

APSA Supports MENA Scholars at the 2024 APSA Annual Meeting

DANA EL-ISSA | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, MENA WORKSHOPS AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Seven early-career scholars from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) were selected to participate in the 2024 APSA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA as part of a Research Development Group (RDG) focused on political behavior in the MENA region. Led by Drs. Nermin Allam (Rutgers University), and Mazen Hassan (Cairo University), the full-day seminar provided participants the opportunity to present and receive constructive feedback on research projects currently in-progress, which included PhD dissertations, research proposals, and article-length manuscripts.

Each year, APSA convenes several RDGs, often in partnership with organized sections or related groups, to provide international scholars an opportunity to advance their research manuscripts towards publication, participate in the conference, and develop scholarly networks with colleagues.

This year's MENA RDG was organized through [APSA's MENA Program](#), a long-term initiative to support early-career scholars across the Arab world. The RDG participants, consisting of six PhD candidates and one master's student from Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, and Tunisia, are alumni of the [2023 APSA MENA Workshop](#). This workshop, which was held in Cairo in partnership with the American University in Cairo (AUC), supported 18 fellows undertaking research in the field of political behavior in developing and refining their PhD dissertations and research proposals. During the program, participants received critical feedback on the substance and design of their research projects alongside personalized guidance on fieldwork and data collection plans. APSA's annual MENA Workshops aim to build long-term relationships between regionally-based scholars, encourage research collaborations, and embed those workshop cohorts in wider scholarly networks through follow-up engagements, such as the RDG at the Annual Meeting.



Dr. Nermin Allam from Rutgers University (fourth from the left) during a feedback session with participants at the 2024 MENA RDG in Philadelphia.

2024 MENA RDG Participants

1. **Motasem Abuzaid**, University of Oxford
Project Title: "Suburbanized Violence In Revolutions: Adjusting The Repression-Disruption Trade-Off"
2. **Abdulla Al-Kalisy**, University of St Andrews
Project Title: "Maintaining criticality in a horizontal Discourse Analysis"
3. **Dina Osama Lotfy**, Cairo University
Project Title: "Religion and Politics Post the Muslim Brotherhood Rule: A Theo-Secular State in Egypt?"
4. **Farah Nasser Rasmi**, Geneva Graduate Institute
Project Title: "Far Right Conspiracy Theories & Egyptian Political Narratives"
5. **Mohamed Gamal Aly Ahmed**, Cairo University
Project Title: "Family laws in Egypt and Tunisia: A comparative study of the settlement politics of religion in the state"
6. **Sama Mamdouh**, New Giza University
Project Title: "Explaining Democratic Backsliding in Democracies"
7. **Yasmine Haiti**, University of Illinois at Chicago
Project Title: "Organizing Islamist Parties: Insights into the Internal Structure of the Party of Justice and Development in Morocco"

The 2024 MENA RDG at the Annual Meeting served as a scholarly follow-up opportunity for fellows who had made significant progress on their projects nine months after the initial workshop in Cairo. Attendees sought additional feedback and guidance, particularly in addressing challenges they may have encountered during fieldwork or with secondary data collection.

Prior to the seminar, fellows submitted revised drafts of their manuscripts alongside a summary outlining how they had incorporated feedback from the previous workshop and updated their data collection efforts, thus showcasing the progress and developments of their research.

Papers were circulated weeks in advance to allow am-

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ple time for review by both co-leaders and fellow peers. During the seminar, Drs. Allam and Hassan provided another round of critical feedback, working closely with fellows to refine their theoretical framework and better position their contributions within the broader literature. Discussions also addressed strategies for presenting and addressing any potential and remaining weaknesses in the research design.

Additionally, organizers helped the cohort develop personalized schedules to optimize networking opportunities throughout the four-day conference, connecting them with relevant organized sections, related groups, and other scholars.

In an effort to provide additional long-term support following the conclusion of the conference, participants were encouraged to apply for the [MENA Mentoring Initiative](#), which pairs early-career scholars from the region with advanced-career scholars for feedback and guidance on their research projects



From left: Sama Mamdouh (New Giza University), Yasmine Haiti (University of Illinois at Chicago), Farah Nasser Rasmi, (Geneva Graduate Institute), Dina Osama Lofy (Cairo University)

with the aim of advancing manuscripts towards publication once nearly all components are complete.

Following their participation in the full-day seminar, some fellows had the opportunity to present their papers at research panels held by other Organized Sections, while some presented in [APSA's iPoster sessions](#), allowing them to display and discuss their research with the wider audience of conference attendees.

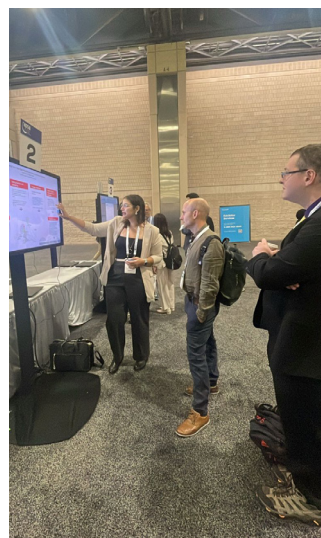
Funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, APSA's MENA Program is a multi-year effort to support political science research and networking among early-career scholars across the Arab MENA region.

Through a series of annual workshops, departmental collaborations, research grants, methods training and mentoring initiatives, the Program extends APSA's engagement with the international political science community and strengthens research networks inside and outside the MENA region.

For program news, updates, and additional information, contact menaworkshops@apsanet.org or visit the project website: <http://web.apsanet.org/mena/>. ■



Dina Osama Lofy, Assistant Lecturer and PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at Cairo University, during a discussion of her paper on "Religion and Politics Post the Muslim Brotherhood Rule: A Theo-Secular State in Egypt?"



MENA Workshop Alumna & RDG participant Farah Rasmi (PhD Candidate, Geneva Graduate Institute) discusses her paper, 'How Right-Wing Extremist Ideas and Violence Reproduce' with conference attendees at a poster session on Society, Extremism, and Democratic Backsliding

APSA VIRTUAL RESEARCH MEETING

The two-day event provides a forum for scholars interested in sharing their research, providing constructive feedback for others, and creating partnerships and networks for future collaboration.

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