-society relations in Jordan. Abu-Rish pointed to how the overall decline in optimism in the region colors regime-society relations in Jordan, arguing that while observers have been hung up on why no major change took place in Jordan, they have been ignoring the realities of civic engagement in the country. Even in discussions on the impact of constitutional reforms in Jordan, such discussions have come at the expense of focusing on the king's ability to appoint and dismiss military leadership. Abu-Rish highlighted some of the pitfalls of the reforms, such as the laws on press and terrorism, which have been used to assert the regime's power--a regime which Abu-Rish described as not being wholly ignorant of the region's political climate.





The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

First "Rulers and the Ruled" panel this morning: @moagati on #Egypt, @CarmenGeha on #Libya, and @ziadaburish on #Jordan. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Starting off is @moagati with "Post-Revolution: Civil society and the democratic transformation in Egypt." #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@moagati: after the revolution, there was an opening of space, including alternative media and news. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@moagati: Phases/shifts in laws of registration for organizations and groups dependent on those in power. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Next is @CarmenGeha, discussing civic activism and constitutional development in #Libya 2011-2013. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@CarmenGeha: At least 3 people who participated in this research have been assassinated as a result of their civil society work. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Due to bans on political parties, etc. in #Libya pre-2011, civil society had to be built from scratch. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@CarmenGeha: I conceptualized role of civil society by taking historical elements and weak state institutions into account. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@CarmenGeha emphasizes importance of understanding constitutional phases and (dis)order in #Libya. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@CarmenGeha: 91% of respondents said that civil society had a role in "rebuilding #Libya." #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@CarmenGeha: Constitutional priorities in #Libya dependent on region. For East: oil and natural resources. #AICC2015 (1 of 2)

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@ziadaburish starting presentation on regime-society relations in Jordan, reflecting on decline in optimism in region. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@ziadaburish: people have been looking at why nothing has happened in #Jordan, not analyzing realities of civic engagement. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@ziadaburish: Most debates on effect of const. reform in #Jordan misses ability of king to appoint & dismiss military heads. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@ziadaburish: Laws on press very significant; ex. of journalist who isn't member of press syndicate being charged with perjury #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@ziadaburish: new #Jordan law defines terrorism as any act that disturbs order, foreign relations of Jordan, sows discord, etc. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@ziadaburish: This is not a regime that is unconcerned or unaware of region's climate. #Jordan #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



Heba Al-Nasser
@HebaAlNasser

.@ziadaburish Field of knowledge production about the #ME region is going to be prosperous n #Jordan @AsfariInstitute #AICC2015

🔄 @AsfariInstitute · 21 DAYS AGO



Heba Al-Nasser
@HebaAlNasser

.@ziadaburish Yes, reforms were more ceremonial n Jordan.WarOnTerror has also affected #CivilSociety scene giving rise to big NGOs #AICC2015

🔄 @AsfariInstitute · 21 DAYS AGO



Panel 9: The Rulers and the Ruled (2)

Chair: Hassan Abbas, Syrian League for Citizenship

Focus on the Relationship between the Rulers and the Ruled in the Era of the Arab Uprisings, by Massoud Daher, Lebanese University

Beyond the 'Moroccan Exception': Historicizing state and civil society relations in Morocco, by Samia Errazzouki, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, United States

The Role of Syrian Civil Society in Mediation and Peacemaking in Syria, by Rim Turkmani, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom

The final panel of the conference built on the theme of "the rulers and the ruled," starting with Massoud Daher's presentation that broadly examined these relations in the context of the uprisings. Daher asserted that the slogans chanted during protests indicated that the uprisings had state political and socioeconomic goals, citing the importance of incorporating discussions on the historical relationships that have shaped relations between the rulers and the ruled. Samia Errazzouki's paper carried on this theme of incorporating a historical approach by historicizing state-civil society relations in Morocco as a way of debunking claims of Morocco as a regional model and exception. Errazzouki highlighted how state-civil society relations in Morocco are rooted in a history of co-optation, marginalization, and the calculated use of violence, using the Moroccan Human Rights Association as an example of these relations. Rim Turkmani concluded the panel with her paper on the role of civil society in Syria during the processes of mediation and peacemaking. Turkmani argued Syrian civil society's role in the future will largely be determined by its ability to be involved in resolving the conflict. Turkmani referred to Homs and Al-Ghouta as examples where ceasefires were negotiated through Syrian civil society.



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Our next panel with Massoud Daher, (Samia Errazzouki) @charquaouia, and @Rim_Turkmani is starting now. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Starting now is Massoud Ali with "Focus on the Relationship between the Rulers and the Ruled in the Era of the Arab Uprisings." #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Daher points to slogans during protest as being indicative that uprisings did have specific political and socio-economic goals. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Daher discussing historical relationships, roles, and responsibilities between the rulers and ruled in the region. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Errazzouki (@charquaouia) now starting her presentation on historicizing the 'Moroccan Exception' #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@charquaouia: Morocco was designated as both regional model and exception. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@charquaouia: Essential to historically (de)construct royal legacy and civil society-state relations. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@charquaouia: State-civil society relations steeped in history co-optation, marginalization, and use of violence. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



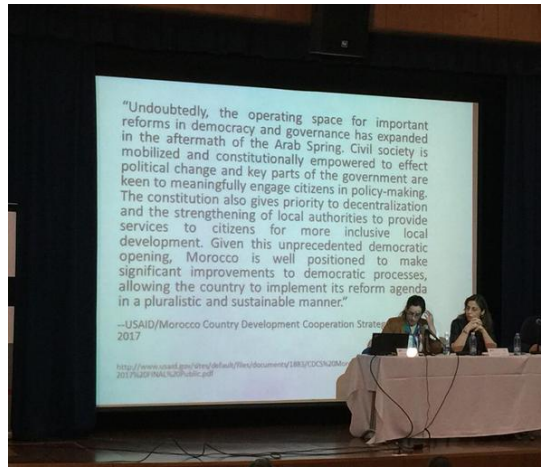
The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@charquaouia: Myth of Moroccan exception has infiltrated policy circles and foreign policy of other countries toward Morocco. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO





Habib Battah
@habib_b

. @charquaouia : The king is the senior business partner of private sector... Western media eats up 'liberalization' #Morocco #AICC2015

🔄 @AsfariInstitute · 21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@Rim_Turkmani discussing shift from Syrian civil society calling for rights to calling for peace. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@Rim_Turkmani: what will determine role of Syrian civil society in the future is ability to play role in resolving conflict. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@Rim_Turkmani: what will determine role of Syrian civil society in the future is ability to play role in resolving conflict. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@Rim_Turkmani: "new wars" are a mutual enterprise and it is to benefit of actors for conflict to continue. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@Rim_Turkmani: Homs and Al-Ghouta are examples of cease-fires negotiated via Syrian civil society. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



Open Discussion: Elements for a Future Agenda

Facilitators:

Ziad Abdel Samad, Arab NGO Network for Development;
Fateh Azzam, Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, AUB;
Bassam Haddad, Arab Studies Institute, George Mason University; and
Rania Masri, Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, AUB

The conference ended in a vibrant and extended open discussion among conference speakers and attendees. The facilitators laid out four main issues of focus to guide the closing session: concepts, role and function of academia, empirical case studies, and possibilities for alternatives. Under each of these four umbrellas, comments and debate ran well over time allotted, with all in attendance enthusiastic to contribute to establishing an agenda moving forward from the presentations of research and conversations had throughout the weekend. Fateh Azzam reminded the group that the goal was not to start from the ground floor, but that practitioners, academics, and all those in attendance are resources for each other and should share basic information in order to build a more specific research agenda. Bassam Haddad, in response to a comment from a participant, encouraged the discussants to keep the current context of an absence of functioning political parties in mind as a reason for why civil society is burdened with responsibilities it cannot always fulfill — and more generally that “we need to not only discuss what the role of academia ought to be, but what it currently is in the Arab world.” With these interjections and others from the facilitators, discussants worked to push themselves and each other past what Azzam called the “tendency to oversimplify” and insist on an atmosphere of free inquiry, with all of the conference organizers maintaining that these conversations do not end at the end of the session, but that this conference is a community and this research is work that must be built on and published. Below, you can read a wide sampling of the comments made during the open discussion.



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Audience members settling in now for wrap-up to conference and open discussion. [#AICC2015](#)

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

4 issues of focus 4 discussion: Concepts, Role & Function of Academia, Empirical Case Studies, & Possibilities for Alternatives. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Floor open now on “concepts.” @CarmenGeha: need to revisit what terms mean in localities, what people say. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Comment: Does all of this talk about civil society mean to imply that political parties are irrelevant? #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Comment: We cannot ignore the role of the international state system, even as we discuss transformations re: civil society. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Comment: Civil society is becoming more non-political. Does civil society have political obligations though? [#AICC2015](#)

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Traditional civil society still very interesting and integral. Many things happening in business now that need to be discussed. [#AICC2015](#)

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@moagati: We always want to start with larger concepts and then go into specifics. Why not try starting with the particulars? [#AICC2015](#)

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@fatehazzam: goal not to start from ground floor. We are resources for each other & should share basic info to get to specifics [#AICC2015](#)

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@fatehazzam: goal not to start from ground floor. We are resources for each other & should share basic info to get to specifics [#AICC2015](#)

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@4Bassam: in absence of functioning political parties, civil society is burdened w/ responsibilities it cannot always fulfill. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Comment: Local citizenship engagement and generational understandings of concepts and terms are also critical to study. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Need to look at transition, where not only projects and initiatives start but where we actually want to end up. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Moving on now to second issue of focus: role and function of academia generally and creating an alternative project. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Need to rethink fundamentally the idea of citizenship, esp. with marginalized communities (non- and sub-citizens). #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@AmerZahr: academics should take active role in helping think through future political solutions. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@CarmenGeha: Academics should have a practitioner side to their work. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Leila Hilal: Production has to be shared outside of academia...to business, policy circles, etc. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@alaashehabi No one is discussing academia in the Arab world and the toxicity of Gulf funding, threats to academic freedom. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@4Bassam: we need to not only discuss what the role *ought* to be, but what it currently is in the Arab world. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Shared spaces for academics and practitioners is essential. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Ziad: Let's not forget that academia is a part of civil society and there are examples of success to look to. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

.@4Bassam: we have enormous reach through our students who move into civil society and public realm.

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute
@AsfariInstitute

Moving on now to priorities for empirical case studies. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

An understanding of the militancy in conflict important to understand how civil society will be shaped. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@moagati: we cannot talk about civil society or citizenship without examining the citizen. Cross-cutting comparative study. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@moagati: we cannot talk about civil society or citizenship without examining the citizen. Cross-cutting comparative study. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

How can civil society contribute to lessening radicalization of marginalized communities by engaging them? #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Often times, numbers are needed and access is not granted to said statistics. #AICC2015

21 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Producing knowledge is necessarily producing power and we should not shy away from this re: case studies, etc. #AICC2015

20 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@HebaAlNasser: What is an enabling environment for healthy civil society? #AICC2015

20 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Religious organizations and religion in society should be in research agenda re: civil society and citizenship. #AICC2015

20 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Research that does not ascribe to binary between civil society and citizenship. #AICC2015

20 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Moving on now to next steps for research, discussions, papers from this conference. #AICC2015

20 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@CarmenGeha: Need to renew research tools and research alternative funding, not only examine and critique donor funding. #AICC2015

20 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

Open discussion closing now & facilitators explaining multiple potential paths forward for publication of research presented here. #AICC2015

20 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@4Bassam: this is not a conference that ends at the conference. This is a community & work we want to build on. #AICC2015

20 DAYS AGO



The Asfari Institute

@AsfariInstitute

.@fatehazzam critical for us to move away from tendency to oversimplify and insist on atmosphere of free inquiry. #AICC2015

20 DAYS AGO



