

**EuroMed revolutions.
Protest and everyday geopolitics in the Mediterranean**

Supervisor: Dr. Sara Fregonese

Project Description

Applications are invited for PhD project proposals that will explore how the recent waves of popular protest and consequent political transition since 2011 reflect in the official security policies of the Union for the Mediterranean and how these policies, in turn, mediate everyday discourses and practices of security and insecurity in different Mediterranean locations. Using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, the research will trace the connections between official discourses in the *Politics and Security chapter of cooperation* of the Union for the Mediterranean and everyday localised experiences of security and insecurity post-2011. The candidate is invited to develop a project building on scholarship in political geography on the connections between official geopolitics and everyday life (Pain and Smith, 2008) and on the need to develop studies of the everyday and mundane expressions of geopolitics (Dittmer & Gray, 2010; Dittmer, 2013) and the mechanisms of state power (Painter, 2006).

Protest and uprising since at least early 2011 have been shaped by concerns for human rights, democracy, social justice and access to the city which are not the prerogative of the Arab world, but instead emerge on both sides of the Mediterranean, including, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece. By deliberately encompassing cities and localities across the Mediterranean, the project contributes to develop urban comparisons across global regions.

The Mediterranean is a particularly interesting site for examining and interpreting current developments in public sphere, dissent and political responses to protest. David Abulafia (2011), for example, puts the Mediterranean Sea – and the Greek financial crisis – at the centre of global geopolitical concerns. The protests have revealed tensions and contradictions in Euro-Mediterranean relations that make what Charles Tilly called “contentious politics” (in Kousis, Selwyn, & Clark, 2011, p. 3) extremely relevant on the urban and local levels.

Cities are central for dynamics of change, resistance, and securitization. While 9-11 shaped urban political geographies in the past decade (Gregory & Pred, 2007; Graham, 2004), mass protest shows how cities constitute physical and symbolic terrains for sociopolitical change. The research will engage in novel ways with urban geopolitics (Fregonese, 2012; Graham, 2004) by exploring the links between protest, EuroMediterranean official security policy and localised practices and negotiations of security and insecurity.

The research will include empirical fieldwork, with a range of case studies encompassing themes such as: the EU's changing relations with new Arab governmental partners and the impact at the local level; changes in official security policies and their reflection in the look, management, and meaning of urban spaces; and the changing landscape and politics of migration and mobility across the Mediterranean and its impact on local landscapes of border policing, migrant detention and management. Methods will include surveys, analysis of audio-visual and textual archives including social media; semi-structured interviews with activists, security officials, policy representatives, and urban managers, and visual methods to document spatial changes.



Graffiti in solidarity with the Greek riots in Spanish cities. Granada, July 2010. Photo: ©Sara Fregonese 2010.

References

- Abulafia D. (2011) *The Great Sea. A Human history of the Mediterranean*. London: Allen Lane.
- Bialasiewicz, L. (2011) "Borders, above all?" *Political Geography* 30 (6) 299–300
- Dittmer, J. (2013). Geopolitical assemblages and complexity. *Progress in Human Geography*. Retrieved October 15, 2013, from <http://phg.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/0309132513501405>
- Dittmer, J., & Gray, N. (2010). Popular Geopolitics 2.0: Towards New Methodologies of the Everyday: Popular geopolitics 2.0. *Geography Compass*, 4(11), pp. 1664–1677. Retrieved October 21, 2013,
- Fregonese, S. (2012). Urban Geopolitics 8 Years on. Hybrid Sovereignities, the Everyday, and Geographies of Peace. *Geography Compass*, 6(5), pp. 290–303. Retrieved August 3, 2012,
- Giaccaria, P. and Minca, C. (2010) The Mediterranean alternative. *Progress in Human Geography* 35 (3) 345-365.
- Gregory, D., & Pred, A. (2007). *Violent geographies. Fear, terror, and political violence*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Horden, P, Purcell, N. (2000) *The corrupting sea: a study of Mediterranean history* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kousis, M., Selwyn, T., & Clark, D. (2011). *Contested Mediterranean spaces ethnographic essays in honour of Charles Tilly*. New York: Berghahn Books. Retrieved November 13, 2012, from <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10482308>
- Leontidou, L. (1993) "Postmodernism and the City : Mediterranean Versions" *Urban Studies* 30(6): 949-965.
- Matvejevic, P. (1991) *Breviario Mediterraneo*. Milano: Garzanti.
- Painter, J. (2006). Prosaic geographies of stateness. *Political Geography*, 25(7), pp. 752–774. Retrieved October 21, 2013,
- Graham, S. (2004). *Cities, war, and terrorism: towards an urban geopolitics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Pain, R. and Smith, S. (2008). *Fear: critical geopolitics and everyday life*. Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Applicants should apply via <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/research/gees/geog-environ-sciences.aspx> where they should click on 'Apply now' and choose the option 'PhD in Department of Geography and Environmental Science (Human Geography)' and give the PhD title in the 'Funding details' section of the online application.