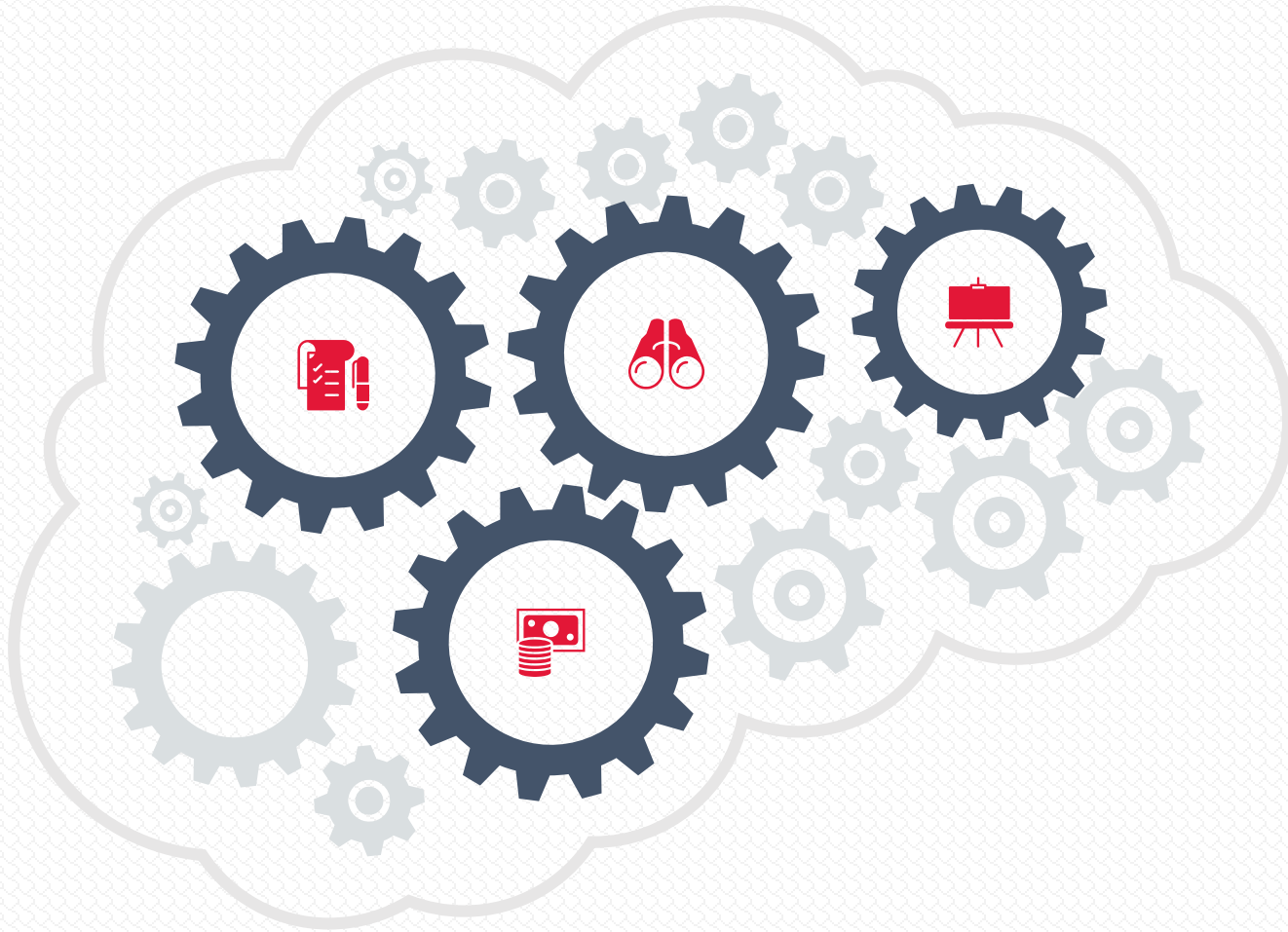




# Asfari Institute SUMMER 2019\* Monthly Events Roundup



# MONTHLY ROUNDUP



The monthly roundup of the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship is a summary of :

- Events organized by the institute
- Events attended by team members
- Publications
- Interviews
- Research and projects updates
- New team members

# Events Organized – Consultation Workshop

## *Environmental Activism in the Arab Region*



**Program/ Project:** *Transnational Social Movements*



**Date:** 3 July



**Location:** College Hall (Auditorium B1), AUB

This workshop aimed at analyzing the principal actors and modes of environmental activism in the Arab region today. It also attempted to answer the following questions: How can we interpret the expansion of mobilization on environmental causes over the last decade? How opening yet controlled political settings witnessed by some Arab regimes in the 2000s, specifically in Egypt and Morocco, have expanded the space of mobilization and how did the Arab spring reinvigorated environmental activism? What are the principal modes of environmental activism (environmental associations, campaigns, informal resistance movements, etc.)? What are the strategies used by these actors (cause lawyering, building cross-class coalitions, mobilizing experts and scientists, and building transnational advocacy networks through the mobilization of partners and diasporas)? What are the prospects of environmental mobilization in the Arab world given the increase of ecological challenges and the restrictive political contexts?



[Link to event details](#)



# Events Organized – Consultation Workshop

## Urban Rights Activism in the Arab Region



**Program/ Project:** *Transnational Social Movements*



**Date:** 4 July



**Location:** College Hall (Auditorium B1), AUB

The workshop sought to critically investigate urban activism in the Arab region, in order to document their work and further enable their action, through learning from their experiences, but also by providing urban movements' leaders and members with opportunities to intersect, exchange, and forge productive links. The workshop also aimed at interrogating three sets of issues vis-à-vis right-to-the-city movements/urban activists' collectives, in order to assess their actual and potential impacts on political change: 1) Actors and organizational setups; 2) Strategies, tactics and tools of action; and 3) Political position/manifesto & “real utopias”.



[Link to event details](#)



# Events Attended – Workshop

*Preparing for fieldwork in the MENA*



**Organizing Entity:** *King's College London*



**Date:** 19 July



**Location:** King's College London

King's College London held a one-day workshop in London to provide training for early career researchers who plan to conduct empirical research in the MENA. One research assistant from the Asfari Institute took part in this workshop that included a number of practical sessions, given by academics and practitioners who enjoy considerable experience in carrying out fieldwork. Considering that fieldwork in the MENA region is increasingly dangerous for both researchers and their interlocutor, the sessions were centered on pre-fieldwork preparations, digital security and protecting informants, conducting interviews, analyzing open source information, and the ethics process.



Photo from [King's College London's website](#)

[Link to the event](#)

# Events Attended – Book Launch

*Border Lives: An Ethnography of a Lebanese Town in Changing Times* BY Michelle Obeid



**Organizing Entity:** *CAMES* and *SOAM* at AUB



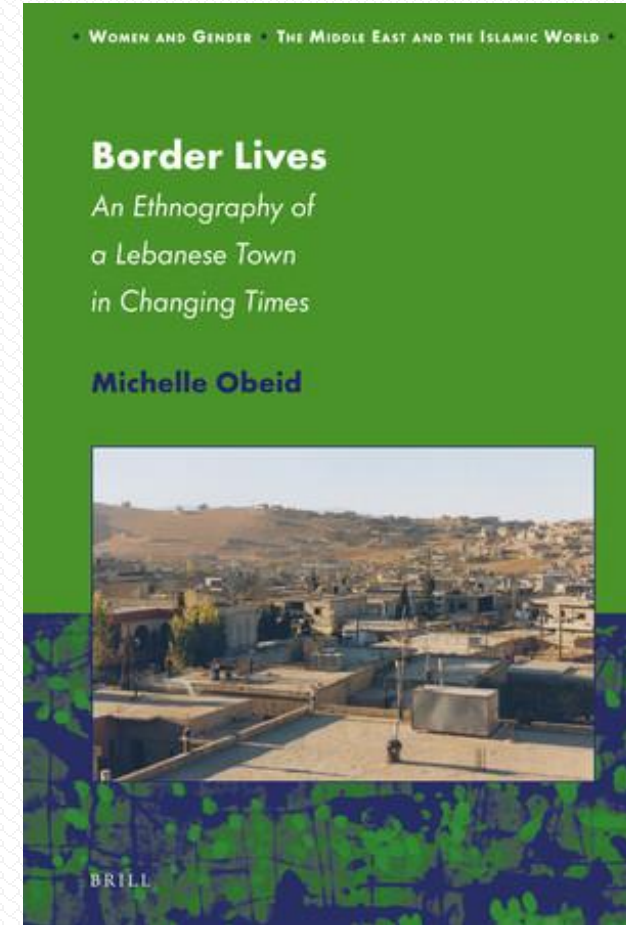
**Date:** 5 September



**Location:** West Hall (Auditorium A), AUB

## Book Abstract:

*Border Lives* offers an in-depth account of how people in Aarsal, a northeastern town on the border of Lebanon with Syria, experienced postwar sociality, and how they grappled with living in the margins of the Lebanese state in the period following the 1975-1990 war. In a rich ethnography of ‘changing times,’ Michelle Obeid shows how restrictions in cross-border mobility, transformations in physical and social spaces, burgeoning new industries and shifting political alliances produced divergent ideologies about domesticity and the family, morality and personhood. Attending to metaphors of modernity in a rural border context, *Border Lives* broadens the sites in which modernity and social change can be investigated.



[Link to the event](#)



# Events Attended – Study Week

## *Migration Study Week*



**Organizing Entity:** *Lebanon Support*



**Date:** 26 to 30 August



**Location:** Smallville Hotel, Badaro

Manar Fleifel, project coordinator at the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, was accepted among 12 others from a pool of 100 applicants to take part in Migration Study Week organized by Lebanon Support. The program offered a participatory, interdisciplinary, innovative, and intensive immersion in migration issues in the Middle East. Among those who attended were practitioners, junior researchers, and journalists that work with and on refugees. During the study week, Lebanon Support granted the participants an opportunity to reflect critically on the main problematics that shape migration, mobility, and circulation in the Middle East. Focusing on the macro, meso and micro levels of migration, the study week involved a combination of lectures, open discussions, roundtables, exchanges between participants and a field visit around one of the most diverse areas in Lebanon. The program managed to provide a holistic view of migration in the middle east region by inviting scholars working on various issues such as the history of migration in the levant and labor migration.



Photos from *Lebanon Support's* Twitter account



[Link to the event](#)

# Events Attended – Open Day

## Open Day Around Cultural Research



**Hosted by:** *Ettijahat-Independent Culture*



**Date:** 30 August



**Location:** West Hall (Auditorium B), AUB

Ettijahat-Independent Culture, a Syrian Entity for arts and culture, organized its 3rd edition of the Open Day Around Cultural Research in partnership with the American University of Beirut. As the entity summed up the event via Facebook, the talks discussed cultural subjects in the Syrian reality based on research papers from the 6th edition of the program research: to Strengthen the Culture of Knowledge.



Photo from the [Facebook event](#)

[Link to the event](#)

# Events Attended – Conference

## Digital Lebanon Conference



**Hosted by:**

*Beirut Digital District and Al-Iktissad Wal-Aamal*



**Date:** 13 September



**Location:** Phoenicia Hotel, Beirut

The communications team at the Asfari Institute attended the Digital Lebanon Conference to learn about the current and futuristic e-commerce that incorporates both the commercial, the academic, and the personal needs of both the private and the government circles. The team also got to get an overview of the various tools and methods to improve the e-communication. Speakers at the conference tackled what internet speed and connectivity mean to daily work and productivity, with concentration on using today's available tools to properly effect and make use of all the data available and how we would put it to work for our benefits.



Photo from the conference's [Facebook event](#)

[Link to the event](#)

# Publications



## Title:

The Workshop on War Economy/Reconstruction Economy in Syria



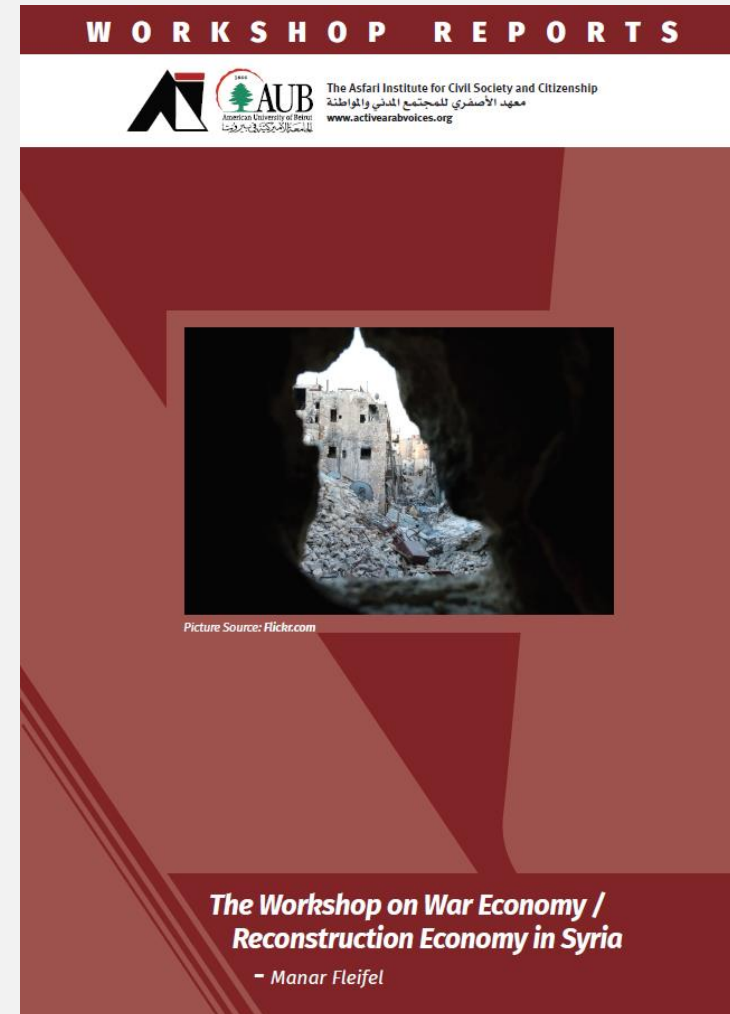
## Author(s):

Manar Fleifel



## Summary:

On 2 March 2019, the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship organized a workshop entitled “War Economy/ Reconstruction Economy in Syria” as part of its project: “The Lay of the Land: A Social Mapping of the Daily Practices in Informality Amongst Syrian Displaced Communities in Lebanon”, funded by the Ford Foundation. This workshop was organized to fulfill the goals of the project, which are to “engage with the Syrian displacement academic debate, offering a more nuanced fact based analysis about realities on the ground. The following report presents the workshop concept, its agenda, and list of participants. It sums up the sessions and key concepts, and concludes by offering key messages and recommendations.



# Interviews

Mohammad al Attar, Playwright and Journalist



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5U0rRgubns>