

Public Talk

„Revolts and Dignity: the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean from the 1970s until today“

Dr. Leyla Dakhli, historian, CNRS France

Hosted and introduced by Falestin Naili
Seats are limited. Please register by email:
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Kollegienhaus, room 115

Thawrât al-karâma -- “the revolutions of dignity” – continues to be a salient term that people from Morocco to Syria use to describe decades of political upheaval. Claimed, proclaimed, and chanted, dignity has been a common refrain that crystallized aspiration, affect, and demands. Analysis of the last decades of political protest and contestation have emphasized the quest for freedom, democracy and justice, while ignoring or marginalizing the aspiration to and proclamation of dignity. Dignity has much to teach us. It dismantles the public/private divide, while shedding light on the multiple forms of dispossession that people were subjected to, survived, and protested against in authoritarian situations and under (post)-colonial conditions. Dignity also challenges the understanding of the present as marked by the lack or absence of revolutionary possibility and political alternatives from the structural adjustment policies of the IMF and World Bank (late 1970s-early 1980s) to the present. In exploring the term protestors used and crafted to narrate decolonial promise and disenchantment, I trace how the “revolts of dignity” shed light on the theories and practices of politics.



Photo source: Creative Memory of the Syrian revolution

Leyla Dakhli is a historian specializing in the intellectual and social history of the contemporary Arab world. She is a research fellow at the CNRS, Center for the Social History of Contemporary Worlds (France, Aubervilliers). Among her many publications: *Une Génération d'intellectuels arabes. Syrie-Liban, 1908-1940* (Karthala, 2009), *L'Esprit de la révolte. Archives et actualité des révolutions arabes* (Seuil, 2020), the latter resulting from her ERC project on revolts and revolutions in the Arab world since the 1950s (ERC-CO DREAM, Drafting and Enacting the Revolution in the Arab Mediterranean, <https://dream.hypotheses.org/>).