

# Fellowship Programme Individual Fellowships 2023-2026





**Dr. Julius Dihstelhoff** 

Academic Coordinator



**Prof. Khaled Kchir** 

Director



**Prof. Rachid Ouaissa** 

Director

#### Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are pleased to announce that the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM), established in 2020, has been able, through its diverse working formats, and especially through its Fellowship Programme to strengthen international, intergenerational and interdisciplinary research exchanges on and in the Maghreb and the wider MENA region. MECAM has served as a platform for academic debates on the causes, forms and transformations of cultural, economic, political and social disparities in Tunisia, the Maghreb and across regional borders.

During its main phase spanning from 2023 to 2026, MECAM will actively advance its fellowship program by providing individual fellowships that span 8 months each year, commencing from September and concluding in April. MECAM extends invitations to a total of nine highly talented senior and junior fellows annually, affording them the opportunity to engage in their respective research endeavors at MECAM. These fellows showcase their research designs, progress, and outcomes through the platform of a MECAM Fellows Seminar, known as "MECAM Spectrum," which benefits from the valuable scientific insights offered by Principal Investigators hailing from Germany and the Maghreb.

We are excited about the future fellows and their potential contributions to the research landscape. Their diverse backgrounds and innovative projects will enrich scholarly discourse on and in the Maghreb, fostering dynamic collaborations and inspiring new avenues of inquiry. MECAM is committed to providing a nurturing and vibrant space for these esteemed fellows to flourish.

#### Julius Dihstelhoff & Rachid Ouaissa & Khaled Kchir



Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb

### Organigram

International Academic Advisory Board

Isabelle Werenfels (Chair)

#### **MECAM Partner** Institutions

Maghreb

Executive Council

Khaled Kchir Rachid Ouaissa

Abdelwahed Daoud



#### Coordination Office

Student Assistant





#### **MECAM Fellows**

Contribute to MECAM's research agenda by working independently on their own research projects and by their active engagement in academic activities at MECAM (on site), during and beyond their stay.

The concept of the fellowship program requires a good balance of freedom and time for the individual scholar to concentrate on a self-chosen research project, access to adequate research facilities, opportunities for free exchange of ideas, questions, and results with colleagues, and contributions to the MECAM Program, its activities and academic outputs.

The fellowship program led by MECAM's directors has been tested and implemented successfully during MECAM's initial funding phase within the Interdisciplinary Fellowgroups (IFGs), even though the on-site component in Tunis has been substituted partially by remote fellowships due to pandemicrelated restrictions.

During the initial funding phase, MECAM has been successful with invitations of excellent scholars working on intriguing individual research projects and the formation of groups of fellows covering a broad range of research questions relating to MECAM's research agenda and a variety of disciplinary approaches.

The individual fellowships offered during MECAM's main phase are primarily targeted to promising postdoctoral researchers (junior fellows), as well as more experienced senior scholars (senior fellows).

MECAM invites nine fellows per year for a period of eight months In addition, MECAM will invite up to six promising postdoc fellows for up to three years. A maximum of three of these three-year postdoc fellowships may run concurrently.

## Imagining Futures: Dealing with Disparities

MECAM's guiding theme "Imagining Futures: Dealing with Disparities" addresses the complex processes of (re)negotiating societal experiences into ideas for the future ("imagining futures") in the context of different forms and scales of disparity and unequal conditions ("dealing with disparities").

It explores the link between multidimensional disparities and the possibilities of constructing and negotiating future-oriented ideas and models.

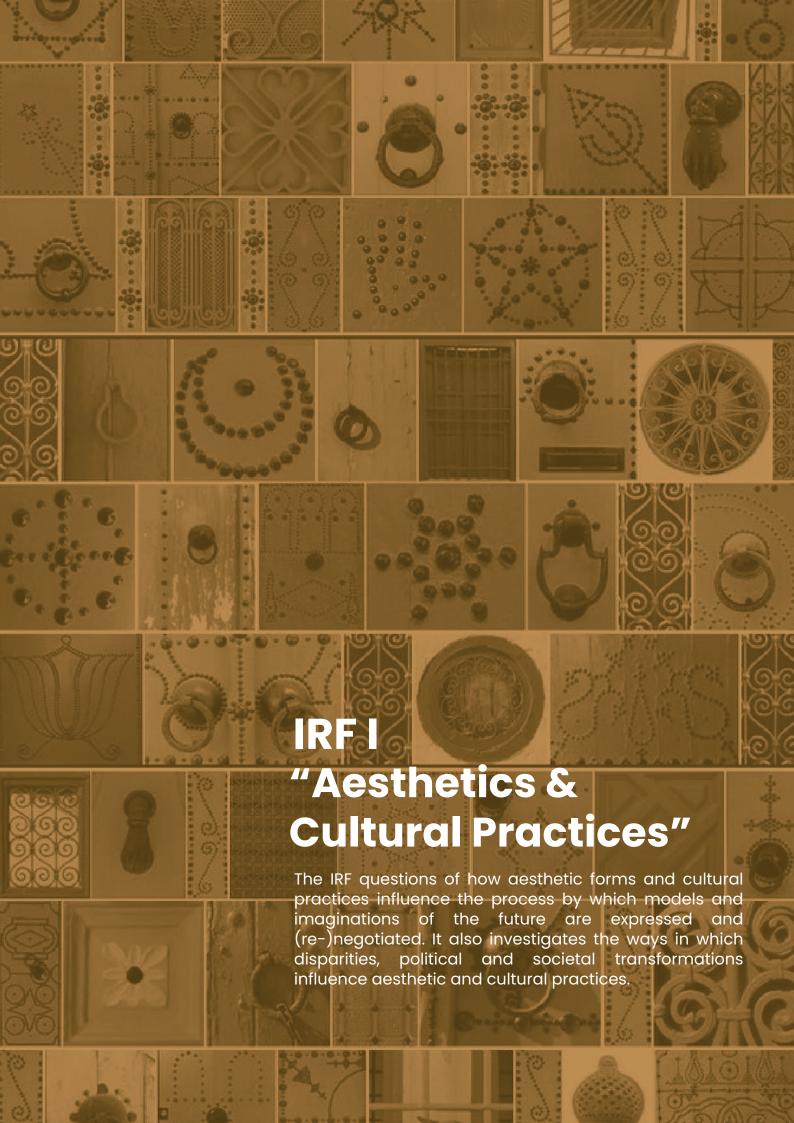
This guiding theme of MECAM is defined more specifically through two key research questions:

- How do multidimensional disparities in Maghreb societies, often rooted in colonial rule and anticolonial resistance, shape different social spheres and life sectors?
- What are the effects of these specific disparities on the scope of coexisting and competing models of the future within and outside the Maghreb?

MECAM's research activities are divided into five thematic clusters: "Aesthetics and Cultural Practices," "Inequality and Mobility," "Memory and Justice," "Resources and Sustainability," and "Identities and Beliefs.". The five thematic clusters translate into five Interdisciplinary Research Fields (IRFs).

#### **CLUSTERS THÉMATIQUES**





#### **Prof. Olaf Müller**

(Professor, French and Italian Literature and Culture, Marburg/Germany)

#### Prof. Malte Hagener

(Professor, French and Italian Literature and Culture, Marburg/Germany)

#### Prof. Mohamed Ben Hamouda

(Department of Music and Department of Arts and Crafts, Université de Sfax/Tunisia)

#### **Prof. Fiederike Pannewick**

(Professor, Arabic Literature and Culture, Marburg/Germany)

#### Prof. Samia Kassab-Charfi

(Professor, French and Francophone Literatures, Tunis/Germany)

#### **Prof. Emna Beltaief**

(Professor of French language and literature, University of Tunis/ Tunisia)



## IRF II "Inequality & Mobility"

The IRF questions of how aesthetic forms and cultural practices influence the process by which models and imaginations of the future are expressed and (re-)negotiated. It also investigates the ways in which disparities, political and societal transformations influence aesthetic and cultural practices.

#### Prof. Sonja Ganseforth

(Research Associate, Economic Geography and Labour Market Research, University of Leipzig/ Germany)

#### Prof. Ali Bennasr

(Professor, Geography, Université de Sfax/ Tunisia)

#### Prof. Mourad Ben Jelloul

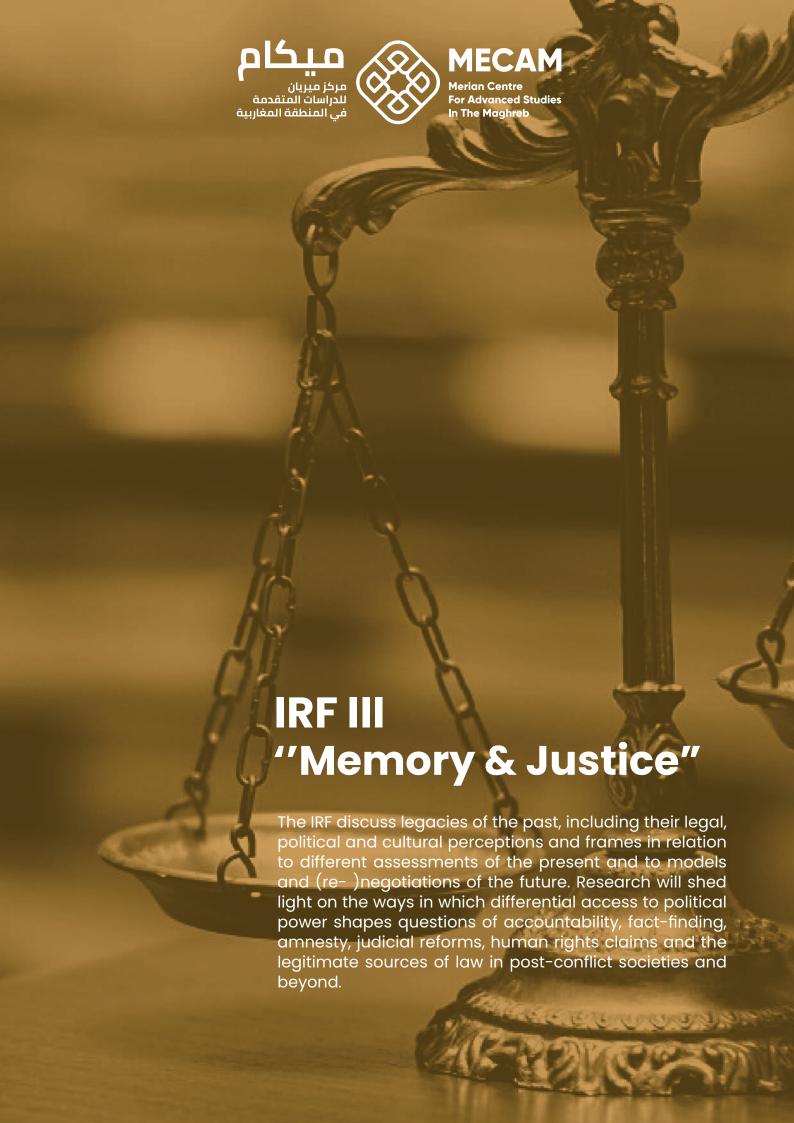
(Professor, Geography, Université de Tunis/ Tunisia)

#### Prof. Ahmed Khouaja

(Professor, Historical and cultural sociology, Université de Tunis/ Tunisia)

#### Prof. Mohamed Ali Benzina

(Professor, Demography, Université de Tunis/ Tunisia)



#### **Prof. Susanne Buckley-Zistel**

(Professor, Peace and Conflict Studies, Philipps-Universität Marburg/Germany)

#### **Prof. Thorsten Bonacker**

(Professor, Peace and Conflict Studies, Philipps-Universität Marburg/Germany)

#### **Prof. Yasmina Ghodbane**

(Professor, Philosophy, Université de Tunis /Tunisia)

#### **Prof. Anika Oettler**

(Professor, Sociology, Philipps-Universität Marburg/Germany)

#### **Prof. Khaled Kchir**

(Professor, History, Université de Tunis /Tunisia)

#### **Prof. Nessim Zengien**

(Professor, Postcolonial/Colonial Studies of the Maghreb, Philipps-Universität Marburg/ Germany)



# IRF IV "Resources & Sustainability"

The IRF investigates how societies in general and political decision-makers in particular deal with burgeoning socio-economic disparities and growing environmental problems. This IRF studies which economic models might ensure a politically, socially and ecologically sustainable future. Especially rentier and extractivist economic models in the Maghreb/Middle East are explicitly addressed here as these models generate particular forms of disparities and thus also interesting visions of the future.

#### **Prof. Rachid Ouaissa**

(Professor, Middle East Politics, Center for Near and Middle East Studies (CNMS) and Director of MECAM, Philipps-Universität Marburg / Germany)

#### **Prof. Eckart Conze**

(Professor, Modern and Cont<mark>empo</mark>rary History, History and Cultural Studies, Philipps-Universität Marburg / Germany)

#### **Prof. Anissa Ben Hassine**

(Professor of Management, ESSECT – Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales, University of Tunis / Tunisia)

#### **Prof. Benedikt Stcuhtey**

(Professor, Modern History, History and Cultural Studies, Philipps-Universität Marburg / Germany)

#### Prof. Nejiba Chkir Ben Jemaa

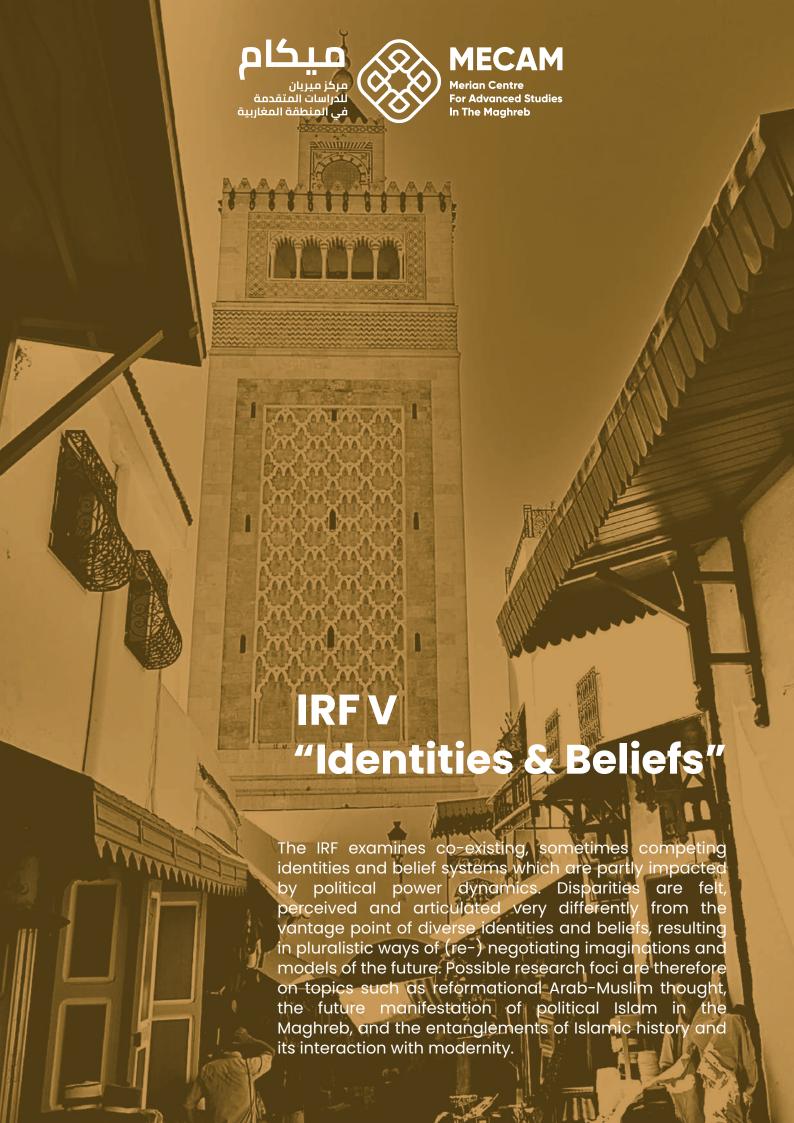
(Geography and Environment / Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Sfax, Université de Sfax/Tunisia)

#### Prof. Héla Belkhiria

(Lecturer, Electrical Engineering, National Engineering School of Tunis (ENSIT), University of Tunis / Tunisia)

#### **Prof. Lamia Rouached**

(Associate Professor, Quantitative Methods and Economics, Institut supérieur de gestion de Tunis, University of Tunis / Tunisia)



#### Dr. André Bank

#### (Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Middle East Studies, German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) / Germany)

#### Prof. Fadma Aït Mous

(Professor, Sociology, Aïn Chock Faculty of Letters and the Humanities, Hassan II University of Casablanca / Morocco)

#### **Prof. Zoubir Arous**

(Professor, Sociology, University d'Alger II / Algeria)

#### **Prof. Sihem Chérif**

(Professor, Sociology, University d'Alger II / Algeria)



#### **Dr. Alessia Carnevale**

(Lecturer - University of Macerata, Italy)

Alessia Carnevale holds a PhD in Civilizations of Asia and Africa from Sapienza University of Rome. Her doctoral thesis deals with Tunisian counter-culture and the 'committed song' of the 1970s-1980s. She previously graduated in Comparative Literatures and Cultures from the University of Naples l'Orientale. She is a lecturer in History and institutions of Islamic countries at the University of Macerata, and a member of SeSaMO (Italian Society for the Studies on the Middle East). She has published in venues such as the British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies and Studi Magrebini. In 2022 she received the Best doctoral thesis award in African Studies from ASAI (Association for African Studies in Italy). Her research explores the relations between culture and politics, issues of collective memories and (counter)narratives, and grassroots/top-down interventions in the cultural field. Besides her academic career, she trained and worked in the third sector in Italy, Jordan, and Tunisia.



#### IRF I: Aesthetics & Cultural Practices

#### Reconfiguration of cultural spaces in Tunisia: public and private intervention, international funds, grassroots practices

The project investigates transformations occurring in the Tunisian cultural field in the two decades that straddle the 2010-11 uprisings. It wishes to shed light on the ways in which contentious and marginal aesthetic practices and imaginaries are influenced by -or are obliged to come to terms with- ideological shifts and structural changes. Specifically, I will look at the reconfiguration of cultural spaces with regard to their function, type of financed activities, access and intervention of different social/political actors and audiences. These spaces include: the 'houses of culture', private and community centres, NGOs-funded initiatives, as well as political and educational venues. Attention is directed to both cultural stakeholders (state, private investors, NGOs) and counter-hegemonic cultural actors (activists, committed artists): from this twofold perspective I will look into processes of negotiation/cooptation/resistance taking place in the cultural field. The chosen timeframe allows me to interrogate ruptures as well as continuities between the highly controlled cultural field under the Ben Ali regime and the post-revolutionary democratized public space. Archives, oral testimonies, and artistic products will constitute the primary sources through which I will examine the continuous battle/negotiation over the cultural field.

#### **Mohamed Amara**

(Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales de Tunis, Université de Tunis / Tunisia)

Mohamed Amara received his master's degree in economic modeling from the Higher Institute of Management of Tunis in 2004, before undertaking a PhD in Geography at the university of Paris I and a PhD in management (quantitative Methods) at the university of Tunis in 2010. In 2016 Dr. Amara joined the Department of Economics of Higher School of Economic and Commercial Sciences of Tunis as an associate professor of quantitative methods. From January to March 2019, he was a Research Follow in the department of Economics at the university of Oxford. Amara's research focuses on development economics, regional sciences, labor market, youth and gender in MENA region, and applied micro-econometrics. He has published in a range of journals on a variety of topics such as the Annals of Regional Science, Social Indicators Research, Annals of Economic and Statistics, Papers in regional science, Middle East development Journal, and Letters in Spatial and Resource Sciences.



#### IRF II: Inequality & Mobility

#### Migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Tunisia: a storm in a teacup?

The issue of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Tunisia has been the subject of an open national debate, widely reported by the media since the Arab uprisings of 2011. The outbreak of the Libyan conflict at the end of February 2011, pushed many hundreds of thousands of foreign workers to move to Tunisia in the hope of returning to their countries. Since 2014, the number of Sub-Saharans has tripled raising a serious problem of their social and economic integration in Tunisia. In fact, the arrival of migrants results in an increase in the overall labor supply of the workforce. The resulting supply are driven by the degree of substitutability or complementarity between immigrant labor, locally produced labor, and the other factors of production. The purpose of this study is to analysis the economic and social integration of sub-Saharan immigrants into local labor markets in Tunisia. Using 2014 population Census data and the unique first national survey on International Migration (Tunisia Households International Migration Survey – 2021 Tunisia – HIMS), we examine labor market integration patterns of sub-Saharans migrants compared to local residents with a focus on migration flows taking place after the Tunisian uprising of 2010–11.

#### **Hend Guirat**

(Faculté des Sciences Humaines et Sociales deTunis, Université de Tunis, Tunis)

Maitresse-assistante au département d'histoire de la Faculté des Sciences Humaines et Sociales de Tunis, elle a soutenu en 2014 à l'EHESS (Paris), une thèse sur « La peine de mort en Tunisie sous le protectorat. Les condamnations prononcées par la justice pénale française (1883-1955) ». Ses travaux de recherche portent essentiellement sur l'histoire de la justice à l'époque coloniale et postcoloniale et sur les divers acteurs de la hiérarchie judiciaire (magistrats, interprètes et avocats). Elle s'intéresse également à la question du genre et de la justice. Elle est membre du Laboratoire Monde arabo-islamique médiéval (FSHST).



#### **IRF III: Memory & Justice**

#### Les oubliés du prétoire : les interprètes judiciaires en Tunisie à l'époque coloniale (1883-1955)

Aujourd'hui, l'histoire des institutions judicaires connaît un engouement particulier. Mais les travaux consacrés aux « subalternes » ne sont pas nombreux. Omniprésents dans l'action judiciaire, les interprètes passent en filigrane dans les recherches historiques. Ce projet souhaite initier une réflexion sur l'histoire de l'institution judiciaire par le bas, c'est-à-dire en mettant l'accent sur des acteurs de second plan.

Nous essayerons de montrer dans un premier temps comment la colonisation française a transformé (voire créé) la figure du traducteur : d'un homme à tout faire, l'interprète judiciaire devient un fonctionnaire (Axe 1). Censés « faciliter » la rencontre entre une administration locale et le pouvoir colonial, les traducteurs qui ont exercé près des différents services de la justice tunisienne retiendront particulièrement notre attention (Axe 2). Enfin nous pencherons sur le sort réservé à ce personnel après la signature des conventions judiciaires (1955-1957) et la cessation des tribunaux français afin de montrer comment la « tunisification » (ou l'arabisation) graduelle de la justice après l'indépendance a fait en sorte que les interprètes judiciaires soient réduits à de simples fonctionnaires de circonstance (Axe 3).

#### Nora Lafi

(Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales de Tunis, Université de Tunis / Tunisia)

Mohamed Amara received his master's degree in economic modeling from the Higher Institute of Management of Tunis in 2004, before undertaking a PhD in Geography at the university of Paris I and a PhD in management (quantitative Methods) at the university of Tunis in 2010. In 2016 Dr. Amara joined the Department of Economics of Higher School of Economic and Commercial Sciences of Tunis as an associate professor of quantitative methods. From January to March 2019, he was a Research Follow in the department of Economics at the university of Oxford. Amara's research focuses on development economics, regional sciences, labor market, youth and gender in MENA region, and applied micro-econometrics. He has published in a range of journals on a variety of topics such as the Annals of Regional Science, Social Indicators Research, Annals of Economic and Statistics, Papers in regional science, Middle East development Journal, and Letters in Spatial and Resource Sciences.



#### IRF II: Inequality & Mobility

#### Migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Tunisia: a storm in a teacup?

The issue of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Tunisia has been the subject of an open national debate, widely reported by the media since the Arab uprisings of 2011. The outbreak of the Libyan conflict at the end of February 2011, pushed many hundreds of thousands of foreign workers to move to Tunisia in the hope of returning to their countries. Since 2014, the number of Sub-Saharans has tripled raising a serious problem of their social and economic integration in Tunisia. In fact, the arrival of migrants results in an increase in the overall labor supply of the workforce. The resulting supply are driven by the degree of substitutability or complementarity between immigrant labor, locally produced labor, and the other factors of production. The purpose of this study is to analysis the economic and social integration of sub-Saharan immigrants into local labor markets in Tunisia. Using 2014 population Census data and the unique first national survey on International Migration (Tunisia Households International Migration Survey – 2021 Tunisia – HIMS), we examine labor market integration patterns of sub-Saharans migrants compared to local residents with a focus on migration flows taking place after the Tunisian uprising of 2010–11.

#### Joshua Rigg

(Small States Research Program, Georgetown University in Qatar)

Joshua Rigg holds a PhD in Politics and International Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. His research interests include socio-political transformations in the Middle East and North Africa, the politics of extractivism, everyday political thinking, and the afterlives of colonial and post-colonial North Africa. He has previously written on everyday understandings of justice in post-over-throw Tunisia, extractivism and marginalization in Tunisia's south, and the circulation of revolutionary political thinking in the Mediterranean space. His work has been published in Comparative Studies in Society and History, Globalizations and Oxford Middle East Review. His doctoral thesis was awarded runner-up in the 2022 British Society for Middle East Studies Leigh Douglas Memorial Prize for best PhD dissertation.



#### IRF IV: Resources & Sustainability

#### The End Zones of the Circular Economy: Capitalism and Waste in North Africa

My project examines the politics of the circular economy in the Mediterranean from the viewpoint of its discard and waste. It traces the emerging political-technical regime of 'circularity' across three countries (Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco), and how it is changing understandings of toxicity, labour and value. Focusing on North Africa's incorporation into transnational circuits of waste and recyclables, the project employs qualitative mixed-methods approach to study the people, places and things that are entangled in the circular economy, and their roles in transporting, managing, recycling or dumping waste. It thus breaks new ground by studying the real-world practices – rather than theoretical promise – of the circular economy. While at MECAM, I will focus on Tunisian fripes (second-hand clothes markets), researching the markets, sorting centres and transport hubs that are engaged in the movement, management and valorisation of second-hand clothes as they move across the Mediterranean.

#### **Mourad Ouchichi**

(Abderrahmane Mira University of Bejaia / Algeria)

Mourad OUCHICHI was born on 07/10/1975 in Ath Laaziz in the Wilaya of Bouira in Algeria. Doctor in political science, graduate of IEP Lyon II. Currently a teacher-researcher at the University of Bejaia. His research focuses on the issue of rent and the nature of institutions in relation to the development of extractive countries. His main focus is on comparative studies between Algeria and the extractive countries of Latin America.



#### IRF IV: Resources & Sustainability

#### Analyse des caractéristiques du régime d'accumulation rentier et les voies de son dépassement

Questioning the possibility of building an economic model that ensures sustainable development, balanced growth that respects environmental requirements and a reduction in social and regional disparities, calls for an in-depth analysis of the existing model. In rentier and extractivist countries such as Algeria, the formation of social classes is not a function of their place in the production process, but of their proximity to the political power that monopolises and controls the distribution of rents.

Faced with this situation, "imagining the future" for these countries presupposes a reflection on the structural reforms needed to overcome this rentier and extractivist model, which is the ultimate source of social inequalities and regional disparities at the root of multidimensional frustrations producing incessant and recurrent physical and symbolic violence.

The research project we are planning revolves around two issues that we have formulated in the form of questions: What are the different aspects of the Algerian political and economic model and its impact on the evolution of the country's social structure? And what type of reforms should be envisaged in order to move beyond the rentier model of accumulation towards a transition to a productive economy?

#### **Imad Alsoos**

(Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany)

Imad Alsoos earned a bachelor degree in English language and literature and a master degree in international studies from Birzeit University/Palestine, as well as a master degree in public law and international relations from the University of the Basque Country. In 2017, he earned his PhD from the Free University of Berlin, focusing on Hamas's political discourse and organisational mobilisation in Gaza. In 2018, he joined the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. His current research focuses on a comparative study of Hamas and al-Nahda's forms of internal and external organised mobilisation. Alsoos' work attempts to bring together MB groups and organisational and state theory to examine their dynamics while they were in opposition and in office.



#### IRF V: Identities & Beliefs

#### Mobilising Strategies while in Office: A Comparative Analysis of Hamas and al-Nahda

#### Asma Helali

(Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany)

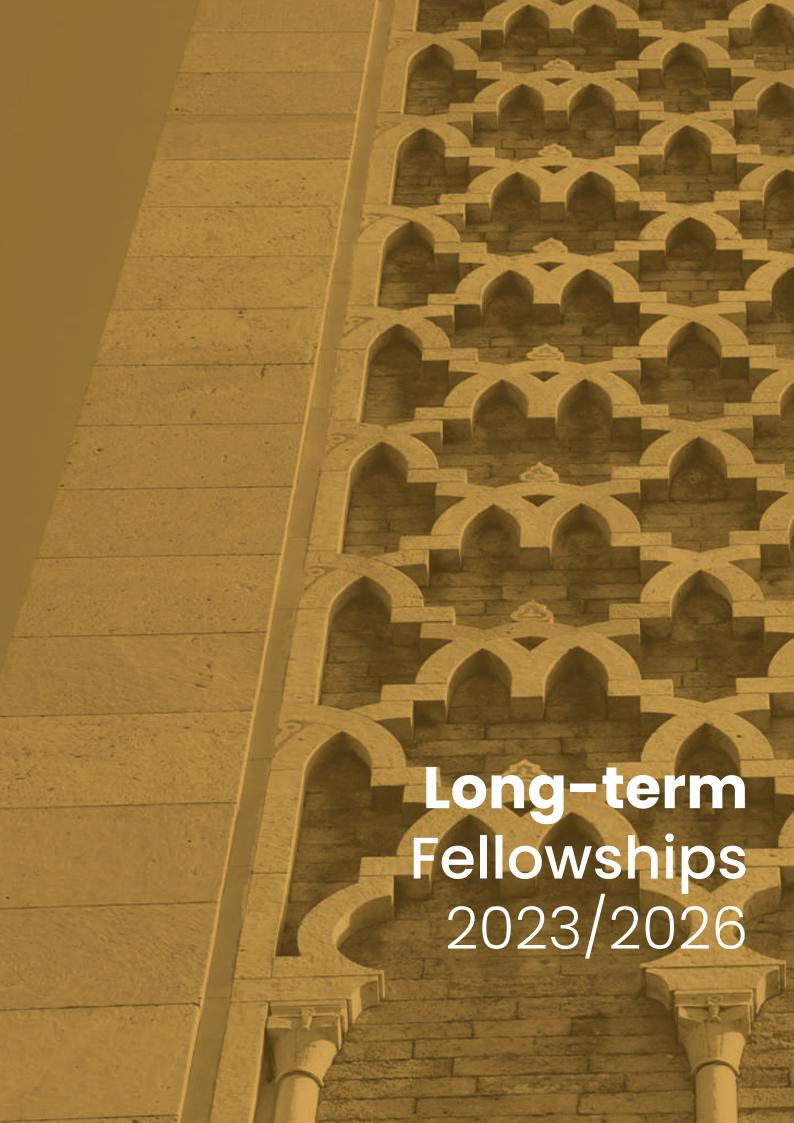
Imad Alsoos earned a bachelor degree in English language and literature and a master degree in international studies from Birzeit University/Palestine, as well as a master degree in public law and international relations from the University of the Basque Country. In 2017, he earned his PhD from the Free University of Berlin, focusing on Hamas's political discourse and organisational mobilisation in Gaza. In 2018, he joined the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. His current research focuses on a comparative study of Hamas and al-Nahda's forms of internal and external organised mobilisation. Alsoos' work attempts to bring together MB groups and organisational and state theory to examine their dynamics while they were in opposition and in office.



#### IRF V: Identities & Beliefs

#### Mobilising Strategies while in Office: A Comparative Analysis of Hamas and al-Nahda





#### Long-term fellow 1

(Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany)

Imad Alsoos earned a bachelor degree in English language and literature and a master degree in international studies from Birzeit University/Palestine, as well as a master degree in public law and international relations from the University of the Basque Country. In 2017, he earned his PhD from the Free University of Berlin, focusing on Hamas's political discourse and organisational mobilisation in Gaza. In 2018, he joined the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. His current research focuses on a comparative study of Hamas and al-Nahda's forms of internal and external organised mobilisation. Alsoos' work attempts to bring together MB groups and organisational and state theory to examine their dynamics while they were in opposition and in office.



#### IRF V: Identities & Beliefs

#### Mobilising Strategies while in Office: A Comparative Analysis of Hamas and al-Nahda

#### Long-term fellow 2

(Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany)

Imad Alsoos earned a bachelor degree in English language and literature and a master degree in international studies from Birzeit University/Palestine, as well as a master degree in public law and international relations from the University of the Basque Country. In 2017, he earned his PhD from the Free University of Berlin, focusing on Hamas's political discourse and organisational mobilisation in Gaza. In 2018, he joined the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. His current research focuses on a comparative study of Hamas and al-Nahda's forms of internal and external organised mobilisation. Alsoos' work attempts to bring together MB groups and organisational and state theory to examine their dynamics while they were in opposition and in office.



#### IRF V: Identities & Beliefs

#### Mobilising Strategies while in Office: A Comparative Analysis of Hamas and al-Nahda

#### Long-term fellow 31

(Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany)

Imad Alsoos earned a bachelor degree in English language and literature and a master degree in international studies from Birzeit University/Palestine, as well as a master degree in public law and international relations from the University of the Basque Country. In 2017, he earned his PhD from the Free University of Berlin, focusing on Hamas's political discourse and organisational mobilisation in Gaza. In 2018, he joined the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. His current research focuses on a comparative study of Hamas and al-Nahda's forms of internal and external organised mobilisation. Alsoos' work attempts to bring together MB groups and organisational and state theory to examine their dynamics while they were in opposition and in office.



#### IRF V: Identities & Beliefs

#### Mobilising Strategies while in Office: A Comparative Analysis of Hamas and al-Nahda