



Azzurra Sarnataro

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I am currently a PhD candidate and researcher in urban studies at the University of Rome “La Sapienza”. Being a former Middle East student, my researches focused on *mawalid* and the cult of saints in Egypt, popular culture in contemporary Egypt and popular Sufism.

I’ve spent almost three years in Egypt both in Cairo and Alexandria improving my Arabic and conducting field researches for my MA thesis. I worked as a research fellow at the Library of Alexandria for a project called "Cultural Routes: Sacred Places and Popular Practice in the Mediterranean" managed by the Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Center (Alex Med). At a later stage, my interest for anthropology and social sciences led me to link the role of Egyptian popular culture to urban practices. Due to my growing interest towards urban studies I therefore decided to focus my PhD research on urban practices in post-revolutionary Egypt.

One of the main objectives of my research is to investigate how a new *discourse* on informal quarters, or ‘*ashwaiyyāt*’ in Egyptian dialect, has been developed after the January 2011 revolution. I refer both to institutional actors and policies as well as a growing number of independent initiatives that are addressing the issue of urban informality. Particularly, I would like to investigate the role of both NGOs and CBOs (Communities Based Association) in promoting new models of governance and reshaping local systems of governance and power of Cairo's informal areas.

Publications, Presentations and Abstracts

- Elhami O., Sarnataro A. (2009) “Sufi Moulids in Modern Alexandria” in *Sacred Places & Popular Practice in the Mediterranean* edited by Yasmine Hussein, The Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Center, Bibliotheca Alexandrina.
- Loddoni M., Sarnataro A., Sordilli R. (2013) “Crossing Urban Informality: Snapshots from Rome, Cairo, Dar Essalam” in Çatak N., Duyan E., Seçer S., eds. *Rethinking the Urban. CUI '13. Contemporary Urban Issues*. Conference proceedings. Istanbul: Dakam Publishing

Research Experience

- **2009-2010:** Researcher at Alex Med (Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Center of Bibliotheca Alexandrina) and participation to the project "Cultural Routes: Sacred Places and Popular Practice in the. Mediterranean" funded by Ramses 2. Field research on major issues addressed by the project, drafting the text for final publication, organization of

meetings with the researchers involved in the project and participation in the seminar for the final presentation of the work.

- **2007-2008:** Participation to the project "Learning Italian as L2 and multicultural perspectives in Naples" at the University of Naples "L'Orientale". Field research and collection of material for the project through interviews with representatives from the different foreign communities of the city of Naples, with particular reference to the Muslim community.