

ميكام
مركز ميريان
للدراسات المتقدمة
في المنطقة المغاربية



MECAM
Merian Centre
For Advanced Studies
In The Maghreb

Event Week

« Voices and Encounters:
From the Margins Inwards »

MECAM Spectrum

Venues:

15 April: Merian Center for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM)
Conference Room-(HIDE) 27, rue Florian – Borj Zouara (Bab Saadoun), Tunis

16 April: Faculté des Sciences Humaines et Sociales de Tunis
Conference Room ElGuermadi –First floor, 94, Boulevard du 9 avril 1938, Tunis

17 April: Merian Center for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM)
Conference Room-(HIDE) 27, rue Florian – Borj Zouara (Bab Saadoun), Tunis

Tunis, Tunisia
15-17 April, 2025

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Conceptual Note

Raising the question of whether the marginalized can have a voice of their own and speak against the dominant power structure, “Voices and Encounters: From the Margins Inwards” answers Spivak’s question while engaging with our institute’s guiding theme: “Dealing with Disparities, Imagining Futures”.

The Event Week will comprise a series of talks and workshops to create a thread between the academic study of pertinent issues around food, economics, literature, and the arts in the Maghreb while underlining the roles, responsibilities, and positionalities of the researchers as they explore broader issues of inequities and futures. The symposium will be divided thematically into three days, hoping to provide an expansive and multidisciplinary engagement among academics and between academics and attendees.

Opening the conversation with questions about the Arab Renaissance and modernization will allow a clearer contextualization of the topics to follow in terms of relatability and efficacy within the Maghreb. It will similarly make way for rethinking the modes by which the North African/Arab experiences are studied and intellectualized. The following discussion will center around the politics of haunting and horror, which permeate the region’s cultural productions. An analysis of literature and film will offer a close depiction of the current postcolonial, post-Arab-Spring context, highlighting how collective visions of freedom and independence continue to emerge in the region. Engaging Jewish and women’s voices in the conversation will construct a more expansive and variegated reading of the context.

The conversation will then shift to the more material conditions of the region. Setting up discussions around food, land, economics, and (possible) development will provide a fruitful engagement centered around understanding the political and socio-economic dynamics that govern the region. Such discussions will also present potential tools for changes and developments that could be set up accordingly. The ways to grapple with such questions within the social sciences at an academic level will make a considerable part of this discussion.

The third tier of the symposium will focus on the scientific engagement with these topics, postulating the roles and responsibilities of academics and their research methodologies while providing practical and first-hand accounts of academic publishing.

The event seeks to address disparities faced by the marginalized in the Maghreb, to create scenarios where the marginalized can be a force of empowerment to reflect on instances of inclusivity where marginalized voices and unexpected encounters are integral to shaping culture, science, and society. Over three days, MECAM’s fellows, guests, and friends will engage in critical discussions to foster genuine encounters that bridge the divide and illuminate a vision of a more inclusive and equitable society and research.

Research questions

- How do marginalized voices perceive and navigate dominant power structures in their attempt to share their narratives?
- How do different forms of marginalization intersect to impact the Maghreb's experience and expression?
- How can research in humanities and social sciences empower the voiceless and marginalized? Can such research initiate change and shape policy ?

Objectives of the Event-week

- To identify and understand the mechanisms via which the marginalized strive for existence.
- To explore the impact of intersections and encountering different forms of marginalization.
- To design and implement adequate research methods to address disparities and imagine alternatives.

Programme

Day 1: April 15, 2025

Venue: MECAM Conference Room

9:00- 9:30	Event Inauguration Rachid Ouaisa, Amel Guizani, Julius Dihstelhoff
09:30-11:00	Panel 1: Exploring the Encounter of Modernity and Islamic Politics: Navigating Narratives and Disciplines Lecture: Hayet Amamou (University of Tunis) ”النهضة العربية وإشكالية الحداثة” Presenters: Imad Alsoos and Julius Dihstelhoff (MECAM, University of Tunis) “Ennahda’s Functional Specialization in Tunisia: Shaping Politics for the State and Cultivating Da’wa for Society”
11:00-12:00	Panel 2: The Politics of Hauntology between Postcolonialism and Post-Spring Chair: Cyrine Kortas (MECAM, University of Tunis) Presenter 1: Najla Mosbehi (MECAM, University of Tunis) “Voices from the Margins in <i>Dashra</i> and <i>Asfour Stah</i> ” Presenter 2: Sanabel Abdel Rahman (MECAM, University of Tunis) “A Reading of Contemporary Tunisian Films: Haunting and Alternative Realities” Presenter 3: Christian Junge (Marburg University) “Horror and Hope: Affective Writing and Reading in Post-Revolutionary Egyptian Novels” (online)
12:00–13:00	Lunch break
13:00-14:00	Book Talk

Chair: Cyrine Kortas
(MECAM, University of Tunis)

Book writer: Hajer Ben Drsiss
(University of Tunis)

Tunisian Women Novelists: Testimonies of Resistance and Resilience

14:00–15:00

Panel 3: Echoes of Diversity: Judeo-Tunisian Literature and Identities in Transition

Chair: Khadidja Boussaïd
(MECAM, University of Tunis)

Presenter 1: Hala ben Mbarek
(MECAM, University of Tunis)

"La Littérature Judéo-Tunisienne : Témoin de la Marginalisation des Identités Multiples et Reflet des Transformations d'une Tunisie en Transition dans un Contexte Colonial"

Presenter 2: Afef Mbarek
(Queen Mary University, London)

"Entre Orientalisme et Ethnographie : La Perception de la Production Littéraire et Journalistique Judéo-Arabe dans l'Afrique du Nord Coloniale" (online)

Day 2: April 16, 2025

Venue: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Conference Room Salah ElGuermadi

9:00- 09:30	Welcoming Slim Driss (President of the University of Tunis) Faouzi Zerai (Vice-Dean of FHSS, University of Tunis)
09:30 - 10:00	Lecture 2: On Food and Land Encountering Chair: Mohamed Sabry (MECAM, University of Tunis) Lecture: Max Ajl (MECAM, University of Tunis) "Food and Land in the World System and North Africa"
10:00-10:30	Coffee Break
10:30- 12:00	Panel 1: Exploring Economic Challenges: Populism and Regional Development Chair: Julius Dihstelhoff (MECAM, University of Tunis) Presenters 1: Samir Bellal and Ahmed Dahmani (MECAM Fellow, University of Tunis) (Tizi-Ouzou University and Paris-Sud-Saclay University) "Rente, Populisme, et Question Économique en Algérie " Presenter 2: Nessrine Abbassi (MECAM fellow, University of Tunis) "Développement Territorial Durable et Inégalités Régionales en Tunisie"
12.30-13.30	Lunch break

13.30-15:00

Round Table

"العلوم الإجتماعية و الإنسانية و الإلتزام"

Chair: Riadh ben Khalifa

(MECAM fellow, University of Tunis)

Presenter 1: Slaheddine Ben Frej

(Dean of FHSS, University of Tunis)

"مجالات البحث ودواعي الإلتزام: الدراسات الاسرية في مجتمع متحول"

Presenter 2: Houda Laroussi

(University of Carthage)

"Retour sur une Expérience de Recherche-Action sur l'Économie Sociale et Solidaire"

Presenter 3: Mehdi Mabrouk

(University of Tunis)

"الهجرة ، الإلتزام و العلم في اسس تجاوز المعضلة"

Presenter 4: Sofien Jaballah

(University of Sfax)

"L'implication du sociologue compromet-elle son objectivité ?"

15:00-16:00

Panel 2 : Questions Urbaines : Réflexions entre l'Algérie et la Tunisie

Chair: Massensen Cherbi

(MECAM, University of Tunis)

Presenter 1 : Safar-Zitoun Madani

(Algiers University 2)

"Du bidonville au Grands Ensembles d'Habitat Collectif : la "marge" est-elle soluble par les politiques de relogement en habitat social ? Un paradigme algérien à revisiter"

Presenter 2 : Boussaïd Khadidja

(MECAM, University of Tunis, CREAD)

"Espaces Publics au Masculin : de la Perception à l'Appropriation des espaces de la ville, lecture comparée entre Alger et Tunis"

Day 3: April 17, 2025

Venue: MECAM Conference Room

9:00- 10:00	<p>Panel 1: Encounters of Algeria: Voices of Leadership</p> <p>Chair: Khadidja Boussaïd (MECAM, University of Tunis, CREAD)</p> <p>Presenters: Massensen Cherbi and Isabelle Werenfels (MECAM, University of Tunis) (MECAM Advisory Board)</p> <p>“Leadership in Algeria 1962-2025: between resilience and rupture”</p>
10:00-12:00	<p>Workshop “Scholarly Production: From Research to Output”</p> <p>Moderator: Sanabel Abdel Rahman (MECAM, University of Tunis)</p> <p>Presenter 1: Imad Alsoos (MECAM, University of Tunis) “Researcher’s Positionality and Extracurricular Challenges”</p> <p>Presenter 2: Max Ajl (MECAM, University of Tunis) “Publication Workshop”</p>
12:00-13:00	<p>Lunch break</p>
13:00-14:00	<p>Rencontre Ibn Khaldun: Book Talk “Doing Research as a Native: A Guide for Fieldwork in Illiberal and Repressive States”</p> <p>Introduction and Modération : Clara-Auguste Süß (MECAM, GIGA)</p> <p>Presenters: Kira Jumet and Merouan Mekouar (Hamilton College / York University)</p>
14:00-16:00	<p>Workshop “Navigating obstacles when conducting research in repressive and/or illiberal states”</p> <p>Presenters and lead: Kira Jumet and Merouan Mekouar (Hamilton College / York University)</p>
16:00-16:30	<p>Closing Remarks</p>

Abstracts :

Hayet Amamou

Professor of Medieval Islamic History and its Contemporary Issues

النهضة العربية وإشكالية الحداثة

تأسست النهضة العربية باعتبارها حركة فكرية إصلاحية منذ بداية القرن التاسع عشر، ومرت بأطوار متعددة كانت حصيلتها إنتاجاً فكرياً متنوعاً وغزيراً. والمطلع على هذا الإنتاج أو على بعضه يتبادر إلى ذهنه أنّ هذا الإنتاج يُشكّل حركة منسجمة تتطوّر في خطّ مستقيم، أو أنّه مكرراً لنفسه عبر الزمن؛ ولكنّ الواقع مختلفاً تماماً عن ذلك لاختلاف الأسباب التي أوجدته. ففي القرن التاسع عشر، عبّر فكر رواد النهضة عن الصدمة التي أصابتهم جزاء التقائهم الأوّل بالآخر الأوروبي، الذي ولئن بهرهم تقدّمه، فقد خشوا خطر أن يبتلع ثقافتهم لتفوقه الفكري والعلمي والتقني، خاصّة وأنّ اللقاء الأوّل جمع بين المستعمر والمستعمّر أي بين من يريد فرض سيطرته لتفوقه الحضاري، وبين من يريد تجاوز تخلفه دون أن يفقد خصوصياته الحضارية وخاصّة الدينيّة منها. أمّا فترة ما بين الحربين، فقد زاد خلالها الشعور بالتمزّق لدى المفكرين بين اعتبار الاستعمار الأوروبي مصدر استغلال وقمع للعرب والمسلمين لذلك لا بدّ من مقاومته عن طريق التمسك بالإسلام؛ والنظر إلى أوروبا على أساس أنّها منبع قيم الحداثة وهو ما يدعو إلى التماهي معها لتطوير نظام الحكم وتنظيم العمل السياسي والنقابي وتحقيق المساواة بين الجنسين وحرية الرأي والتعبير. وفي بداية سبعينات القرن الماضي، عبّر المثقفون المنتمون إلى دول ما بعد الاستقلال إلى أنّ أنظمتهم حققت تحديداً ولم تحقّق حداثة، لذلك نقدوا سياسات هذه الأنظمة، وطُرحت من جديد مسألة الإسلام والحداثة من أجل رؤية أعمق وأقدر على تحقيق التقدّم الذي فشلت أنظمة الدول الوطنية في تحقيقه. ولما وعت هذه الأنظمة عمق أزمته، أرست سياسات الانفتاح الاقتصادي وفتحت المجال أمام تيارات الإسلام السياسي الغاضب لمقاومة "التغريب" و"إعادة أسلمة" المجتمع، التي فرضت بدل الحزب الواحد، الدين الواحد والمذهب الواحد وتكفير كلّ من خالف هذا التوجّه، وهو ما أدى إلى انخراط مجموعة كبيرة من المثقفين لمواجهة هذا الوضع وطرح السؤال من جديد: ما العمل للخروج من هذا المأزق الذي يتأرجح بين قمع الأنظمة الدكتاتورية وعنق تيارات الإسلام السياسي؟

Julius Dihstelhoff and Imad Alsoos

MECAM Coordinator, MECAM fellow

Ennahda's Functional Specialization in Tunisia: Shaping Politics for the State and Cultivating Da'wa for Society

This paper examines Ennahda's evolution from political Islam to *Muslim democracy*; namely the 2016 adoption of *functional specialization*, which separates between the da'wa movement of socio-religious activities and the political party or the state politics. This specialization is symbolized by rebranding the name of the group as the Ennahda Party Movement. We argue that Ennahda's prioritization of democracy as a value system distinguishes it from both conventional secularism and political Islam, offering critical insights into the interplay of religion and governance in the MENA region. In so doing, we draw on extensive firsthand data – namely 20 interviews, survey data from 86 ANC deputies and 'Bylaws of the 10th Conference'. The paper concludes that Ennahda does not represent a conventional secular party that fully separates religion and the state but instead emphasizes a differentiation between what is sacred and what is political, positioning itself within a unique model of Muslim democracy.

Najla Mosbehi

MECAM Fellow

Voices from The Margins in *Dachra* and *Asfour Stah*

This paper seeks to decipher gender and social disparities in two Tunisian films. The focus will be primarily on “Asfour Stah” to investigate the power dynamics and the scopophilic pleasure of the gaze through semiotic and cinematographic lenses. Emphasis will also be placed on the movie *Dashra* to see the intersecting identities between horror and social criticism.

Keywords: Disparity, social, gender, horror.

Sanabel Abdel Rahman

MECAM Fellow

A Reading of Contemporary Tunisian Films: Haunting and Alternative Realities

This paper studies a selection of Tunisian films and novels to offer a reading of instances of haunting and other magical-realist manifestations permeating Tunisia as a country that witnessed the Arab Spring and one that continues to endure a postcolonial reality. The recurrence of apparitions, mythical creatures, and instances of animism will be placed within the Tunisian social realities such as dreams of emigration, poverty, and the sense of defeat post-2011. The paper will investigate the works of Tunisian directors such as Marwan Trabulsi, Yousef el-Shabi, and Alaa al-Din Slim as well as novels such as *al-Massab* by Shadia al-Qassimi to highlight the quotidian haunting as a direct repercussion of these movements and histories in the country. Works that employ a more existential approach and use haunting to offer a rather dystopian reading of Tunisians crossing of the ‘bohayra’ (the Mediterranean Sea) will also be investigated. In some of these works, the appearance of ghosts and strange creatures is more pronounced and direct. How can we better understand the implications of the country’s past and present through the lens of haunting as prevalent in Tunisia’s film and literature? How does Tunisia’s hauntings differ from other instances emerging from the Mashreq? How can the phenomenon of haunting construct different realities?

Christian Junge

Marburg University

Horror and Hope: Affective Writing and Reading in Post-Revolutionary Egyptian Novels

Is horror inherently linked to hope? This paper examines the interplay of horror and hope in post-revolutionary Egyptian novels, focusing on Muhammad Rabea’s post-apocalyptic *Otared* (2013) and Alaa al-Aswany’s docu-melodrama *The Republic of False Truths* (2018). It explores the affective poetics and aesthetics of writing and reading about the thwarted Egyptian revolution, highlighting horror as a pervasive phenomenon in post-revolutionary Egyptian

literature. Manifesting in various forms of traumatic writing, horror engages with hope here in complex ways. By placing these literary dynamics in dialogue with the reading experiences of social media users, the paper investigates the cultural and social functions of writing and reading horror in Egypt and beyond.

Hager Ben Driss and Cyrine Kortas

Associate Professor at the University of Tunis
MECAM Fellow

Book Talk: *Tunisian Women Novelists: Testimonies of Resistance and Resilience*

The book explores the often-overlooked representation of women authors in Tunisia. Written by Prof. Hager Ben Driss, the anthology discusses the voices of 16 Tunisian women writers who articulate their experiences of resistance and resilience in a complex socio-cultural landscape marked by political unrest and cultural upheavals. By examining their testimonies, Ben Driss illuminates how these writers navigate the challenges of being a woman novelist in Tunisia, where literature often struggles for attention against the lure of cinema and the internet. Ultimately, the book discussion will seek to foster a deeper understanding of Tunisian women authors' contribution to the national and international literary scene.

Hala Ben Mbarek

MECAM Fellow

La Littérature Judéo-Tunisienne : Témoin de la Marginalisation des Identités Multiples et Reflet des Transformations d'une Tunisie en Transition dans un Contexte Colonial

Cette communication vise à explorer la littérature judéo-tunisienne imprimée à partir de la moitié du XIXe siècle, en l'inscrivant dans le contexte des profondes transformations sociales, culturelles, linguistiques et politiques qu'a connues la Tunisie à cette époque. En tant que minorité, les Juifs tunisiens ont navigué entre les influences culturelles françaises et arabes, tout en tentant de préserver leur identité distincte. Les auteurs ont utilisé la langue et les motifs littéraires pour exprimer leur identité marginale et revendiquer un espace culturel propre. Cette littérature dépasse le simple cadre patrimonial pour devenir un reflet des dynamiques identitaires et des tensions qui ont façonné la société tunisienne. Oscillant entre assimilation et préservation des traditions, elle demeure en marge en raison de son support linguistique spécifique (l'arabe dialectal en caractères hébraïques) et de la relative confidentialité de son lectorat. Cette communication propose un regard croisé sur ses récits (contes, chansons, lamentations) en interrogeant leur rôle dans la construction des identités collectives, la préservation des mémoires partagées et leur contribution à la compréhension des transformations majeures de l'époque.

Afef Mbarek

Assistant professor, Queen Mary University of London

Entre Orientalisme et Ethnographie : la Perception de la Production Littéraire et Journalistique Judéo-arabe dans l'Afrique du Nord Coloniale

Cette communication se propose d'étudier la perception de la production judéo-arabe en Afrique du Nord dans le contexte colonial. En effet, l'expansion coloniale française ne s'est pas limitée à une domination politique et militaire ; elle s'est accompagnée d'un travail d'exploration et d'analyse du territoire et des populations locales, dans un contexte marqué à la fois par l'orientalisme et par l'essor de nouvelles disciplines comme l'anthropologie et l'ethnographie. La culture des communautés juives et leur production littéraire et journalistique judéo-arabe ont ainsi suscité un intérêt particulier. Nous allons essayer d'explorer les deux dynamiques ayant conduit à l'étude de cette production : d'un côté, une approche stéréotypée, héritée des représentations orientalistes ; de l'autre, une démarche raisonnée cherchant à documenter et à analyser ce corpus. Il s'agira également d'interroger les acteurs, les motivations et les méthodologies impliqués dans ces dynamiques, afin de mieux saisir leurs impacts sur la reconnaissance et la transmission de la littérature judéo-arabe.

Max Aji

MECAM fellow

Food and Land in the World System and North Africa

This keynote considers the relationship between the agrarian question and the national question in North Africa, as they emerge against broader issues of food, land, accumulation, and underdevelopment in the world-system. How can national agricultures contribute to greater self-reliance and sovereignty? How have export-oriented agricultures reduced sovereignty? The presentation first offers a synthetic account of the evolution of the world-system under colonialism and neo-colonialism, and specifically discusses how North Africa was incorporated into the world-system first as a primary exporter and later as a cereal importer within the world-system. This evolution was part-and-parcel of a broader shift towards dependent and extraverted accumulation, passing through various historical stages. It then argues that self-reliant and internally articulated agriculture and energy systems reduce national social formation's need for imports of energy and food, reducing or eliminating current account deficits, external debt, and externally-debt-driven macro-economic restructuring. It specifically addresses this through a reading and recuperation of the theoretical and planning contributions from Tunisian and Egyptian agronomists and economists.

Samir Bellal

MECAM fellow

Rente, Populisme et Question Économique en Algérie

Le contenu du livre part de l'idée générale que le développement économique d'un pays est une affaire de dynamique sociale dans laquelle les codifications des rapports sociaux jouent un rôle clef. En Algérie, ces codifications, qui prennent la forme d'un mode de régulation, présentent la particularité d'être liées de manière ombilicale au circuit de circulation de la rente pétrolière, revenu qui constitue l'essentiel du surplus économique du pays. Dans ce recueil issu d'une série de réflexions publiées dans la presse nationale entre 2010 et 2021, nous développons l'idée selon laquelle l'échec du projet de développement économique en Algérie s'explique fondamentalement par l'incapacité du pays à générer des compromis institutionnels en adéquation avec les nécessités de l'évolution économique et sociale, en particulier celles se rapportant au dépassement du caractère rentier du régime d'accumulation.

Nessrine Abbassi

MECAM fellow

Développement Territorial Durable et Disparités Régionales en Tunisie

Les disparités et inégalités territoriales entre différentes régions ou au sein d'une même région résultent de nombreux facteurs et peuvent affecter la qualité de vie, les opportunités économiques et l'accès aux services publics dans ces zones. Cette communication examine les disparités territoriales en Tunisie, en abordant les dimensions économiques, sociales, environnementales, et politiques. Elle étudie les éléments qui affectent la croissance des territoires, comme la compétitivité et la durabilité. Notre intérêt pour le cas de la Tunisie est essentiel au fait que le développement territorial est au cœur des politiques publiques du pays, notamment à travers des stratégies comme la discrimination positive, la décentralisation et la mise en œuvre de projets pilotes.

Slaheddine Ben Fraj

Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

الدراسات الأسرية في مجتمع متحوّل: مجالات البحث ودواعي الالتزام

تتناول المداخلة المقترحة بالشرح والتحليل أهمية الدراسات الأسرية والبحث الأكاديمي في مجال قضايا الأسرة وتحديد أثر التفكك الأسري في تشكيل الفكر المتشدد والانحراف السلوكي باعتبار أن الإرهاب والايديولوجيات المتطرّفة لا تتشكّل بالصدفة وأنما هي نتاج صيرورة ظروف ومناخات اجتماعية مهيأة لها، أولها العلاقات الأسرية المتميّزة بالهشاشة والتصدّع، كما أنّ التصدّي الناجع لعوامل التهديد هذه يشترط التزام الباحث وإيمانه بدوره النوعي في التصدّي لتلك الظواهر عبر التشخيص العلمي السليم وتقديم المستخلصات العملية.

Houda Laroussi

Associate Professor at INTES/ University of Carthage

Retour sur une Expérience de Recherche-Action sur l'Économie Sociale et Solidaire

Pendant les années 2010, l'auteure s'est intéressée à l'économie sociale et solidaire (ESS), notamment en Tunisie, où elle a travaillé avec le cabinet de l'ancien ministre Kamel Jendoubi sur le développement durable et les droits des générations futures. Sa mission de « recherche-action » lui a permis de produire des connaissances et de travailler avec les acteurs de l'ESS pour élaborer un projet de loi visant à organiser et développer ce secteur. L'auteure s'est davantage investie auprès des acteurs de la société civile que des représentants des politiques publiques, privilégiant une approche ascendante. Elle souhaitait éviter une expérience similaire à celle du coopératisme d'Ahmed Ben Salah dans les années 1960, qui était planifié d'en haut et manquait d'autonomie pour les coopératives. L'auteure s'est opposée à la démarche dirigiste de Kamel Jendoubi, qui consistait à travailler en priorité avec les acteurs publics et à informer ensuite les acteurs de la société civile de leurs projets de lois, ce qui a entraîné sa démission.

Mehdi Mabrouk

Tunis University

الهجرة ، الالتزام و العلم في اسس تجاوز المعضلة

طاردت العلوم الاجتماعية بشكل خاص علم الاجتماع كافة اشكال الالتزام و تعبيراته تحت وطأة النزعة الوضعية و" تشيئة " الظاهرة على نحو ما أكد عليه دوركهايم . كان الالتزام ضريا من ضروب التحيز مخالفا لقواعد المنهج . ومع ذلك ظلت تجارب أخرى خارج الفضاء السوسولوجي الفرنكوفوني تجرب اشكالا أخرى من مقارنة الظاهرة لا يبدو فيها الالتزام مناهضا للعلمية.

ثمة ظواهر لا يمكن ان تشيئها ، انها تحتاج الى تفهم وتأويل مما يقتضي ضريا من الالتزام . ففي الهجرة مثلا لا يمكن أن ترسم مسافة " فصل " بين الباحث والمبحث و لأنهما يحتلان نفس الحيز من " العالم الاجتماعي " le monde social

فماذا يعني الالتزام إذا ما تعلق الأمر بمبحث الهجرة؟ ما الأسس الابستمولوجية التي ينهض عليها الالتزام ؟ كيف يمكن لنا في مثل هذا المبحث أن نلتزم دون أن نفقد حيادنا/ موضوعيتنا العلمية . وما أشكال الالتزام التي يبديها الباحث ؟ (المشاركة في النقاش العمومي، النضال من أجل حقوق المهاجرين، رأي مثقف ...).

Sofien Jaballah

Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Sfax

L'implication du Sociologue Compromet-elle son Objectivité ?

Cet abstract explore la tension entre l'engagement et la rigueur scientifique en sociologie, en se basant sur les idées de Pierre Bourdieu et Nathalie Heinich. L'auteur, un sociologue académicien, effectue des recherches empiriques et socio-anthropologiques sur les groupes vulnérables comme les marchands informels et les chiffonniers, cherchant à révéler leurs réalités et leurs luttes. Son implication sur le terrain vise à promouvoir les droits économiques et sociaux de ces populations et à influencer positivement les politiques publiques. Bien que sa sociologie se veuille rigoureuse et objective, l'auteur reconnaît la subjectivité inhérente à son rôle de chercheur, notamment dans le choix des sujets et la transformation des résultats en actions concrètes.

Safar- Zitoun Madani

Professor at University of Algiers 2

Du Bidonville au Grands Ensembles d'Habitat Collectif : la "Marge" est-elle Soluble par les Politiques de Relogement en Habitat Social ? Un Paradigme Algérien à Revisiter

Cette communication s'interroge, à partir de données chiffrées et cartographiques récentes montrant l'extraordinaire ampleur des campagnes de résorption de l'habitat précaire à Alger et à partir d'enquêtes de terrain ayant porté sur la construction du lien social dans les grands ensembles d'habitat collectif post relogement, sur la question de la soutenabilité et de l'efficacité de cette solution de résolution de la question de la "marge" dans les villes algériennes.

L'analyse des modalités de réponse des populations relogées à cette incitation, à cette injonction d'inclusion des populations classées comme "marginales" à la normalité urbaine et sociale par le biais de l'amélioration des conditions d'habitat, montre des situations contrastées et souvent génératrices de conflits symboliques et de malaises dans la recherche du vivre ensemble et souligne l'existence des attentes inassouvies d'inclusion sociale, économique et urbaine chez les populations relogées. La communication pose ainsi le problème d'ordre plus général de la définition, du classement et du traitement des "classes dangereuses" par le biais de l'habitat dans le pays, en essayant de reposer le problème dans ses véritables dimensions politiques et de bénéficier du droit à la ville.

Boussaïd Khadidja

MECAM fellow

Espaces Publics au Masculin : de la Perception à l'Appropriation des Espaces de la Ville, Lecture Comparée entre Alger et Tunis

L'espace public au Maghreb est marqué par des dynamiques sociales complexes où les masculinités jouent un rôle central. Cette présentation décortique les multiples dimensions des masculinités dans l'espace public. En mobilisant une méthodologie qualitative, le chercheur s'appuie sur un photo-documentaire des espaces publics et des entretiens approfondis menés avec des hommes issus de différentes catégories à Tunis et à Alger. Une analyse critique est développée pour mieux comprendre les enjeux contemporains liés aux masculinités dans cette région, en explorant notamment des questions d'inégalités d'accès, des rapports de genre dans les espaces publics urbains, ainsi que les spécificités de la construction du masculin dans le contexte maghrébin. La dimension comparative entre l'Algérie et la Tunisie enrichit cette réflexion en offrant une perspective élargie sur les convergences et les divergences des expériences masculines au sein des deux sociétés.

Massensen Cherbi & Isabelle Werenfels

MECAM Fellow, MECAM Advisory Board

Leadership in Algeria 1962-2025: between Resilience and Rupture

The transition, since 1962, from a single-party system under the 1963 Constitution, in favour of the Front de libération nationale (FLN), to a multi-party system under the 1989 Constitution, raises questions about the nature of Algeria's political class, through the notion of leadership. Since independence, the country has experienced several political upheavals. The crisis following the Tripoli session gave rise to the crisis of the summer of 1962 and an internal war within the FLN, marked by the victory of the political-military duo Ben Bella/Boumediene. In response, the Parti de la révolution socialiste (PRS) was born in September 1963, while the Majestic affair in July 1963 saw Ferhat Abbas go into opposition and the birth of the Front des forces socialistes (FFS). Against Ben Bella's creeping presidentialisation of power, the military coup of 1965 restored the principle of collegiality, while in reality accentuating the personalization of power to the benefit of its president, Colonel Boumediene, in the face of a single party that had faded into the background. Although the advent of Colonel Bendjedid in 1979 gave the FLN party a new lease of life, the new Constitution of 1989 meant that it lost its monopoly on the country's political life and saw the recognition of nearly fifty political associations. Moreover, although the halt to the electoral process in 1992, which led to the victory of the Front Islamique du salut (FIS), was a brake on this opening-up, the 1996 Constitution enshrined the notion of a multi-party system, while suspicions of fraud systematically tainted the successive elections from 1995 onwards.

It was against such an election ‘à l’algérienne’ that the *Hirâk* opposed President Bouteflika’s planned re-election for a fifth term in 2019, before being swiftly suppressed. So in what way have these different events been an opportunity for resilience or a rupture within the Algerian leadership, be it political, military or even economic?

Imad Alsoos

MECAM fellow

Researcher Positionality and Extracurricular Challenges

This presentation focuses on exploring positionality in qualitative research by looking at the role of authors and why they chose to study a potentially contentious topic in the first place. The author’s positionality can be affected by sources that provide primary data or secondary literature and the effects of the language these sources employ. Positionality can also embody feelings of sympathy and empathy with the researched group or community without violating the researcher’s neutrality – a trend that can often be found within ethnographic studies. Meanwhile, positionality is not only affected by the author or the informants but also by external power relations that may affect the researchers themselves and their future careers. The Gaza genocide is a prime example of this, and universities and academics sometimes find themselves compelled to compromise their research ethics at the risk of losing their jobs and compromising their future careers. The extent to which this violates the European Union’s laws covering research ethics – which specify “not harming” and protecting “the autonomy, wellbeing, safety, and dignity” of the researcher – will also be discussed during the presentation.

Participants' Bios

Ahmed Dahmani

He is a known political activist for democracy and human rights. (a political prisoner during the Berber Spring of 1980) and an academic economist who has taught in Algeria and France. Currently retired from the University of Tizi-Ouzou (Algeria) and Paris-Sud-Saclay (France), he has taken a keen interest in reform issues in developing countries in general and Algeria in particular. He is the author of the book: *Algeria's Ordeal: Economic and Political Reforms 1980-1997*. Algiers: Casbah Edition.

Afef Mbarek

She is an academic researcher specializing in heritage studies, with a particular focus on the cultural heritage and history of minority communities in Tunisia and North Africa. Holding a PhD in Heritage Sciences from the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of Tunis, she has dedicated her career to exploring the rich cultural tapestry of the region. Currently affiliated with Queen Mary University of London, Afef Mbarek continues to advance her research through interdisciplinary approaches that combine historical analysis, cultural studies, and heritage management. Her work is marked by active participation in seminars, publications, and collaborative projects, reflecting her commitment to fostering dialogue and promoting a deeper appreciation of the region's diverse heritage.

Christian Junge

Christian Junge is a senior lecturer and researcher in the field of modern Arabic literature and culture at the CNMS since 2015. He was a visiting professor of the elite master's program in Cultural Studies of the Middle East at the University of Bamberg and Erlangen / Nuremberg and a member of the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA). He studied Comparative Literature and Arabic Studies in Berlin, Paris, and Cairo. From 2008 to 2011, he was a lecturer at the Seminar for Semitic and Arabic Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. From 2011 to 2015 he was a fellow of the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin, where he received his PhD on literature and language thinking in the work of in the work of al-Shidyāq (d. 1887). His recent book project deals with emotions and effects in contemporary Egyptian literature from 1990 to 2020. He is co-director of the international program "Arabische Philologien im Blickwechsel", founding member of the project "Für ein lebendiges Wissenschaftsarabisch: Halqa arabiyya" at the CNMS, and since 2024 member of the Editorial Board "Arabic and World Literature: Comparative and Multidisciplinary Perspectives" (AWL).

Cyrine Kortas

She 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 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 Morocco while introducing Sufism as a theory of analysis.

Hager Ben Driss

She is an associate professor of English literature and dean of the Institut Préparatoire aux Etudes Littéraires et Science Humaines at the University of Tunis. Specializing in postcolonial and gender studies, Prof. Ben Driss has published numerous papers and edited books that have contributed to the discourse in postcolonial and gender studies, focusing on Tunisian literature as an overlooked area of research. Some of her latest publications and contributions:

Mobilizing Narratives: Narrating Injustices of (Im)Mobility (2021) - Edited by Hager Ben Driss. This book includes her chapter "The Refugees' Progress: Redefining Travel in Zeyn Joukhadar's *The Map of Salt and Stars*".

Women, Violence, and Resistance (2017) - Co-edited with Meryem Sellami, this publication explores themes of violence and resistance in women's narratives.

"Politics and Poetics of Mobility: Gender, Motion, and Stasis in E. M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*" (2022), published in the *Polish Journal of English Studies*.

Hala Ben Mbarek

She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Arabic Studies at the University of Tunis, where she specializes in modern literature and comparative studies, with a focus on the cultural and social transformations in North Africa and the Middle East. As the General Secretary of the Tunisian Society of Comparative Literature, she is deeply committed to fostering interdisciplinary research and academic collaboration. Her scholarly work delves into the intersection of multilingual literatures and popular genres, exploring how these interactions shape cultural identities and reflect broader societal changes. Currently, she leads a Mecam-funded research project that examines the complexities of cultural identity and linguistic diversity in the region, addressing disparities and envisioning future trajectories. Her publications, including numerous articles in academic journals, highlight her significant contributions to understanding the evolving literary and cultural landscape of the Maghreb and the Middle East, making her a valuable voice in the discourse on social and political transformations in these regions.

Hayet Amamou

She is a professor of the History of Medieval Islam. She is a former Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Tunis. Among her many academic positions is the director of the History of Mediterranean Economies and Societies Laboratory and director of the *Cahiers de Tunisie* (Journal of the Faculty). An adamantly prolific writer, she has published both in French and Arabic. Among her recent publications : *Pouvoir et Légitimité dans l'Islam des Origines*, (Byblion, Liban, 2010), republished in Tunis in 2014 in Arabic, and *Fatima Mernissi : Figure Emblématique d'une Féministe en Terre d'Islam*, (Paris, IMA, 2019) in French.

Houda Laroussi

She is a sociologist and lecturer at INTES/Carthage University. Her work focuses on micro-credit, local development, the social economy and the descendants of Tunisian immigrants in France. She is the author of *Micro-crédit et lien social. La solidarité instituée* (Karthala, 2009), *Le prêt sur gage au crédit municipal de Paris* (Karthala, 2012), *Pratiques du travail social en France et au Maghreb* (dir., L'Harmattan, 2017), *Femmes et développement local en Tunisie*. (L'Harmattan, 2018), *La Tunisie en pandémie. De la corruption à la solidarité* (L'Harmattan, 2021), *La Tunisie en crises* (L'Harmattan, 2021).

Imad Alsoos

Dr. Imad got a bachelor's degree in English language and literature and a master's degree in international studies from Birzeit University/Palestine, as well as a master's 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 organizational mobilization 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 the Ennahda Party's political thought.

Isabelle Werenfels

Dr. Isabelle Werenfels is a Senior Fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), specializing in political transformation, elite change, and social mobilization in the Maghreb states, particularly Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. With a PhD in Political Science from Humboldt University in Berlin and an MSc in Development Studies from SOAS, London, she has extensive expertise in EU Mediterranean policies and political reform. Prof. Werenfels has held various significant positions, including Head of the Middle East and Africa Research Division at SWP from 2014 to 2018 and Head of the Swiss Delegation for the Temporary International Presence in Hebron from 1999 to 2001. Currently, she chairs the International

Advisory Board of the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb and serves as a member of the Foundation Board of Fondation Hironnelle. Her research focuses on authoritarian resilience, migration policies, and intra-regional relations within the Maghreb, reflecting her deep engagement with contemporary issues affecting North Africa.

Julius Dihstelhoff

Dr. Julius Dihstelhoff has been since May 2020 as the Academic Coordinator for the international “Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM),” based in Tunis. He is also a post-doctoral research fellow in the Department of Politics at the Centre for Near and Middle Eastern Studies (CNMS) at Philipps University Marburg. His research focuses on Political Islam and German foreign policy in the Arab world since the so-called Arab Spring, with a special focus on Tunisian transformation processes.

Khadidja Boussaïd

She holds a Ph.D. in Urban Sociology from the University of Algiers 2 and is a permanent researcher at CREAD (Research Center for Applied Economics for Development). She is part of a research team focused on the socio-economic dynamics of families, with a particular emphasis on the transformations of gender identities within Algerian households. Dr. Boussaïd is accredited to supervise research (HDR) and is a member of the LASADET Laboratory (Socio-Anthropological Analysis of Territorial Development). She is also an associate member of the Gender Studies Center (CEG) at the University of Lausanne, contributing to research on the intersection of gender, space, and power. In her postdoctoral work at MECAM, she will explore the topic of masculinities and public space, building on her previous and ongoing research on gender inequalities and access to public spaces.

Massensen Cherbi

He holds a doctorate in law from the University of Paris II Panthéon-Assas, where in 2019 he defended his thesis on “the limits of Algerian constitutionalism”, which happened to coincide with the Algerian *Hirak*, which he experienced in situ during its first year in Algiers. He works more generally on authoritarianism in the Maghreb, from independence to the *Hirak*, through the prism of law, but also on issues of democratic transition and transitional justice in the region. His researches focus on constituent processes, citizenship, relations between civilians and the militaries, the place of Islam, the status of women, and questions of identity, through a legal and more particularly constitutional prism. To this end, he works on case laws, preparatory works, parliamentary debates, alternative draft constitutions, and political speeches, particularly through archives. For several years he taught general constitutional law, the Fifth Republic, and the Constitutions of the MENA region at the Ecole de Droit de la Sorbonne, the universities of Le Havre and Amiens, and Sciences Po Toulouse, Paris, and Grenoble.

Max Aji

He is a fellow at MECAM/University of Tunis, a Senior Fellow at the Department of Conflict and Development Studies at Ghent University, and a researcher in the Tunisian Observatory for Food Sovereignty and the Environment. He is the author of a recent book titled *A People's Green New Deal*, as well as an editor at *Agrarian South* and the *Journal of Labor and Society*. A prolific writer, Max's work has appeared in *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, ecological planning, and Arab-North African intellectual history.

Mehdi Mabrouk

He is a professor of Sociology at the University of Tunis, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. He is the director of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, in Tunisia. He is also a member of the Tunisian Academy of Letters, Sciences, and Arts (Beit El Hikma). He has published books and scientific articles dealing with the issues of migration, youth, and political transformations in Maghreb societies.

Mohamed Ismail Sabry

He is a 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 Center 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's and Masters's degrees were obtained from the American University in Cairo (AUC). Dr. Sabry's academic fields of interest 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

Najla Mosbahi

She holds a PhD in English Language and Linguistics and 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 interest encompasses 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.

Nessrine Abbassi

She holds a PhD in Economics from the University of SfaxFSEG (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. She graduated with a research master's degree in regional development economics from the Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales de Tunis (ESSECT).

Riadh B. Khalifa

He 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 19 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.

Safar Zitoun Madani

Professor Madani SAFAR ZITOUN taught urban sociology at the Department of Sociology of the University of Algiers from 1978 to 2022. He was an associate research director at the Centre for Research in Applied Economics for Development (CREAD) between 2000 and 2012, and since June 2012, he has headed the Laboratory for Socio-Anthropological Analysis of Territorial Development (LASADET).

As a member of several international (Canada, France, United States, European Union) and Algerian (CRASC, CREAD) research teams, he also served as a member of the Scientific Council of the Centre for Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology of Oran from 2005 to 2015 and as a member of the editorial board of the journal **INSANIYAT** since September 1999.

Professor SAFAR ZITOUN Madani has also worked as an expert consultant for international organizations and institutions, including the French **Ratp/Sofretu** (1987), the German **GTZ** (1991-1992), **UNFPA** (2000-2004), **UNDP** (2005-2006), the **World Bank** (1998-2003), **UNESCO**, among others.

His research and publications have focused on the analysis of urbanization, urban policies and housing, urban mobility, and the study of social protection and welfare policies in Algeria and the Arab world. He is the author of numerous national and international publications, including *"Heritage Strategies and Urbanization: Algiers 1962-1992"*, published by L'Harmattan, Paris, in 1997 (298 pages).

Samir Bellal

He 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 Régime – 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.

Sanabel Abdel Rahman

Sanabel Abdel Rahman is a postdoctoral fellow at MECAM. Her research focuses on magical realism in Palestinian literature. She completed her doctoral degree at Philipps-Marburg Universität and her Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the University of Toronto. She is interested in expanding her focus to cinema and the visual arts. She is a writer of fiction and essays.

Slaheddine Ben Fraj

Professor of Higher Education at the Department of Sociology / Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tunis, working on issues of family, youth, gender, and violence. He is also the dean of the faculty. He was a visiting professor at the University of Michigan and its Institute for Strategic Studies in 2014. He is an expert consultant to the Ministry of Family Affairs, Women, Children and the Elderly and the Arab League on family issues and the elderly. He is also a renowned consultant in courts and a member of the Executive Committee of the Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa Codesria. He has several publications, the most important of which are "Paths of Family Modernisation in Tunisia", in 2009.

Soufiane Jaballah

Soufiane Jaballah holds a doctorate in social and religious sciences, with a thesis on conversions to Salafism in Tunisia. He is currently an assistant professor at the Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines at the University of Sfax, where he teaches sociology and anthropology. He has published several academic articles and policy papers on immigration

and the informal economy. He recently published a book on Salafism in Tunisia, analyzing the mechanisms and motivations behind conversions to this movement in the country. Currently, on secondment to CREDIF (Centre de Recherches, d'Études, de Documentation et d'Information sur la Femme en Tunisie), he is in charge of the strategy and implementation of research projects.

