

## The DREAM TEAM

The core team of DREAM is located at the French-German Social Science and Humanities Research Institution (Centre Marc Bloch). The Centre d'Histoire Sociale du vingtième siècle in Paris is also hosting part of the team.

The archiving of our research and data is made possible by our partnership with the International Institute of Social History (IISH), one of the world's leading research institutes on social history.

The DREAM-research-team consists of Dr. **Leyla Dakhli**, Principal Investigator (CNRS- CMB Berlin); three Post-Doc researchers: Dr. **Youssef El-Chazli** (CNRS – CHS Paris), Dr. **Mélanie Henry** (CNRS – CHS Paris), and Dr. **Giulia Fabbiano** (CNRS – CHS Paris); and affiliated researchers: Dr. **Elena Chiti** (Stockholm University), Dr. **Samer Frangie** (American University of Beirut), Dr. **Loulouwa al-Rachid** (Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut), Dr. **Fadi Bardawil** (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Dr. **Kmar Bendana** (Université de la Manouba, Tunis), Dr. **Amin Allal** (CNRS – IRMC Tunis), Dr. **Sophie Wahnich** (CNRS – IIAC Paris), and Dr. **Yann Potin** (Archives nationales, Paris). Finally, **Leila Musson** is an archivist at the ISSH in Amsterdam in charge of the Arab language collection and is our principal contact there.

In order to secure high standards in research, our Ethics Committee consists of Dr. **Myriam Catusse** (CNRS - Aix-en-Provence), Dr. **Jihane Sfeir** (Université libre de Bruxelles), Dr. **Vincent Lemire** (Université de Marne-la-Vallée), Dr. **Jillian Schwedler** (City University of New York).

Dr. **Lucile Debras** (Berlin) is the Financial Project Manager and Dr. **Anna-Esther Younes** (Berlin) is the Project Manager of the entire team. This transnational research project is made possible with funding from the European Research Council (CO-771453-DREAM).

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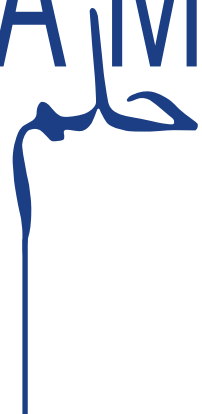
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[dream.hypotheses.org](http://dream.hypotheses.org)

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# DREAM



Drafting and Enacting

the Revolutions in

the Arab Mediterranean.

In Search for Dignity –  
from the 1950's until today



## THE BACKDROP

When speaking of revolutions in the Arab Mediterranean two massive periods tend to cloud over the historical horizon: Firstly, the revolutions tied to decolonization and the national emancipation struggles of the 1930s-1960s; Secondly, the movements of 2010-2011, whose status as revolution/s has ironically been tangled up in various climatological narratives of “Springs” and “Winters”. Moreover, most of these revolutions have been confined to national frames of reference and were turned into instruments of authoritarian regimes. There are, for instance, the Algerian Revolution, the Ba’athist coup d’état in Syria, the Libyan Revolution of the “Popular Democratic Republic”, and the Nasserian Revolution in Egypt, to name just a few.

## THE DREAM PROJECT

Between the times of decolonial revolutions and the 21st-century revolutions, we are made to believe that nothing happened. Against this backdrop, this project seeks to forge new ways to explain and understand what it is that we mean when we speak of „revolutions“, the times “in between revolutions”, the times before and after, as well as sociopolitical dynamics that are often rather neglected in conventional research on “revolutionary changes”. Instead, it is our goal to look at a discourse around revolution that gives emphasis to the visceral, to emotions, silences and omissions, as well as, to revolution as a process and not just as an event-in-history. By borrowing from research on the “ungovernables” and the forms of ordinary infra-political resistance, DREAM will show that micro-resistances cannot be separated from moments of revolutionary macro-explosion. It will furthermore show that the very idea of a “revolutionary surprise” is constructed by a phantasmatic view that pivots the idea of having “immobile” periods in between “revolutionary events”. Having said the latter, DREAM will thus show these periods as just as rich with revolutionary potential and desires for social change as the periods during

and after the so-called “revolutionary moments”. Therein, the countries of reference are Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon.

### > Step I: Collecting – Archives, Oral History, Inquiries

The first step within our research is to understand narratives of revolution-as-a-process through the large spectrum between archival research, oral history, and sociological inquiry. For that, our research team members will strive to write history in order to – first and foremost – locate, date, and identify what we mean by revolution and the time leading up to it. The next step is to establish typologies, to refine and contest accepted and existing terminologies. Once archives have been identified, collected and gathered together, we must bring out the voices and sounds that have until now been drowned out by others who speak more loudly. These voices are the common thread that may help us to create the history of the everyday aspects of uprisings, the bursts of hope and the disappointments, as well as the sedimentations of both.

### > Step II: Comparing – Transnational and Transhistorical Narratives

DREAM’s primary goal to deconstruct epistemic nationalisms that have oftentimes framed revolutionary change within the body politics of the nation: Such limited nationalist perspectives hence usually focused on capital and major cities, as well as, on written accounts of history. In DREAM, we aim to deconstruct such methodology by focusing more on the still hidden local and oral traditions of the margins, may they be geographically, politically, or socially marginal, as well as the otherwise aesthetic, age-wise and gendered margins of society. Moreover, our approach also troubles normalized notions of what “Arabness” stands for, a sociopolitical narrative that often goes hand in hand with normalized notions of the Middle Eastern nation-state and its revolutions. Stressing analogies of already existing margins that have al-

ways been in communication across geo/-political or social borders allows us to span a much wider horizon of what revolution in the Arab Mediterranean could potentially mean.

### > Step III: Identifying – Places and Moments

In our third step, we then go on to seek understanding of how revolutionary change at and in the margins related to violence, the so-called national/-ist “center”, and discourses on “Arabness”. Can we find commonalities across borders? After all, marginal places, bodies, and moments in time and space have also always dealt with shifting power dynamics, yet, so far they weren’t centered in narratives of political change or upheaval. For DREAM it is pivotal to understand these margins as assemblages that need to be located and placed in order to understand the often hidden networks of discourse, alliances, body politics and defiance. By re-mapping revolutionary change, we will not only be able to draw new conclusions about “revolutions”, but we will also be able to visualize revolution as a process that is connected across time, gender, age, borders, and the flow of capital to name just a few intersecting interpellations.

### > Step IV: Understanding – The Quest for Dignity

DREAM aims to write the history of this political emotion through the lens of the Arab uprisings and protests that occurred during the long second half of the 20th Century. The use of the Arabic term Karama (dignity) to define what happened in 2011 in Tunisia and elsewhere has a genealogy that speaks to the region and, more generally, to the contemporary grammar of revolt. Dignity is thus the final and last optic through which we want to posit our research in a larger spectrum of a political debate on “revolutions”. Whilst maintaining a critical awareness to the fact of historical and/or geopolitical differences, we nevertheless aim to bring back “dignity” as an anthropological constant within discussions on contemporary revolutionary change.