



# CONTESTING AUTHORITY: KNOWLEDGE, POWER AND EXPRESSIONS OF SELFHOOD

ENIS/MIDA Online Summer School 2020

June, 22-26, 2020



**m** mediating  
Islam in the  
digital age

**ENIS** European  
Network  
for Islamic  
Studies



UNIVERSITÀ  
degli STUDI  
di CATANIA | DIPARTIMENTO di  
SCIENZE POLITICHE  
e SOCIALI

*Artwork: Tunisia, 2011 ©ZOO Project, Bilal Berreni / Photograph: Elissa Jobson*  
<https://www.zoo-project.com/hommage/>

Booklet : Sophie Bilardello (IISMM)

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## Introduction

The MIDA/ENIS Spring School 2020 takes place from Monday March 2<sup>nd</sup> to March 7<sup>th</sup> 2020 in Catania, Sicily.

## *Theme*

The MIDA/ENIS Spring School 2020 addresses two closely interrelated aspects of Islam in the digital age. Firstly, how (past and contemporary) technological revolutions have informed the performance of selfhood (including gender), the modes of engagement with society, and the political consequences of shifting boundaries between public and private spheres. Secondly, it addresses the construction and transformation of religious authority and religious knowledge production, and concomitant questions of legitimacy, power and discipline, under changing circumstances.

Presently there is a mushrooming of YouTube channels presenting testimonials and life accounts, face book pages providing space for minority groups (e.g. homosexuals or ex-Muslims) that publicise previous hidden aspects of identity, as well as blogs and homemade videos communicating everyday life events or short clips showing artistic performance in an affordable non-celebrity style sharing them with a wide audience. Quite often they contain an (implicit) political statement about the societies in which the expressions are uttered, not only in the message but also in the mere fact of the utterance. (Young) people in the Muslim world, like elsewhere, share more and more aspects of self, including more intimate and previously hidden ones, or experiences with 'illegality'. These new digital forms of self-expression also entail a claim to space for individualised selfhood. Out of sight of different regimes of surveillance, forms of marginality, secret lives and intimate experiences take on a more public form. With that it questions dominant forms of authority, whether parental, communal, religious or political. The Muslim / Arab world is usually characterised as stressing communal or relational forms of identities and putting less emphasis on individualised selfhood in comparison to the West. The Arab Uprisings first seemed to overturn some deeply rooted forms of authority, including with respect to political power, but now long-established authoritarian forms of power with their different nuances appear to be square back. Yet several observers notice a 'silent revolution' taking place on an individual level, asserting individual selfhood and rights. Do these new forms of self-narratives and artistic performances offer us insight into the development of new forms of selfhood? What are the most important characteristics and expressive forms of these new forms of selfhood? What are the potential political consequences of new forms of self-understanding and expression?

Issues of selfhood and artistic performance are closely linked to questions of legitimacy, power and discipline. Muslims have held varying, sometimes conflicting, views on the extent to which knowledge and authority are exclusive of a single figure, a masculine 'professional' group, or distributed in society, how knowledge should be transmitted and controlled, and the literary forms that it should take, and how it should be reproduced.

The widely held assumption that in the pre-digital era Islamic reasoning was a collective matter of established scholars and theology-centred argumentation lacks historical pedigree. The individual as a political subject emerged centuries before the dawn of digital technology. This also questions the assumption that religious authority was uncontested, only to be challenged very recently by the same technological innovations. Questioning 'established' religious authorities and addressing new audiences is as old as Islam. The invention of paper, the rise of literacy and the emergence of 'calligraphic states', and not least the spread of print technology have had profound influence on authority and knowledge production, but also generated new expressions of selfhood. Digitisation has intensified this process in an unprecedented way, resulting in the rise of new intellectuals, the feminisation of contestation, the 'democratisation' of knowledge production, the

emergence of new audiences and discursive communities, the relocation, subjectivation, and fragmentation of authority, but also in new forms of community building, online and offline. Finally, digitisation also prompted 'established' religious authorities to reflect upon these newly arising challenges and how to effectively cope with them.

## *Organisation*

The organisation of the MIDA/ENIS Spring School is a joint effort by the Innovative Training Network *Mediating Islam in the Digital Age* (ITN-MIDA), the European Network for Islamic Studies (ENIS) and the University of Catania.

## *Participating institutions*

### **University of Catania**

Department of Political and Social Sciences

Centre for the Study of the Contemporary Islamic World and Africa (CoSMICA)

The University of Catania, whose foundation dates back to 1434, is the oldest institution of higher education in Sicily. Its students number 40,000 and it provides undergraduate and master courses through the activity of seventeen departments, the Faculty of Medicine, and two decentralised units based in Ragusa (Modern Languages) and Syracuse (Architecture). In 1998 a school of excellence, named "Scuola Superiore di Catania", has been established in order to select the best young minds and offer them a complementary high-level curriculum.

The Department of Political and Social Sciences emerged from the Faculty of Political Sciences born in the late 1960s. It stands out for its interdisciplinary character reflected in its courses and research activities. In constant interaction with local actors and territorial needs, the Department has enhanced its internationalisation as well. Of particular note are recently-introduced courses, which are taught in English, focused on international trade relations and the Euro-Mediterranean area.

Within the Department of Political and Social Sciences, Middle Eastern and African Studies have been developed by the Centre for the Study of the Contemporary Islamic World and Africa (CoSMICA), created in 1998. This niche area of expertise managed over the years to attract research funds, build international networks, carry out scientific and educational activities, and produce a series of publications. In Italy CoSMICA is closely connected with the Society for Middle Eastern Studies (SeSaMO) and the Association for African Studies in Italy (ASAI).

### **ITN MIDA - Mediating Islam in the Digital Age**

*Mediating Islam in the Digital Age* (MIDA) is an Innovative Training Network funded by the European Commission in the framework of Horizon 2020 programme and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. The European and international consortium is composed by the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), four universities from the Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies (NISIS), the Higher Council of Scientific Research (CSIC, Spain), the Philipps Universität Marburg, the Freie Universität Berlin, the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), KU Leuven University (Belgium), the NGO Cultural Heritage without Border and the Institute of Research for



Development (IRD, France). The aim of the project is to train 15 researchers in social and human sciences through an interdisciplinary research programme conceptualised together with MIDA's non-academic partners. The main objective is to understand the tremendous influence that digitisation and technological innovations have on Islam. Hence, the 15 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows will follow, during the 36 months of the doctoral grant, various training courses in digital humanities, media and film as well as three spring doctoral schools and up to two secondments of one month each.

Together with the non-academic actors MIDA facilitates professional training opportunities for the PhD students in different areas of expertise. The non-academic partners (al-Jazeera Media Institute, Tropenmuseum, Gotha Research Library, PS Media, Centre Pompidou, Brill Publisher, Casa Árabe, the NGO "Cultural Heritage without Borders") will provide scientific, technical, and communicational trainings in order to produce new theoretical and practical knowledge on issues associated with the digitisation of Islam.

**The European Network for Islamic Studies (ENIS)** which includes University of Catania, Department of Political and Social Sciences, Centre for the Study of the Contemporary Islamic World and Africa (CoSMICA), Italian Society for Middle Eastern Studies (SeSaMO), the Centre for Near and Middle Eastern Studies / Centrum für Nah-und Mittelost-Studien (CNMS), University of Marburg, the Institut d'études de l'Islam et des sociétés du monde musulman (IISMM, UMS 2000, CNRS-EHESS), the Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies (NISIS), the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) and Freie Universität Berlin

### **La Società per gli Studi sul Medio Oriente (SeSaMO)**

The Italian Society for Middle Eastern Studies has been founded in Florence in November 1995. The reference to the Middle East enables us to include in the Association's sphere of interests issues related not only to Arab culture, but also to cultural and ethnic minorities inhabiting the region.

The interest of Italian scholars towards the Middle East dates back to the nineteenth century. Michele Amari, Leone Caetani, Ignazio Guidi, Francesco Gabrieli stood out for their contribution to the development of European Orientalism. Islamic and Oriental studies in Italy gained momentum thanks to the activity of Giorgio Levi della Vida, who gave them the status of an autonomous discipline. To pioneer the field were also Carlo Alfonso Nallino, who founded the Istituto per l'Oriente and, in 1921, the review *Oriente Moderno*, and Giuseppe Tucci, who, through the Istituto per il Medio e l'Estremo Oriente, introduced the new geographical concept of Eurasia, which soon became a cultural, historical and anthropological trope and a study subject.

In the wake of the Italian tradition of Middle Eastern Studies, SeSaMO aims to foster research on the Middle East meant in a broad sense – that is to say, an area including North Africa and the neighbouring territories inhabited by Muslim populations, such as the Horn of Africa and the Indian subcontinent – with a particular focus on the relationships of these regions with Europe since the end of the eighteenth century. For this purpose SeSaMO organises periodical national and international conferences, seminars and study days, collaborates with academic reviews, promotes research networks and thematic monitoring unit.

### **The Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies (CNMS)**

The Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies of the Philipps-University Marburg were established in 2006. Since its foundation, the CNMS has proven to be a scientific hub which is able due to its large and interdisciplinary structure, which is unique in Germany, to

shed a broad light on the Near and Middle East from a variety of scientific angles. With a total of seven professorial chairs it tells the story of the region from ancient times until today. The staff of the CNMS teaches the relevant languages and does common research in a wide range of subjects, from Culture and Religion up to Politics and Economics.

### **The Institut d'études de l'Islam et des sociétés du monde musulman (IISMM)**

The Institut d'études de l'Islam et des sociétés du monde musulman was created in 1999 by the National Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology as an institute within the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS). On September 1, 2016, IISMM became an Unité Mixte de Service (UMS 2000) of the EHESS and the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS).

The institute aims to foster dialogue between researchers, to build bridges between research and civil society, and to disseminate knowledge of Islam and the Muslim world using the combined resources of the EHESS and the CNRS.

IISMM has three main missions:

- to promote a transversal approach to Islam by creating a space for collaboration and sharing between researchers specializing in the study of the Muslim world,
- to provide education, to support young researchers, and to coordinate educational and research activities with other scientific institutions in France and abroad,
- to establish the legitimacy of studies on Islam and Muslim societies by disseminating scientific knowledge beyond the spheres of pure research.

### **The Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies (NISIS)**

The Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies is a collaboration between nine Dutch and one Belgian universities with substantive scholarship on Islam and Muslim societies. As a national research school, NISIS covers the field in its broadest dimension, by acknowledging that Islam can only be properly studied from different disciplinary angles and with multidisciplinary sensitivity, without ignoring its doctrinal, cultural and historical specificities. Students and researchers participating in NISIS activities have disciplinary backgrounds in law, history, religious studies, theology, anthropology, sociology, political studies, media studies, security studies and philology. NISIS covers a wide range of regional expertise, as geographically. NISIS members work on the Middle East, Turkey, Iran, Africa, Indonesia, Western Europe, Central Asian, India, Russia and China.

### **Universiteit Leiden**

Leiden University was founded in 1575 and is one of Europe's leading international research universities. It has seven faculties in the arts, humanities and sciences, spread over locations in Leiden and The Hague. The motto of the University is 'Praesidium Libertatis' – Bastion of Freedom.

**Leiden University Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (LUCIS)** promotes high-quality research on Islam and Muslim societies and actively communicates the insights and findings of that research to the larger public. By bringing together scholars from a range of disciplines and experts from diverse backgrounds - including journalists, policy-makers and opinion leaders - LUCIS stimulates new perspectives on the vibrant field of Islamic studies at Leiden University and enhances the quality of the debate in society at large.

### **El Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC)**

The Spanish National Research Council is the largest public institution dedicated to research in Spain and the third largest in Europe. It supports many institutes, among them the ILC (Madrid), EEA (Granada) and IMF (Barcelona)

- **The Institute of Languages and Cultures of the Mediterranean (ILC, CCHS), CSIC**

The Institute of Languages and Cultures of the Mediterranean and the Near East has as its fundamental goal the study of languages and cultures of the Mediterranean basin and the Near East. This study is carried out on original texts and from a multidisciplinary perspective.

The ILC has as a goal to study cultures in their different manifestations for whose adequate understanding it is indispensable to know in depth the languages and texts of each individual tradition. Any linguistic, literary, cultural, social or historical phenomenon is taken into consideration in order to improve our understanding of its culture of origin, by establishing relevant comparison, opposition of typological parallelism.

The fundamental thematic lines of the research carried out in ILC encompass the languages and cultures of the ancient Near East, classical culture of ancient Greece and Rome, along with its continuation in the Byzantine and Neo-Greek world, as well as in the Latin Middle Ages and the Neo-Latin world, biblical culture and the Hebrew language, Spanish-Jewish world and its Sephardic continuation, the Arabic language and Islam, as well as the study of the processes of cultural production and transmission.

In addition to the different research projects carried out in the ILC and the scientific production with its multiple connected activities, the impact of the publications edited and directed by members of the Institute in the form of periodical publications (Journals *Al-Qantara*, *Emerita* and *Sefarad*), and the different texts and monographs collections.

- **The Escuela de Estudios Árabes (EEA), CSIC**

The School of Arabic Studies is a research centre focusing mainly on the History and Culture of al-Andalus through written documents on the one hand, and on Medieval Archaeology and Architecture, both Islamic and Christian, on the other hand. Created in 1932 with the purpose of "protecting and supporting Arabic studies in Spain", the EEA has two research groups:

- The Group of Philology, Historiography and Textual Criticism focuses its research on the study of Islamic culture and civilization through its written manifestations, with special attention to al-Andalus, as well on Arabic Dialectology. Its lines of research stand out for the multidisciplinary approach as regards the processes for editing, translating and interpreting manuscripts.

- The research lines of the Laboratory of Archaeology and Architecture of the City, LAAC, are related to the archaeological and historic study of Islamic architecture and urbanism. The work associated to the documentation, topographic and photogrammetric surveys of buildings and archaeological sites, together with the creation of infographics and virtual reconstruction, has placed the EEA as a leading centre in its field.

- **The Institución Milá y Fontanals (IMF), CSIC**

The Institución Milà i Fontanals-Barcelona (IMF-CSIC) is a research centre with a strong focus on African anthropology and Mediterranean history; it publishes the peer-reviewed journal *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*.

## **Freie Universität Berlin**

Freie Universität Berlin is one of the universities that the federal government has designated as a University of Excellence. Its particular strengths are (1) a broad variety of global academic and scientific cooperation arrangements in place as part of alliance



projects and networks with other entities active in research (2) its innovative support strategy for junior scholars. In the humanities it is the most successful German university in terms of research income.

The Institute for Islamic Studies at Freie Universität Berlin has 6 professorships and further disciplinary expertise is available through dedicated professorships in Middle East/Islam in other departments (e.g. politics, anthropology). The Institute is the lead entity in the Berlin Graduate School of Muslim Societies and Cultures (BGSMSC), which is dedicated to innovative training of PhD students.

#### Scientific Committee

Prof. Pascal Buresi (CNRS, EHESS-IISMM)

Prof. Albrecht Fuess (CNMS/Marburg University)

Dr. Jens Heibach (German Institute for Global and Areas Studies, and Marburg University)

Prof. Christian Lange (Director NISIS)

Dr. Pénélope Larzillière (IRD)

Prof. Daniela Melfa (SeSaMO, University of Catania)

Maike Neufend (CNMS/University of Marburg)

Prof. Karin van Nieuwkerk (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Prof. Thijs Sunier (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Prof. Gerard Wieggers (UvA)

#### Organising committee

Petra de Bruijn (Universiteit Leiden)

Sophie Bilardello (CNRS, IISMM)

Mustafa Oğuzhan Çolak (Universiteit Leiden)

Giulia Galluccio (ITN MIDA, CNRS, IISMM)

Emmanuelle Gravejat (IISMM, EHESS)

Anne de Groot (LUCIS)

Giuseppe Maimone (University of Palermo)

Dorieke Molenaar (NISIS)

Maike Neufend (Philipps University Marburg, CNMS)

# Program

## Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June

### KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER

#### Morning session | Live Room

09:30 **Connect yourself to the channel**

9:45-10:00 Opening and Introduction of the ENIS-MDA Online Summer School  
Introductions by **Daniela Melfa, Pascal Buresi, Thijs Sunier**

Masterclass **“What is Islam?” Definitions and interdisciplinary Approaches between the Middle Ages and the Digital Age, Albrecht Fuess and Gerard Wiegers**

10:00-10:40 Masterclass Part 1 **“Islam as a religion”**

10:40-11:00 Questions and discussion

11:00-11:25 Short break - **Connect yourself at 11:25**

11:30-12:10 Masterclass Part 2 **“Islam as a Commonwealth / Civilisation”**

12:10-12:30 Questions and discussion

12:30-13:15 Long break

#### Afternoon session 1 | Workshops | **Connect yourself at 13:15**

Workshop 1 **Between the Lines: Historical Texts Reinterpreted** | Chair: **Gerard Wiegers**  
Breakout Room 1

13:30-13:45 Presentation 1, by **Mahdieh Tavakol** (MIDA, ESR 8), "A Journey from the Actual to the Virtual. A history of a collection of manuscripts in the Astan-e Quds library in Iran."  
Discussant: **Jens Fischer**

13:45-13:50 Questions and discussion

13:50-14:05 Presentation 2, by **Tohir Mustofa** (EPHE), "Al-Rāzī's innovative commentary on *ẓulm* (injustice) and the challenge for political authority"  
Discussant: **Fabrizio Grasso**

14:05-14:10 Questions and discussion

14:10-14:25 Presentation 3, by **Hayat Ahlili** (Utrecht University), "A baha'i convert publishing Ibn Taymiyya's Majmū': challenging 'Islamic' authority"  
Discussant: **Mohamed El-Moursi**

14:25-14:30 Questions and discussion

14:30-14:50 Short break

Workshop 2 **The Impact of Technology on Religiosity** | Chair: **Thijl Sunier**  
Breakout Room 2

13:30-13:45 Presentation 4, by **Stephan Venmans** (Utrecht University), "Internet Islam in the West, the Great Game of Multiple Choice... Or Not?"  
Discussant: **Robin Cognée**

13:45-13:50 Questions and discussion

13:50-14:05 Presentation 5, by **Andar Nubowo** (ENS, Lyon), "'Islamic' Selfhood and Authority: The 'Conservative Turn' in Contemporary Indonesian Islam"  
Discussant: **Samia Kotele**

14:05-14:10 Questions and discussion

14:10-14:25 Presentation 6, by **Robin Cognée** (MIDA, ESR 7), "Digitization as a vector of religious authority and knowledge: the case of the web page of the Islamic Community (*Islamska zajednica*) of Bosnia and Herzegovina"  
Discussant: **Mounir Saifi**

14:25-14:30 Questions and discussion

14:30-14:50 Short break

Workshop 3 **Islamic Sentiments on Social Media** | Chair: **Pascal Buresi**  
Breakout Room 3

13:30-13:45 Presentation 7, by **Aleeha Zahra Ali** (MIDA, ESR 11), "Aalims and the Internet: Shia majlis on YouTube"  
Discussant: **Rayane Al-Rammal**

13:45-13:50 Questions and discussion

13:50-14:05 Presentation 8, by **Zeynep Aydin** (MIDA, ESR 14), "The Ticking Time Bomb: How the Interrelation Between Media and Terroristic Attacks Changes EU Sentiment and Politics"  
Discussant: **Giuseppe Cannata**

14:05-14:10 Questions and discussion

14:10-14:25 Presentation 9, by **Juliette Babin** (University of Strasbourg), "Muslim Preachers on YouTube: a new religious offer. Transformations of religious authority, legitimacy and knowledge"  
Discussant: **Elmozfar Abdelhafiz**

14:25-14:30 Questions and discussion

14:30-14:50 Short break

**Afternoon session 2 | Workshops | [Connect yourself to the channel at 14:50](#)**

Workshop 4     **Internet Worlds** | Chair: **Petra de Bruijn**  
Breakout Room 1

15:00-15:15     Presentation 10, by **Mustafa Oguzhan Çolak** (MIDA, ESR 6), "Exploring social network of state sponsored turkish television series"  
Discussant: **Zeynep Aydin**

15:15-15:20     Questions and discussion

15:20-15:35     Presentation 11, by **Samia Kotele** (ENS, Lyon), "Women *ijtihad* discourse on the digital sphere: from a contested authority to expressions of selfhood".  
Discussant: **Mahdieh Tavakol**

15:35-15:40     Questions and discussion

15:40-15:55     Presentation 12, by **Darul Ma'arif Asry** (Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha), "Religious Authority in The Digital Age of Islam in Indonesia"  
Discussant: **Andar Nubowo**

15:55-16:00     Questions and discussion

Workshop 5     **Transnational Networks of Religious Authority and Knowledge** | Chair: **Jens Heibach**  
Breakout Room 2

15:00-15:15     Presentation 13, by **Betül Demirkoparan** (KU Leuven), "Religious Identity and New Institutional form of Islam in Belgium and Europe. 'New mobilization strategies: from private to public space'"  
Discussant: **Rukayyah Reichling**

15:15-15:20     Questions and discussion

15:20-15:35     Presentation 14 by **Hayat Douhan** (MIDA, ESR 10), "Who speaks for Islam in the Diaspora? Islamic Authority (ies) among Moroccan Diasporic Communities in Europe"  
Discussant: **Lena Richter**

15:35-15:40     Questions and discussion

15:40-15:55     Presentation 15 by **Vladimir Blaiotta** (University of Catania/EHESS), "Western intervention in the Sahel: A social media perspective"  
Discussant: **Guillermo Di Marco Sánchez**

15:55-16:00     Questions and discussion

## Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June

### IDENTITY, EXPRESSIONS OF SELFHOOD

#### Morning session | Live Room

09:45 [Connect yourself to the channel](#)

10:00-10:10 Chair: **Karin van Nieuwkerk**

10:10-10:40 Keynote lecture 1 by **Siobhan T Lambert-Hurley** (University of Sheffield), "Staging the Self: Producing Women's Autobiography in Muslim South Asia »

10:40-10:55 Questions and discussion

10:55-11:25 Short break - [Connect yourself at 11:25](#)

11:30-12:10 Keynote lecture 2 by **Marjo Buitelaar** (University of Groningen), "Narrating the Hajj. Applying Dialogical Self Theory in the study of religious Self-Narratives"

12:10-12:25 Questions and discussion

12:25-13:20 Long break

#### Afternoon session 1 | [Connect yourself to the channel at 13:20](#)

Workshop 6 **Gendered Politics and Sexuality** | Chair: **Karin van Nieuwkerk**  
Breakout Room 1

13:30-13:45 Presentation 16, by **Antonio Scalia**, (University of Catania), "Resistance as a masculinizing act? Gendered narratives in Italian Palestine solidarity campaigns (1967-1993)"  
Discussant: **Scott Burns**

13:45-13:50 Questions and discussion

13:50-14:05 Presentation 17, by **Amel Nouri** (EHESS), "Ordinary women; extraordinary citizenship"  
Discussant: **Dewi Meyrasyawati**

14:05-14:10 Questions and discussion

14:10-14:25 Presentation 18, by **Scott Burns** (Leiden University), "Bringing Sexy Back: The Dichotomy of Sexual Modernity in the Transnational Franco-Moroccan Community"  
Discussant: **Eleonora Landucci**

14:25-14:30 Questions and discussion



Workshop 7 **Medieval Identities** | Chair: **Maribel Fierro**  
Breakout Room 2

13:30-13:45 Presentation 19, by **Mohamed El-Moursi** (MIDA, ESR 1), "Defying the Populace, Vindicating the Self Preliminary Notes on 'Abd Allāh B. Buluggīn's Self-Representation Versus Authority in *Kitāb al-Tibyān*"  
Discussant: **Hagen Rinn**

13:45-13:50 Questions and discussion

13:50-14:05 Presentation 20, **James Rouse** (Aix-Marseille University), "Lowly bandit or warrior of the Faith: a view of the Turkish nomad through the lens of the *Dānishmendnāme*"  
Discussant: **Mustafa Oguzhan Çolak**

14:05-14:10 Questions and discussion

14:10-14:25 Presentation 21, **Jens Fischer** (Münster University), "Staying in Control: Autobiography amongst 12<sup>th</sup> Century Arabic Literati"  
Discussant: **Justin Mauro Benavidez**

14:25-14:30 Questions and discussion

Workshop 8 **Constructing Counter-Narratives Online** | Chair: **Daniela Melfa**  
Breakout Room 3

13:30-13:45 Presentation 22, by **Mounir Saifi** (MIDA, ESR 15), "Digital self-expression as a means of demythification of Al-Andalus in the muslim world."  
Discussant: **Aleeha Zahra Ali**

13:45-13:50 Questions and discussion

13:50-14:05 Presentation 23, by **Dewi Meyrasyawati** (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), "Acquiring Agency Online: Women's Fashion and Social Media in Surabaya, Indonesia"  
Discussant: **Andar Nubowo**

14:05-14:10 Questions and discussion

Afternoon session 2 | [Connect yourself to the channel at 16:50](#)

17:00-17:10 Chair : **Albrecht Fuess**

17:10-17:40 Keynote lecture 3 by **Muhammad Qasim Zaman** (University of Princeton), "Scripture, Translation, and Authority in Muslim South Asia, 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries".

17:40-17:55 Questions and discussion

## Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June

Only for Marie Curie Fellows (ITN-MIDA)

### MIDA's Mid-term Check - Live Room

09:30	<b>Connect yourself to the channel</b>
09:40-09:45	Short introduction by <b>Pascal Buresi</b> (MIDA's Scientific Coordinator)
09:45-10:15	Presentation of <b>Isabelle Aires-Pinto</b> (REA Project Officer)
10:15 -10:45	Round table of Beneficiaries and Partner Organisations. Short and quick presentation of their role within the network and of their research team.
10:45-11:00	Short break
11:00-11:30	Review of MIDA's Preview Activities - <b>Pascal Buresi</b> (Scientific Coordinator)
11:30-12:15	Fellows' Individual Reports (3min each)
12:15-12:30	Questions & Answers with the Project Officer - <b>Isabelle Aires-Pinto</b>
12:30-13:30	Long break
13:30-14:30	Meeting between the Project Officer and the ESRs Breakout Room 1
13:30-14:30	Supervisory Board and Financial Point Live Room
14:30 - 15:00	Short break
15:00-15:30	Restricted session & Feedback from REA ( <b>only for</b> the Scientific Coordinator, <b>Pascal Buresi</b> , the Project Officer, <b>Isabelle Aires-Pinto</b> , and the Project Manager, <b>Giulia Galluccio</b> ) – Live Room
15:30-16:30	Communication, dissemination and outreach activities for all MIDA Team - <b>Thijl Sunier</b> and <b>Philipp Rückriem</b> - Live Room

## Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June

### CONTESTING AUTHORITY

#### Morning session 1 | Live Room

09:45	<a href="#">Connect yourself to the channel</a>
10:00-10:10	Chair: <b>Thijl Sunier</b>
10:10-10:40	Keynote lecture 4 by <b>Hilary Kalmbach</b> (University of Sussex), "Media, education, and authority from the age of print to the digital age".
10:40-10:55	Questions and discussion
10:55-11:20	Short break

#### Morning session 2 | Workshops | [Connect yourself to the channel at 11:20](#)

##### Parallel Session 1

Workshop 9	<b>Transformation of Religious Authority</b>   Chair: <b>Thijl Sunier</b> Breakout Room 1
11:30-11:45	Presentation 24, by <b>Ameen Omar</b> (Hamad bin Khalifa University), "The Impact of Modernity on Islamic Pedagogy and its effects on the Conception of Knowledge and Islam" Discussant: <b>Hayat Douhan</b>
11:45-11:50	Questions and discussion
11:50-12:05	Presentation 25, by <b>Justin Mauro Benavidez</b> (MIDA, ESR 12), "Between Heaven and Earth: Contested Authority in the Major Letters of Ibn 'Abbad of Ronda (d. 1390)" Discussant: <b>Tohir Mustofa</b>
12:05-12:15	Questions and discussion
12:15-13:15	Long break

##### Parallel Session 2

Workshop 10	<b>Navigating the Self</b>   Chair: <b>Mayte Penelas</b> Breakout Room 2
11:30-11:45	Presentation 26, by <b>Hagen Rinn</b> (Philipps University of Marburg), "Notions of 'Self' and 'Other' in the Siyāḥatnāmah by Maḥmūd Ṭarzī" Discussant: <b>James Rouse</b>
11:45-11:50	Questions and discussion
11:50-12:05	Presentation 27, by <b>Galiia Muratova</b> (University of Amsterdam), "Picturing Muslim self at the era of late Socialism. Text on the back of the photograph". Discussant: <b>Elaheh Habibi</b>

12:05-12:15 Questions and discussion

12:15-13:15 Long break

### Afternoon session 1 | Workshops | [Connect yourself to the channel at 13:15](#)

#### Parallel Session 1

Workshop 11 **Resistance and Activism** | Chair: **Karin van Nieuwkerk**  
Breakout Room 1

13:30-13:45 Presentation 28 by **Lena Richter** (MIDA, ESR 2), "The King's fear: when questioning faith becomes contesting politics".  
Discussant: **Amel Nouri**

13:45-13:50 Questions and discussion

13:50-14:05 Presentation 29, by **Rayane Al-Rammal** (MIDA, ESR 3), "Digital Activism In The Lebanese Revolution (October 2019)"  
Discussant: **Antonio Scalia**

14:05-14:10 Questions and discussion

14:10-14:25 Presentation 30, by **Eleonora Landucci** (MIDA, ESR 4), "Islam at the University: Multilingual selves, offline-online public voices and legitimacy of Moroccan students".  
Discussant: **Ameen Omar**

14:25-14:30 Questions and discussion

14:30-16:50 Long break

#### Parallel Session 2

Workshop 12 **The Cartography of Ideas** | Chair: **Pascal Buresi**  
Breakout Room 2

13:30-13:45 Presentation 31, by **Elmozfar Abdelhafiz** (MIDA, ESR 5), "Arab-Muslim encounters with Orientalism in the colonial age"  
Discussant: **Galiia Muratova**

13:45-13:50 Questions and discussion

13:50-14:05 Presentation 32, by **Rukayyah Reichling** (MIDA, ESR 13), "Circulating the 'sacred', sustaining the Holy: the Dutch colonial gaze on Mecca".  
Discussant: **Hayat Ahili**

14:05-14:10 Questions and discussion

14:10-14:25 Presentation 33, by **Fabrizio Grasso** (University of Catania), "Outlines of a critique of technology"  
Discussant: **Stephan Venmans**

14:25-14:30 Questions and discussion

14:30-16:50 Long break

### Parallel Session 3

Workshop 13      **Political Authority: State Agendas and Propaganda** | Chair: **Jens Heibach**  
Breakout Room 3

13:30-13:45      Presentation 28, by **Elaheh Habibi** (MIDA, ESR 9), "Visual Battlefield: Translating Religiosity and the Contested Legacy of War In Iran"  
Discussant: **Juliette Babin**

13:45-13:50      Questions and discussion

13:50-14:05      Presentation 29, by **Giuseppe Cannata** (University of Catania), "Xinjiang Islamic revival: The securitisation of the 'three evil forces' and Uyghur symbolic resistance"  
Discussant: **Vladimir Blaiotta**

14:05-14:10      Questions and discussion

14:10-14:25      Presentation 30, by **Guillermo Di Marco Sánchez** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) "Rojava: political organization and internationalization of the conflict with turkey"  
Discussant: **Betül Demirkoparan**

14:25-14:30      Questions and discussion

14:30-16:50      Long break

### Afternoon session 2 | Live Room | [Connect yourself to the channel at 16:50](#)

17:00-17:10      Chair: **Jens Heibach**

17:10-17:30      Keynote lecture 5 by **Suad Joseph** (University of California, Davis), "Selving: Reflections"

17:30-17:45      Questions and discussion



## Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June

Morning session | Live Room

09:45 [Connect yourself to the channel](#)

10:00-10:10 Chair: **Araceli González-Vázquez**

10:10-10:40 Keynote lecture 6 by **Arshad Muradin** (Leiden University), "Religious Authority and Family Dispute Resolution among Moroccan Muslims in the Netherlands: Recent Trends and Debates"

10:40-10:55 Questions and discussion

10:55-11:20 Short break

11:30-12:00 Closing Session by **Karin van Nieuwkerk** and **Thijl Sunier**

# Masterclass

## "What is Islam?" Definitions and interdisciplinary Approaches between the Middle Ages and the Digital Age.

Albrecht Fuess, Marburg, and Gerard Wiegers, Amsterdam

This masterclass has three main parts and a concluding discussion:



You can find the literature in

<https://mycore.core-cloud.net/index.php/s/fmfonfs2az5U75v>

### 1. "*Islam as a religion*", introduced by Gerard Wiegers

Readings:

Reinhold Gleis and Stefan Reichmuth, "Religion between Last Judgment, law and faith. Koranic Din and Latin Religio in Latin Translations of the Koran." *Religio*, 42, 2, 247-271.  
From: Sahab Ahmad, *What is Islam? The Importance of being Islamic*. Chapter IV, Culture, Meaning, Symbol System. Whatever Muslims Say it is. Discursive Tradition, Orthodoxy, Process, 247-297.

From John Bowen. *A New Anthropology of Islam (New Departures in Anthropology)*. 2012, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 1, 1-41.

### 2. "*Islam as a Commonwealth / Civilisation*", introduced by Albrecht Fuess

Readings:

From: Asma Uddin, *When Islam is not a Religion. Inside America's Fight for Religious Freedom*. Forthcoming 2019, Introduction, chapters 1 and 2, 13-64.

### 3. "*Present-day debates about the renewal of Islam in Modernity: The case of Egypt as an example*", introduced by Albrecht Fuess

Four years ago, Egyptian president as-Sisi declared the urge to revolutionize religion. He started therefore a program to teach religion and especially Islam in what he considers a more up to date way. The program was mainly aimed at secondary school education and stands in the context of an anti-Muslim brotherhood policy.

Not all members of the religious establishment agreed to the necessity of renovation of religion and discussions on the topic are ongoing.

At the end of January of this year a large international Islamic conference took place at the Azhar, which was devoted to the renewal of religion and a new look on heritage.

This conference stands in a series of events initiated by President as-Sisi in an attempt to launch a debate about the role of Islam as cornerstone of the country but of course also in the interest to counter the Brothers, who propagated according to him an exclusive view on Islam which would have sidelined especially the Coptic minority.

During the conference, a heated dispute about religion and heritage broke out between the Shaykh al-Azhar and the President of Cairo University, a Philosopher.

As this dispute is talk of the day in religious and academic circles in Cairo right now, we would like to include it in the Master Class as actual example of inner Muslim discussions on Islam and its role for society. Of course, it is an example of one specific country but we might talk in the class of other examples too.

On the actual discussion: see the following sources in English:

Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbiAwHYIOD4>

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/2106611/debate-between-al-azhar-grand-imam-cairo-university-president-provokes>

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

For the full debate between the shaykh and the president (only in Arabic), see:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_EOW9XYzwf4&t=1159s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EOW9XYzwf4&t=1159s)

# Abstract Book

## Keynote Speakers: titles, abstracts and biographies

(In alphabetical order by author)



You can find the literature in

<https://mycore.core-cloud.net/index.php/s/fmfonfs2az5U75v>

**Marjo BUITELAAR** (University of Groningen), "Narrating the Hajj. Applying Dialogical Self Theory in the study of religious Self-Narratives

In this presentation I will present Dialogical Self Theory (DST) and demonstrate its value as an analytical tool to study intersectionality in self-narratives. DST emphasizes that self and society are closely interconnected. Moreover, the self can be conceived of as a 'society of mind' in which various collectively shared discourses or 'voices' are in constant dialogue with personal voices that speak to and from the self as the individual moves between different positions. DST thus helps to analyse how one's desires, views, feelings and experiences are informed by the various cultural discourses and accompanying power relations that one is embedded in. I will demonstrate how DST can effectively used in the study of religious self-narratives by applying it to some stories that Dutch Muslims told me about their Hajj experiences as participants in the research project 'Modern Articulations of Pilgrimage to Mecca'.

### Reading:

Marjo Buitelaar & Hetty Zock (Eds.), 2013. *Religious Voices in Self-Narratives. Making Sense of Life in Times of Transition*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, pp. 11-35.

Marjo Buitelaar. "'Discovering a different me': Discursive positioning in life story telling over time". *Women's Studies International Forum*, 43 (2014) 30–37.

Hermans, H., & Hermans-Konopka, A. (2010). The impact of globalization and localization on self and identity. In *Dialogical Self Theory: Positioning and Counter-Positioning in a Globalizing Society* (pp. 21-81). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Marjo Buitelaar** is an anthropologist and full professor of Contemporary Islam at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. Her research interests concern Islam in everyday life, narrative identity construction and migration. She has written two ethnographies set in Morocco concerning the meaning of the hammam, the public bath, and the practice of Ramadan, and a monograph on social identifications and life trajectories of Moroccan-Dutch women. Recently co-edited books are *Religious Voices in Self-Narratives* (2013); *Hajj: Global Interactions through Pilgrimage* (2015); *Activisme, Feminisme & Islam* (2018). Buitelaar is presently programme leader of a research project on *Modern Articulations of Pilgrimage to Mecca*.

The early 21<sup>st</sup> century brought with it a host of books, essays, papers and other contributions reflecting on the notion of selfhood in the Arab region or in relationship to Islam. Those interventions came from multiple streams:

1.) One was anthropology's inward turning to notions of culture which rethought its own old and discredited notions of culture and personality. The rethinking was picked up by numerous other disciplines and expanded in fascinating trajectories. More sophisticated notions of selving and cultural difference emerged from such works as Dorinne Kondo's *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace* (1990) and Kenneth J. Gergen's *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* (1991).

2.) Another stream of rethinking selving emerged from feminist psychoanalysis as early as the 1970's but flourished in the 1990's. The triggering publication, Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering. Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (1978), spawned tomes of feminist conversations: Evelyn Nakano Glenn et al, *Mothering. Ideology, Experience, and Agency* (1994); Michael Carrithers et al, *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History* (1985); Debora Battaglia, ed., *Rhetorics of Self-Making* (1995). Much of that work was ground in classical Freudian theory, but also drew on the works of John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss* (1969).

3.) A third stream came from modernization theory and development theory which posited certain notions of self were "modern" – based in the notion of the "individual. Part of developing the developing countries entailed developing the new notion of selfhood – the individual.

The combination of these three streams, in different ways, fed into notions that the Arab region, did not have a modern notion of self – and that partly explained its "dysfunctional" social arrangements and delayed development. Prime reasons offered for this lack of an adequate modern self and belated development usually targeted Islam and patriarchy.

The work of Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (2005) challenged these streams to offer an agential Muslim female subject.

My own earlier work took up the challenge against these streams, but from a different trajectory: I was interested in documenting how the politics of family in weak states called for and subsidized particular kinds of selves. I developed the notion of patriarchal connectivity, a relational notion of selfhood, situated in age and gender-hierarchical kinship systems which were repositories of economic, political and social safety in the context of unstable states that provided little in the way of services or safety. It was and remains a notion that is culturally, historically and politically situated – and always subject to change. I began developing these notions in the late 1970's and early 1980s, but did not publish until the 1990's (1993, 1994, 1999). This talk is a reflection on 40 years of tussling with notions of selfhood as they emerge, transform, present themselves, elude description and defy stabilization.

Reading:

Suad Joseph (1994) "Brother/Sister Relationships: Connectivity, Love and Power in the Reproduction of Arab Patriarchy." *American Ethnologist* 21.1 (February): 50-73.



Suad Joseph (2005) "Learning Desire: Relational Pedagogies and the Desiring Female Subject in Lebanon." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 1.1 (Winter): 79-109.

**Suad Joseph** is Distinguished Research Professor of Anthropology and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies. Her research has focused on her native Lebanon, on the politicization of religion, on women in local communities, on women, family and state, and on questions of self, citizenship, and rights. Her current research is a long-term longitudinal study on how children in a village of Lebanon learn their notions of rights, responsibilities and citizenship in the aftermath of the Civil War and on their transnational families who have moved to the United States and Canada. She is founder and Founding Director of the [Middle East/South Asia Studies Program](#), UC Davis. She is founder and director of the [Arab Families Working Group](#) (AFWG); founder of the [Association for Middle East Women's Studies](#) (AMEWS) and co-founder of [AMEW's Journal of Middle East Women's Studies](#) (JMEWS); founder and Director of the UCDAR Consortium which includes American University of Beirut, the American University in Cairo, the Lebanese American University, the University of California and Birzeit and American University of Sharjah. She served as the President of the [Middle East Studies Association of North America](#), 2010-2011. She is Founding and General Editor of the [Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures](#). Her edited books include: *Arab Family Studies: Critical Reviews* (Syracuse, 2018); *Women and Islamic Cultures: Disciplinary Paradigms and Approaches* (Brill, 2013); *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East* (Syracuse, 2000), and *Intimate Selving in Arab Families* (Syracuse, 1999). Her co-edited books include: *Building Citizenship in Lebanon* (Lebanese American University, 1999); *Women and Citizenship in Lebanon* (1999) and *Women and Power in the Middle East* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); and *Muslim-Christian Conflicts: Economic, Political, and Social Origins* (Westview, 1978). She has published over 100 articles, and won many awards and prizes including the UC Davis Undergraduate Teaching and Research Award, and the Middle East Studies Association's Jere L. Bacharach Service Award.

**Hilary KALMBACH** (University of Sussex) "Media, education, and authority from the age of print to the digital age"

This keynote explores the impact of shifts in the dominant modes of knowledge transmission in Egypt during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to highlight issues of relevance to the study of media, authority, and the self in any era. Throughout the nineteenth century, Egypt's rulers attempted to compete with Europe by importing, adapting, and applying European knowledge. Central to these efforts was a new system of civil schools that ran in parallel with longstanding religious schools, the elementary-level kuttab and higher-level madrasa. While civil schools were not founded to replace their religious counterparts, they helped chip away at the role and authority of religious scholars outside of moral and spiritual affairs. An even more significant impact of civil schools, however, was their role in spreading new, text-focused modes of knowledge transmission. During this period, Egyptian education was misrepresented by European discourses that divided Egypt into two halves – a modern foreign and a traditional local. These discourses not only ignored the ways in which "modern" Egyptian civil schools deliberately diverged from European models, but also discounted how knowledge was transmitted within "traditional" religious schools. By restricting the ranks of the learned to those able to read and write written texts, they dismissed the complex use of memorisation, recitation, and audition among highly-educated religious scholars. Their "audiocentric," person-to-person knowledge transmission was accessible to all, even the

blind and poorly-sighted, in sharp contrast with the “ocularcentric,” text-focused pedagogies used in civil schooling. Civil schools were founded to provide their graduates (efendiyya) with the ocularcentric cultural capital necessary to transform the Egyptian state. However, towards the end of the century, as European ideas about education and knowledge were internalised, graduates of these schools formed new sociocultural groups, launched new cultural and political movements, and brought about major shifts in social, religious, and political authority. Mediation – initially via printed texts – facilitated these shifts in various ways. After introducing these competing forms of knowledge transmission and literacy and their impact, the lecture explores the use of print and audio by two groups: the efendiyya, in their presentation of self narratives, and male and female “new religious intellectuals,” in their efforts to establish social and religious authority.

### Readings

Hilary Kalmbach, “Blurring boundaries: Aesthetics, performance, and the transformation of Islamic leadership,” *Culture and Religion* 16:2 (2015), pp. 160-174

Timothy Mitchell, “Chapter 5: The machinery of truth” from *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, pp 128-160.

Brinkley Messick, “Media muftis: Radio fatwas in Yemen” from *Islamic legal interpretation: Muftis and their fatwas*, edited by Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David S. Powers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 310-320 and 370-371.

**Hilary Kalmbach** is a historian specialising in the culture, religion, and art of the modern Middle East and North Africa, and the founding director of the Middle East and North Africa Centre at University of Sussex. Trained at Princeton and Oxford Universities, she has held Fulbright and Clarendon Fellowships, as well as the Sir Christopher Cox Junior Fellowship at New College, Oxford. She won the 2007 British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) Graduate Article Prize and co-edited *Women, Leadership, and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority*. Her most recent publication, *Islamic Knowledge and the Making of Modern Egypt, establishes a 130-year history for the conflict over the role of Islam in the Egyptian public sphere that led to the failure of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. She has served on the Councils of BRISMES and the British Association for Islamic Studies and as President of the Syrian Studies Association.*

**Siobhan LAMBERT-HURLEY** (University of Sheffield) "Staging the Self: Producing Women's Autobiography in Muslim South Asia"

From the late nineteenth century, South Asian Muslim women began producing autobiographical writing in ever-greater numbers. Their outputs took a number of different forms – from autobiographical biographies and biographical autobiographies to travelogues, reformist literature, letters and diaries. That they were able to produce written texts points to the elite social positioning of the authors in a context of low literacy. Many had struggled to achieve high levels of education that enabled them to pursue an occupation when few elite Muslim women did. Located throughout the Indian subcontinent, they wrote in a wide range of South Asian languages, including Urdu, English, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi and Malayalam. Very often, specific languages were employed with the intention of accessing specific audiences with specific interests: sometimes family and friends, but, in many cases, a broader readership of elite, literate, perhaps segregated women. Like the authors themselves, they maintained links

with the world outside, while remaining consumed by their more immediate domestic environments.

A main aim of this event is to consider the relationship between technological revolutions (including in the past) and the performance of selfhood. This presentation will take up that theme by relating *context* to *construction*, specifically in terms of how literary milieu shaped the stories that South Asian Muslim women wrote about their lives. The focus will be on processes of production and, where appropriate, publication. Where did Muslim women write their lives, and what impact did that literary and historical context have on their style and content? Did their personal narratives remain in manuscript form, or were they published in a magazine or book? How important were scribes, editors, translators, cowriters and publishing houses to the way in which a life story was structured and told? A framework of performance is useful here to underline how concepts of selfhood may be 'staged' in autobiographical writing: how each rendition of a life story may be tailored to and *by* audience, literary milieu, or historical moment.

Reading:

Siobhan Lambert-Hurley. "Life/History/Archive: Identifying Autobiographical Writing by Muslim Women in South Asia". *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 25, Number 2, Summer 2013, pp. 61-84.

**Siobhan Lambert-Hurley** is Professor of Global History in the Department of History at the University of Sheffield. She is a cultural historian of modern South Asia with particular interests in women, gender and Islam. She has written on education, social and political organisations, Indian princely states, the culture of travel, missionaries and personal narratives. Her book publications include: *Elusive Lives: Gender, Autobiography, and the Self in Muslim South Asia* (2018), *Speaking of the Self: Gender, Autobiography and the Self in South Asia* (2015) (co-edited with Anshu Malhotra), *Atiya's Journeys: A Muslim Women from Colonial Bombay to Edwardian Britain* (with Sunil Sharma) (2010) and *Muslim Women, Reform and Princely Patronage* (2007). Currently, she is leading two projects funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund in the UK: 'Advancing Female Literacy and Empowerment in Pakistan and India through Life Writing' and 'Forgotten Food: Culinary Memory, Local Heritage and Lost Agricultural Varieties in India'.

**Arshad MURADIN** (Universiteit Leiden), "Religious Authority and Family Dispute Resolution among Moroccan Muslims in the Netherlands: Recent Trends and Debates"

I conducted fieldwork in the Netherlands between 2014 and 2017 in order to learn how "ordinary" Muslims in the Netherlands resolve their private and family disputes within their religious community. I particularly looked into the processes of mediation, reconciliation and (marital) counselling with the assistance of imams and Islamic scholars, primarily among Dutch-Moroccan Muslims, in order to understand the procedures and outcomes of these informal processes and the motives and subjective experiences of both the users and the facilitators. For that purpose, I interviewed imams and important "key community figures", along with social workers, psychologists, general practitioners, lawyers, police officers and married and divorced men and women predominantly from the Moroccan Muslim community. In addition, I was given permission to attend 'mediation sessions' (*jalasat al-sulh*) in local mosques and at people's homes. The data reveals a picture of 'informal dispute resolution' based on cultural and religious norms that lie at the heart of notions of Muslim identity and Islamic family values and which members of the community continue to practise in the Netherlands.

Studies in the field of legal anthropology and sociology on conflict and dispute resolution have demonstrated that most disputes are not settled in state courts, rather they are resolved in a variety of extra-judicial ways. Therefore, systems of private ordering are common in societies all around the world, especially if they represent meaningful principles and processes for those who choose to use them. This is certainly true for Muslim societies and communities, where a private or family dispute is only brought before a judge when other informal possibilities to restore the family balance are exhausted. This empirical research shows that imams of Moroccan origin in the Netherlands are challenged by the many demands and constantly evolving roles with regard to mediation in family disputes. The imam is turned to in times of personal crisis because of his religious authority and position as a trusted mediator which guarantees the preservation of a certain intimacy and closeness of family life from the outside world. He can get to the heart of the matter fairly quickly, without disputants having to make their shortcomings explicitly public, and therefore running the risk of losing their reputation and good name or permanently damaging family ties. This paper focusses in particular on how Moroccan imams of local mosques in the Netherlands acquire or claim religious authority, what techniques they use during mediation sessions in order to achieve reconciliation (*sulh*), and what motivates them to succeed in mediation attempts.

Reading:

Tanya Walker, *Shari'a Councils and Muslim Women in Britain: Rethinking the Role of Power and Authority*, Leiden: Brill (2017)

Chapter 2: The Question of Authority, pp. 70-97

Chapter 4: Tactics of Power, pp. 139-186

**Arshad Muradin** is PhD-candidate at the Van Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance and Society (VVI) at Leiden University and participates in the research project: "Making Islam work in the Netherlands. Islamic authority and Islamic law in the Netherlands among ordinary Muslims: recent trends and developments". This research project looks into recent developments in the ways Islam takes shape in Dutch society. It focuses on the doctrinal dimensions of Islam and addresses two separate but closely interlinked central domains: (1) religious authority and leadership, and (2) the creation and application of Islamic law in the context of counselling and mediation.

**Muhammad Qasim ZAMAN** (University of Princeton), "Scripture, Translation, and Authority in Muslim South Asia, 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries".

This talk examines how a number of works relating to the Qur'an, produced and published between the 18th and the late 20th centuries in South Asia, served as vehicles for the articulation of claims to religious authority on the part of their authors. These Persian and Urdu language works shed some useful light on how Sufism, scholarly networks, print, politics, and patronage could come together in precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial South Asia in shaping particular understandings of Islam and attendant claims to authority.

Reading:

Zaman, Muhammad Qasim. *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age : Religious Authority and Internal Criticism*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

- Introduction
- Epilogue: The Paradoxes of Internal Criticism

**Muhammad Qasim Zaman** is Niehaus Professor of Near Eastern Studies and Religion at Princeton University. His books include *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age: Religious Authority and Internal Criticism* and *Islam in Pakistan: A History*. Among his current projects is a book on South Asia and the wider Muslim world in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

## Students: titles, abstracts and biographies

(In alphabetical order by author)

**Elmozfar ABDELHAFIZ** (MIDA, ESR 5), "Arab-Muslim encounters with Orientalism in the colonial age"

Ever since its publication, Edward Said's thesis on "orientalism" as a specific cultural and historical dynamic has occupied a central stage of studies of Islamic and Arabic cultures, as well as various other disciplines. This research, however, questions the historical accuracy of Said's argument by trying to uncover the bidirectional nature of communication between the European scholars of Islam and the native intellectuals of the Islamic region in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Arguing that this transcultural encounter has manifested in the production of diverse knowledge(s) on both the Islamic east and the European west, as well as various interpretation of such general categories as "Islam" and "modernity", this research historically paints an image mutual discovery and negotiation between intellectual peers, rather than a case of one-sided interpretation of colonial subjects by colonial actors.

Following the circumstances and interpretations of the participation of Arabic and Muslim scholars in the earliest meetings of "The International Congress of Orientalists", this research aims to uncover this dialogue in the actual words of the scholars participating in and shaping it.

And by historically contextualizing this dialogue in the various biographies of the scholars participating in it, This research aims to gauge the lasting cultural traces of this dialogue.

**Elmozfar Abdelhafiz** received a bachelor's degree in Sociology and cultural studies from Istanbul Sehir University, and a master's degree in Anthropology from Leipzig university, currently a research associate at KU Leuven's department of Arabic and Islamic studies. Has a particular interest in the cultural history of modern and contemporary Egypt.

**Hayat AHLILI** (Utrecht University), "A baha'i convert publishing Ibn Taymiyya's Majmū': challenging "Islamic" authority"

Egypt became - politically - more independent of Ottoman authority over the course of the nineteenth century. This can be seen in the increasing printing industries popping up in the twentieth century. Egypt had many printing houses; state-owned but also private ones that printed and spread the works of Ibn Taymiyya. A recent published work would have been reviewed in an intellectual magazine such as *al-Manar*. IbnTaymiyya 's works were being praised in *al-Manar* by its founder Rashid Rida until identity and religion became a matter of attention. The "angry" Rida eventually raised the question of identity in his *al-Manar*. Who was allowed to publish Ibn Taymiyya's works? Who had the authority? And how did this impact the identity of people? Why did the volunteers hide their identity? Were only Muslims allowed to participate in the publishing industry? And why did the owner hide his religion? In this paper, I will focus on religious knowledge production in early 20th-century Egypt, in particular how the technological developments in book making gave rise to new ways of conceiving religious authority and thus, an 'Islamic' identity.



**Hayat Ahlili** is a Phd candidate at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies of Utrecht University, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Christian Lange and Prof. Dr. Umar Ryad (KU Leuven). Her research focuses on a modern book publication of Ibn Taymiyya's collection of legal opinions (*Majmū'at al-Fatāwā*) and is funded by the NWO program PhDs in the Humanities.

**Rayane AL-RAMMAL** (MIDA, ESR 3), "Digital Artivism In the Lebanese Revolution (October 2019)"

The Arab Spring did not only include mass mobilization and revolts in several Arab Countries from Tunisia to Syria, but it also sparked a growing interest in art as a form of expression. Songs, graffiti, satirical TV shows etc... were ubiquitous in the different countries where the Arab uprisings took place. And although these revolutions have been put out by yet other emerging suppressing regimes like in Egypt, or led to devastating wars like in Syria, the tremendous changes that accompanied the rapid growth of digitization in the Arab World allowed those artistic forms of self-expression -towards activist ends- to carry on, by providing them with a new platform.

What is so intriguing about those different activist art forms published on the internet, among many, is that they soften the boundaries between art and non-art. One could argue that this era of digitization is allowing for more and more art creations which are populist in nature as receivers could potentially become creators at one point. What's more, under the suffocating supervision of tyrannical regimes, people engaging in those activist forms of art must walk on very thin lines neither to be too salient nor too inconspicuous which render their work accessible yet sophisticated.

Although Lebanon lagged behind in social movements at the beginning of the Arab Spring, and while many thought that the era of revolutions has moved towards its closure, the Lebanese Revolution (October 2019) surprised even the Lebanese people with its emergence. In the light of those current events, my project seeks to answer two questions: What could paying attention to forms of digital activism in Lebanon teach us about the conflicts in the country and those encountered in the neighboring countries of the MENA region?

Could digital activism offer an inclusive and accessible tool for the seekers of social change in Lebanon? Could its simplicity yet sophistication create chances of change within a highly sectarian authoritarian regime?

**Rayane Al-Rammal** has a BA in Sociolinguistics from the Lebanese University and a MA in anthropology from the American University of Beirut. She worked as a project manager for local initiatives in Lebanon and is interested in the sociology/ anthropology of religion, gender and sexuality, ecology, semiotic anthropology and Philosophy.

**Darul Ma'arif ASRY** (Hamad Bin Khalifa University), "Religious Authority in The Digital Age of Islam in Indonesia"

"*Isnād* (chain of narrators) is part of Islam, if *isnād* does not exist, then everyone would talk as they pleased", a popular statement of Abdullah bin Mubarak reflecting how selecting references in learning Islam is critical in the early period of learning Islam. Finding Islamic references through the internet is handy today. Many researchers confirm the trend showing that Indonesian Muslims tend to learn Islam from social media rather than traditional resources such as classical books of Islam. This symptom then leads Indonesian Muslim youngsters to be intolerant and prone to become terrorist. The result of a research

held by Center for Islamic Studies and Society Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta (2018) revealed that 37.71% of Z generation (born from 1996 to 2012) perceive war against nonmuslim as the real jihad and 23.35% of them argue that bombing is an implementation of the real jihad. After observing their sources in learning Islam, the researchers find that 50.89% of them lay social media as their first rank reference, beating the books at 38.57%, 33.73% on TV and face to face meeting by 17.11%. In line with this, an online statistics and research portal (Statista.com) reported that as of April 2018, Indonesia is the third-largest user of Facebook in the world, just below India and the United States. With the total number of Facebook users reaching 140 million, the penetration rate is about 54 percent. This figure is predicted to continue to grow. The main problem of today's learning Islam in virtual environment is the misguided selection process in searching for references. People seem to refer popular preacher without considering their credibility and qualification. Whereas credibility of the teacher is fundamental in Islam to ensure that largely disseminated Islamic teaching is the correct one which is campaigning tolerant and peaceful Islam, not vice versa. In Indonesia, impact of this problem had seriously endangered interfaith social harmony even national security as aforementioned research had uncovered.

**Darul Ma'arif Asry** is pursuing MA program in Islamic Civilization and Society at Hamad bin Khalifa University Qatar. His BA was in Qur'anic Exegesis graduated from Alauddin State Islamic University in Indonesia. Since last year, he established panrita.id, an Islamic portal upholding the authority of resources in the attempt of mainstreaming moderate, tolerant, and nationalist Islam in Indonesia.

**Zeynep AYDIN** (MIDA, ESR 14), "The Ticking Time Bomb: How the Interrelation Between Media and Terroristic Attacks Changes EU Sentiment and Politics"

Terrorist attacks, as the name suggests are performed for just that: to instill terror within onlookers. Media has always played an important role, not only in the coverage of these attacks but also in the dissemination of this information to the general public. This has happened to such a degree that certain terroristic attacks, such as 9/11 or the Charlie Hebdo attacks are dubbed 'media events'. Thus, an interrelation between the media and terroristic attacks is undeniable, with either being dependent on the other – one for something to cover and the other for the coverage. With the addition of social media, both the mode of coverage of terroristic attacks and the engagement of the general public has changed; making converge and reactions instantaneous and its effects hard to control or even predict. While much information exists about the 9/11 attacks in the United States and its backlash on the topics of Islam both in the US public and US governmental policies, this study aims to research the effects of terroristic attacks, such as the Charlie Hebdo attacks in the European Union. With the social media revolution being in full swing, the reaction of the European public after the Charlie Hebdo attacks commented not only on the attack at hand but unearthed much more deep-set issues of belonging within the countries of the EU. It also provided the kindling that helped fuel the steep increase in Islamophobia online and finally paved the ground for change in authority in the form of new EU political regulations and an upswing in far-right political sentiment.

**Zeynep Aydin** currently holds the position of ESR14 and studies the reaction of the European public and European governments after terrorist attacks. Having always lived between several languages and cultures, and being the holder of an MA in Journalism and an advanced MA in American Studies, she is an ideal candidate for assessing the role of



*the media in framing Islam and the subsequent (mis)understandings of Islam in the digital sphere.*

**Juliette BABIN** (University of Strasbourg), "Muslim Preachers on YouTube: a new religious offer. Transformations of religious authority, legitimacy and knowledge"

The objective of my presentation is to expose an ongoing research about French Muslim preachers on YouTube. Since the 2010s, the platform displays a fast-growing number of confessional channels. Some of them are reaching millions of views and hundreds of thousands of subscribers. The emergence of these new clerics 2.0 then offers a new form of accessibility to religious knowledge. I will analyze some of these transformations through different questions: Who are these YouTubers? What do they claim? What is their goal?

Sixteen channels of French Muslim preachers have been chosen for the importance of their community. On the one hand, I will present a typology of these new clerics. Their profiles are very diverse in terms of their age, origin, career and religiousness, but also in terms of their religious experience (in France or abroad), their academic background and in terms of their links with various organizations. Therefore they refer to various types of authority and legitimacy: erudition, experience, charisma, tradition, etc., which also influence the kind of knowledge they transmit. On the other hand, I will propose a content analysis of their videos. Are they centered on religiosity? Do they also address social and political issues with the same kind of reference to the French society, according to their own concerns and those of their following? How do they consider otherness? How do they relate to Islamic orthodoxy and to the freedom of choosing between various available interpretations?

*Juliette Babin is a student of master's degree (second year) in sociology of religions (Strasbourg University), specialized in French Muslims practices. She is also research assistant in a project about online Islam, where she analyzes YouTube videos of Muslim French preachers. She plans to conduct her PhD in this field.*

**Vladimir BLAIOTTA** (University of Catania/EHESS), "Western intervention in the Sahel: A social media perspective"

War for mediasphere has emerged as a new battleground shaping political interventions and public opinion concerns. The claim for truth has developed new instruments (bots, fact-checkers) to address social media and information, with the purpose of implementing a specific political agenda. Truth has become a contested space where national and international actors try to influence domestic and foreign audiences' perception by shaping the coverage of facts, especially when addressed to terrorist attacks and armed conflicts normally over-securitized grounds for researchers and official media. We are assisting to a proliferation of truths, each one potentially functional to a certain kind of political agenda.

Furthermore multiplicity of truths has widened the space for authority contestation from the bottom. Policies and intervention aims can be reinterpreted by public opinion when a truth, distancing from the supposed official, is perceived as more loyal to specific political and cultural backgrounds. New forms of patriotisms and militantisms are shaped by political-entrepreneurs and civil society, capitalizing on cleavages and emotions deeply rooted and fed by social media. War for truth is pivotal when regional balances and international governance are jeopardised by security challenges and state fragility.

After six years since the beginning of military French operation Serval (now Barkhane), the Sahel region is facing growing anti-western sentiment among Sahelian population. Lack of development and the spreading of violent extremism are increasingly perceived by public opinion as a consequence of western governments agenda, supposedly protecting western economic and political interests (new forms of imperialism) with the pretext of war on terrorism and migration management. Emphasising the strategic use of western presence information in the Sahel, this presentation aims to stress how truths are reproduced in social media and how battle for mediasphere is shaping international actors strategies and public opinion agency.

**Vladimir Blaiotta** is a PhD student in Political Science at the Università degli Studi di Catania and EHESS Sciences Sociales (Marseille). His studies are focused on international relations and politics of local development in Africa. He is currently developing a comparative research on migration policies of both Niger and Tunisia.

**Scott BURNS** (Leiden University), "Bringing Sexy Back: The Dichotomy of Sexual Modernity in the Transnational Franco-Moroccan Community"

In transnational Arab diasporas in Europe, cross-cultural encounters can lead to the cultural transformation of local communities. *Beur/rebeu* culture, an identitarian product of the Franco-Moroccan community, has created a unique socio-cultural space in which the modern Franco-Moroccan can express a hybrid identity. For a minority community bearing a long history of discrimination and socioeconomic disparity, *beur* culture empowers and provides agency, translating French cultural adjustments and adapting sexual modernity across religions and traditions.

Joseph Massad's *Desiring Arabs* (2007) was one of the first academic studies to contextualize and analyze the evolution of sexuality in the Arab Lands and address the stigmas associated with its expression in contemporary Arab societies. The sexualization of Arab communities, addressed notably in Mehammed Amadeus Mack's *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture* (2017), acknowledges the relevance of this social phenomenon and its prevalence in Western societies. If we consider the influential engagement of Franco-Moroccans in contemporary French society and the transnational nature of these social transactions, can we argue the existence of bilateral circumstances in this phenomenon?

In this project, I will investigate how the Franco-Moroccan relationship has experienced the development of sexualized *beur* culture in France since the 1980s. The project will investigate the impact of the transnational Franco-Moroccan community on contemporary Moroccan society, and the potential creation of subcultures. Focusing on the development of online LGBT presence in France and Morocco, the project analyses the role of France LGBT publication *Têtu* and its online presence, in creating and normalizing gay *beur* culture. Similarly, I will look at *Têtu*'s transnational importance, particularly in relation to Moroccan LGBT organization *Kif-Kif* and their failed attempt to create a Moroccan LGBT publication.

**Scott Burns** is a motivated student preparing to complete his ResMA Middle Eastern Studies thesis, which will focus on the relationship between the Israeli and Lebanese media, taking as a case study the migration of South Lebanon Army fighters from Lebanon to Israel following the disengagement in 2000.

**Giuseppe CANNATA** (University of Catania), "Xinjiang Islamic revival: The securitisation of the 'three evil forces' and Uyghur symbolic resistance"

That of Xinjiang is an old-age issue in China's history. Beginning in the 1990s long-standing Xinjiang separatist struggle assumed a more pronounced religious profile, influencing political dynamics in the region. The emergence of the Uyghur Islamic revival in Xinjiang can be interpreted as both a consequence of state policies and a reason for the securitisation carried out by the Chinese government in the name of the fight against the 'three evil forces' of terrorism, extremism and separatism. To a certain extent, Chinese government policy, hindering traditional form of dissent, has polarised Uyghur identity struggle: at one end it erupted in terrorism, while at the other it developed into individual and concealed expressions of dissent, in a sort of 'online symbolic resistance'.

The presentation will therefore situate the Xinjiang Islamic revival within the wider context of Uyghur recent history in order to provide a general background and to understand the gradual alignment of the separatist struggle with religious instances. In this regard, a brief overview of the theoretical lenses of securitisation theory and symbolic resistance will be provided. Then, the outline of counter-terrorism law and the tightening up of surveillance of Uyghur expressions of cultural and religious dissent will pave the way for a possible analysis of the emergence of Uyghur 'online symbolic resistance'. Finally, the issue of to what extent these forms of 'connective action' can resist Chinese government surveillance regime will be outlined.

**Giuseppe Cannata** is currently a MA student in Global Politics and Euro-Mediterranean Relations at the University of Catania, where he also earned a BA in History, Politics and International Relations. His recent research focused on China foreign policy and global actorness.

**Robin COGNÉE** (MIDA, ESR 7), "Digitization as a vector of religious authority and knowledge: the case of the web page of the Islamic Community (*Islamska zajednica*) of Bosnia and Herzegovina"

The Islamic Community (*Islamska zajednica*, IZ) is the official religious body that has authority on Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as on those of Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Hungaria, Serbia (partly) and the Bosniak diaspora. The IZ has been going through many changes and transformations since its creation in 1882, during the Austro-Hungarian period in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Originally designed to represent solely the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it became by 1918 the official religious authority of all Muslim inhabitants of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later Kingdom of Yugoslavia), and by 1945 of all the Muslims of Socialist Yugoslavia. Particularly targeted during the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the IZ lost many local cadres and officials, not to mention the annihilation of numerous local communities (*medžlisi* and *džemati*), as well as the destruction of hundreds of mosques and religious facilities. Moreover, several splits have been weakening the authority of the IZ during the 1990's, and it lost control over Macedonia, Kosovo and part of Serbia. However, the IZ has been reemerging since, and, at the turn of the 21st century, has been adapting to the digital era, mainly with the creation of its own web page, that comes into many ramifications, each attached to a local *medžlis* or *džemat*. The IZ has been having its own paper publications for a long time, and still has, but, in the meantime, it has clearly understood that reconstituting its might, regaining its authority, documenting its activities and reaching its audience had to imply a transition to digitalization.

**Robin Cogné** is coming from Paris in France. He has a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian language and Balkan civilization, and focuses his works on Bosnian mosques. He will make his PhD research in Sarajevo, where he will be employed by a local NGO, Cultural Heritage without Borders (ChwB)."

**Mustafa OGUZHAN ÇOLAK** (MIDA, ESR 6), "Exploring social network of state sponsored turkish television series"

The advancement of digital technology serves not only individuals to share their opinion on new social platforms for broader public audiences but also allows state institutions to propagate the state-political agenda to wider audiences through these digital platforms. TV-series as one of the most powerful means of conveying political messages to the public widely used for political propaganda. My proposed study aims to explain social, political, and economic networks that enable producers of Turkish drama series to produce these TV series as state-sponsored projects.

For a decade, TRT (Turkish state broadcaster) has been increasingly producing TV series about the Ottoman history. Historical dramas play significant roles in the reconstruction of Turkish Ottomanist and Islamist cultural nostalgia. Today, audiences watch dubbed and subtitled versions of these television series all around the world via online platforms such as YouTube and Netflix. Being the second-highest-ranking TV series exporter, Turkish TV series became highly popular in the Islamic world. Erdogan publicly supports these TV series, which promote neo-Ottomanist and pan-Islamist nostalgia.

This study specifically focuses on two television series about the Ottoman past broadcasted by TRT, namely *Diriliş Ertuğrul* and *Payitaht Abdulhamid*. Many claim that actions and sayings of the main heroic characters of these TV series attempt to rationalize President Erdogan's political agenda in public by constructing historical parallelism on topics to the contemporary issues in Turkey. This study has a goal to explore the social network of Turkish drama series broadcasted on TRT by focusing on the relationship between associates such as political and financial agents, the production team, and the crew. By doing so, it aims to show network relations play a decisive role in constructing parallelism between the past and present to rationalize Erdogan's political agenda in the public eyes.

**Mustafa Oguzhan Çolak** is a PhD researcher and Marie-Curie Fellow at Leiden Institute for Area Studies. His research focuses on the socio-cultural context of exported Turkish television series. Colak received his bachelor's degree in Sociology from Bogazici University, and earned his master's degree in Sociology from Istanbul Sehir University."

**Betül DEMIRKOPARAN** (KU Leuven), "Religious Identity and New Institutional form of Islam in Belgium and Europe. 'New mobilization strategies: from private to public space'"

In this presentation I want to discuss how new Islamic knowledge is produced and transferred by different types of new Islamic authorities and what impact they have on the process of Muslim self- understanding. My research findings indicate that there is an increase of new Islamic knowledge centers and new authorities. These centers and authorities are in contrary to the 'traditional' mosques and imams, positioned within the Islamic field in a different way.

I interpret the increase of new Islamic knowledge centers as on the one hand, a transformation of Islamic knowledge from private to the public sphere, and on the other hand as a pluralization of Islamic authorities. In order to get to know how new Islamic

authorities transfer Islamic knowledge and what impact these authorities have in the process of Muslim self- understanding, I focus on how new forms of Islamic authorities are developed. I hereby make a distinction between two new types of religious authorities".

**Betül Demirkoparan** is a doctoral (PhD) researcher at the KU Leuven. Her main research interests are in religious identity, Islamic education in organized religious field and Islam in public space. She is currently working on a PhD thesis on identity formation of Belgian Muslim youth and new forms of Islamic leadership at the KU Leuven.

**Guillermo DI MARCO SÁNCHEZ** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), "Rojava: political organization and internationalization of the conflict with turkey"

During the month of October Erdogan's Turkey launched an attack against the Autonomous Federation of Northern Syria with the goal of taking control of a strip of land that would move the Syrian border with Turkey 60km southwards. The area, where a great variety of ethnic groups cohabitate, is controlled by the mostly Kurd –but also Arabic, Assyrian, etc–SDF. The invasion started slightly after the announcement by the USA of the withdrawal of its forces from the Syrian scenario because, argues Trump, the ISIS had already been defeated. The long and harsh resistance opposed by the SDF against the Turkish army and its Islamist proxy, which still continues in form of low intensity warfare, was defeated by Ankara mainly in the diplomatic scenario, having its interests recognized first by Trump and later, partially, by Putin.

In the area occupied by Erdogan the ethnic cleansing that Ankara has been declaring he wished to do since 2011 against the Kurdish population is already happening. In the territories that haven't been occupied yet the novel political system introduced by the YPG-YPJ, the Kurdish militias, is still alive. It's a project based on the empowerment of women and on an assembly democracy that grants the representation of ethnical and religious minorities.

The resistance of *Rojava*–west, in the Kurdish dialects–has been accompanied in the rest of the planet with mobilizations that, in some countries, as Germany and Italy have filled the streets with several tens of thousands of persons. The technologies of the communication are allowing the Kurds to export their struggle in numerous cities, and there they found a strong support from the local populations.

**Guillermo Di Marco** was born in Madrid in 1994. He studied Law and Political Science and started his researches in the field in which he is specialized in July 2018, interviewing different political personalities and members of the security forces of the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan, in Northern Iraq. Nowadays he is working in his Phd in the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

**Hayat DOUHAN** (MIDA, ESR 10), "Who speaks for Islam in the Diaspora? Islamic Authority (ies) among Moroccan Diasporic Communities in Europe"

Religious authority is one of the most significant constructs that attracted a great deal of attention among various stakeholders including activists, researchers, policy makers, etc. In the last few decades, there has been an increasing interest in managing the religious field beyond the Muslim countries' borders by reaching out to their citizens abroad. In this regard, this paper investigates the notion of religious authority among diasporic Muslim communities in Europe. As it relies on the premise that the making of religious authority is a process that is context based, the paper aims to analyze how Islamic authority is



constructed, transferred and mediated among Moroccan diasporic communities in Germany. Thus, the paper opens with an overview of the nature of religious authority in Morocco making special reference to its specificities and governance. After that, it moves on to focus on how such Islamic authority is being managed by Moroccan authorities within the public sphere in the diaspora. To limit the scope of the paper, it will zoom into the mobility of Moroccan religious authorities or what is referred to as the export of "imams". It will not only identify the various actors involved in training and exporting these Islamic authorities to the diaspora, but also examine their roles in the process of constructing Islamic authority and transmitting Islamic knowledge among Moroccan diasporic communities in Germany.

**Hayat Douhan** is an EU researcher at GIGA and a PhD student at the University of Marburg. Her current research focuses on Islamic authority and knowledge production among Moroccan diaspora in Europe. Hayat was a Fulbright FLTA fellow at Mercyhurst University. She received MA in applied linguistics and MA in media & cultural studies.

**Mohamed EL-MOURSI** (MIDA, ESR 1), "Defying the Populace, Vindicating the Self Preliminary Notes on 'Abd Allāh B. Buluggīn's Self-Representation Versus Authority in Kitāb al-Tibyān".

Around 1094, after his deposition by the Almoravids, 'Abd Allāh B. Buluggīn, the last Zīrid Amīr, wrote his own version of the events. His book, the Kitāb al-Tibyān, offers not only a unique testimony for the Taifa period but is also noteworthy for its historical information and eyewitness accounts, narrative imagery, and unusual candor. The title, al-Tibyān, expresses B. Buluggīn's main intentions to clarify his forefathers' actions as well as his own in order to avoid misjudgments during his life and after it. To do so, he did not only transmit and evaluate his own history of the Zīrid dynasty up till his time, but also expressed his opinion on several 'public' and 'private'. This presentation aims to explore the form or literary convention through which B. Buluggīn designed his narrative situating himself with respect to the political, religious, and sociocultural authorities of the time. First, a brief mention will be made of the context - mainly the political actors, social structure, and religious authorities in eleventh-century Andalus - in which B. Buluggīn composed his book, with reference to his purpose in this work or to how he used a narrative style to challenge the surrendered hegemonic narratives. I will then discuss the location of the individual (B. Buluggīn) in various situations and vis-à-vis the different types of authorities. Several excerpts that show B. Buluggīn's perspective on 'public' affairs, either political or cultural or social, and his 'private' intentions and actions will be discussed during the presentation. This will help us to understand B. Buluggīn's mode of engagement with society and observe his transition from discussing public issue to private realm. It will further allow us to analyze the role of the written narrative in situating and orienting the self in a society consisting of complex religious and social authorities.

**Mohamed El-Moursi** is a Marie Curie Fellows of the ITN-MIDA and he is doing his PhD at the EHESS (Paris) where he is working on the Memoirs of 'Abd Allāh b. Buluggīn. He has a BA in history/medieval history from Mansoura University (Mansoura, Egypt), and MA in civilization studies from Ibn Haldun University (Istanbul, Turkey). His research interests span from Islamic history, Islamic and religious studies to philosophy of history and literature.

**Jens FISCHER** (Münster University), "Staying in Control: Autobiography amongst 12<sup>th</sup> Century Arabic Literati"

While the oldest Arabic autobiographies date to the 9th century, the 11th and 12th centuries witnessed an unprecedented explosion in autobiographical writing and personal record keeping. In this presentation, I will focus on three literati belonging to a cluster of autobiographers centred on the Ayyubid dynasty, being: the poet ‘Umāra al-Yamanī (1121–1174), whose fame rests on his panegyrics to the last Fatimid caliphs and their viziers; Usāma b. Munqid̄ (1095–1188), whose work as a poet and anthologist probably is more impressive than his military exploits in the service of (among others) the Zangids and the Fatimids; and ‘Imād ad-Dīn al-Isfahānī (1125–1201), who was amongst the most important panegyrists and secretaries of both Nūr ad-Dīn and Saladin. All these autobiographers were not only famous literati, but also influential courtiers, spending parts of their careers in the service of Saladin. All three texts date from difficult moments in their authors' lives, in which they felt the need to justify their past actions and/or remind their readers of their former eminence. They can therefore be read as attempts to reassert control over how contemporaries and posterity would perceive and judge their lives and works. This desire to remain in control of one's own legacy by means of written texts seems to have been widespread among scholars and literati of the period: Simultaneously with the flourishing of autobiographical literature, many poets started to compile their own dīwāns instead of relying on the transmissions of pupils, family members, or philologists. I argue that this wider trend is best explained as a long-term consequence of the spread of paper and the concomitant growth in literacy and text production.

**Jens Fischer** studied Spanish Philology and Arabic and Islamic Studies at the universities of Münster, Oviedo and Tunis El Manar. He is currently working on his PhD on the literary depictions of Sunni-Shiite conflicts in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. His research focuses on the history and literature of the "postclassical" period.

**Fabrizio GRASSO** (University of Catania), "Outlines of a critique of technology"

Occidentosis, that is the plague or intoxication, the dazzle Iranian people fell for in the second half of the twentieth century according to Jalāl Āl-e-Ahmad (1923-1969). Can such dazzle be extended and used in understanding the relationship between the Islamic world and new technologies? This is an essential question to understand the impact that new technologies have had and / or can have within the Islamic culture. Technology is the result of Western thought in a broad sense and in its correlation with the Islamic culture we have an additional mediation in the relationship that man has with it. Therefore it is, so to speak, "alien" in the sense that it is the product of a civilisation that in history has placed itself repeatedly (even in current times) in open confrontation with the Islamic culture. Nowadays, globalisation has accelerated a process of homologation and unification in relations with new technologies, but this rapidity must not be misleading, because it calls for an implicit acceptance and assimilation of a lifestyle that *is Western because it is high-tech*. Can all of this happen without causing any "injuries" or traumas within one's culture of origin? Additionally, it must be taken into account that in some predominantly Muslim nations access to social networks is strictly forbidden. At the same time, some Islamic terrorist groups are very active on the web and wisely use social networks as a tool to attract and radicalise the younger population. Such facts still present the same initial above-mentioned question, to which this study seeks to find an answer, while acknowledging the concept of Occidentosis in order to apply it to new forms of technology.

**Fabrizio Grasso** is currently a PhD student in Political Science at the University of Catania. He has dedicated research articles to Carl Schmitt, Max Stirner, Ludwig Feuerbach, Hannah Arendt. He is currently focusing his studies on the principle of immanence and the problem of atheism.

**Elaheh HABIBI** (MIDA, ESR 9), "Visual Battlefield: Translating Religiosity and the Contested Legacy of War In Iran"

The war with Iraq (1980-1988), officially recognised as "Sacred Defence", led to the routing of all major organised opposition and to the increased centralisation of power in the hands of Islamists in Iran. In this process, the need to monopolise war imagery and to narrate the events in a specially religious and pious fashion gave birth to a wide array of official institutions, in which committed (*mote'ahed*) artists tried to translate ideological and religious concepts into artistic expressions. Nevertheless, never did these state-sponsored institutions completely sideline artists, professional and amateurs, who advocate for more dynamic understandings of the war. These artists seek to push past the narrative of the war that the Islamic Republic has monopolised and to present more critical understandings of this formative period in the regime's history. This project is an attempt to study both the visual and religious language of the official narrative of war, and to shed new light on the efforts of artists whose representations of war transcend and transgress the authoritative war narrative. In so doing, I will compare the works of three Iranian photographers, Bahman Jalali (1944-2010), Kaveh Golestan (1950-2003), and Ehsan Rajabi (1969- ) to find out how war as a legacy is represented, contested and negotiated by different cultural producers.

**Elaheh Habibi** is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie PhD fellow in Art History at University Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne. She is a researcher at the French National Centre of Scientific Research (CNRS), and a member of the the InVisu laboratory at National Institute for the History of Art (INHA), Paris.

**Samia KOTELE** (ENS, Lyon), "Women *ijtihad* discourse on the digital sphere: from a contested authority to expressions of selfhood".

The increasing reliance of muslims on social media when practicing their faith caused the emergence of various Islamic discourses on the digital space. The bodies of muslim women became the receptacle of the crystallization of tensions between various schools of Islamic thought. These various actors produced discourses on women's bodies trying to project their ideology through behavior regulations. The *pembaharuan* (renewal) movement, and Islamic revivalism in Indonesia in the 1980s constituted a turning point bringing woman status in the core of religious reform. It led female ulema to develop an alternative Islamic gender theology competing with the one developed by their male counterparts. Drawing a silent revolution, on the sidelines of secular feminist and islamist movements the voice of women ulema invested the same digital channel to counter these literal interpretations. Through podcasts, social media accounts, Youtube channels, these female ulema preach gender equality, widening their audience and allowing them to subvert traditional religious institutions. This turning point caused a shift from a traditional religious authority, confined in specific theological pedigree, to a broader sphere of religious agency. Opposing conservative trends who legitimize discrimination of women on the name of islam, these new modes of engagement produced forms of contestation regarding the religious



authority of female ulema. Indeed, the digital sphere, the public space saw, and these women ulema correlatively saw the emergence of female islamist spreading their own interpretations, and condemning female behavior. This presentation will question the investment of the digital sphere by muslim indonesian women through their dissemination of knowledge and performance of selfhood. We will focus on the on the construction and transformation of their religious authority and legitimacy through the study of these discourses.

**Samia Kotele** is a first year PHD student in ENS de Lyon. She is currently working on the history of female ulema in Indonesia since the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. Focusing on their quest for religious authority and their production of a new gender theology, her work is based on archives and ethnographic fieldworks.

**Eleonora LANDUCCI** (MIDA, ESR 4), "Islam at the University: Multilingual selves, offline-online public voices and legitimacy of Moroccan students".

Based on an ethnography of Moroccan students from Berberophone rural areas attending the university, the aim of this paper is to examine the multiple constructions of the self and strategies of self-legitimation through the activism of Islamist youth groups, particularly as it is deployed in their oral and written practices both offline and online. Active in most Moroccan universities, these groups claim to be the heirs of the main Moroccan student union (the National Union of Moroccan Students, UNEM), anti-regime political actor until the end of 1980. Student unions are considered as illegal because they challenge State authority, nevertheless these groups are tolerated as long as they remain within academic spaces: this explains why the group membership is strictly limited to people attending the university. In this sense, the university in Morocco can be considered as a place at once disputed and shared, an interstitial space, daily shaped by different types of imaginaries and interactions that are required to be analysed in depth. This paper will examine the multi-linguistic profile of this young Islamists and their practices, which can help revealing the transformations of the normative models in terms of gender and status. Moreover, it will explore the expressive dimension of the political and religious socialisation of young Islamists through the study of the use of different forms of communication in different spaces, both online and offline. This will give particular insight into individual trajectories and practices, bringing out the contemporary redefinitions of social, political and religious authority at stake.

**Eleonora Landucci** is a Marie Curie Fellow of the ITN-MIDA Project at the Institución Milà i Fontanals of CSIC, and PhD candidate at the University of Barcelona. Her thesis explores the uses of Arabic and Berber vernacular varieties within Islamist movements in Morocco, as they are deployed in public and digital spheres

**Justin MAURO BENAVIDEZ** (MIDA, ESR 12), "Between Heaven and Earth: Contested Authority in the Major Letters of Ibn 'Abbad of Ronda (d. 1390)"

My presentation examines the question of contested authority in the writings of the North African-Andalusian jurist and mystic, Ibn Abbad of Ronda (d. 1390). He was the preacher of the Great Mosque of Fez and an early formulator of the Shadhiliyya spiritual order. Born in Ronda—a town in Andalusia—Ibn Abbad relocated to Fes as a child when his family decided to leave their native city due the pressures of the Christian political advance.

Indeed, the era was one of political peril and social uncertainty for the Muslim ummah in general. One of the main issues of the Mediterranean Islamic world in the fourteenth century centered on the question of who were the true guardians of Islamic law and of the community: the jurists or the mystics. In the middle of the debate stands the jurist and mystic, Ibn Abbad, particularly his writings. Ibn Abbad critiques the perspectives of the jurists and mystics and offers an alternative way for people who, like him, sought to live a life in conformity to the law on the one hand and with a deep consciousness of God on the other. Jurists took the views of Ibn Abbad seriously and wrote legal opinions (*fatwas*) against his views and letters seeking clarification and answers from him, including a letter from Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406). The collected replies of Ibn Abbad form the second and third works, entitled: the *Major Collection of Letters* and *Minor Collection of Letters*. These letters (fifty-four in all) provide us with criteria for both the theoretical and practical aspects of the process of transformation that lies at the heart of Islamic spiritual education. So affective were his writings that they challenged traditional forms of authority and became the center of one of the most important intellectual debates in the fourteenth-century Islamic Mediterranean. Despite the influence of Ibn Abbad's works, they have not been examined in detail, particularly within the context of spiritual transformation as it relates to contested authority.

**Justin Mauro Benavidez** is a researcher at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas (CSIC) in Granada, Spain, working on a three-project on the impact of the Reconquista on the thought and identity of Andalusian scholars. Justin holds MA degrees in Islamic thought from the University of Chicago and Berkeley.

**Dewi MEYRASAWATI** (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), "Acquiring Agency Online: Women's Fashion and Social Media in Surabaya, Indonesia"

My research on Muslim women and their complexities of hijab practices has brought me to four Muslim women groups in Surabaya, Indonesia. The groups consist of traditional, modern, modest, and combination between modern and modest Muslim women. Various social media platforms penetrating their everyday lives keep them posted on global fashion trends and at the same time become media for them to express their selfhood. This study is one part of the research, focusing on one group whose members are very modest in term of their hijab preferences. However, they use technological innovations intensively. They firstly use *WhatsApp* social media platform to hold their online meeting. Later, they move to *Telegram* social media platform. This study analyzes how they express their knowledge, power and selfhood in their online lives. Drawing on participant observation method and applying the concept of *Women and Agency* suggested by Saba Mahmood (2005), this study found that *Telegram*, as one of social media platforms, has an important role to empower the existence and position of Muslim women as intellectual Muslim women. There are 124 members in this online group, consist of Muslim women from many academic institutions in Indonesia but the administrator is based in Surabaya. *Telegram* has given a chance for the Muslim women to develop themselves to become an agency for establishing Islamic leadership in Indonesia. *Telegram* is also potential as a medium for not only knowledge transfer but also power and selfhood expression. Their authority can be identified through the topics of their discussions. In offline life, they cover their identity during social interaction in their social life. Interestingly, in *Telegram*, they come out to give their voices and express openly about their selfhood as an Islamic women warriors. They are agencies for their resilience acts toward the constraint in their offline lives.

**Dewi Meyrasyawati** is writing her thesis on the way Muslim women in Surabaya wear a hijab, finding their way between sometimes conflicting expectations from religious leaders, male kin, the state, (global) fashion trends. She has focused on organized groups of women, paying ample attention to the use of social media by these groups.

**Galiia MURATOVA** (University of Amsterdam), "Picturing Muslim self at the era of late Socialism. Text on the back of the photograph".

The collision of the new and old forms of selfhood performs unexpected shapes of the individuality. My presentation applies to the specific Muslim community of Soviet Russia faced with new political circumstances after 1917. That rich and contradictory historical period charged with the displacement of power relations, cultural foundations and linguistic shifts provides us with many examples of self-expression. It is reflected in the historical material such as images and postcards circulated in narrow groups of Muslim elites during the era of late Socialism. My research is based on the study of these artefacts. That allows investigating dynamics of the selfhood from the historical perspective.

My study is the part of the "Muslim Individual in Imperial and Soviet Russia" project led by Dr. A. Bustanov, University of Amsterdam. Our team participates the first wave of the researches of Muslim subjectivity in Russia based on private documents and archives.

My project studies Muslim's photography usually accompanied by the extensive notes in Arabized-script Tatar. I argue that the textual context is crucial for developing ways of self-representation via visuality. Hence my research is historical, I would start my presentation with the introduction to the historical and social context. Then I will prove my arguments in favour interplay of textual and visual dimensions by the example from one of the available familial archives. Historical material I investigate preserves the mosaic of the variegated Muslim community and its forms of speaking for themselves.

My presentation will provide the ENIS Spring School 2020 with the historical perspective of the contradictory ways of expression of the selfhood.

**Galiia Muratova** has studied the Middle East at the university in St-Petersburg, Russia. After graduation, she took an academic pause and has been working in the local mosque. The interest in Tatar history and culture lead her to the projects on Tatar-Mishar manuscripts. Now PhD-student in MIND project, University of Amsterdam.

**Tohir MUSTOFA** (EPHE), "Al-Rāzī's innovative commentary on *ẓulm* (injustice) and the challenge for political authority"

The term *ẓulm* and its derivations are abundantly present in the Quran. In most cases, this term means the opposition of 'adl (justice). However, when it comes to the commentary of the Quran, the interpretation of certain verses involving this term could have more nuances. Faḥr Dīn Al-Rāzī, who is known for his innovative method on Quranic commentary by introducing a more philosophical approach, interpreted *ẓulm* differently. Sometimes, this interpretation contains his political view implicitly. This research aims to analyze how al-Rāzī commented *ẓulm* and how he used this interpretation as a substantial justification to challenge political authority.

**Tohir Mustofa** is currently enrolled at *École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE)*, Paris as a doctoral candidate in religious studies. Having accomplished his graduate study in *École Normale Supérieure de Lyon*, Tohir particularly interested in Islamic political thought,

*especially in the conflict of authority between scholars and political power. He is writing his thesis on Faḥr Dīn al-Rāzī's concept of justice.*

**Amel NOURI** (EHESS), "Ordinary women; extraordinary citizenship"

Ordinary citizenship designates the capacities of individuals to perceive, practice and formulate judgments on living together and the common good, in particular outside or on the margins of practices and places labelled by conventional approaches to citizenship (votes and electoral campaigns, but also public meetings or neighbourhood councils).

The ordinary citizen is thus this political subject in permanent construction, which is built, or more precisely living the process of subjectivation outside the traditional political sphere.

In Tunisia, the events of January 14, 2011 began on the street, in public space. In Sidi Bouzid, a gigantic wave of protest has invaded the streets.

Women were a very important part of the participants, not only during the fall of Ben Ali but also during the presidential election of 2014. This participation and also the constant change that we observe in Tunisian society pushed us to ask the following questions:

What are the new forms of political participation for Tunisian women? The recent form of contesting authority of expressions of selfhood?

Indeed, our questions concern two aspects of citizen participation. The first is within the framework of a theoretical reflection on the new forms of selfhood expression, and the place of ordinary women in the revolutionary process. The second, meanwhile, questions a more local and more recent framework, namely the citizenship of Tunisian women and its characteristics since 2011. The interest of this double light is to understand the particularity of the Tunisian case, by contextualizing it in modern history.

In other words, we seek to define, identify and analyse the forms of the practice of citizenship among ordinary Tunisian women? And how does the latter contribute to the liberating process in the country?

To do so, we carried out a field survey in Sfax that helped us answer partially those questions.

*Amel Nouri, a third year PHD student in political studies, her thesis research project is on the contribution of women to the democratization process in Tunisia between 2011 and 2014. After obtaining a Master's degree in research at L'Université Nouvelle Sorbonne, Ms. Nouri was interested in political subjectivity and citizenship among Tunisian women.*

**Andar NUBOWO** (ENS, Lyon), "'Islamic' Selfhood and Authority: The 'Conservative Turn' in Contemporary Indonesian Islam"

The 212 Action for Defending Islam (Aksi Bela Islam) in 2016 is a turning point for mainstream Indonesian Islam. Many have asserted that since Indonesia has been experiencing a 'conservative turn' and a crumbling down of moderate-progressive version of Islam. Through the 4.0 technologies, followed by millions of "netizens" users, the Islamists and conservatives benefited a huge privilege on digital marketing (expressing Islamic selfhood, piety, and Islamic *da'wah*) to convince people that Islam is "the only solution". Many prominent 'savvy internet' *ustadz*s, actors and actresses, suddenly become more authoritative figures to whom many Muslims ask for explanations in terms of religion, social, economic and politics than the moderate ones. Departing from religio-political current events in Indonesia (the 2016 Action for Defending Islam, the 2017 Jakarta

Gubernatorial Election and the 2019 Presidential Election), this paper will reveal how social media and digital marketing become very crucial in triggering social and political transformations and **deepening islamisation within Muslim community**. It argues that social media platforms have been used by conservative groups to challenge and compete for moderate religious knowledge and authorities. The conservatives do 'digital jihad' to shape Muslim's islamity, piety, and religiousity, based on a political struggle for sharia application or caliphate. However, the paper will also map out some efforts taken by Muhammadiyah and NU in handling out the conservative turn. Being much more presents than ever, the two moderate organisations try to bring back their religious knowledge and authorities among Muslims, by campaigning Islamic moderation, *wassatiyat Islam*. In this vein, they show huge eagerness to exercise Islamic digital marketing to 'moderate' and 'neutralise' the offline world seized by the conservatives. Finally, in the Indonesian context, social media might be useful to proliferate moderation, civil values and democracy, but on the other side, it has been used to spread out uncivilized temptations of radical and Islamist ideologies degrading the quality of Indonesian democracy, tolerance, and harmony.

**Andar Nubowo** is a Ph.D. student at ENS Lyon France. Graduated from EHESS Paris in 2008, he is writing a dissertation at the Ecole on the history of Indonesian progressive Muslim intellectuals (1960-2020).

**Ameen OMAR** (Hamad bin Khalifa University), "The Impact of Modernity on Islamic Pedagogy and its effects on the Conception of Knowledge and Islam"

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the British wrote extensively on Wahhabism as it sought to monitor and enforce stability in the Arabian peninsula region to protect its colonial interests in British India. A clash we often perceive in Wahhabi history is the relationship it forged with the British while expanding the realm of doctrinal issues. In this study, I ask whether this tension is a modern conception reinforced by notions of religion and politics or whether these were real contractions actors such as Ibn Saud also experienced. As the 19th century gave new meanings to normative understandings of geographical boundaries, ethnic and religious identities, and individual autonomy, it is worth investigating the clash of normative values in law, customary practices, and religion common to the Arabian Gulf. The British were ambivalent about Wahhabism. Looking at British archival records and scholarship, this research asks whether the British perceived Wahhabi alliance as a contradiction, how such ideas evolve and change over the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries as their relationship with Wahhabism changes through realpolitik, and how these impressions are connected to Orientalist representations of Islamic law. The British's support of Ibn Saud seemed to align with their imperatives to institute order in the region through codifying Islamic law, a structural development this paper demonstrates ran roughshod over tribal customary practices through which different understandings of normative values operated. The British's role in Islamic knowledge production was part and parcel of their perception that law was an improvement in the Gulf. My approach involves exploring summaries, reports, and correspondences available in the British archives. Many of the civil servants who served the British Raj and, by extension, had a continual presence in the Gulf were trained at Oxford and SOAS, institutions wherein Orientalist discourse developed and flourished. Such attitudes, it is often argued, had an enormous stake in policy decisions in British colonial projects. By looking at such attitudes, this research converses with discourses of Orientalism and the effects it had on the Gulf. As Wael Hallaq's response to Edward Said's timely work has shown, the relationship between Orientalist representations and colonial projects are in much need of demonstration. Moreover, this research elicits attention as it not only shows the force with which



representations affect policymaking but also the extent to which realpolitik has been taken for granted in such conversations.

**Ameen Omar** is an MA student at Hamad Bin Khalifa University studying Islamic Studies with a concentration in Civilizations and Society. Previously, Ameen had obtained an MA in History from George Washington University (2019). Ameen also received a BA in History from George Mason University (2015). Ameen's academic interests are Islamic intellectual history, Islam and modernity, and Islamic religious transmission, authority, and pedagogy

**Rukayyah REICHLING** (MIDA, ESR 13), "Circulating the "sacred", sustaining the Holy: the Dutch colonial gaze on Mecca".

In my presentation I will draw the attention to the advent of photography and motion picture, two interconnected technological revolutions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While the permissibility of those media, both innovations "imported from the West", was eagerly discussed through *fatwas* by reformist and traditionalist Islamic scholars in different parts of the Muslim world, the debates were particularly intense in the context of the increasingly global city of Mecca. Towards the turn of the century, when more Muslims were ruled by the leading imperial powers of the day than by any single independent Islamic state, the European need for information about the political, religious and social life in Mecca – a city that aroused suspicion as it stayed closed to non-Muslims – kept growing alongside the demand for real image representation. Consequently, contestations in Mecca against the use of photography cannot not only be read in the light of the tradition-modernity dichotomy, but also as an embodiment of anti-colonial sentiments. In other words, these debates can be seen as an opposition to the European intrusion into the lands of Islam, especially its most holy sanctuary in Mecca.

Following the contextualization of the power and authority struggle of photography in Mecca, I will turn to the visual material produced by two key figures related to the Dutch colonial service: the islamologist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1937) and the Dutch-Indonesian filmmaker Georg Krugers (1890-1964). Being from a non-Muslim family background, they go through experiences of "illegality" in Mecca, and like many other colonial agents they adjust their private and public religious self-identification to mediate broader politico-religious tensions. Their work, the visual portraiture of Muslim pilgrims, turns them into forerunners of that field in the West. It unveils aspects of the Islamic religion that were previously hidden to non-Muslim eyes; it thus gives the authors the power to significantly forge the colonial gaze on Mecca, Muslims, and the hajj to their European audiences. With their criteria for a collection of original as well as staged images, they produce and control (visual) knowledge about the religion of a non-Western "other": the Muslim colonial subject.

**Rukayyah Reichling** holds a BA degree in Modern Languages & Communication Studies from the ULB/VUB in Brussels. Afterwards, she earned two MA degrees, the first in Social & Cultural Anthropology and the second in Arabic & Islamic Studies, both from the KU Leuven. Furthermore, she followed a specialized teacher training in the field of history and spent several study periods at universities abroad. Rukayyah's main research interest lies on European Islam. Within that field, she is interested in religious aesthetics, the impact of colonialism, networks, multiculturalism, pilgrimage and the study of sainthood.

**Lena RICHTER** (MIDA, ESR 2), "The King's fear: when questioning faith becomes contesting politics".

The Moroccan king, Mohammed VI finds himself in a rather tricky situation: he has to hold back his rather liberal inclinations in order not to undermine the monarchy's own religious basis (Benchemsi, 2015). To strengthen the religious back-up of his authority he undertook several measurements, especially after his power became contested during the 20<sup>th</sup> February Movement. To calm the protests the King proposed a reformed but ambiguous constitution in 2011 that tried to please several fronts (Benchemsi, 2012). As Islam and the monarchy are paired, it is not possible to criticise either of them and it is not allowed to revise the status of Islam in the constitution (Article 175). This stipulation does not only target non-believers but also some currents of Islam that do not recognize the legitimacy of the King as Commander of the Faithful and direct descendant of the prophet (Article 41). As the title gives him much symbolic importance, such as the legitimacy to preside over the High Council of the Ulemas which is the only instance entitled to issue fatwas, the constitution makes sure that his religious power cannot be brought into question. This said, the King encourages a certain form of Islam which gives him control and limits other forms of religion which might question his power. That is why criticising religion merely becomes a problem because it can jeopardize the authority of the King. Hence, the challenging of political and religious authority are two sides of the same coin, which also become visible outside the realm of politics, such as in the school curriculum, gender constellations, and child-parent relations.

**Lena Richter** holds a B.Sc. (*cum laude*) in Cultural Anthropology (Radboud University) and a Joint M.A. in Migration Studies (*cum laude*) from the Universities of Barcelona, Venice, Sousse and Montpellier. As an ESR at the Radboud University (Nijmegen) she conducts comparative research about "non-religion" in Morocco and the Moroccan diaspora.

**Hagen Friedrich RINN** (Philipps University of Marburg), "Notions of "Self" and "Other" in the *Siyāḥatnāmah* by Maḥmūd Ṭarzī"

During the reign of Amir Ḥabībullah (1901-1919) various innovations are introduced to Afghanistan. The progressive Amir establishes an elite school in Kabul, the Ḥabībiyya, encourages the publication of a bi-monthly newspaper, the *Sirāj al-Akḥbār* and establishes the first publishing house in Afghanistan. Along with other books a multitude of writings and translations by Maḥmūd Ṭarzī are published by the 'Aināyat Publishing House, the first Afghan publisher. The *Siyāḥatnāmah-yi seh qitt'ah ruh-yi zamīn dar bist u nuh rūz, Ūrūpā, Āfrīqā, Āsīā* is a travelogue written by Ṭarzī in 1892 during his sixteen-year exile in the Ottoman Empire (1885-1901) and eventually published in Kabul in 1913. It consists of 647 pages, describing Ṭarzī's journey, accompanying his father from Damascus to Athens, Istanbul, Alexandria and Beirut. The *Siyāḥatnāmah* is written under the impression of a state undergoing massive change, being the pivot of the Islamic world contested by European modernity. Ṭarzī himself experiences technical innovations like the book-press or the railway, as well as social and ideological change, that is instigated by the increasing influence of the European powers on the Ottoman Empire. In my presentation I want to highlight the description of the perceived "Other" along with the formation of a distinct modern-Muslim "Self" and its influences on Ṭarzī's personality and especially his nationalistic and reform-Islamic ideology. Furthermore, the *Siyāḥatnāmah* can be seen as one of the first publications in Afghanistan that narrates the personal experience of the changes of the Islamic-world on the threshold to modernity. The *Siyāḥatnāmah* is an ego-document, that contains valuable information about the self-perception of a Muslim exile, traveler and writer in the wake of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Hagen Rinn** studies a consecutive Master in Islamic Studies at the CNMS in Marburg during which he also spent a term abroad in Tajikistan. His special interest lies in Islam in the Russian Federation, the Post-Soviet-States, Afghanistan as well as Iran, and in the national discourse in the region.

**James C. ROUSE** (Aix-Marseille University and University of St Andrews), "Lowly bandit or warrior of the Faith: a view of the Turkish nomad through the lens of the *Dānishmendnāme*"

When evoking nomads in relation to authority in the Medieval Islamic World, one's mind is most likely to drift towards the well-known social theory of Ibn Khaldūn and the numerous examples of revolts led by nomadic groups on which his theory was based (the most famous example being the Hilali invasions of the eleventh century). However, I would like to approach the theme from a different, more subtle angle.

Anyone interested in the study of nomadic societies in the Middle Ages will soon be confronted with the problem of the available historiography's highly one-sided representation of transhumant populations. Just as in the case of the Vikings, the inherent bias of our conventional urban, sedentary sources has, willingly or unwillingly fashioned the way we consider these social groups, portraying them as ever-warring, brutish and lawless people, resistant to any form of authority, be it a State, a ruler or God. Yet, an indisputably different picture emerges when we examine the very few and homogenous written sources these societies left us, mainly sagas and epics. These stories, recorded at a given point in time after having been circulated orally for centuries, give us valuable insight into certain aspects of nomadic society, albeit in a heroized, glorified and highly mythical fashion. Due to the particular nature of these types of sources, the historical value of epic literature has regularly been challenged by certain scholars; however, I argue that by its sheer existence, the *Dānishmendnāme* (one of the first Turkish epics known to us) constitutes a rare and precious counterpoint to the demonstrably antagonistic and often ill-informed view of nomads presented by the universal narrative handed down to us by sedentary society.

Thus, I would like to dedicate my presentation to addressing some of the discrepancies present in the urban- and nomado-centric narratives by way of some specific examples taken from the *Dānishmendnāme* as well as other sources. The chosen passages will, I hope, illustrate how these differences often stemmed from a divergence in these groups' respective set of values and how, until quite recently, the urban writers' version of history had managed to remain the authority on how we viewed the role of nomadic society in medieval Islamic societies.

**James Rouse** is currently a first-year PhD student in the framework of an international co-tutelle agreement between Aix-Marseille University and the University of St Andrews. His research focuses on the complex relationship between nomadic and sedentary populations in medieval Anatolia during the XI<sup>th</sup>– XV<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Mounir SAIFI** (MIDA, ESR 15), "Digital self-expression as a means of demythification of Al-Andalus in the muslim world."

Being a historically contested epoch, al-Andalus continues to divide scholars in Spain and the West, and a dichotomy seems to be found in Spanish scholarship when dealing with Spain's history and formation. Liberal intellectuals and historians embrace the Islamic past of their country and consider it a fundamental element in its making. Conservative authors,



on the other hand, impute to this past the different political and economic crises Spain went through during the centuries that followed its expulsion of the Moors and the Jews in 1492.

In the Arab-Muslim world, however, al-Andalus has long been lauded by nationalists and Islamists alike, who consider it a utopia where Christians, Muslims and Jews got along so well. According to them, this coexistence of faiths is to be held up as an example of religious tolerance. This idealization of al-Andalus is probably part of an unconscious, collective, psychological response meant to heal the narcissistic injury suffered by the peoples of the Arab-Muslim world as they have been living under the West's cultural, scientific, technological, economic and military dominance for centuries.

The idealistic image of al-Andalus is seldom opposed in the Muslim world, but the Internet has allowed more and more people to voice their personal opinions criticizing the general idealization of Islamic civilization. Can this online personal space provided by digitization lead eventually to debunking the myth of al-Andalus within the Arab-Muslim world? This paper will try to shed light on such views expressed in the form of blogs, Youtube channels, etc. It will also strive to assess the possible effects of this digital self-expression on the historical representation of al-Andalus in the Muslim collective mind.

**Mounir Saifi** works as a predoctoral researcher at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) in Madrid. He is a PhD student at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. He has an MA in Semitic studies from Sorbonne Université and an MA in translation from the University of Constantine (Algeria).

**Antonino SCALIA** (University of Catania), "Resistance as a masculinizing act? Gendered narratives in Italian Palestine solidarity campaigns (1967-1993)"

This paper studies how Palestinian gendered narratives influenced individual and collective leftist and feminist Italian Palestine solidarity practices and discourses between the 1960s and the early 1990s. The study assesses the transformation that occurred in the Italian Palestine solidarity movement, from its outset in 1967 when it was marked by conventional gendered representations to the establishment of a feminist practice and discourse in the mid-1980s. This study argues that such changes resulted from a complex interplay between legacies of Italian anti-Fascism, Palestinian agency, and shifts in Italian women's activism influenced by global and national contingencies.

In order to test this hypothesis, the piece first examines gender tropes and women engagement in Italian leftist internationalist mobilisation from 1945 to 1967. Secondly, the study concentrates on the case study of Palestine solidarity and investigates the interplay between Italian and Palestinian Italian reformist and revolutionary left. In particular, this section focuses on the case of the collaboration between the drama company *Collettivo Teatrale La Comune* led by theatre stars Franca Rame and Dario Fo and Palestinian left-wing activists. Finally, the paper explores the engagement of leftist and feminist Italian women in Palestine solidarity movements. This final part specifically focuses as much as on connection and cross-fertilization between Italian and Palestinian gendered narratives as on tension and conflict.

**Antonino Scalia** is a PhD candidate in Political Science at the University of Catania, Italy. He completed a master's in Transnational, Global and Spatial History at the University of St Andrews, UK as well as an MA in Contemporary History at the University of Catania. He is currently working on a doctoral thesis about Italian leftist internationalism between the 1960s and the 1980s.

**Mahdiq TAVAKOLI** (MIDA ESP 9), "A Journey from the Actual to the Virtual: A history of

From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onward we encounter a process of commodification and displacement of endowed portable assets including manuscripts as large numbers of such endowed items were channeled from Islamic foundations to secular places, such as library and museums, mostly in Europe and the US, but also in the Middle East. This process has gradually transformed the nature of the institution of *waqf*, which is a major institution in Islam. In the past two decades, the *waqf* holdings experienced another fundamental transformation as large numbers of manuscripts came to be digitized.

The focus of my research is a collection of Islamic scientific manuscripts in the Central Library of the Astan-e Quds-e Razavi, a very rich library located in the vicinity of the shrine of Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (765-818 CE), in Mashahd, Iran. Tracing the life story of these manuscripts, their movements, displacement, and digitization, I seek to understand the way these changes have transformed the institution of *waqf*, on the one hand, and have affected scholarship and knowledge production, on the other.

**Mahdieh Tavakol** comes from an academically diverse background, ranging from engineering to the history and philosophy of science. Having studied in Iran, the United States and Lebanon, she joined MIDA to work on Islamic scientific manuscripts and their digitization, bringing together her intellectual background and her passion for the Middle East.

**Stephan VENMANS** (Utrecht University), "Internet Islam in the West, the Great Game of Multiple Choice... Or Not?"

Simply googling 'What does Islam say on following sharia in the West?', is bound to lead to thought-provoking results. Many online voices within the broad Islamic community clamor to answer that question – and others like it – on a daily basis. No matter what answers Google conjures up, one will get some answer when querying such pressing religious issues. But just how nuanced, representative, all-encompassing, and fair to the religious tradition(s) are those top results? How considerate are they to the complicated context of that Western inquirer? And just 'who' is the online authority on Islam to answer such questions and what explains their potency?

Past authors (e.g. Alexandre Caeiro, Martijn de Koning, Lisa Wynn, Gary Bunt) have investigated the general dominance of Salafi voices online, especially regarding so-called e-fatwas and internet communities. A noted phenomenon, for instance, is fatwa-shopping, where some Muslims petition different internet-based Muftis with problems until they get a satisfying (permissive) fatwa. This phenomenon would imply a range of differing opinions online. Yet, little research exists on the dynamic contestation around the authority over Islam online in the West from different angles within Islam.

Therefore, this presentation investigates the digital success of the oft-discussed missions of Yusuf al-Qaradawi (ECFR) and Tariq Ramadan to foster a Western form of Islam against, crucially, their digital competitors (such as IslamQA.info and AboutIslam.net). The underlying research is quantitative and qualitative. Utilizing Alexa.com and SimilarWeb, I track these websites whose contents I analyze comparatively thereafter.

Quantitatively substantiating preceding findings, Salafi voices drown out the others by an overwhelming margin. However, while some 'moderate'/'Western-minded' sites made inroads in specific Western countries, Salafi websites appear monolithic: garnering a worldwide audience while conveying a straightforward, universal message. I argue it is this unambiguous universalist (contextless) perspective that guaranteed Salafism's domineering grasp over the virtual realm.

**Stephan Venmans** is a second-year Research Master's student in History at Utrecht University. He specializes in the (social) memory and contemporary perception of Islamic history in the Western as well as the Islamic World. In recent years, his focus is on nativist reform movements with particular regard for Salafi organizations.

**Aleeha ZAHRA ALI** (MIDA, ESR 11), "Aalims and the Internet: Shia majlis on YouTube".

In Shi'a tradition, the *hawza* is a unique system of education and classical authority that produces religious scholars and clerics. Through years of training and debate, these figures pronounce rulings on matters ranging from Islamic jurisprudence to everyday life. Their knowledge is made publicly accessible, purposefully diffused through the ranks as well as to religious figures and practitioners outside of the *hawza*, trickling into Shia communities, cultures and rituals.

Simultaneously in the contemporary internet age, different Muslim communities have created virtual habitats for religious activity. Amongst Shi'ite groups, the consumption and production of *majlis* videos through YouTube is slowly mushrooming. The *majlis* is a performed sermon, mourning ritual and communicative practice. *Majlis* gatherings combine an emotionally-laden ritual and the transfer of religious knowledge between a preacher leading the sermon to an audience engaged in performance and listening. It becomes an avenue for the dissemination and socialization of religious knowledge.

Both the *hawza* and *majlis* are long-standing and historical Shi'a traditions. Shi'i practices derive from contextual dimensions, theological perspectives, power structures and epistemological traditions. The *majlis* and the *hawza* are processes combining knowledge and praxis; of producing and exchanging knowledge; and connecting the Shi'ite clergy and public.

This presentation will discuss how knowledge flows and circles from the upper echelons of classical Shi'ite authority, the *hawza*, to everyday practices of Shi'ites in the European diaspora. In particular I will explore the online presence of the Shi'a *majlis* sermon.

The focal question my project asks is: what happens to the *majlis* and religious authority when the spatiality and temporality of the audience, cleric, content, and knowledge informing the content go online- all at the distance of a click? Ultimately, my research project seeks to understand possible implications for a globalized, transnational, and diasporic community, and for the established authority structures it is enmeshed with.

**Aleeha Zahra Ali** is an anthropologist educated in Pakistan and the UK. She is currently a PhD candidate at VU Amsterdam and researcher within the MIDA Project. Her current project will explore Shi'ism in a European context, digitization, and knowledge networks. Her research interests/areas include: phenomenology, authority, religiosity and community.



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