

# Fellowship Programme







**Dr. Julius Dihstelhoff** 

Academic Coordinator



**Prof. Khaled Kchir** 

Director



**Prof. Rachid Ouaissa** 

Director

#### Ladies and Gentlemen,

We're delighted to share that the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM), established in 2020, has successfully bolstered global research connections.

Our diverse working formats, notably the Fellowship Programme, have facilitated international, intergenerational, and interdisciplinary exchanges focusing on the Maghreb and the broader MENA region.

MECAM has provided a platform for scholarly discussions exploring the roots, manifestations, and transformations of cultural, economic, political, and social disparities in Tunisia, the Maghreb, and beyond regional boundaries. During its main phase, spanning from 2023 to 2029, MECAM is actively advancing its fellowship programme. This includes: Offering Individual Fellowships, each lasting for 8 months per year, commencing from September and concluding in April. MECAM extends invitations to a total of nine highly talented senior and junior fellows annually, providing them with the opportunity to immerse themselves in their respective research pursuits at MECAM. Grateful acknowledgement is extended to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Tunisia for their support in funding one of these fellowships. Additionally, MECAM extends invitations to up to six promising postdoctoral fellows for a Longterm-Fellowship with a duration of up to three years. Concurrently, a maximum of three of these three-year postdoctoral fellowships may be active. All fellows present their research designs, progress, and outcomes through the self organised event week called "Fellow Seminar", known as "MECAM Spectrum". This seminar benefits from the valuable scientific insights contributed by Principal Investigators affiliated institutionally from both Germany and the Maghreb region. We eagerly anticipate the upcoming fellows and the valuable insights they will bring to the research community. With their varied backgrounds and pioneering projects, they are set to invigorate scholarly discussions within the Maghreb and beyond. This promises to cultivate a dynamic environment of collaboration and spark fresh avenues of exploration. vMECAM is dedicated to nurturing and cultivating this space, ensuring our esteemed fellows thrive and make lasting contributions.

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



#### Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb

# Organigram



Prof. Dr. Karima Dirèche (Vice Chair)

#### **MECAM Partner** Institutions

Maghreb

#### Executive Council

#### PRESENT IN TUNIS:

- COORDINATION OFFICE): DR. JULIUS DIHSTELHOFF
- PROGRAMME MANAGER: MOUNIR MRAD
- OFFICE MANAGER: MOHAMED ALYANI
- FELLOW ASSISTANCE: N.N.

#### PRESENT AT PARTNER INSTITUTIONS IN GERMANY:

#### PHILIPPS-UNIVERSITÄT MARBURG / MARBURG

- PROJECT COORDINATOR GERMANY: BENJAMIN HEIDRICH
   FOREIGN LANGUAGE SECRETARY: JULIA HERMANN
   PROJECT ADMINISTRATION MANAGER: N.N.

#### GIGA/HAMBURG

- PUBLICATIONS MANAGER: DR. HABIL. STEFFEN WIPPEL/

#### FORUM TRANSREGIONALE STUDIEN / BERLIN

- DR. DIANA ABBANI





#### **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 programme 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 programme 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 longterm 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.

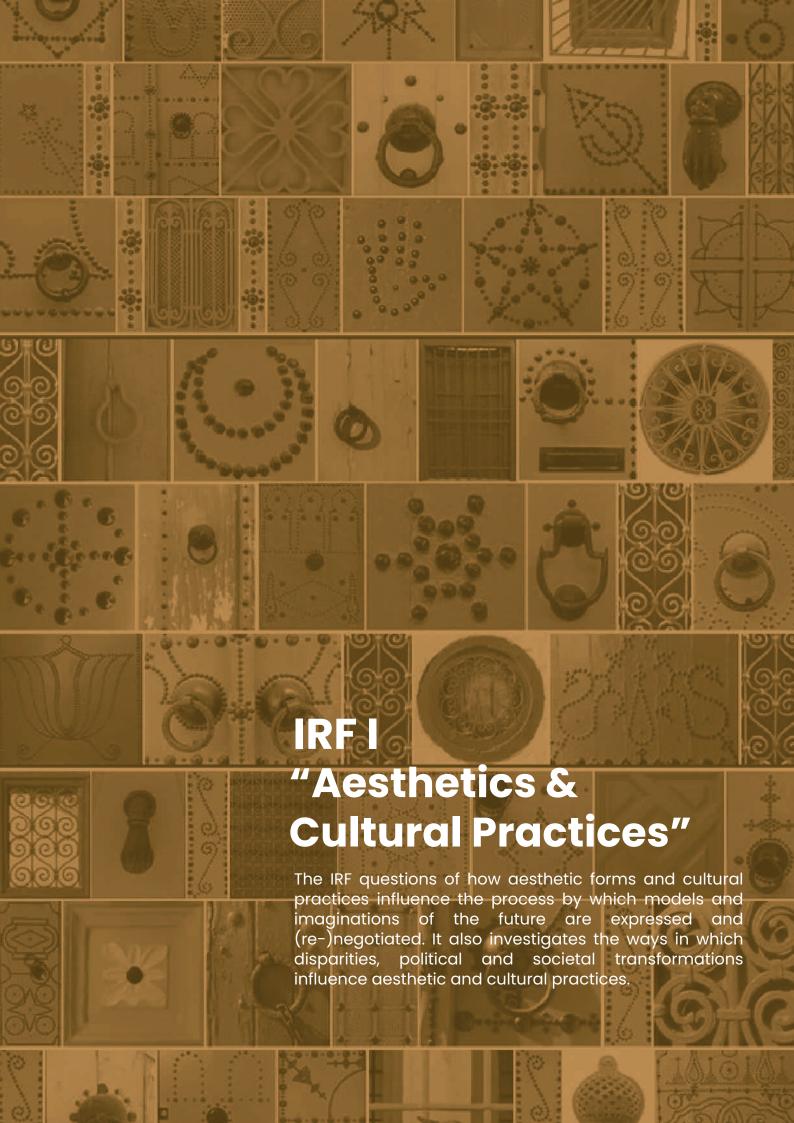
This guiding theme of MECAM is defined more specifically through two key research questions:

- 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 programme is divided into five thematic clusters: "Aesthetics & Cultural Practices," "Inequality & Mobility," "Memory & Justice," "Resources & Sustainability," and "Identities & Beliefs.". The five thematic clusters translate into five Interdisciplinary Research Fields (IRFs).

#### THEMATIC CLUSTERS





#### **Prof. Olaf Müller**

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

#### Prof. Malte Hagener

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

#### Prof. Samia Kassab-Charfi

(Professor, French and Francophone Literatures, Université de Tunis/Tunisia)

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

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

#### **Georges Khalil**

(Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin/Germany)



# 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.

#### Dr. Sonja Ganseforth

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

#### Prof. Ali Bennasr

(Professor, Geography, Université de Sfax/Tunisia)

#### Prof. Mourad Ben Jelloul

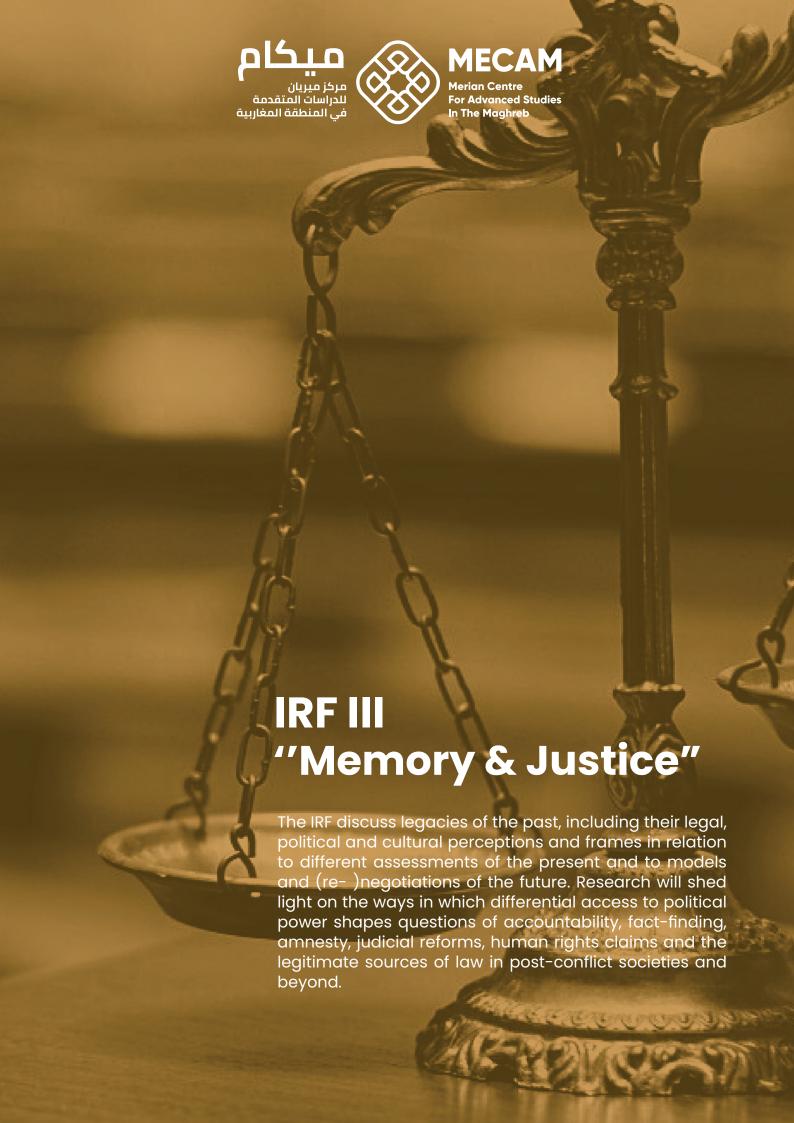
(Professor, Geography, Université de Tunis/Tunisia)

#### 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 Contemporary History, History and Cultural Studies, Philipps-Universität Marburg/Germany)

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

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

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

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

#### Prof. Nejiba Chkir Ben Jemaa

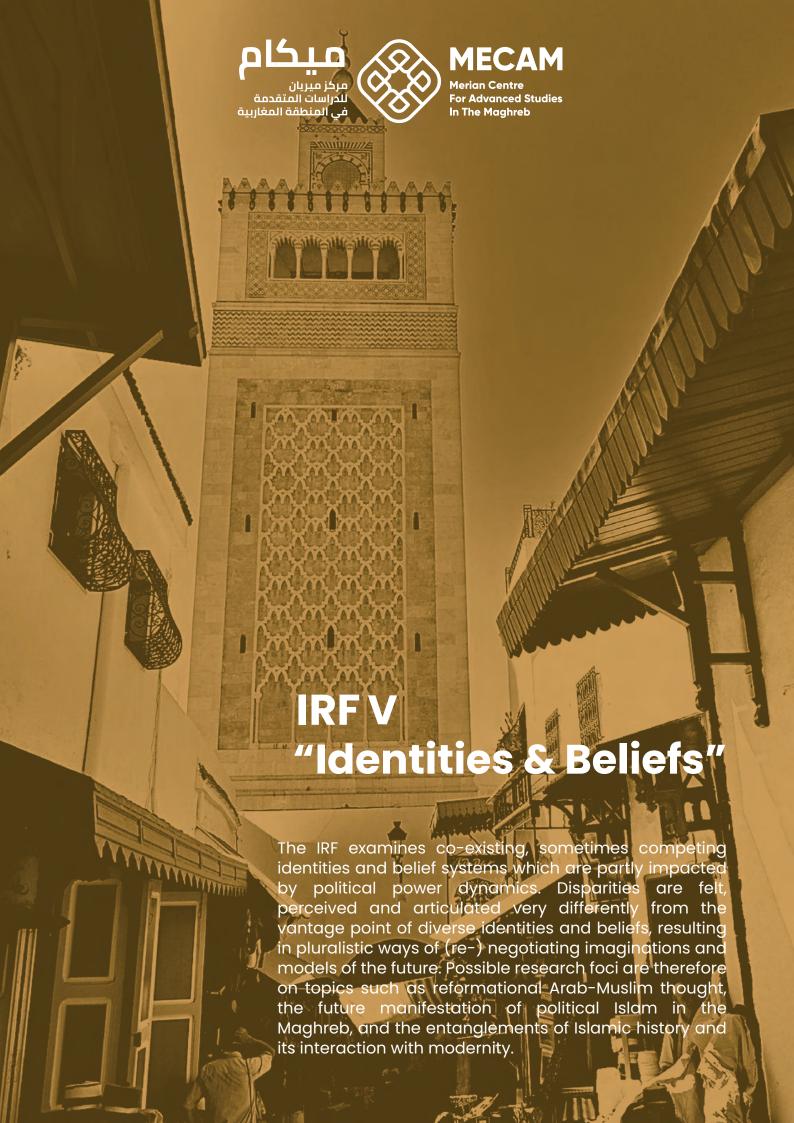
(Professor, Geography and Environment / Université de Sfax/Tunisia)

#### Dr. Héla Belkhiria

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

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

(Associate Professor, Quantitative Methods and Economics, Institut supérieur de gestion de Tunis, Université de 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 Université de Casablanca/Morocco)

#### **Prof. Zoubeir Arous**

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

#### Dr. Sihem Chérif

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



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

(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.

#### **Dr. 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.

#### **Dr. Hend Guirat**

(Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Tunis University of Tunis/Tunisia)

Assistant Professor in the department of history at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Tunis, in 2014, she presented her thesis on "The death penalty in Tunisia under the protectorate. Sentences handed down by the French criminal justice (1883–1955)" at the EHESS (School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences) – Paris. Her research focuses on the history of justice in the colonial and post–colonial periods and on the various actors in the judicial hierarchy (judges, interpreters and lawyers). She is also interested in gender and justice. She is a member of the Medieval Arab–Islamic World Laboratory (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Tunis).



#### IRF III: Memory & Justice

# The forgotten of the courtroom: Court interpreters in Tunisia during the colonial era (1883-1955)

Today, the history of judicial institutions is particularly popular. However, there are not many studies devoted to "subordinates". Interpreters are omnipresent in legal proceedings; they are also an integral part of historical research. The aim of this project is to initiate a reflection on the history of the judicial institution from the bottom up, i.e. by focusing on secondary actors.

We will first try to show how French colonization transformed (and even created) the figure of the translator: from a handyman, the court interpreter becomes an official (Axis 1). They were supposed to "facilitate" the meeting between a local administration and the colonial power, translators who have worked for the various Tunisian judicial authorities will be of particular interest to us (Axis 2). Finally, we'll examine the fate of these employees after the signing of the judicial agreements (1955–1957), and the cessation of French courts, to show how the gradual "tunisification" (or arabization) of justice after independence meant that court interpreters were reduced to mere officials of circumstance (Axis 3).

#### Dr. Nora Lafi

(Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin/Germany)

Nora Lafi is a historian (PhD, 1999; Habilitation, 2011), working as a Senior Research Fellow at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin. She specializes in the study of the Ottoman Empire and of the societies of the Middle East and North Africa. She has been chairing since 2020 the international research project HISDEMAB of the Leibniz-Association. She is also a Privat Dozentin at Freie Universität Berlin and was in 2020 a Senior Fellow of the Max Weber Kolleg at Erfurt University. She co-chairs the Cities Compared project EUME (Forum Transregionale Studien). She has published extensively on urban governance (Esprit civique et organisation citadine dans l'empire ottoman, Brill, 2019) as well as on the historical anthropology of violence (Urban Violence in the Middle East, co-ed., Berghahn, 2015), on gender studies ("Finding women and gender in the sources", 2018) and on anti-colonial movements ("Longue-Durée Reflections on Anti-Colonial Movements", 2022).



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

## Women Resisting Colonization: Female Rebels in Late-19th and Early 20th c. Tunisia

In 2023/2024 at MECAM Tunis, Nora Lafi is working on a research project dedicated to female rebels against the French colonization of Ottoman North Africa. Focusing mostly on Tunisia at the end of the 19th c., but also Algeria and Tripolitania, and exploring the rich archival documentation available in Tunis, she proposes innovative interpretations as for the role of women in resistance against colonial occupation and repression one the one side, and on their role in local societies in general. What the documentation is exposing indeed is not only the colonial repressive apparatus, combining brutal military operations, intrusive policing and judiciary or administrative punishments, but also, in a mirroring effect, the complex identities of the women under investigation. This research, thus, is revealing how woman were able to make important decisions like that of choosing armed resistance, but also, through the lists of the goods and properties that were confiscated to them once they joined the rebellion, how they acted in local societies on a level that colonial and postcolonial clichés have often tended to minimize: home and shop ownership, business activities, role in decision-making processes. This is why this research is intended both as an exposition of the mechanisms of imposition of the violent colonial order and as an exploration in the historical anthropology of gender relations.

#### Dr. Joshua Rigg

(Small States Research Program, Georgetown University/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.

#### **Dr. 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?

#### **Dr. Imad Alsoos**

( 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

This research project aims to conduct a comparative study of Hamas and al-Nahda while in office in Palestine and Tunisia. As Muslim Brotherhood organisations, Hamas and al-Nahda managed to survive repression, win elections, ascend to office and form governments. To address their resilience, this research proposal will focus on al-Nahda and Hamas's organising structures, human capital and overall narratives. The research will examine the learning and training of their cadre and the formation of leadership as well as how their members come to occupy functional positions within their organisational hierarchy and executive branches while in opposition. This serves to explain how al-Nahda and Hamas maintain the continuity and public outreach that resulted in their electoral victories. The research then focuses in on the way in which these institutions and qualified cadre facilitated al-Nahda and Hamas's transitional adaptation to new political and administrative roles and forms of local governance while in office. Drawing on theories of state and organisations, the research contributes to the growing body of work on Muslim Brotherhood groups in the Arab Mashriq as well as the Maghreb and opens comparative avenues of study on how Hamas has so far managed to survive in office while al-Nahda did not.

#### Dr. Asma Helali

(University of Lille/France)

Asma Helali is an associate professor of Islamic studies at the University of Lille, France. Dr Helali has worked in various research centers in the Arab world, U.S, Europe and the United Kingdom. Her main interest is the transmission of religious texts in early and mediaeval Islam. She is currently member of the Templeton Religion Trust project, Paratexts Seeking Understanding, University of Glasgow and she is director of The Kairouan Manuscript project (KMP), University of Hamburg, Center for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC). She is the author of The Sanaa Palimpsest: The Transmission of the Qur'an in the First Centuries AH (Oxford University Press, 2017), and The Making of Religious Texts in Islam: The Fragment and the Whole (Gerlach, 2019).



#### IRF V: Identities & Beliefs

## Unveiling religious identities and beliefs: Shī'ī teaching in the scholarly milieu in Kairouan during the Fatimid period

The project studies the history of the teaching tradition in the scholarly milieu in Qayrawan during the Fatimid period. The research will be based on manuscript evidence held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Tunis and more precisely on marginal annotations in Qur'an fragments. Marginal and interlinear comments on selected Qur'an manuscripts will be scrutinized in order to demonstrate how such sources are lived traditions to which Muslim scholars in the Fatimid city at the Xth and XIth centuries, studied, taught, and interpreted religious material. These teacher-student annotations include reading instructions, marginal and interlinear comments and also textual variants. Once analyzed systematically, this data will allow studying the religious beliefs in the Fatimid Kairouan and the ways the Muslims interacted with the scholarly milieu. It also allows observing the relationship between Sunnī and Shī ī teaching networks. The result of the project will be to add to our understanding of early Islamic scholarship. The project will not only bring new knowledge, but also knowledge of different type: the lived tradition of copyists, teachers and students.

#### Dr. Tommaso Virgili

(WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin/Germany)

Tommaso Virgili is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Migration, Integration, Transnationalization Department of the WZB Berlin Social Science Center and a Research Associate at the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies in Brussels. At the WZB, he works on Islamism and liberal Islam in connection with individual rights, with a focus on Europe and the MENA region. On these topics he has published academic and policy articles, as well as the book Islam, Constitutional Law and Human Rights. Sexual Minorities and Freethinkers in Egypt and Tunisia, Routledge, 2022.

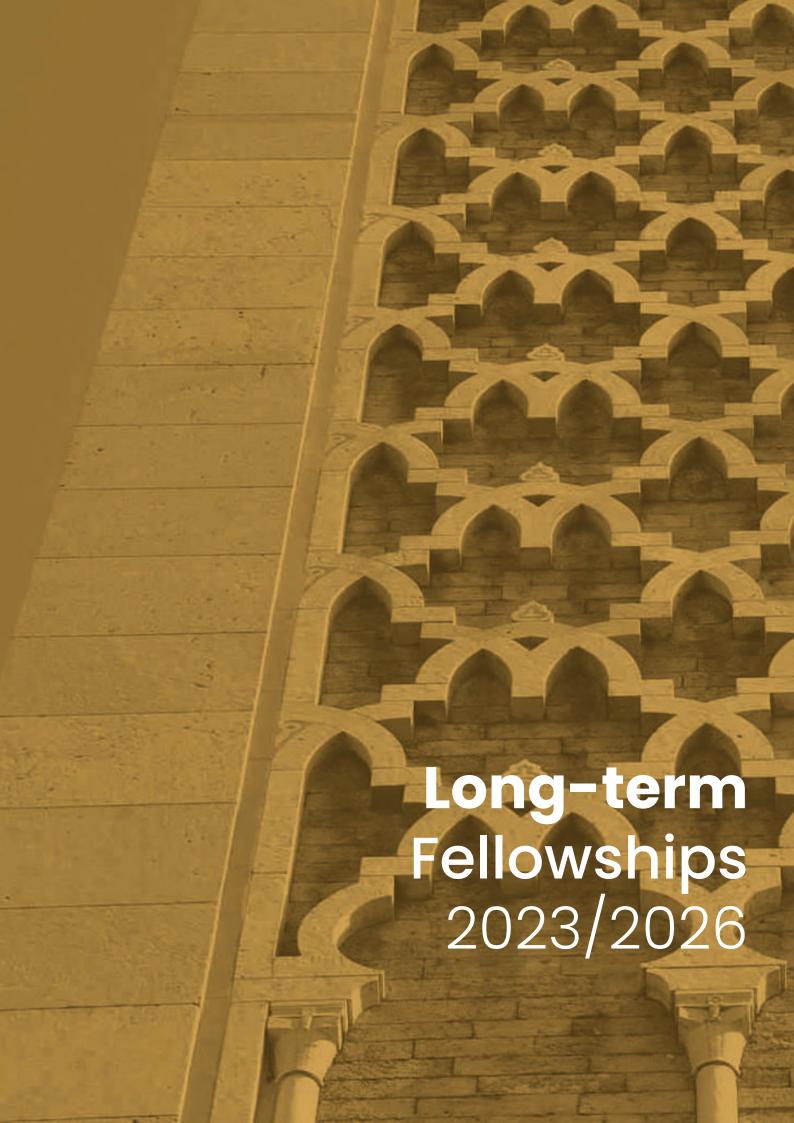
Tommaso holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Public Law and a Master's degree in Law from Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa and a Master of Arts in Middle East and Islamic Studies with Arabic from the American University of Paris and Cairo.



#### **IRF V: Identities & Beliefs**

## Freedom of Conscience and LGBT Rights in Tunisia and Morocco: The Spring is Yet to Come

Despite a partial democratic opening, Tunisia and Morocco still maintain a score of criminal laws that target individuals who do not conform to the prevalent moral ethos. In particular, sexual minorities and freethinkers (atheists, apostates, blasphemers and unorthodox intellectuals) are targeted by law and society on grounds of transgressing public morality and the traditional Islamic norms. This research concentrates on the constitutional and legal protection of the individual liberties of those categories in a comparative perspective between Tunisia and Morocco. It also aims to assess how different interpretations of Islam interact with LGBT rights and freedom of conscience. At the legal level, what is the effect of the legal recognition of Islamic rules and principles on individual rights? At socio-legal level, what is the influence of the religious ethos of the majority on the interpretation and application of the law? At the social level, does religion play a role in the treatment of out-groups – whether as trigger of hostility or as a source of compassion and bonding? To answer these questions, the research follows a qualitative multi-method approach that is partly based on a "black-letter" analysis of legal provisions and case law and partly on sociological jurisprudence, to assess the "law in context" via media sources and semi-structured interviews.



#### **Dr. Cyrine Kortas**

(The University of Gabes/Tunisia)

Cyrine Kortas is an assistant professor of English literature at the university of Gabes, Tunisia. She is also a member of the Research Unit LAD at the faculty of Arts and Humanities, Sfax. Her research interests include Lawrentian studies, comparative literature, feminist and gender studies. Recently, she has developed an interest for media studies as coordinator of the MA programme English for media studies and journalism. Her current research focuses on the influence of modernist English authors such as D. H. Lawrence on the rise of the modern novel in the Maghreb region; it explores the concept of the New Man in a selection of novels published in Tunisia and Marocco, while introducing Sufism as a theory of analysis. This project is influenced by one of her publications: The Image of the New Man in Post-War Short Stories "The Man who Loved Islands" by D. H. Lawrence and "The White Rose" by Hanna Mina in 2020.



#### IRF I: Aesthetics & Cultural Practice

The Politics and Poetics of the New Man's Body Image in the Modernist Novel: A Sufi Comparative Study of D. H. Lawrence's Women in Love, Mohamed Khaldi's Awted, and Abdallah Laroui's Awaraq

Through a uniquely spiritual style that stems from the Maghreb region, both Mouhamed Khaldi and Abdallah Laroui write about the estranged modern Maghrebi man who is in constant search for his own identity in Awtad and Awraq, respectively, a concern shared with the English author D. H. Lawrence in his breakthrough novel Women in Love. In a comparative study interested in exploring the development of male characters within a Sufi tradition, the following project aspires to trace the role of mysticism, as a human endeavour to grasp and understand the essence of reality by shaping and reshaping the authors' understanding of the New Man in the selected novels.

Through a painful journey of self-discovery, the male characters in the selected narratives reconnect with their bodies by throwing off the social glaze, revelling instead in what Lawrence coins as "our imperative needs". Hence, the purpose of this study is:

To explore the diverse mystical meanings related to the experiences of pain and pleasure materialised in the male characters' physical love stories that are enlivened by a Sufi tradition and infer the suggestions embedded in the authors' imagery of the erotic.

To discuss and examine the role of the body as a paradigm of meaning, both political and cultural.

To reach these objectives, the project is guided by the following research questions:

- Can Sufism be considered a theory of analysis? What distinguishes Maghrebi Sufi tradition? What elements of Sufism can be traced in the selected novels in relation to the body?
- What is the New Man modern novel? What is the aesthetics of such a novel? How did the English novel influence the Maghrebi conceptualization of the New Man Fiction?
- What are the poetics and politics of the masculine body in the modern novel in general and in the Maghrebi one in particular?

#### Dr. Massensen Cherbi

(Université Le Havre/France)

Massensen Cherbi holds a doctorate in law. In December 2019 he defended a thesis at the Université Paris II Panthéon-Assas on the "limits of Algerian constitutionalism" within the constitutional law of March 6, 2016. He moved to Algiers in January 2019 for his research, which allowed him to experience the first year of the "Hirak" protest movement \*in situ\* and incorporate initial developments into his thesis. He currently works on both the organization of public authorities, through themes such as citizenship, presidentialism or the constitutional role of the army, and fundamental rights and freedoms, through themes such as state religion, gender equality, or linguistic pluralism. He also works on Algerian constitutional history, from the demands of the Algerian nationalist movement to the more recent Hirak, and more generally on comparative law, particularly with constitutions in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.



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

Penser l'avenir du Hirak.

Entre transition démocratique et justice transitionnelle : imaginer une Algérie plurielle et respectueuse du rule of law

Imagining a plural Algeria that respects the rule of law is a research project that is part of an in-depth study of the Hirak—a peaceful protest movement experienced throughout the country between 2019 and 2021—through which it explores the themes of democratic transition and transitional justice. In order to do this, we first examine the institutional deadlocks that Algeria experienced in 2019, through a study of the constitutional provisions then in force, and their interpretation by the authorities; the crackdown on the opposition, through an analysis of the legislation that was mobilized and its interpretation by the judges; before examining the constitutional revision of 2020, through a study of the preliminary drafting and the resulting final version. This first analysis then allows us to review the various alternatives in support of a democratic transition and transitional justice, proposed by the opposition and civil society, to try to understand why they diverge, while confronting them with comparative law, through the study of legal mechanisms allowing the free expression of pluralism in a substantial \*Rechtsstaat\*.

#### Dr. Max Ajl

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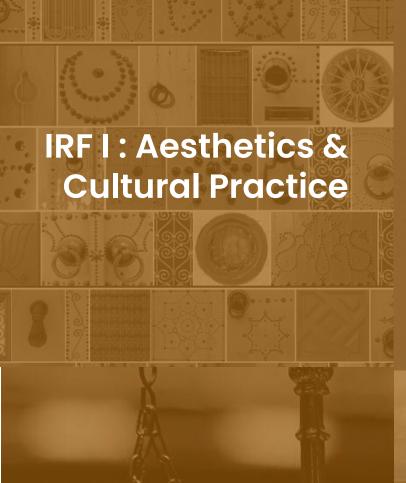
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#### **IRF IV: Resources & Sustainability**

# Development Alternatives from North Africa: Big Plans and Small Farms in the Search for Sustainability

Since the 2010-2011 Arab uprisings, rural poverty, agriculture, food import dependence, and climate change began to feature more prominently in Middle East-North African (MENA) development agendas. Development Alternatives from North Africa: Big Plans and Small Farms in the Search for Sustainability focuses on intellectual "paths not taken" in smallholder development. It offers an intellectual history of development practitioners, agronomists, and economists' rupture with the industrialization/modernization paradiam in agriculture since the 1960s. These Tunisian thinkers and practitioners, in dialogue with Egyptian economists and development experts, analyzed the problems of industrialization of agriculture and the causes of underdevelopment, rethought agriculture's role in ecologically-sound development, fused their analyses of smallholder agriculture with the "dependency school" of economics, and produced local models for self-reliant development focused on smallholder farms. This intellectual history elaborates how North African researchers analyzed the mistakes of the past, produced their novel planning framework, and examines its intellectual content. It uses archives, oral histories, and technical literature to address these questions and places them in the context of international circuits of agronomic and development-related intellectual production.



IRF II : Inequality & Mobility

IRF III: Memory & Justice

IRF IV: Resources & Sustainability





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