



Contentious politics and protest spaces: the spatial and political dynamics of Lebanon's October uprising

Drawing on literature that problematizes the political geography of protests, the lecture will analyze the intertwined spatial and political dynamics of Lebanon's October uprising. It will argue that understanding these protests and their dynamics requires an insight into the deep-seated disparities and long-standing grievances that the political system has enshrined in Lebanon's multi-levelled spatial, economic and political spheres. First, I unpack the causes and trajectory of the protests that broke out in Lebanon in October 2019. Then, I illustrate how protesters' performances and tactics in Lebanon's urban and rural localities enact a bottom-up insurgency against the sectarian state that has consolidated its "infrastructural power" through dominating public and private spaces.

Introductory readings:

Schwedler Jillian, "Spatial Dynamics of the Arab Uprisings." PS 46 (2013): 230-34

Fawaz, Mona, 'Neoliberal Urbanity and the Right to the City: A View from Beirut's Periphery,' *Development and Change*, 40.5(2009): 827-52

Background readings on Lebanon and the October uprising

Fakhoury, Tamirace. (2015). "Lebanon's Perilous Balancing Act," *Current History* 114 (776): 349–354.

Fakhoury, Tamirace. (2019) "The Unmaking of Lebanon's Sectarian Order? The October Uprising and Its Drivers", *Instituto Affari Internazionali* working paper

Majed Rima and Lana Salman (2019), Lebanon's Thawra, *Middle East Report* 292/3 (Fall/Winter 2019). <https://merip.org/2019/12/lebanons-thawra/>

Optional reading:

Henri Lefevre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. and eds. by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000 [1996])