

Citizenship, Sectarianism and Belonging

December 16/17 2021
Call for Papers

Ten years after the Arab Uprisings, the struggle between rulers and ruled continues to shape the contours of political life across the region. Central to these struggles are questions about citizenship and its capacity to order political and social life through drawing lines of inclusion and exclusion. The study of citizenship has received renewed attention in Middle East and North Africa studies across recent years, reflecting the widespread challenges facing people in the region. The region's recent past, shaped by conflict, sectarian tensions, geopolitical rivalries, economic crises, and authoritarianism have all exacerbated tensions between rulers and ruled and, with it, questions about who is to be included as citizens.

Contestation over where lines of inclusion and exclusion are drawn are bound up within broader political struggles over the nature of national identity, sectarian cohesion, and transnational politics. From these debates, definitions of citizens' rights and responsibilities manifest in a struggle between rulers and ruled. The Arab Uprisings and the protests of 2019 in Iraq and Lebanon highlight this dissatisfaction with the terms of the social contract that binds people together in a state, yet in the years that followed, very little has changed; rulers across the region continue to use citizenship – and its revocation – as a mechanism of control within the governance structures of sovereign power.

To raise and address some of these questions, SEPAD is organizing its fourth annual conference on the theme of ***citizenship, sectarianism and belonging***. We welcome papers from different disciplinary backgrounds that engage with the following or similar questions:

- How central is the concept of citizenship in processes of boundary making and exclusion?
- What implications does the interaction of citizenship and sectarianism have for contemporary politics?
- What notions of citizenship are relevant when it comes to looking at transnational relationships and identities that go beyond the state?
- How do citizenship and nationalism interact in the Middle East, and to what effect?
- How can citizenship education serve the process of desectarianization?
- What conditions facilitate the emergence of active citizenship in divided and post-conflict societies?
- How far new developments such as labour force nationalization and COVID have affected citizenship rights and perceptions especially within the Gulf region?

We are delighted that keynote speeches will be given by **Dr Noora Lori** (Boston University) the author of *Offshore Citizens: Permanent "temporary Status in the Gulf* (Cambridge University Press, 2019) and **Professor Haider Ala Hamoudi** (University of Pittsburgh), the author of *Negotiating in Civil Conflict: Constitutional Construction and Imperfect Bargaining in Iraq* (University of Chicago Press, 2013).

Please submit abstracts of no more than **300 words** and panel proposals of up to 4 papers and panel rational (1500 words maximum) to **Elias Ghazal** (E.Ghazal@Lancaster.ac.uk) by **08.10.21 (date extended)**. Successful applicants will be informed within one month.