

MESP FACULTY UPDATE

Mehrzad Boroujerdi

(Director of MESP) published *Tarashidam, Parastidam, Shekastam: Gofarhay-e dar Siyasat va Hoveyat Irani [Essays on Iranian Politics and Identity]* (Tehran: Nashr-e Negah-e Mo'aser, 2010). He also wrote a chapter on "Iran" in Ellen Lust-Okar (ed.), *The Middle East*, 12th edition (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 2010) and an opinion piece for UAE's *Khaleej Times* (February 23, 2010). He conducted an interview with the *Mehr Nameh* magazine in Iran (March 1, 2010). Boroujerdi received a renewal grant for the "Iran Social Science Information Project" (<http://www.princeton.edu/irandataportal/>) (with Professor Mirjam Künkler of Princeton University) from the Social Science Research Council. He delivered invited lectures at Colgate University, Cornell University, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and the United States Institute of Peace.

Carol Fadda-Conroy

(Assistant Professor of English) published a book chapter titled "The New Transnational Immigrant and the Search for Home in Rabih Alameddine's *I, the Divine: A Novel in First Chapters*" in Layla Al-Maleh's edited collection, *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature* (Rodopi, 2009). Her essay on "Writing Memories of the Present: Alternative Narratives about the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon" appeared in *College Literature* 37.1 (2010): 159-73. She has been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer 2010 Stipend and a Future of Minority Studies postdoctoral fellowship for the Spring 2011 semester to work on her book manuscript "Between the Transnational and the Ethnic: Arab-American Literary Renegotiations of Self and Home."

Louis Kriesberg

(Professor Emeritus of Sociology) made presentations concerning President Obama and mediation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the Lauder School of Government, Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel (January 2010); the Walter Lebach Institute for Jewish Arab Co-existence at Tel Aviv University (January 2010); the International Studies Association Convention in New Orleans (February 2010); and the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University (March 2010). He also wrote ten encyclopedic entries for *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, *The International Studies Encyclopedia*, *Sage Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, and *Berghof Handbook Dialogue, No. 7, Peacebuilding at a Crossroads*.

Nancy Snow

(Associate Professor of Public Diplomacy) saw the third edition of her *Propaganda, Inc.* published by Seven Stories Press in March 2010. The book, which is about Snow's tenure at the U.S. Information Agency in Washington, D.C., has been published in several languages, including Japanese and Farsi. Her other book, *Information War: American Propaganda, Free Speech, and Opinion Control Since 9/11*, was translated into Arabic by Dr. Ahmed Bin Rashid Bin Said. A review of the book was published (May 12, 2010) in *Asharq Al-Awsat*, English language edition.

MESP STUDENT / ALUMNI UPDATE

Christine Bald

(B.A., 2008) is now working at the International Republican Institute (a D.C.-based NGO that does democracy and good governance promotion internationally) as a Program Assistant in the Middle East & North Africa division. She works on the Afghanistan, West Bank/Gaza, and Lebanon programs and also for the Arab Women's Leadership Institute, an IRI initiative.

Lisa Bhungalia

(Ph.D. Candidate in Geography) conducted a year of dissertation research in the Palestinian territories. Her dissertation analyzes the foreign assistance program of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in the West Bank and Gaza and its reception by aid-receiving communities. She is heading to Middlebury College for a Modern Standard Arabic program to build enhanced Arabic skills necessary for textual analysis of Arabic documents and primary source materials collected throughout the course of her field research.

Sara Bobak

(MES Major, Spring 2010) is heading to Providence, RI to be a High School Special Education teacher as part of the Teach for America program. Her new e-mail address is sara.bobak@gmail.com.

Selina Carter

(a triple Masters student in Public Administration, International Relations, and Economics) has received a Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) through the U.S. State Department. In 2009-10 she was a FLAS Scholar for the Turkish language. Selina's focus is on economic development policies in Turkey, especially within the agricultural sector.

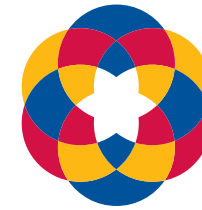
Abdulaziz Said

(MES Minor, Spring 2010) has received a Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) through the U.S. State Department to study in Egypt and a Fulbright scholarship to serve as an English Teaching Assistant in Turkey.

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Middle Eastern Studies Program



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NEAR EAST FOUNDATION MAKES HISTORIC MOVE TO SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

During the spring semester 2010, Syracuse University formed a strategic affiliation with the Near East Foundation (NEF), the oldest nondenominational international development organization in the United States. The affiliation brings together SU's rich mix of academic programs, institutes and other resources with NEF's 95 years of experience in finding creative solutions to the challenges facing vulnerable communities in the Middle East and Africa. NEF has relocated its headquarters to the SU campus in Syracuse, N.Y., while remaining an independent organization. This unprecedented affiliation between a major higher education institution and an international nonprofit development organization places NEF and SU at the cutting edge of innovative philanthropic partnerships.

SU Vice Chancellor and Provost Eric F. Spina points out that the University's new relationship with NEF is both natural and deeply reciprocal. "We know, as NEF does, that the challenges facing communities across the Middle East and Africa are complex, demanding cross-sector collaboration to address them," Spina says. "NEF's presence on the SU campus will facilitate precisely that, stimulating mutually beneficial engagement between our faculty—which already has extensive interests and expertise in those regions—and the foundation's existing community of experts. At the same time, we will create extraordinary opportunities for our students to test what they learn by tackling global issues in their local contexts."

Founded 95 years ago, NEF pioneered large-scale humanitarian relief in the period 1915-30, providing relief to Armenian, Greek, and Assyrian minorities facing persecution during the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, and community-based economic development from 1930 until today. NEF's work served as a model for social and economic development institutions around the world, including the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Peace Corps and the United Nations Development Program. Today, NEF works in the Middle East and Africa to improve conditions for vulnerable communities confronting the effects of chronic poverty, conflict, migration and climate change. These communities include marginalized social groups (young people in Morocco's peri-urban slums and residents of "poverty pockets" in rural Jordan); villages isolated by their environment (Berbers in Morocco's Atlas Mountains, Malians facing an encroaching desert, Egyptian farmers relocated from the Nile Delta, and rural Armenians cut off from economic opportunity); and people affected by conflict (Palestinians in the West Bank, Iraqis in Jordan, and Darfurians in central Sudan).

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Make sure to visit our website at <http://middle-eastern-studies.syr.edu/> to get more information about our ongoing activities.

Middle Eastern Studies Program

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NEF maintains six international offices, staffed by all-local teams, in Egypt, Jordan, Mali, Morocco, Palestine and Sudan, and supports programs in Armenia. The teams assist local partners to participate more fully in the development of their countries—to build the lives they envision for themselves. NEF supports these groups at three levels: increasing access to knowledge necessary to participate fully in civic and economic life through education, job training, and literacy programs; helping amplify their collective voice through community organizing and institution-strengthening initiatives; and creating economic opportunities through enterprise development, micro-credit, and improved agricultural and natural resource management.

NEF and SU are working together to create internships and research opportunities for the SU community. NEF will offer SU students opportunities to put their education into practice through service-learning activities in the United States and participation in on-the-ground development work abroad. For example, two groups of Maxwell MPA students are completing capstone workshops with NEF—one helping to develop an organization-wide system for measuring the impact of its work and another conducting research and analysis to assist with strategic planning. Moving forward, SU and NEF will work together to develop jointly implemented projects involving students and faculty in grassroots development efforts.

“NEF has always prided itself in being a learning organization,” says NEF’s new president, Charles Benjamin. “The fit with SU, with its strong commitment to social engagement, is perfect. Now more than ever we need thoughtful approaches to the problems of the Middle East and Africa. And we anticipate that the SU community will shape NEF’s work in important ways—bringing new skills and creative solutions to the people we serve, identifying new program areas, and analyzing our work with a new rigor.”

For more information on NEF, visit: <http://neareast.org>.

2009-2010 GRADUATING STUDENTS

We congratulate the following twenty-three students who earned a degree in Middle Eastern Studies during the 2009-2010 academic year:

- Paul Alberry (MES Minor, Fall 2009)
- Jonathan Alter (MES Minor, Fall 2009)
- Sydney Anderson (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Sara Rose Bobak (MES Major, Spring 2010)
- Rebecca Chad (MES Major, Spring 2010)
- Jacob M. Cramer (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Stephen Dockery (MES Major, Spring 2010)
- Anna Firliet (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Ryan Fishman (MES Major, Spring 2010)
- Kasey Flohr (MES Major, Spring 2010)
- Eric Inafuku (MES Graduate Certificate, Fall 2009)
- Haifa Jedea (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Laila Kabbaj (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Nayab Khan (MES Major, Spring 2010)
- Anna Koulouris (MES Major, Spring 2010)
- Ejolee Mitchell (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Max Nepstad (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Ilyana Rahman (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Brian Riedy (MES Graduate Certificate, Fall 2009)
- Abdulaziz K. Said (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Mehvesh Shereef (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Bryan Young (MES Minor, Spring 2010)
- Tarek Zatet (MES Major, Spring 2010)

2010 YABROUDI AWARD RECIPIENTS

The 2010 Hasan Abdullah Yabroudi Award for the best undergraduate paper on the Middle East was granted to Anna Koulouris (Newspaper and Middle Eastern Studies Major) for a paper entitled “Iranian Nuclear Ambitions: Why an Iranian Nuclear Program is not a Threat to the West.” Ms. Koulouris argues that Iran’s development of a nuclear program, and even possible obtainment of nuclear weapons, is not a threat to the West. She attempts to place the nuclear developments in Iran in a fresh historical and strategic context. The argument is developed with a great degree of respect and nuance.

The 2010 Hasan Abdullah Yabroudi Award for a graduate paper went to Sarah Barkin (Ph.D. Candidate, English) for a paper entitled “Eating the Shadow of Memory: Food, Authenticity, and the Geography of Memory in *The Language of Baklava*.” Ms. Barkin’s paper explores how food connects and disconnects the migrant with their homeland. Beautifully written, the paper offers a careful analysis of geographic memory, gender roles and family dynamics in an Arab diaspora family.

Both papers can be viewed at <http://middle-eastern-studies.syr.edu/Awards.htm>.

The Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language (UISFL) grant from the U.S. Department of Education enabled MESP to give summer travel grants to the following undergraduate students:

- Anna Koulouris to do an internship at the *Palestine-Israel Journal* in East Jerusalem
- Marc Mason (International Relations, Communication and Rhetorical Studies Majors and Middle Eastern Studies Minor) to do an internship at the Central Elections Commission of Palestine (Ramallah, Palestine)
- Ilyana Rahman (Biology and Middle Eastern Studies) to enroll in a six-week Arabic Language Program at The Lebanese American University

Furthermore, the following graduate students also received Yabroudi/MESP summer travel grants:

- Khaldoun Abou Assi (to conduct research in Lebanon)
- Aniseh Bassiri Tabrizi (to conduct research and do an internship in Turkey)
- Lisa Bhungalia (to study advanced Arabic at Middlebury College)
- Jared Keyel (to do an internship in Lebanon)
- Michael Makara (to conduct research in Jordan)
- Sarah Marusek (to conduct research in Lebanon)
- Deepa Prakash (to conduct research in Washington, D.C.)
- Stephanie Rugolo (to conduct research in Israel and East Jerusalem)

Back row from left:
Sarah Barkin
Stephanie Rugolo
Aniseh Bassiri Tabrizi
Jared Keyel
Anna Koulouris
Marc Mason
Michael Makara
Sarah Marusek

Front row from left:
Deepa Prakash
Ilyana Rahman



SPRING 2010 EVENTS

In its Spring 2010 events schedule, MESP hosted an array of speakers and also continued the Arabic and Hebrew language conversation table series. Following is a list of speakers:

- February 8 **Miriam Elman** (Associate Professor of Political Science, Syracuse University), "The Future of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process"
- February 9 **Daphne Tsimhoni** (Schusterman Visiting Israeli Professor, Northeastern University), "Christians in Israel and the Middle East"
- February 25 **Michael Berenbaum** (Professor of Jewish Studies, American Jewish University; Director, Sigi Ziering Center for the Study of the Holocaust and Ethics), "Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial in the Middle East"
- March 8 "Türkiye in Perspective" panel moderated by **James Bennett** (Maxwell School, Syracuse University) with Yildirim Yildirim (Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University), Mustafa Gokcek (Niagara University) and York Norman (Buffalo State College)
- March 10 "The EU After the Lisbon Treaty: A New Peacemaker Between Israelis and Palestinians?" conference with keynote speaker **Costanza Musu** (University of Ottawa)
- March 22 **Nir Rosen** (Independent Journalist), "Updates from Afghanistan and Iraq"
- March 24 **Jason Wiles** (Assistant Professor of Biology, Syracuse University), "Evolution in Islamic Societies"
- March 31 **Peter Moore** (Associate Professor of Political Science, Case Western Reserve University), "Economies, Political and Otherwise of the Middle East"
- April 1 **Joshua Stacher** (Assistant Professor of Political Science, Kent State University), "U.S.–Arab Relations: Difference between Democracy and Authoritarianism"
- April 1 **Charlie Benjamin** (President of Near East Foundation), "Practicing Social and Economic Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Introducing the New Affiliation between SU and the Near East Foundation"
- April 5 **Kamel Abu-Jaber** (President of Jordan Institute for Middle Eastern Studies), "Problems of the Arab World"
- April 7 **Kim Jenson** (Poet and Novelist) and Zahi Khamis (Artist), "The Color of Exile, the Language of Witness: An Evening of Art and Poetry for Palestine"
- April 8 **Stacey P. Yadav** (Assistant Professor of Political Science, Hobart and William Smith), "Women's Voices vs. Women's Votes: Understanding the Associational Shift in Yemen"
- April 21 "Whose justice? Preemptive Prosecution in the 'War on Terror,'" Panel discussion with **Laila Al-Arian**, writer and producer for *Al Jazeera* English
- April 22 **Ziad Fahmy** (Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Cornell University), "Colloquial Mass Culture and Nationalism in Egypt: 1908-18"



AN UPDATE FROM THE FIELD: A NAKBA COMMEMORATION AT SHATILA CAMP IN BEIRUT by Sarah Marusek

Every May, Palestinians around the world commemorate the 1948 Nakba, or disaster, that forced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland, including around 120,000 who found refuge in what were originally intended to be temporary camps in Lebanon. Since then, the situation for Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon has been marked by violence and oppression during times of both war and peace. In fact, saying that Palestinians even 'live' in Lebanon is quite misleading as they are not entitled to work outside of the camps, let alone access public services such as education and healthcare. In Beirut, collective memory is also deeply scarred by The War of the Camps during Lebanon's long and bloody civil war, as well as the 1982 massacre of civilians at the Sabra and Shatila Camps. Considering these dire circumstances, an outsider might imagine that Palestinians in the remaining Shatila camp would be bereft of any hope for a better future. But doing so would be another injustice, as illustrated by the vibrant celebration of history, tragedy, resilience and faith during a special Nakba commemoration Palestinian youths organized on May 22, 2010 in Beirut's Shatila Camp.

On this warm Saturday afternoon, hundreds of Palestinians gathered at the Youth Center. They were a diverse crowd comprising babies, children, adults and the elderly, all boisterously assembled in front of a small stage. Neighbors were leaning over balconies and peering through windows to watch the event. As a foreigner to the camps, women welcomed me with warm smiles and greetings. Children stared at me with wide eyes before breaking into infectious laughter, either then asking my name or shyly looking away. On stage young men and women were interpreting a series of traditional Palestinian songs and dances as modern reflections on how they live the Nakba through their own lives as well as through their parents, grandparents and the wider community. In these actions, they communicated a powerful message of solidarity.

The enormously talented youths sang poetic songs about the Nakba while several women danced in front of the stage waving kafiyehs and Kalashnikovs, capturing the defiant spirit of the performances by the resolute smiles on their lips. After each song the youths performed a dance wearing beautiful traditional costumes borrowed from the nearby Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS). The PRCS was founded in 1968 to alleviate suffering in the Occupied Territories and the Diaspora. One of their current projects involves teaching women in the camps how to sew and embroider and encouraging artisanship which the PRCS then sells at a museum and showroom just outside of the Sabra and Shatila camps. According to one of the dancer's sisters, the youths had been staying up until eleven every night leading up to the commemoration. This hard work was apparent in a series of dances that were emotional, athletic and full of grace. They performed the Palestinian debka and choreographed a retelling of the Nakba, a story of love that is taken away but if remembered together will never be forgotten.

Between every song and dance, those members of the community who were forced to leave their homeland 63 years ago were recognized for their perseverance and strength. These inspirational men and women were given a plaque while the crowd showed their appreciation through cheers and applause. Behind the stage was an artistic graphic montage of Palestine, and above that a poster with images, underneath a large Palestinian flag, of those martyred in the struggle for their homeland. Together these scenes captured the contradiction of the Nakba and the spirit of Palestinians in the camps today: tragedy and loss accompanied by hope and defiance.



Photos credit of Franklin Lamb • Palestine Civil Rights Campaign

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In the 2009-2010 school year, the MESP organized a successful teacher training workshop series for the Central New York Council for Social Studies (CNYCSS) sponsored by a UISFL grant. In coordination with Kim O'Neil, the President of CNYCSS, we organized four faculty presentations on various topics related to the Middle East, presenting selected books and handouts to social studies teachers in order to augment their knowledge. The workshops were held either at local schools or at the New York State United Teachers facility in East Syracuse.

During fall semester we held the following two workshops: "How to Understand Arab Culture" led by Rania Habib, Assistant Professor of Linguistics and Coordinator of Arabic Program; and "The Future of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process" led by Miriam Elman, Associate Professor of Political Science. During spring semester we held an additional two workshops: "Understanding Terrorist Organizations in the Middle East" led by Isaac Kfir, a visiting Assistant Professor from the Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism; and "Islamic Organizations, Welfare Policies, and Legitimacy in the Middle East" led by Sarah Marusek, Social Science Doctoral Candidate. Between six to fifteen teachers participated in each seminar and received attendance certificates as well as credit toward in-service hours needed for New York State certification requirements.

During each session teachers were able to ask the presenter questions, often leading to a spirited group discussion on the respective topics. The feedback from teachers was excellent, with participants saying they really enjoyed both the presentations and the accompanying readings. The MESP will continue to hold further teacher training workshops throughout 2010-2011.

In addition to these workshops, Sarah Marusek participated in a panel on "Reflections from Abroad on the Obama Presidency" at the annual CNYCSS conference, along with panelists from the East Asia Center, South Asia Center, and Center for European Studies. Around 300 teachers from Central New York attended the conference.

NEW AND DEPARTING FACULTY

The Middle Eastern Studies Program is happy to welcome Professor Sam Salem as the inaugural Yabroudi Chair of Sustainable Civil Infrastructure in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Prof. Salem (Ph.D., University of Alberta, 1998) has more than twenty years of industrial and academic experience in infrastructure management, construction engineering and management, and sustainable development. As a licensed Professional Engineer, Certified Professional Constructor and a LEED Accredited Professional, he has conducted research and has done consulting projects in the U.S., Canada and the Middle East. He focuses his teaching and research activities on managing the planning, engineering, construction, and post-construction processes of buildings and infrastructures to provide safe, economical, and sustainable systems. As part of his Yabroudi Chair duties, he coordinates the annual Dubai Construction Internship Program. Prof. Salem has published more than 70 refereed articles and is a founding member of the International Society for Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Infrastructures. Before joining SU, he was a Professor and Director of the Infrastructure Systems and Management Program at the University of Cincinnati.

At the same time, we are sorry to part with the following colleagues:

- Prof. James Bennett (Political Science) is retiring after many years of brilliant teaching.
- Prof. Arsalan Kahnemuyipour (Linguistics) is leaving Syracuse to take up a new position at the University of Toronto, Mississauga.
- Prof. Gerlinde Ulm Sanford (former Chair of the Languages, Literature and Linguistics Department) passed away in April 2010.

PROJECT ON DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST NOW IN ITS SECOND YEAR

Launched in Fall 2008 with a grant from the Moynihan Institute, the Project on Democracy in the Middle East (DIME) was generously refunded this year by Moynihan and received supplemental support from a new U.S. Department of Education grant. The DIME Project, which explores regime transformation and dynamics in the contemporary Middle East from a cross-disciplinary perspective, enrolled five undergraduate students and nine graduate students in a year-long seminar that included a guest speaker series, discussions on seminal readings, and the opportunity to interact with visiting scholars and practitioners from the region in residence at Maxwell through the LDF and CELF programs.

Led by Miriam Elman, the six credit (2 semester) interdisciplinary course sequence covered a wide variety of topics including the sources of the democratic deficit in the Arab world; U.S. democracy promotion in the Middle East; the impact of new and old media on democratization prospects; the rise of political Islam; civil society in the Middle East; and the nexus between oil and women's rights. These topics were examined by considering state/societal dynamics across the region, including in Yemen, Egypt, Iran, Palestine, Turkey, and the Gulf. Guest speakers included the preeminent scholar of the Holocaust, Michael Berenbaum, who spoke on "Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial in the Middle East;" Visiting Professor at Northeastern University, Daphne Tsimhoni, who delivered a public lecture on "Christians in Israel and the Middle East;" and Ramazan Kilinc of Michigan State University who shared his research on "Islam, Secularism, and Democracy in Turkey."

The DIME course also required students to work on a project related to their interests and program of study. On April 8, the students presented these research projects to the SU community using a variety of interactive media, including Powerpoint slides, posterboards, and video. This culminating event, entitled "State and Society in the Contemporary Middle East: Showcasing 2009-2010 Student Research Projects," drew an audience of over 70 students, faculty, SU administrators, visiting scholars, and community members. They had the chance to learn more about the modern Middle East in an informal setting while listening to Middle Eastern music and sampling the region's cuisine. The diverse set of student projects included studies on the role of civil society in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the comparison of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas; the obstacles to U.S. democracy promotion in the region; the Sadrist movement in Iraq; media in the Middle East; democracy in Libya, Israel and Yemen; and the "green movement" in Iran.

For 2010-2011, DIME will continue to sponsor a guest speaker series. In addition, DIME Project Director Miriam Elman plans to work with interested students on several publications related to democracy, religion, and conflict in the contemporary Middle East.

GIFTS RECEIVED

We would like to thank the following individuals for their generous support of the Middle Eastern Studies Program during the 2009-10 academic year:

Ahmad and Elizabeth El-Hindi, Rev. Hani W. Khoury, Richard Thomas Kortright, Dr. Othman Shibly, Alan V. Sokolow, and Abdallah Yabroudi.

If you would like to receive information concerning Middle East related events at Syracuse University or if you would like to receive daily briefings on current events in the Middle East please send an e-mail to mes@maxwell.syr.edu or call (315) 443-5877.



YOUTH AND MIGRATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

by Guita G. Hourani

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is endowed with abundant human capital; almost one in five people are between the ages of 15 and 24. A 2005 estimate of its population gave a staggering figure of 95 million youth. Low infant mortality and high fertility rates caused this phenomenon, resulting in the recently coined term, "youth bulge." The region's growth rates until the 1980s were at 3 percent per year while the rest of the world averaged 2 percent. Currently, the fertility rate in the region stands at 2 percent a year while the world is growing at 1.2 percent. The "youth bulge" is exercising pressure on the region's government services, as well as on the environment.

The "youth bulge" creates large numbers of working-age youth, some of whom are educated and skilled and some who are less educated and unskilled. However, all have a high rate of mobility. This has resulted in abundant pools of migrants who move around within the region, especially to the Arab Gulf area, as well as outside the Arab world, mainly to Europe and North America.

Migration in the region has many causes; however, the main triggers are political instability, unresolved conflicts, poor returns on educational investments, low economic growth, increasing unemployment, and high population density in some areas which causes environmentally triggered migration. MENA labor market expansion is unable to match population growth. In other words, the labor markets in these regions are not able to absorb the mounting number of youth entering the job market every year.

While demographic expansion may be viewed as a blessing because it could be a catalyst for economic development, the lack of economic and labor policies that facilitate the entry of this excess population into the job market creates frustration. If this problem is not addressed, the responses will inevitably be either a voicing of frustration or an "exiting" of the unsuitable situation, to borrow a term from Albert O. Hirschman. Many of the region's political regimes are experiencing stalled democratic processes, which result in violent manifestations of frustration and/or political extremism. To exit is to migrate. Many of the MENA countries have eased their travel restrictions, thus increasing mobility. The proportion of young people who intend to emigrate is high. Whether effectively or nominally, emigration aspirations illustrate the inherent dissatisfaction that plagues the youth of these regions. Egypt, Morocco, and Iraq are the largest sources of emigrants, followed by Algeria, Yemen, Tunisia, and Lebanon.

In terms of destination, immigrants originating from Egypt, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, as well as the rest of the Mashrek, tend to head to the Gulf region, North America, and to Europe to a lesser extent, while emigrants from North Africa, mainly Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria and the rest of the Maghreb, tend to migrate to Europe, mainly to Spain, France, and Italy.

The typical emigrant from the MENA region is young, male, and unmarried, with little or no attachment to their countries in terms of land ownership, family obligations, or political affiliation. Consequently their return might be less of a problem, especially with increased mobility, skill transferability, and access to social and financial capital. It is important to note however that female migration in some of the MENA countries is on the rise.

It can now be assumed that countries which are currently benefiting from the remittances sent by their emigrant populations will not enjoy this privilege much longer. A clear trend in the reduction of remittances transferred to sending countries is evident. While both the emigrants' ownership of resources and the stock of human capital are increasing in the diaspora, money transfers toward the homeland are decreasing. This can be interpreted in many ways: an overall decrease in the will to return, settlement in the host country, or even migrating to a new destination, along with increasing investments in personal assets, education, and career development.

Governments in the MENA region are improving their links with their diasporas, aiming

mainly at increasing remittances and economic investments in the home country. Some are trying to create an environment suitable for channeling practical know-how, knowledge, and flow of ideas.

Today, technology, in particular satellite dishes and the internet, has brought the world to the most remote parts of the region. These technologies, along with education, travel, and transfer of knowledge from emigrant members to their families and the community in general, are changing the lives of the youth, thus furthering the gap between them and the decision-making elites.

The youth segment of the population is increasingly in need of access to education, jobs, and infrastructure in order to become productive citizens. The MENA regimes will be forced for the foreseeable future to tackle unresolved political and economic issues and to address reforms in order to accommodate the growth of working-age adults, women in the job market, and expectations for improved services and a better life. These forces will result in both peaceful and not so peaceful pressures on governments to improve their delivery capabilities.

Guita G. Hourani is the Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University, Lebanon. She was a Civic Education and Leadership Fellow (CELF) at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University in 2009-10.

SPRING 2010 FILM SERIES SHOWCASES THE BEST OF MIDDLE EASTERN CINEMA

In Spring 2010, the MESP showcased five films from the region, which not only captured the imagination of the audience but also, in the words of a local Syracuse resident who frequented the film screenings, "opened [their] eyes to a whole new world."

Majid Majidi's *Children of Heaven*, an Oscar-nominated film, explores questions of poverty and inequality in Iran through the prism of childhood innocence and the love that is shared between a brother and sister. The simple plot revolves around a lost pair of shoes but is told with such artistry to convey a deeply poignant story about personal sacrifice and triumph that is both inspiring and uplifting. Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir*, another Oscar-nominated film, deconstructs the psychology of war and memory, focusing on the Israel army's role in the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre of Palestinians during the Lebanese Civil War. By coupling stark animation with an emotional soundtrack, the film brilliantly captures the trauma that an Israeli soldier goes through as he tries to remember the details of his involvement in the massacre. What starts off as a nightmare where the protagonist is chased by 26 dogs turns into a superbly crafted story about the always-blurry lines between innocence and guilt.

The Visitor is a poignant film about a lonely and defeated economics professor who unexpectedly encounters two illegal immigrants, a Syrian musician and his Senegalese girlfriend, living in his vacant New York City apartment. Although the story that unfolds tells us little about these two immigrants, we do see how their presence transforms the professor from a hopeless widower into somebody once again ready to embrace life. The main theme is conjuncture: the unlikely relationships that develop between humans; experiencing art as a means to the universal; and the unfortunate clash of politics and justice, in this case the treatment of illegal immigrants from the Middle East during the Bush administration.

The film *Amreeka* chronicles the adventures of a single mother who leaves the West Bank with her teenage son with dreams of an exciting future in the promised land of small town Illinois. The director manages to offer a glimpse into the lives of a family of immigrants and first generation teenagers caught between their heritage and the new world, and the search for a place to call home. And finally, *Captain Abu Raed* is a film about an airport janitor who is mistaken for a pilot. The janitor goes on to inspire children from a poor neighborhood in Jordan to dream, think big and not be limited by their circumstances.

PREPARING ENGINEERING STUDENTS FOR DUBAI

Six students from L.C. Smith College of Engineering will head to Dubai to take part in the James A. Mandel and Samuel P. Clemence DCC-SU Internship Program. They will spend five weeks in Dubai, gaining exposure to the latest construction techniques and methodologies. With the tallest tower in the world, Burj Khalifa, standing proudly in Dubai and several construction companies aiming to build special, certified green projects, the emirate offers superb opportunities to learn the latest processes and methodologies in the industry. Sustainability, green technologies, and eco-awareness are the new buzz words in the construction industry of the region, with the United Arab Emirates having one of the highest carbon-footprints in the world.

"This five-week program is designed to expose students to the operations and physical realities of one of the leading construction firms in the United Arab Emirates. Students selected for this program will also have the opportunity to learn about business practices, the history and the culture of the Middle East, creating an environment for professional and personal development," said Prof. Samuel Clemence, Meredith Professor at the L.C. Smith College of Engineering. "Through a combination of learning and discussion sessions at corporate headquarters and on actual project sites, students will learn the detailed inner workings of the contracting and construction industry. This is a priceless opportunity to experience engineering practiced on a global scale," he added.

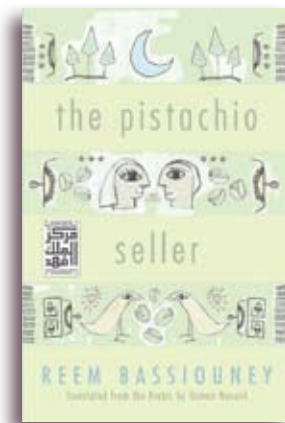
MESP organized several sessions for the young scholars, all budding civil engineers, to groom them for the internships. Prof. Robert A. Rubinstein (Anthropology) initiated the students into the field of the cultural anthropology of the Middle East by covering such topics as the varieties of environments in the region, linguistic conventions, the importance of family and personal ties, and hospitality and norms of business interaction. Prof. Mehrzad Boroujerdi (Political Science) spoke about the political significance of the Middle East, its process of nation-state formation, and some analytical pitfalls that one should avoid when thinking about the region.

Sarah Marusek (Social Science Doctoral Candidate) provided a perspective on the languages and dialects of the region and a quick overview of the relevant issues in the political discourse of the region, along with presenting an exhaustive reading list. Finally, Sabith Khan (MPA student and a former resident of Dubai) spoke about the customs, manners and gender relations in the UAE. He spoke about the growing role of women in the corporate world, the changing gender dynamics, the openness of the Emirate to people from all over the world, and the role of religion in everyday life.



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—Foreword Magazine,
Big Ten University Press Picks 2010

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My Bird

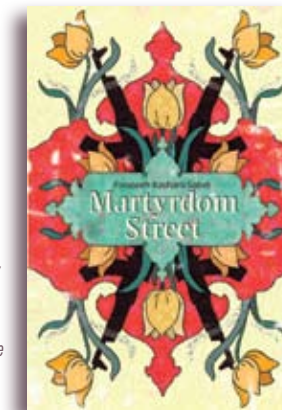
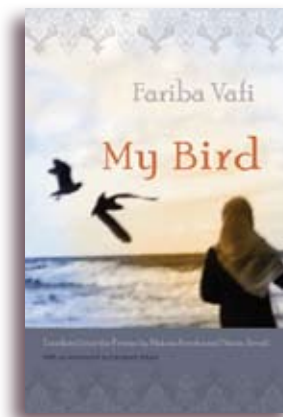
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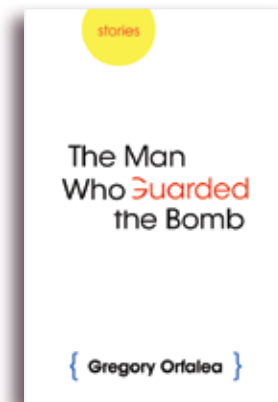
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