

ميكام  
مركز ميربان  
للدراستات المتقدمة  
في المنطقة المغاربية



MECAM  
Merian Centre  
For Advanced Studies  
In The Maghreb

# Fellowship Programme

## Individual Fellowships

from September 2024 to April 2025

## Long-term Fellowships

2023-2026



# Fellowship Programme



**Dr. Julius Dihstelhoff**

Academic Coordinator



**Prof. Amel Guizani**

Director



**Prof. Rachid Ouaisa**

Director

## Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM), established in 2020, has been successful in fostering global research connections and exchanges.

During its main phase, spanning from 2023 to 2029, The centre offers fellowship programmes that enables international, intergenerational, and interdisciplinary collaborations on the Maghreb and MENA region. The centre provides a platform for scholars to discuss cultural, economic, political, and social disparities in Tunisia, the Maghreb, and beyond. Each year, MECAM offers up to 8-month individual fellowships from September to April, allowing scholars to engage in their research and contribute to advancing knowledge and understanding of the Maghreb region.

This time, MECAM extends invitations to a total of 12 highly talented senior and junior fellows, providing them with the opportunity to immerse themselves in their respective research pursuits. Grateful acknowledgement is extended to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Tunisia as well as for the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) for their support in funding one of these fellowships each. Additionally, MECAM offers long-term post-doctoral fellowships (up to three years) for a maximum of six postdoctoral researchers in humanities and social sciences. Only a maximum of three long-term fellowships can be active simultaneously.

All fellows present their research designs, progress, and outcomes during the self-organized 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 talented fellows and the valuable insights they will bring to the research community. With their diverse backgrounds and innovative projects, they are set to invigorate scholarly discussions within the Maghreb and beyond.

**Juilius Dihstelhoff & Amel Guizani & Rachid Ouaisa**

# Organigram

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Universität Leipzig  
GiGA, Hamburg  
Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin  
Maghreb  
Université de Tunis  
Université de Sfax

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### PRESENT IN TUNIS :

- ACADEMIC COORDINATOR (HEAD OF MECAM'S COORDINATION OFFICE): **DR. JULIUS DIHSTELHOFF**
- PROGRAMME MANAGER: **HIBA MEDNINI**
- OFFICE MANAGER: **MOHAMED ALYANI**
- FELLOW ASSISTANCE: **DR. IMÈNE KHEFACHA TRABELSI**

### PRESENT AT PARTNER INSTITUTIONS IN GERMANY :

#### PHILIPPS-UNIVERSITÄT MARBURG / MARBURG

- PROJECT COORDINATOR GERMANY : **BENJAMIN HEIDRICH**
- FOREIGN LANGUAGE SECRETARY : **JULIA HERMANN**
- PROJECT ADMINISTRATION MANAGER : **PIA WAGNER**

#### GIGA/HAMBURG

- PUBLICATIONS MANAGER: **DR. HABIL STEFFEN WIPPEL / DR. MARIA JOSUA**
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- COORDINATOR FOR SCIENCE COMMUNICATION & EVENTS: **DR. DIANA ABBANI**
- RESEARCH DATA COORDINATOR: **AHMAD GHARBEIA**

# Fellowship Programme

## MECAM Fellows

They Are offered the opportunity to contribute to the organization's research agenda while working on their own individual research projects. The program provides a balance between independence and access to research facilities, as well as opportunities for collaboration and exchange with colleagues.

The fellowship programme led by MECAM's directors and its Academic Coordinator has been successfully tested and implemented during MECAM's initial funding phase within the Interdisciplinary Fellows group (IFGs), even though the on-site component in Tunis has been substituted partially by remote fellowships due to pandemic related restrictions. During the initial funding phase, MECAM has been successful with invitations of excellent scholars working on 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). In addition, MECAM invites up to six promising postdoc long-term 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.

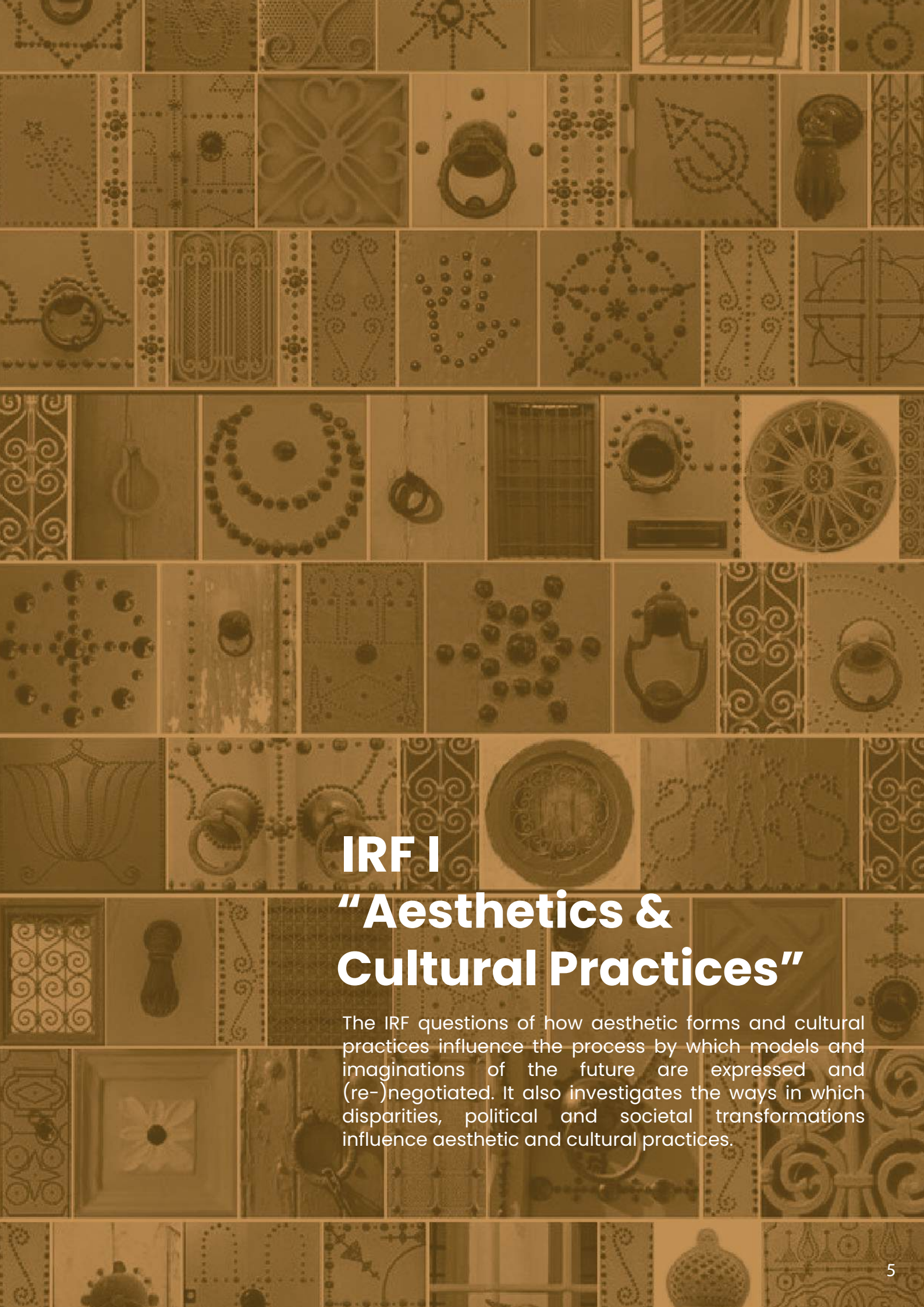
This guiding theme of MECAM is defined more specifically through two key research questions:

- *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





# IRFI “Aesthetics & Cultural Practices”

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.

## Cluster Principal Investigators:

### **Prof. Olaf Müller**

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

### **Prof. Fiederike Pannewick**

*(Professor, Arabic Literature and Culture, Philipps-Universität Marburg / Germany)*

### **Prof. Malte Hagener**

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

### **Prof. Samia Kassab-Charfi**

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

### **Prof. Mohamed Ben Hamouda**

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

### **Prof. Emna Beltaief**

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

### **Georges Khalil**

*(Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin / Germany)*

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**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.



## Cluster Principal Investigators:

### **Dr. Sonja Ganseforth**

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

### **Prof. Ali Bennisr**

*(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)*

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## IRF III

# “Memory & Justice”

The IRF discuss legacies of the past, including their legal, political and cultural perceptions and frames in relation to different assessments of the present and to models and (re-)negotiations of the future. Research will shed light on the ways in which differential access to political power shapes questions of accountability, fact-finding, amnesty, judicial reforms, human rights claims and the legitimate sources of law in post-conflict societies and beyond.

## Cluster Principal Investigators:

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

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

### **Prof. Anika Oettler**

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

### **Prof. Thorsten Bonacker**

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

### **Prof. Khaled Kchir**

*(Professor, History, Université  
de Tunis / Tunisia)*

### **Prof. Yasmina Ghodbane**

*(Professor, Philosophy,  
Université de Tunis / Tunisia)*

### **Prof. Nessim Zenaïen**

*(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.

## Cluster Principal Investigators:

### **Prof. Rachid Ouaisa**

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

### **Prof. Benedikt Stcuhtey**

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

### **Prof. Eckart Conze**

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

### **Prof. Nejiba Chkir Ben Jemaa**

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

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

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

### **Dr. Héra 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)*

### **Prof. Adel Karaa**

*(Professor in the Department of Quantitative Methods and Economics and Director of the Doctoral School at the University of Tunis – ISG Tunis / Tunisia)*

### **Dr. Katharina Nicolai**

*(Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg/ Institut für Politische Wissenschaft / Germany)*

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IRF V

## “Identities & Beliefs”

The IRF examines co-existing, sometimes competing identities and belief systems which are partly impacted by political power dynamics. Disparities are felt, perceived and articulated very differently from the vantage point of diverse identities and beliefs, resulting in pluralistic ways of (re-) negotiating imaginations and models of the future. Possible research foci are therefore on topics such as reformational Arab-Muslim thought, the future manifestation of political Islam in the Maghreb, and the entanglements of Islamic history and its interaction with modernity.

## Cluster Principal Investigators:

### **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, Ain 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)*



**Individual  
Fellowships  
2024/2025**



## Dr. Najla Mosbahi

The Military Academy / Tunisia

Najla Mosbahi holds a PHD in English Language and Linguistics. She teaches English at the Military Academy in Tunis. Dr. Mosbahi earned her doctorate in this field, showcasing her profound expertise and commitment to advancing linguistic and media studies. Her research interests encompass a wide range of subjects, including media studies, film studies, critical discourse analysis, multimodality, and applied linguistics. Dr. Mosbahi has contributed significantly to these fields through her published research papers. Notable works include 'A Genre Analysis of the Film Children of a Lesser God' and 'Fearless Voices: A Systemic Functional Grammar Examination of Female Resilience in Halloween' (1978), which explores themes of female empowerment and resilience through a linguistic lens. In addition to her publications, Dr. Mosbahi is an active participant in both national and international academic conferences, where she shares her insights and collaborates with other researchers.



## IRF I : Aesthetics & Cultural Practices

### **The Linguistic Construction of Gender Disparity in the Tunisian TV show «Fekret Sami Fehri» on Elhiwar Ettounsi**

This research project, situated within the theme 'Imagining Futures: Dealing with Disparity' of the MECAM initiative, employs critical discourse analysis to investigate the linguistic construction of gender disparity in the Tunisian TV show "Fekret Sami Fehri" on Elhiwar Ettounsi. Specifically, this study examines how the show represents and reinforces gender roles, stereotypes, and disparities, with a focus on the portrayal of women. The research aims to answer three key questions: How do the TV show's linguistic strategies contribute to the construction of gender roles and stereotypes? Do these constructions perpetuate or challenge existing gender disparities in Tunisian society? What are the potential consequences of these constructions on gender inequality?

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## Dr. Sanabel Abdelrahman

Europe in the Middle East, Middle East in Europe (EUME)  
at the Forum Transregionale Studien / Germany

Sanabel Abdelrahman holds a Ph.D. in Arabic Studies, focusing on magical realism in Palestinian literature, from Philipps-Universität Marburg. She completed her BA and MA at the University of Toronto's Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. She was a Postdoctoral Fellow at EUME at the Forum Transregionale Studien in 2023/2024 in Berlin, where she worked on her research under the title 'Beyond Magical Realism: Situating Palestinian Liberation within Indigenous Futurisms'. In addition to lecturing at Philipps-Universität Marburg and Freie Universität Berlin, Sanabel is a bilingual writer of fiction and essays whose focus extends to visual arts and film.



## IRF I: Aesthetics & Cultural Practices

### The Futures of Postcolonial Hauntologies: A Case for the Maghreb

This research project attempts to trace the phenomenon of the Maghreb's postcolonial haunting of French spaces in a selection of films, songs, and visual arts. It will explore potential continuums of possible future revolutions emerging from protracted postcolonial traces. It delves into how postcolonial traces, such as Algerian 'ghosts', perform a decolonial resistance in the form of hauntology that is understood within indigenous contexts. In parallel, it will investigate the persistence of martyrdom as a (post)colonial condition within the Algerian context specifically and the Maghreb generally. These topics invite questions regarding the post-revolution/independence poetics of space in film and exhibition spaces as well as conceptualizations of 'home.' How is the sense of space altered in the post-independence vacuum in which the 'utopias' of post-revolution have not (yet) materialized? Additionally, is it possible to incorporate these questions within the framework of Afrofuturism- especially regarding agency, alternative presents-futures, and powerful, collective imaginations at work?

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## Dr. Muriam Davis

University of California, Santa Cruz / United States

Muriam Haleh Davis is an Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where she directs the Center for the Middle East and North Africa. She is the author of *Markets of Civilization: Islam and Racial Capitalism in Algeria* (Duke University Press, 2022) and the co-editor of *North Africa and the Making of Europe: Governance, Institutions, and Culture* (Bloomsbury Press, 2018). Previously, she has been a fellow at the European University Institute in Florence, and the Iméra in Marseille. She is co-chair of the editorial committee for MERIP (Middle East Research and Information Project) and is co-editor of the Maghreb Page for *Jadaliyya*.



## IRF II: Inequality & Mobility

### **Decolonizing Sociology: State-Building and Knowledge Production in the Maghreb**

"Decolonizing Sociology: State-Building and Knowledge Production in the Maghreb," studies how intellectuals in North Africa appropriated and transformed the discipline of sociology after independence. These sociologists sought to craft new models to understand culture, human behavior, and the organization of society. Yet they were forced to reckon with the history of their discipline, which had been developed to face the challenges of 19th century Europe. My research asks a number of pressing questions: First, how did thinkers in Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria grapple with the need to reformulate theoretical concepts first developed in Europe? Second, how did the different colonial legacies in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia account for the divergent directions taken by intellectuals? And third, how did Maghrebi sociologists help consolidate a sense of national identity in the backdrop of ambitious state-building projects across the region?

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## Dr. Nessrine Abbassi

University of Gabes / Tunisia

Nessrine Abbassi holds a PhD in Economics (awarded in 2022) from the University of Sfax- FSEG (Faculty of Economics and Management). Currently, she is a member of the economics and rural societies laboratory at the Institut des régions arides de Médenine (IRA, Médenine) & University of Gabes. Her PhD thesis focused on regional disparities and inclusive growth in Tunisia, utilizing a spatial econometrics approach. Prior to her doctoral studies, she graduated with a research master's degree in regional development economics from the Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales de Tunis (ESSECT) in 2014. She also previously held a position as a contract professor at the University of Gabes.



## IRF II: Inequality & Mobility

### **Regional disparities and inclusive territorial development in Tunisia: The South-East region.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problem of those left behind and highlighted the major inequalities in regional development that characterize the Tunisian landscape. At the same time, territorial research to understand the role of places and their specificities, often small, sparsely populated areas, can provide a framework for inclusive development.

The aim of our research project is to characterize regional disparities throughout Tunisia, and in the South-East region, in terms of inclusive territorial development. This concept, which is particularly suited to the regional fabric, contributes to research aimed at the regional revitalization of neglected territories, the identification of disparities and the redefinition of new ways of conceiving the role of space and place, through a place-based spatial approach. To do this, using geographical data from the regional development index for Tunisia's 24 regions, this study aims to go beyond mere discourse on the issue of regional disparities, using the method of spatial analysis.

## Dr. Fabrizio Leonardo Cuccu

Dublin City University / Ireland

Fabrizio Leonardo Cuccu obtained his PhD in Politics and International Relations in 2023 from Dublin City University, where he also served as Assistant Professor. His diverse academic journey has taken him through Italy, Ireland, Morocco, and Tunisia. His research expertise lies in International Relations and Development Studies, with a focus on the North African region. He employs a decolonial lens, integrating Critical Discourse Analysis of international development documents with “vernacular” and “everyday” approaches, to explore the evolution of development programmes in postcolonial contexts. His work has been published in the Cambridge Review of International Affairs and L’année du Maghreb. He is currently working on his first monograph for Routledge.



## IRF II: Inequality & Mobility

### Navigating Inequalities: Locating Agency in the Margins and International Aid

This study focuses on international development and aid programs aimed at fostering economic empowerment in Tunisia, specifically examining how community actors, particularly youth workers engaged with youth and cultural centers in Tunisian suburbs, influence and co-produce these initiatives. Drawing on Bell Hooks' concept of the margin as a site for counter-hegemonic discourse, the research explores the individual understandings of economic empowerment among local actors to uncover alternative approaches to addressing economic inequalities. Using discourse analysis of international aid documents, semi-structured interviews with NGO representatives, and unstructured interviews with local community members involved in these programs, this research highlights the nexus between global aid agendas and local understandings of economic empowerment. The study analyses the interplay between international aid interventions and localized narratives of inequality. In so doing, it aims to understand how different actors perceive economic disparities and shape strategies to mitigate them. By interrogating the discursive and practical dimensions of international development, this research seeks to foster critical reflections on the efficiency of aid programs and the agency of marginalized communities in reshaping their socio-economic landscapes. The findings aim to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how international aid can be better aligned with the needs and perspectives of local communities, ultimately enhancing the impact and relevance of development initiatives in Tunisia.

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## Dr. Riadh Ben Khalifa

University of Tunis / Tunisia

MECAM fellowship funded by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)  
Tunisia

Riadh Ben Khalifa is an Associate Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Tunis and a member of the Research Laboratory of Economy and History of the Mediterranean (Faculty of Human and Social Sciences). He is editor-in-chief of the Tunisian Review of Social Sciences. His research interests focus on migration, asylum, and mobility in transitional contexts. Over the past decade, he published several books and articles in refereed journals as well as contributed to numerous chapters in collective works. He also made contributions to reports on migration and refugee issues for international organizations.

Riadh Ben Khalifa serves as a scientific member of the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES), the Arab Institute for Human Rights, and the National Migration Observatory (Minister of Social Affairs). Additionally, he is a member of several migration networks.



## IRF II: Inequality & Mobility

### **Crises and Transnational Migration in Tunisia (2011-2024): Discourses and Practices of Hospitality / Rejection of Immigrants'**

The research project examines the issue of hospitality and inhospitality towards migrants in Tunisia. It addresses the political instrumentalization of the migration issue and citizen mobilization to defend human rights. The study reveals contradictions within Tunisian society. Despite an initial wave of solidarity towards Libyan immigrants in 2011, Tunisia's tolerance towards sub-Saharan Africans later waned, with growing hostility, most notably in the city of Sfax.

The project aims to investigate whether there are elements that legitimize the hypothesis of Tunisia adopting state racism. It also seeks to explore the correlation between the violation of migrants' rights and the retreat of democracy. Furthermore, it aims to propose a policy of cooperation with European partners to implement a migration policy that respects human rights.

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## Dr. Faouzia Zeraoulia

Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University / Algeria

MECAM fellowship funded by The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA)

Dr. Faouzia Zeraoulia is an Associate Professor and a researcher at the Department of Political Science, University of Jijel, Algeria. She is a scholar with a broad and deep interest in conflict studies, peacebuilding, and female empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). She is also a member of Arab-German Young Academy of Science and Humanities (AGYA). As a part of her research projects, she worked as an associate researcher with different research institutes including: The Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies (CNMS) Marburg, Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies in Italy, Research Fellow at German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin, and Sciences Po Bordeaux in France.



## IRF III: Memory & Justice

### **Academic Community and Peacebuilding Process in the Conflict Zones: The Role of Scholars in Libya, Sudan, and Palestine**

In the complex landscape of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, academia stands as a crucial junction where theoretical frameworks meet practical interventions. This project is driven by the goal of uncovering nuanced insights that can inform effective peacebuilding strategies by delving into the multifaceted contributions of scholars in conflict and post-conflict settings. It acknowledges universities and academic institutions as not only repositories of knowledge but also as dynamic spaces fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and critical discourse. By amplifying the voices of victims and marginalized communities, academics play a pivotal role in challenging prevailing power structures and advocating for sustainable peace. The project examines 'Academic community and peacebuilding process in the conflict zones: What is the role of scholars in Libya, Sudan, and Palestine'. The main key themes that will be addressed are: identifying challenges and risks faced by scholars, examining their involvement in peacebuilding, exploring ways to enhance their role, and assessing Germany's support for academic peacebuilding initiatives.

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## Prof. Samir Bellal

Faculté des sciences économiques, Université Moulod Mammeri / Algeria

Samir Bellal graduated from the National Institute of Planning and Statistics (INPS) in Algiers and the University of Lyon 2. He has taught at numerous universities in Algeria. Currently, he is a professor of economics at the Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou (Algeria). His research focuses on issues of economic regulation and institutional dynamics in the context of a rentier economy. He published "La crise du régime rentier – essai sur une Algérie qui stagne" (The Crisis of the Rentier Regime – Essay on a Stagnant Algeria) in late 2017 with Frantz-Fanon editions, and "Rente, populisme et question économique en Algérie – réflexions sur un système en crise" (Rentierism, Populism and the Economic Question in Algeria – Reflections on a System in Crisis) in late 2022 with El-Amel editions.



## IRF IV: Resources & Sustainability

### Rent and institutional change in Algeria

The project, presented in the form of an essay, sets out to analyze the issue of institutional change in the context of the rentier economic regime operating in Algeria. The project is structured around several themes. The first is devoted to a review of the terms of the theoretical debate on the question of institutional change. In particular, we will discuss the specific status of institutional mediation in the context of a rentier economy.

Secondly, we describe the institutional configurations at work in Algeria. These constitute what we call a mode of regulation. We will focus on the ambiguities that characterize the institutional choices that frame the mobilization of rents for economic development.

In another section, certain number of factual elements that characterize the country's economic trajectory will be recalled. Another chapter will be devoted to analyzing the consequences of the indeterminate nature of the category "rent" on institutional dynamics. Finally, we will conclude by addressing the role of political deliberation and that of actors in defining the country's institutional choices.

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## Dr. Mohamed Ismail Sabry

Philipps-Universität Marburg / Germany

Dr. Mohamed Ismail Sabry is currently a Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. He is a former Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM) in Tunis, the Bremen University of Applied Sciences (HSB), and the Extractivism Project of the Philipps University of Marburg. He is also a Lecturer at different universities in Germany. He obtained his PhD in Economics from the Philipps University of Marburg, while his Bachelor and Masters degrees were obtained from the American University in Cairo (AUC).

Dr. Sabry's academic fields of interests are Institutional Economics, Economic Development, Political Economy, and the MENA region. The focus of his research is on state-society relations, industrial policy, and the Green Transition. He published several books in English and Arabic and several academic papers in different peer reviewed journals.



## IRF IV: Resources & Sustainability

### **The EU Green Deal, State-Society Relations and the Green Transition in North Africa: Prospects of Success or Failure**

The proposed research investigates various state-society policy coalitions forming around green energy transition in North Africa and their effect on the prospects of energy transition in the region. First, two processes that are relevant to the green transition in North Africa are identified, both of which are initiated by the EU Green Deal. The first process is the EU developmental assistance that entails financial and technical assistance to support structural transformation towards a greener economy. The second process is the EU's support to its renewable energy industries' GVCs under fierce competition from other global powers such as China. The second step is to investigate how the two processes shape the typology of actors in North Africa, carving them out, making some active, and others irrelevant. The capability of those active actors to impact the transition in either direction, however, depends on their relative power vis a vis each other and their ability to coordinate. Both factors depend on state-society relations, necessitating a deeper investigation for these relations, which is the third step in the proposed research. The final step is to assess the prospects of the success or failure of the green transition in North African countries depending on the analysis done in the previous three steps. Given the formulation of the research question, the main independent sets or domains of actors in North Africa could be broadly identified as the state, businesspeople (local and EU MNCs), labor, EU developmental agencies, and environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS). From each of these independent sets, actors would be drawn out based on the interests built around the identified two processes. The research depends mainly on qualitative data obtained during visits for selected North African countries as well as to headquarters of EU developmental assistance organizations and firms related to the field.

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## Dr. Thomas Serres

University of California, Santa Cruz / United States

Dr. Serres's research spans the field of Middle Eastern studies, critical security studies, and comparative politics, combining an ethnographic approach with a conceptual apparatus inspired by critical theory. He is particularly interested in the effects of protracted and entangled crises (popular uprisings, "war on terror," refugee crisis, neoliberalization) in North Africa and beyond. His first book, *The Suspended Disaster: Governance by Catastrophization in Bouteflika's Algeria*, was published in 2023 with Columbia University Press, expanding on a French edition initially released in 2019. He also co-edited the volume *North Africa and the Making of Europe* with Bloomsbury Publishing (2018).



## IRF V: Identities & Beliefs

### **The political activities of dual citizens in the Western Mediterranean, with a focus on Tunisia, Algeria and France**

His research spans the field of Middle Eastern studies, critical security studies, and comparative politics, combining an ethnographic approach with a conceptual apparatus inspired by critical theory. He is particularly interested in the effects of protracted and entangled crises (popular uprisings, "war on terror," refugee crisis, neoliberalization) in North Africa and beyond. His first book, *The Suspended Disaster: Governance by Catastrophization in Bouteflika's Algeria*, was published in 2023 with Columbia University Press, expanding on a French edition initially released in 2019. He also co-edited the volume *North Africa and the Making of Europe* with Bloomsbury Publishing (2018).

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## Dr. Hala Ben Mbarek

University of Tunis / Tunisia

Hala Ben Mbarek is associate professor of modern Hebrew language and literature in the Department of Arabic studies at the University of Tunis. She is also general secretary of the Tunisian Society of Comparative Literature. Her research focuses on the Hebrew and Comparative Literature; the contribution of popular genres to the construction of modern Jewish identities; the intersecting fields of modern multilingual Arab-Hebrew literatures of North Africa and the Middle East. She currently directs an Mecam funded research project: Judeo-Arab cultural heritage in Tunisia: A damaged identity and threatened linguistic diversity. She leads a team of approx five MA students. Her publications include her first book *العربية للمبتدئين* (FSHST Press, 2016) and many articles in academic journals.



## IRF V: Identities & Beliefs

### **Judeo-Arab cultural heritage in Tunisia: A damaged identity and threatened linguistic diversity (1850-1950)**

This project presents works of Judeo-Arabic Tunisian literature that have been previously unstudied and unavailable in translation. It's based on a qualitative study of a number of works divided by genre. It will present translations of *malzumat* (satirical ballads), 22 *qinot* (laments), 39 *ghnayat* (songs), 10 *hikayat* and deeds of righteous men (fiction).

We will reveal: How social identity correlates with linguistic identity? How were the Tunisian Jewish authors of these works part of a permanent tension between identity and belief; between mobility and adaptation? What is the double link between their writing and their identity; between identity construction and intercultural and linguistic dialogue?

This Tunisian Judeo-Arab corpus is becoming more and more vulnerable because its elements are more than ever threatened by forgetting, political and social influences, emigration, and deterioration. To what extent are linguistic unification policies in Tunisia a frequent source of incomprehension between the majority group and the linguistic minority? How do they give ethnic minorities the feeling of loss of identity? How to preserve the Judeo-Tunisian cultural and linguistic heritage to contribute to the national cultural wealth?

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## Dr. Imad Alsoos

Alumni MECAM Fellow 2023/2024 / 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. In 2023-24, he joined the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb. His current research focuses on a comparative study of Muslim thoughts in Mashreq and Maghreb and then examines the way their interactions have influenced the development of Ennahda Party's political thought.



## IRF V: Identities & Beliefs

### Genealogies of Muslim Thought in Mashreq and Maghreb: The Case of Ennahda's Muslim Democracy

This research project conducts a comparative study of Muslim thoughts in Mashreq and Maghreb and then examines the way their interactions have influenced the development of Ennahda Party's political thought. Ennahda has evolved from a sharia-based approach (1969-1979), through an umma-based approach or Islamic democracy (1981-2010) to a Muslim democracy (ca. 2011-present). The latest development represents the most advanced Muslim political thought in terms of the relationship between Islam and the modern model of state and civil society. Tracing Ennahda's development demands an exploration of the movement's historical and philosophical origins and the ways in which they have been renegotiated and transformed to adapt to the Tunisian political context. In theoretical and methodological terms, my research builds on Ibn Khaldun and Michael Foucault's genealogical perspective, which argues that the cross-generational transfer of knowledge has neither a defined beginning nor a linear evolution. As such, Muslim democracy has emerged as a result of disparities between events, actors, unplanned situations and Ennahda's own agency, which is conditioned by local context.

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**Long-term  
Fellowships  
2023/2026**

## 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\**.

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## Dr. Cyrine Kortas

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 *Awtad*, 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?

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## Dr. Max Ajl

(Department of Conflict and Development Studies, Ghent University, Belgium; Observatory for Food Sovereignty and the Environment, Tunis/Tunisia)

Max Ajl is a Senior Fellow at in the Department of Conflict and Development Studies at Ghent University and a researcher with the Tunisian Observatory for Food Sovereignty and the Environment. He is an editor at Agrarian South and Journal of Labor and Society, and has written for Agrarian South, the Journal of Peasant Studies, Globalizations, Review of African Political Economy, Middle East Report, and many other scholarly and popular journals, including the Guardian's Comment is Free, Boston Review, and Monthly Review. He researches climate politics, Tunisian national liberation, agrarian politics in the Arab region, and ecological planning, and Arab-North African intellectual history. He is the author of a recent book, *A People's Green New Deal*.



## 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 paradigm 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.


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## IRF I : Aesthetics & Cultural Practice



## IRF II : Inequality & Mobility



## IRF III: Memory & Justice



## IRF IV: Resources & Sustainability



## IRF V : Identities & Beliefs



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