

# Kalabalik!

Bulletin of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul



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On March 16, 2018, SRII staff, fellows and affiliates marked the 50th anniversary of the death of Swedish poet Gunnar Ekelöf (1907–68), whose *Dīwān* trilogy (1965–67) was inspired by a visit to Istanbul in 1965, whose ashes lie scattered at the ancient site of Sardes in Turkey, and whose bronze portrait is featured on the back garden wall of the Swedish consulate general compound in Istanbul (background right). In front of it, from left to right: Patrik Klingborg (archaeologist and scholarship holder, Uppsala), Ahmed Fahmy (SRII intern), Helin Topal (SRII administrator), Andrea Karlsson (Consulate general of Sweden in Istanbul), Anders Ackfeldt (islamologist and visiting scholar, Lund), Bahar Uludağ (SRII librarian) and Helena Bodin (professor of literature and visiting scholar, Stockholm). Photo: Kristina Josephson Hesse (SRII director).

# Göç, İnsan Hakları ve *Black Metal*

*Dr. Kristina Josephson Hesse, Arkeoloji, İsveç Araştırma Enstitüsü müdürü 2018*

Ocak ayından bu yana, yönetim görevini üstlendiğim İstanbul İsveç Araştırma Enstitüsünde ilginç pek çok çalışmayla uğraşmaktayım. Bahar döneminin konferanslar dizisi "Spring Lectures" her salı akşamı, geniş bir yelpazede ilgi çekici konu ve konuşmacılara yer verdi. Her bir konferans, hem Türkiye'den hem de İstanbul'daki diğer uluslararası enstitülerden araştırmacılar ve konu ile yakından ilgilenenler ile İstanbul İsveç Araştırma Enstitüsünün araştırmacı ve bursiyerlerinden oluşan ortalama 20-40 kişilik bir dinleyici grubunun katılımıyla gerçekleştirildi. Konular, ağırlıklı olarak göç konusu ele alınmakla birlikte çeşitlilik gösteriyordu. Göç konusunun ağırlıkta olması, İstanbul İsveç Araştırma Enstitüsünün Avrupa Birliği tarafından finanse edilen RESPOND projesine olan katkısı ve bunun yanında konunun Türkiye açısından taşıdığı önem ile izah edilebilir. En yoğun katılım güncel konuları ele alan sunumlara oldu. Åsa Eldén'in, Türkiye'de ve İsveç'te kadına karşı şiddetin medyada ele alınışını konu edinen sunumu, Paul Levin'in İsveç'e göç eden ilk kuşak Türklerin entegrasyonu ve asimilasyonu üzerine araştırması, Jonas Draege'nin Gezi protestoları ve muhalefetin bundan yarar sağlama konusundaki başarısızlığını ele alan sunumu, Douglas Mattson'un *Black Metal* müzik ve bunun İslam ile olan ilişkisi üzerine yaptığı araştırması, Andrea Karlsson'un Türkiye'de insan hakları üzerine yürüttüğü tez çalışması hakkındaki sunumu bu bağlamda örnek olarak verilebilir.

Konferanslar dizisi "Autumn Lectures" yaz tatilinden sonra eylülün başında başlayacak ve aralığın ortasına kadar her salı akşamı devam edecek. Araştırma alanlarımızdaki kendine özgü çeşitliliğin yanı sıra iki farklı temaya daha yer verilecek. Bunlardan biri, insan hakları üzerine İstanbul'daki Raoul Wallenberg Enstitüsü ile birlikte gerçekleştirilecek olan üç sunumluk bir konferanslar dizisi. Diğerisi ise, Orient Enstitüsü ve Anadolu Kültür ile işbirliği sonucu altı hafta boyunca çarşamba akşamları gerçekleştirilecek ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nın sona erişinden bu yana 100 yıllık bir sürenin geçmiş olduğuna dikkat çekecek olan bir konferanslar dizisi. 1918'i, Türkiye'de sosyal ve siyasal açıdan bir dönüm noktası olarak görmek mümkündür. Güz dönemi konferanslarının tam programını Kalabalık'ın bu sayısında bulabilirsiniz.

Türkiye'de, kısa bir hazırlık sürecinin ardından 24 Haziran'a alınan seçimler, kargaşa yaşanabileceği yönündeki bütün endişelere rağmen oldukça sakin geçti. İstanbul İsveç Araştırma Enstitüsünde de, Başkonsolosluk ile işbirliği sonucu gerçekleştirilen ve oldukça ilgi gören insan hakları konulu yaz kursuna katılan öğrencilerle birlikte seçim izleme etkinliği düzenlendi.

Yine Başkonsolosluk ile işbirliği içerisinde, Bahar döneminde, martta kadın edebiyatı semineri ile nisanda İsveç/Türk/Kürt yazarlar çalıştayı gerçekleştirildi. Bu ortak çalışmalar sonucu 2019'da yazarlar evi düzenlenmeye başlanacak. Nisanda ayrıca geleneksel Labraunda günleri düzenlendi. Etkinlikte, geçen yıl Labraunda'da yapılan arkeolojik kazılar hakkında kazı başkanı Olivier Henry'nin düzenlediği ilginç tanıtımlar ve raporlar sunuldu. Bu seneki program İstanbul'da ve Ankara'da Bilkent Üniversitesinde birer gün olmak suretiyle hayata geçirildi.

Avrupa Birliği göç projesi Horizon 2020 RESPOND, enstitünün araştırmacıları Dr. Ela Gökalp Aras ve Dr. Zeynep Şahin Mencütek tarafından yine bizzat enstitüde organize edilen çeşitli konferanslar, çalıştaylar ve *kick-off* toplantıları ile Bahar döneminde dinamik bir başlangıç yaptı. Söz konusu Avrupa Birliği projesi İstanbul İsveç Araştırma Enstitüsüne Avrupa'da iyi bir tanıtım

imkanı sunmakta. Projenin İsveç Bilimsel Araştırmalar Kurumu ile Avrupa Birliğindeki başvuru sürecinde, İstanbul İsveç Araştırma Enstitüsü ile iş birliği kurma yönünde büyük bir istek söz konusu idi. Halihazırda da, üçü Avrupa Birliğine, biri İsveç Bilimsel Araştırmalar Kurumuna sunulmuş olan dört proje başvurusunda ödenek yöneticisi ya da ortak enstitü olarak yer almaktayız. Bu başvurulardan bir kısmının kabul edileceği ümidini taşıyoruz.

Göç olgusu, Avrupa Birliği ile olan sözleşmeler çerçevesinde göçmenlerin Avrupa'ya doğru hareketinde bariyer görevi üstlenen Türkiye'de bariz bir şekilde hissediliyor. Ülkede üç milyondan fazla Suriyeli göçmen bulunmakta. Bu göçmenlerden halihazırda İstanbul'da bir üniversitede öğrenci olan beşi, enstitüde Siyasal Bilimler alanında çalışan bir araştırmacıya üç ay boyunca haftanın bazı günleri asistanlık yaptı. Onların enstitüde bulunması özellikle söz konusu araştırmacının yanı sıra, bursiyerlerimiz, diğer araştırmacılar, yaz okulu öğrencileri ve personelimiz için de çok önemli idi. Birbirleriyle fikir alışverişinde bulunma ve iletişim kurma imkanı buldular. Suriyeli öğrenciler özellikle göç temalı sunum ve seminerlere de tecrübeleriyle katkıda bulundular. Bu, ayrıca onlar için de nitelikli ve paha biçilmez bir zaman dilimi oldu.

Burs çalışmaları enstitünün omurgasını oluşturur. Bursiyerlerin burada geçirdiği zaman hayatlarının en dinamik ve eğlenceli zamanlarından biri haline gelir. Enstitüde yaşça büyük araştırmacılar ile birlikte geçirilen süre de yaratıcılık açısından verimli bir zaman dilimidir. Öğrencilerin büyük bir kısmı burs sürelerini Bahar döneminde mart ve nisan aylarında, Güz döneminde ise ekim ve kasım aylarında kullanmayı uygun buluyor. Bu bültenin alt kısmında bursiyerlerimiz ve çalıştıkları konular üzerine bilgi bulabilirsiniz. Katılımı artırıp akademik ortamı canlandırmak adına alınan tedbirlerden biri, Güz boyunca yoğunluğun ve ilginin az olduğu dönemler için üçer haftalık küçük seyahat bursları ilan etmek oldu. İlane gösterilen büyük ilginin bir sonucu olarak güz döneminin özellikle başında ve sonunda enstitüde çok sayıda seyahat bursu kazanan bursiyer bulunacak.

Yaz boyunca Devlet Binalar Müdürlüğü, özellikle, yoğun yağış altında su sızıntısı yapan Dragomanhuset'in arka tarafındaki teras ile ek yapının en üst katındaki konuk odasının balkonuna başta olmak üzere binaların bakım ve tamiri ile yoğun bir şekilde uğraşmakta. Bu iki kısım, sızdırmayan yeni bir tabaka ve açık renkli yeni karo ile kaplanıyor. Konuk odalarındaki duş bataryalarının değiştirilmesi gibi diğer bazı tamir işleri de yine yaz tatilinde gerçekleştiriliyor.

İlginç konferans ve çalıştayların gerçekleştirileceği bir Güz dönemini dört gözle bekliyor, hem araştırmacılara hem de bursiyerlere İstanbul'daki rahat ve huzurlu enstitü ortamımıza şimdiden hoş geldiniz diyoruz.



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## Lectures at the SRII

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**September 18, 19:00**

Diğdem Soyaltın, Altınbaş University

*Good Governance and Fight against Corruption in Turkey: Did the EU make a difference?*

**September 25, 19:00**

Beril Eski, İstanbul Bilgi University

*RWI Lecture I: Negative Gendered Effects of Turkey's Asylum Regime*

**October 2, 19:00**

Zeynep Gülru Göker, Sabancı University

*Digital Feminism in Turkey: Memories, Deliberation and Negotiation.*

**October 9, 19:00**

Kilian Clarke, Princeton University

*Popular Unrest in the Aftermath of Revolution: Contention and Resistance during Egypt's Democratic Experiment, 2012-2013*

**October 16, 19:00**

Olgun Akbulut, Kadir Has University

*RWI Lecture II: The Future of Human Rights in Europe*

**October 23, 19:00**

Ayhan Kaya, İstanbul Bilgi University

*RESPOND Lecture III: Migration, Heritage and Populism in Europe*

**October 30, 19:00**

Susan Rottmann, Özyeğin University

*RESPOND Lecture IV: Reflections from the Field: Family and Gender for Syrian Migrants in Istanbul*

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## Autumn 2018

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**November 6, 19:00**

Meral Akbaş, Middle East Technical University

*RWI Lecture III: From Factory to Museum: They are telling our Story*

**November 13, 19:00**

Daniel Leviathan Forsrup, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

*The Colonnaded Streets of Roman Palestine*

**November 20, 19:00**

Lisa Hellman, Uppsala University

*The knitting instructor and the map-maker: Swedish prisoner in eighteenth-century Dungarna*

**November 27, 19:00**

Görkem Çimen, Uppsala University

*Water Management at Labraunda*

**December, 4 19:00**

Filip Vukosavović, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

*Judeans of the Babylonian Exile*

**December, 13 19:00**

Joachim Östlund, Linnéuniversitetet

*Intersecting Worlds: Mehmed Said Efendis "Sefâretnâme" (Book of Embassy) and eighteenth century Sweden*

👉 Admission only after registration to [event@sri.org.tr](mailto:event@sri.org.tr) ! 👉



# Human Rights – a Recurrent History

## Five summer schools at the SRII, 2013–2018

The idea to arrange a summer school in Human Rights was developed and realised by Andrea Karlsson, head of the Section for Turkish-Swedish Development Cooperation at the Swedish Consulate General in Istanbul 2015–2018, and Marianne Boqvist, deputy director of the SRII 2011–2013. Taking place in June 2013, the first summer school on the topic *Human Rights – a Recurrent History* set a successful example that was to be repeated in 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018.

Bringing together students from Turkey with students from the Nordic countries, the aim of the five summer schools has been to tell the history of human rights in a way that puts the Ottoman Empire rather than Europe at the centre of attention, and to show the importance of a human rights discourse in the lands it has left behind. Both teaching teams and students have been multidisciplinary in composition, consisting of historians, human rights scholars, political scientists and practitioners in the field of human rights and cultural heritage.

Minorities and cultural pluralism in and after the Ottoman period has formed the main core of the course contents. In addition to dealing with such themes in fact and theory, students have met with people and NGOs devoted to questions of historical justice, cultural heritage and human rights in Turkey and beyond. Examinations have consisted of individual or group projects in which students have put forward their own ideas for NGO projects with the aim of advancing collaboration and new approaches to the interplay of culture and human rights.

The venue of the SRII has offered many opportunities to connect the course topic with the living city and heritage of Istanbul – with city walks to historically significant places or areas testifying to the continuous pluralism of the city – as well as to build lasting friendships.





*Lesson with Ayşegül Altınay (Sabancı University) at the SRII auditorium (2013)*



*City walk with SRII director Johan Mårtelius, (2015)*



*Study visit and workshop at the Hrant Dink Vakfı (2018)*



*Working with final presentations, Swedish Consulate General (2017)*

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## Spring Scholarships 2018

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**Patrik Klingborg** defended his PhD thesis *Greek cisterns - water and risk in ancient Greece, 600-50 BC* at Uppsala University in 2017. The study explored cisterns, a critical but previously unexplored component of the ancient water supply system. Currently he is working towards a project investigating the transformations of water supply systems during antiquity.

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The water supply has long been viewed as a fundamental aspect of ancient Greco-Roman society. Especially monumental fountains and aqueducts have been subject of intense study for more than a century. But despite the impressive effort spent exploring ancient water supply systems scholars have hardly touched upon smaller, much more numerous, installations such as wells and cisterns. Consequently, our understanding of the ancient water supply is largely incomplete and cannot be used to produce an accurate reconstruction of how the water supply worked as a whole and at what points in time it was transformed. This, in turn, means that many important questions remain unexplored, in particular why humans change something as critical to their survival as their water supply system. What is the driving force behind the transformation of ancient water supply systems? Many such forces of transformation have been proposed: warfare, technical innovation, population growth and urbanisation.



Most recently climate change has become a popular explanation. Lack of a systematic survey of the empirical data, however, makes studies either inaccurate or limited to local contexts.

Based on this I am currently developing a larger project exploring how water supply systems were constructed and transformed in the ancient world based on a substantial empirical material. In order to do so I am currently collecting material which can be used both in a project proposal and following study. During my stay at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul I therefore conducted a preliminary collection of various water sources attested in the ancient literature. The result is an Access-database recording more than 1000 occasions when fountains and springs were mentioned by ancient authors from 700-1 BC. Preliminary analysis of the material shows that ancient authors often were preoccupied with themes such as the origins of rivers and the healing properties of waters. It is also notably that springs and fountains were less commonly connected to the divine than acknowledged in modern scholarship: just 5% of the mentions can be related to the sacred sphere. While further qualitative analysis still remains in order to use the material to its full potential, I am very grateful that my stay at the Institute enabled me to perform important parts of my study in an excellent research environment.



*Aqueduct of Valens, Istanbul*

## Corruption, Informality and ‘Living Law’ in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan

*Rustamjon Urinboyev, Senior Research Fellow, Sociology of Law, Lund University*

In search for empirical clues in April 2009, my Swedish colleague and I (hereinafter ‘we’) travelled to Uzbekistan for an ethnographic field research. The evening flight from Riga to Tashkent Airport on AirBaltic took just under six hours. We arrived at the Tashkent airport in the middle of the night and checked into Radisson Hotel. After rest and breakfast we walked through the streets to a nearby market, *Alay*, to observe informal transactions on the black market for foreign currency. We were welcomed by a group of money changers who immediately approached us, offering their currency exchange services. What struck us was that there were several policemen around; none of them, however, bothered about illegal transactions on the black market, thereby de-facto ‘decriminalising’ the informal practices of money changers. We next turned our attention to the informal taxi sector. One of our fascinating finding was that almost anybody in Tashkent could work as a taxi driver. There were no taxi stops and we did not have to order a taxi. Waving your hand at the side of the street was sufficient to find a taxi in a minute. Observing the magnitude of the informal taxi sector, we came to realise that informal economy has become a major source of self-employment and income-generating opportunities for many of the urban unemployed. The interaction between the taxi drivers and traffic police is also based on informal rules. During our observations we noticed that taxi drivers often shake the hands of traffic police with money when they break traffic rules, such as exceeding the speed limit.

The above observations have implications for international reports and policy documents that use informal economic practices as an indicator in assessing countries’ models of governance and levels of corruption. According to the 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index, released annually by Transparency International (TI), Uzbekistan is among the ten most corrupt countries in the world (TI, 2012). The ‘control of corruption’ indicator of the World Bank Governance Studies shows an extremely high level of corruption in Central Asian countries (Libman, 2008; World Bank, 2013a). The conclusion of international reports and policy documents seems clear: the term ‘informality’ has come to be associated with adversity and carries with it the negative connotation of being abnormal and an exception to the rule of law (TI, 2012; World Bank, 2012, 2013a).

Anthropological studies have demonstrated the existence of local perceptions of moral codes and values of informal transactions that significantly differ from Western morality and standards (Werner, 2000; Humphrey, 2002; Wanner, 2005; Polese, 2008; Rasanayagam, 2011; Urinboyev and Svensson, 2013). At a first glance, many of these transactions may come across as bribes; however, these studies show that when taking the local context and culture into consideration, these transactions may very well be considered to be morally acceptable gifts. In the context of Russia, Humphrey (2002) argues towards rethinking bribery, and Ledeneva (2009) differentiates between ‘supportive’ and ‘subversive’ functions of informal practices.

Studies also discuss the ‘blurred boundary between gifts and bribes in Kazakhstan’ (Werner, 2000), illustrate the existence of local morality in Uzbekistan, where a ‘little corruption does not hurt anyone’ (Rasanayagam, 2011), and suggest local definitions of corruption in Ukraine ‘If I receive it, it is a gift, if I demand it, then it is a bribe’ (Polese, 2008).

This paper aims to explore the multifaceted meaning, logic and morality of informal transactions in order to better understand the social context informing the meaning of corruption and bribery in Uzbekistan. According to international actors such as the World Bank and Transparency International (TI), corruption is defined as: ‘the abuse of public office for private gain’ (World Bank, 2013a, 2013b) or ‘the abuse of entrusted power for private gain’ (TI, 2012). I argue that the aforementioned definitions of corruption are highly Western-centric and therefore fail to reckon with the local context and needs in non-Western societies such as the Uzbek. I emphasize the need to take into consideration the critique by scholars such as Tanzi (1998) who argue that the meaning of the word ‘abuse’ varies according to local legal and cultural standards. In this paper I argue that the informality, at the higher echelons of government, is significantly different from informal practices at the level of ‘everyday citizen behaviour’. Hence, the assertions that insist only on the negative effects of informal practices seem to disregard the important distinction between the informal (predatory) practices of kleptocratic elites, which have nothing to do with ‘survival’, and the informal coping strategies of ordinary citizens and low-level state officials, wherein they have a ‘getting things done’ philosophy.



*Village mosque in rural Fergana, Uzbekistan. (Photo by the author)*

This paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2009 and 2017 in the Ferghana Valley of Uzbekistan. The field site was chosen based on contacts and social networks available to the authors. During these field trips a rich stock of ethnographic material was collected mainly through observations and informal interviews, however for this specific paper, I have chosen to display the essence of two informal interviews. The interviews will be presented in the subsequent sections.

### **Theoretical framework**

In this study, I draw on Eugen Ehrlich's (2002) concept of 'living law' as a theoretical framework for putting informal transactions in a socio-legal context. Ehrlich (2002, p. 493) states that 'the living law is the law which dominates life itself, even though it has not been posited in legal propositions. Ehrlich advises that if we want to glean the patterns of 'living law', we should observe everyday life, actual habits of people, and inquire into people's thoughts on proper social behaviour. Ehrlich in this sense stresses the importance of considering the local context and moral codes when examining the role and rule of law. Hence, what may be defined as corruption, such as nepotism or cronyism, might be regarded as a morally good behaviour according to the local 'living law'. Likewise, Ehrlich's 'living law' could be instructive when trying to understand the validity of Western-centric interpretations of corruption in the context of Uzbekistan where society is mostly based on 'gift economy', kinship networks and social hierarchies. Equipped with the concept of 'living law', it could be inferred that we cannot satisfactorily explore the nuances of corruption in Uzbekistan without considering the local context, moral codes and functional meaning of informal transactions.

### **Informal interviews**

In this section I present the results of two informal interviews with key informants. My aim is to illustrate how things get done and how they are perceived by the ordinary citizens and low-level state officials, and their implications for understanding corruption in the local context. The first interview is centred around *Dilshod*, a traffic policeman and the second focuses on *Umida*, a midwife at maternity hospital in Ferghana. These two key informants were selected on the basis of their daily involvement with the law and/or state officials, knowledge, willingness, and communicability. The interviews lasted from forty-five minutes to two hours, depending on the informants' status, location, and time available. To protect the anonymity of my informants, their names have been changed.

*Dilshod, a traffic policeman: How should I feed my kids when the state does not pay me any salary?*

It is not so easy to work as a traffic policeman in Uzbekistan. We have to communicate with more than a hundred people on a daily basis. We do not have fixed working hours. If you want to get a job with the traffic police, you have to pay a bribe, around 6,000-7,000 USD, to top officials of the traffic police. The biggest problem is, actually, that we do not get paid a salary for our work. The official salary for traffic policemen is 900,000 soum, but in fact, we do not receive any salary. In rare cases, we might receive 10% of this salary, 100,000 soum. Of course, you may wonder how



we survive. Here is the reality for you: Instead of paying salary, our administration provides us with traffic tickets which we may sell to drivers to earn a salary. We usually sell these tickets to drivers who drive without having their seat belt fastened and/or drive cars which do not meet technical safety standards. The price of one traffic ticket is 12,500 soum. So we earn our salary by selling traffic tickets to drivers. Since we do not get any salary, we are not required to return ticket receipts or reports to our administration and can keep the revenues made from the ticket sales.

This is not the end of the story. Our bosses give us the order (i.e. set the standard) to sell at least twenty tickets per day. However, drivers do not violate traffic rules every day. How can we sell twenty tickets per day? If I do not sell twenty tickets per day, I might get a warning from the administration or even lose my job. Under these circumstances, we are under strong pressure to find drivers to sell tickets to. There is also an informal monthly payment called 'gruz' (burden) which we have to pay directly into our bosses' pocket. The amount of this monthly payment ranges from 50,000 to 100,000 soums. We have to make this payment if we want to keep our job. These circumstances compel us to sell tickets even to drivers who act legally. Ordinary people do not know about these problems and therefore hate us. It is politics. We cannot talk about these problems openly.

I know many people look upon traffic police as the most corrupt profession in Uzbekistan. Since we do not receive any salary from the state for our work, the money we earn through selling tickets is completely legal. I am also an ordinary man, like everybody else; I have a family, kids to feed! Instead of giving salary, our bosses force us to earn our salary through selling tickets to drivers. So tell me, how should I feed my kids when the state does not pay me any salary? Had I received a normal salary, I would not bother selling tickets to law-abiding drivers.

There are three main issues that need to be elaborated on in this context.

First, the interview shows the existence of a shared language among traffic policemen that serves to reconstruct the meaning and application of traffic laws. When describing his informal practices, the traffic policeman tends to use the expression 'selling tickets to drivers' rather than saying 'imposing a fine on drivers.' This expression also reveals that traffic police look at traffic tickets as a commodity for earning income rather than a means to enforce state traffic laws.

Second, the traffic policeman's reasoning is important to better understand the difference between predatory practices and survival strategies. Notably, the traffic policeman makes a distinction between salary earning (ticket selling) practices, and the payments he makes to high-level



*Driver attempts to bribe a traffic camera in order to escape a fine. Cartoon from [uzbekistanillustrated.com](http://uzbekistanillustrated.com) (reproduced with kind permission from the journal)*

police officials, such as the bribe he paid to get a job, or the ‘*gruz*’ payment he makes every month. As he claims, his salary earning (ticket selling) practices are completely legal, since he does not receive any salary from the state for his arduous work, whereas he expresses dissatisfaction with the informal payments he has to make to high-level police officials. Nevertheless, irrespective of their predatory or survival character, both of these practices fall within the interpretation of corruption adapted from Western moral and juridical codes. Certainly, such an interpretation is quite normal and legitimate in the context of Western welfare states where public authorities provide formal means of survival. But, is it appropriate to interpret the policeman’s actions as illicit in the context of Uzbekistan, where the state fails to provide even a basic salary to traffic police? In the light of these problems, one conclusion could be that informal practices allow low-level state officials such as traffic police to survive in the absence of decent salaries.

Third, it is also necessary to acknowledge the fact that corruption has different meanings and logic within different levels of society, and that there is a difference between masses of low-level officials on the one hand and the smaller group of state elites on the other. For instance, the elite level corruption, rent-seeking, and ‘clan struggles’ described by scholars such as Ilkhamov (2004) and Collins (2006) are not the same as the everyday ‘getting things done’ practices of low-level traffic policemen.

Umida, a midwife: *‘I will not be able to feed my kids if I follow the law’*

I know maternity hospitals are often criticized for being one of the most corrupt places in Uzbekistan. But those people and organizations who label us ‘corrupt’ are unaware of the serious problems we face in our daily working life. I think all problems are connected to the state and system. During the Soviet era, the state provided everything for hospitals and physicians received a good salary. But, after independence, the state significantly decreased financing for hospitals. There is a serious shortage of medical equipment. Hospitals are over-crowded. Electricity and gas cuts are very common. The state does not supply us with necessary medicaments.

According to law, all maternity hospitals are state-owned in Uzbekistan, which means giving birth in a hospital must be free of charge. But this law is rarely enforced in practice. Almost everyone pays for maternity services. Of course, we accept their payment informally through hand-shaking. Often, people themselves slip money into our pocket. Such informal payments are called ‘suyunchi’ (literally ‘joy’ in English), where the father or relatives of the new born baby give cash (or sometimes expensive gifts) to the midwife and nurses who deliver the baby. ‘Suyunchi’ is usually given after the birth of a child. The amount of ‘suyunchi’ varies from one case to another, ranging from anywhere between 50,000 to 500,000 soum. If it is an uncomplicated vaginal birth, people give us ‘suyunchi’ of around 50,000-100,000 soum. In cases of complicated vaginal births or C-sections, we receive a lot more ‘suyunchi’, approximately 300,000-500,000 soum.

I know my actions are illegal according to law, but real life circumstances force me to expect suyunchi from patients. Law and real life are completely different things. You will understand what I mean after I explain my work conditions. First, it is very difficult to get a job at a maternity hospital. For instance, if you want to work as a nurse at our hospital, you must pay a bribe of at least 500 USD to top health officials. Second, our salaries are extremely low. A midwife’s monthly salary is 280,000 soum, around 100 USD, and a nurse’s salary is 180,000 soum (65 USD). Isn’t it

frustrating when you pay a 500 USD bribe in order to get a job with a 100 USD salary? Our salary is very low, but I have to feed my kids. I studied for five-six years to become a midwife, but I do not receive a high enough salary to live on from the state. Due to my good education, I believe I should earn more money than people who sell potatoes at the bazaar. I, too, have my own dreams, so I want to have a good salary. Everything is expensive at the bazaar. For example, one kilo of meat costs 17,000 soum and one sack of flour is 60,000 soum. I have to buy clothes for my kids. So, you see, it is impossible to survive on my 280,000 soum salary. Since the state does not reward me properly, I have a full right to supplement my salary through *suyunchi*. I do not force anyone to give 'suyunchi', but I expect people to respect my work and people themselves voluntarily reward me. This is the only way to feed my kids and I do not see any other alternatives. I will not be able to feed my kids if I follow the law. Therefore, it is quite understandable that we expect people to thank and reward us for our efforts.

There are two main issues that need to be emphasized:

First, the midwife's story shows that the gap between law, which states that maternity services should be free of charge, and actual delivery (the lack of state financing for hospitals and low salaries), forced maternity hospital workers to search for informal coping strategies that help them survive in the absence of decent salaries. As midwife asserts, she will not be able to feed her children had she followed the law. Seemingly, since Uzbek authorities fail to secure the basic needs of its citizens, so the state officials such as midwives and traffic policemen do not feel any moral obligation to act in compliance with the law. According to the midwife's moral code, her informal practices are completely 'legal', and she has a full right to reap the benefits of her good education. Subsequently, informal transactions that are interpreted as corrupt in the Western moral and juridical codes could be regarded as a morally acceptable behaviour according to the 'living law' of maternity hospitals in Uzbekistan. This example illustrates that the actions and working practices of hospital workers are more shaped by a living law rather than the state law.

Second, the midwife's story indicates that the kleptocratic practices of the high level state officials (elites) should be distinguished from the informal practices of ordinary citizens and low-level officials that have a different meaning ('to get things done'). Hence, the midwife's informal practices significantly differs from the predatory practices of kleptocratic elites, such as 'rent-seeking strategies among local prokurators (prosecutors) in Uzbekistan' (Markowitz, 2008) or the 'battle for cotton' between the central government and regional elites in Uzbekistan (Ilkhamov, 2004). In this regard, the rent-seeking strategy of local prokurators is not comparable to the *suyunchi* that midwives and nurses receive from ordinary citizens. However, both transactions are illicit according to Western-centric interpretations. This leads us to the conclusion that we need to take the local context and moral codes into account when measuring corruption in social settings such as Uzbekistan.

## Discussion and conclusions

I have argued that Western-centric interpretations cannot satisfactorily explain the nuances of corruption in Uzbekistan, and that there is a need to make a distinction between the informal practices of kleptocratic elites, which have nothing to do with 'survival', and the



informal coping strategies of the ordinary citizens and low-level officials. All four interviews demonstrated the existence of local morality and norms (living law) that significantly differ from the Western juridical and moral codes. As the findings indicate, informal economic practices are not automatically negative; rather, they may serve as an alternative welfare structure to the formal economy when the state and its policies fail to meet the basic needs of its citizens. It could be stated that there is a need to distinguish between informal survival (coping) strategies and more predatory transactions where resources go from weak to strong. Consequently, the informal transactions that are interpreted as 'corrupt' by international bodies such as TI are not necessarily named or recognized as such by the local population. Similar points have been made before by scholars such as Werner (2000), Humphrey (2002) and Polese (2008). In that sense, my research could be said to empirically support the findings of previous research. My research differs in one aspect from previous research by bringing together and comparing the perspectives of both state officials and ordinary citizens, and exploring informal transactions through a 'living law' perspective. By utilizing this concept, I question the validity of the Western-centric interpretations, and underline the importance of understanding the 'living law' of the society, in which corruption is being discussed and/or measured.

The results can be summarised in three points: (1) informal transactions are deeply embedded in coping strategies; (2) international legal definitions of corruption should be sensitive to heterogeneity of informal transactions; (3) when talking about (or measuring) corruption,

social norms, moral codes and local perceptions should be considered. If this is not taken into consideration, informal transactions that are not corrupt run the risk of being labelled as illicit. This study has shown that informal transactions that are considered to be corruption in a Western-centric interpretation have little to do with abuse. Rather, informal coping strategies are incorporated into Uzbek culture as a rational way of 'getting things done.' Hence, anti-corruption measures are not simply a matter of getting people to obey the juristic law. They are, more importantly, about understanding 'living law' and promoting socio-economic change.



*Wedding ceremony in rural Fergana (photo by the author).*



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## Spring Scholarships 2018

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**Hanna Berg** is a master student in Middle Eastern studies at Stockholm University, graduating in the fall 2018. She speaks fluent Arabic, having travelled many times to Jordan. Currently she conducts research and field work there with the aim to establish an understanding of the conditions of Syrian refugees' (im)mobility.

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I applied for the minor scholarship from the Swedish Research Institute for my master project in Middle Eastern Studies, a three-month field study in Amman, Jordan. The aim of my research is to, through an ethnographical approach, capture the lived experiences of Syrian (im)mobility in and across Jordan in relation to nationalism and border politics. In Jordan, the over a half million Syrians who are registered as refugees at the UN, on a daily basis experience restricted mobility as a result of the politicizing of the human body in the form of papers, passports and statuses. This research will contribute with a new perspective of what it means to be displaced in a world where identity documents is a determining force for the outcomes of people's lives.

Through my time spent in Jordan, involving everyday social engagement and semi-structured interviews, in contrast to focus on the "traditional" losses of displacement such as culture or identity, the findings in this study emphasizes another type of loss: mobility.

The investigation of the loss of ability to move and the interconnections to topics such as nationality, nativity, border politics and displacement demonstrates the real effects of politicizing human lives into, through different categorizations, bodily representing the international world order.

The motive to write a thesis about (im)mobility was not something I imagined as I first registered for the master program in 2016. For almost one year I was convinced to write an ethnography examining the re-imagination of the homeland for Syrians who supported the revolution in 2011. However, the spring 2017 when I traveled to back to Amman, a place that had already become a very important place in my life, to do an internship, I realized that the theme I wished to write about simply was not there anymore. Through the many conversations and time spent with Syrians living in Jordan, an interest in the dimensions of mobility instead emerged. Yet, this theme was not something I witnessed from an outside position, but rather something I was part of from the very beginning. The growing awareness of the ways my passport forms a reality that differentiates me from all Syrians I met in Jordan, motivated me to investigate the forces, mechanisms and power relations forming these realities in which I myself am a part of.

Being granted the scholarship from the Swedish Research Institute allowed me to both realize my research project but also to visit the institute in Istanbul for a few days. Being a guest at the institute was both inspiring and stimulating since it gave me the opportunity to meet other students and researchers contributing to new perspectives for my research. Presenting my work was a perfect chance to get inspired by other scholars and exchange thoughts, ideas and writings. Coming back to Jordan after a few days in Istanbul, I had many new ideas and a lot of energy to write and continue my fieldwork with my new insights.

# Patterns of Istanbul

## Two events of the Cultural Section of the Consulate General

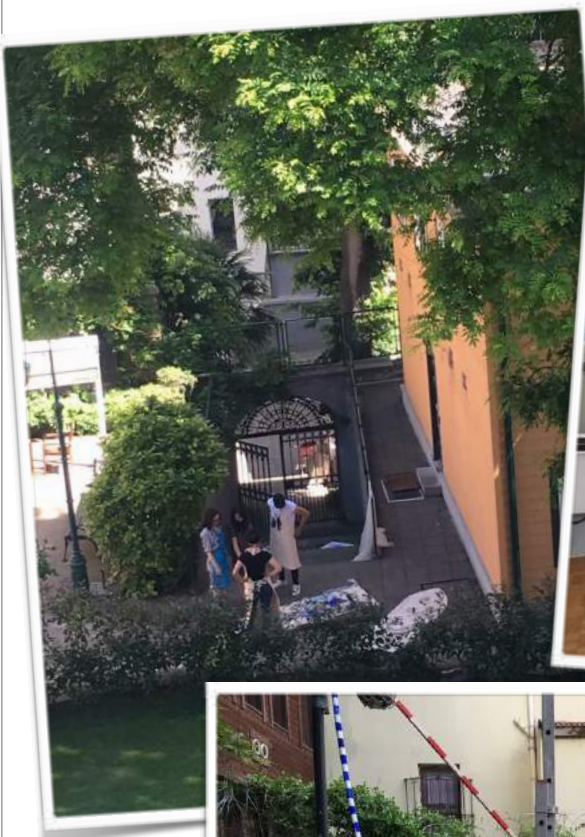
The spring of 2018 saw two initiatives of the cultural section of the Consulate General using the consulate compound in Istanbul and the Swedish Research Institute as artistic venue and workplace.

On March 9–18, the *FemiNaming* writing festival took place in Istanbul, with both Turkish, and Swedish women writers taking part in various forms and venues all over the city. At the SRII, Swedish artist Karolina Bång explored normative identity and introduced practical exercises of how one can move away from traditional stereotypes in graphic novels, whereas Sassa Buregren led a workshop on peculiar children's stories.

On May 15, the old chapel and surrounding areas of the consulate lower garden were turned first into a live atelier and then into a gallery, with eight Turkish and two Swedish visual artists exploring the creative possibilities of forms, shapes and patterns of the space.







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## Spring Scholarships 2018

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**Jonas Bergan Draege** is a post-doctoral research fellow at Harvard Kennedy School. His research focuses on contentious politics, party politics, and electoral behaviour in the Middle East. Draege holds a PhD in political science from the European University Institute, and an Mphil with distinction in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Oxford.

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I applied for a grant to conduct research for my book project, “The Rise of Street Politics: The Gezi Protests and the Opposition's Failure in Turkey”, which I am seeking to complete in my current position as a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School. The book is concerned with the behavior of Turkey's political opposition parties during the last decade. With the 2013 Gezi protests as a starting point, the book discusses how and why opposition parties, most notably the CHP and BDP/HDP, failed to capture and realize the unprecedented momentum that the protests created. Drawing upon a wide array of quantitative and qualitative original and secondary source material, I argue that the Gezi protests not only constituted a unique opportunity for these two parties to reinvigorate the electoral opposition to the AKP government, but that the demands in the Gezi protests also reflected preferences in the wider voting population that the opposition parties hitherto had not fully embraced.

As such, it represented an opportunity for Turkey's opposition parties to capture the momentum the protests raised, and propose a political program that would capture a bigger electoral share in subsequent elections. However, as both parties responded ambiguously and reluctantly, this opportunity was largely lost. I show that the Gezi protests received a great deal of attention from the CHP and BDP/HDP, but both parties framed the protest demands in the direction of pre-existing platforms, and their responses were not accompanied by major changes in party platforms in the four competitive elections of 2014 and 2015. Challenging prevalent narratives of Turkey's authoritarian turn as a deterministic gradual process, I thus argue that until the coup attempt in 2016, the opposition had opportunities to make much more out of their situation than they did. With an in-depth study of the domestic politics of such a pivotal regional and global power as Turkey, in such a crucial period in the country's history, the book contributes to our understanding of the interaction of civil society and political parties.

The grant and visit that the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul generously offered gave me the opportunity to conduct the crucial final round of fieldwork in Turkey. I spent three weeks in Istanbul and Ankara, conducting semi-structured interviews with 25 key actors in Turkish politics, including Presidential candidate Muharrem Ince. I had the pleasure of presenting my research in a well-attended session at the SRII, as a part of their spring lecture series. That was an extremely valuable occasion to discuss my findings with local experts and academics alike, and it provided me with new perspectives and ideas for the final write up of the manuscript that I am currently engaged with.



Lecture Series of OII, SRII & Evangelia Balta in the Fall 2018,  
in Cooperation with Anadolu Kültür

## 1918: Calamity and Aspiration in the Ottoman Empire

Program:

Lecture 1, 10 October:

*The Ottoman Economy in 1918*

Prof. Şevket Pamuk (Boğaziçi Üniversitesi)

Lecture 2, 24 October:

*Ottoman Cinema in 1918*

Prof. Serdar Öztürk (Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara)

Lecture 3, 31 October:

*The Second Great War, 1917-23*

Prof. Jay Winter (Yale University)

Lecture 4, 7 November:

*The Spanish Flu of 1918 and the Ottoman Empire*

Prof. Önder Ergönül, MD, MPH. (Koç Üniversitesi)

Lecture 5, 28 November:

*Women of Ottoman Turkey in 1918*

Prof. Zafer Toprak (Boğaziçi Üniversitesi/ Koç Üniversitesi)

Lecture 6, 5 December:

*Refugees and public order in Istanbul in 1918*

Prof. Kent Schull (Binghamton University, New York)

Venue: Big Hall in the Cezayir building - Galatasaray-Beyoğlu.

Time: 19:00h

6 October - 5 December 2018