Takamul Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies and Research in Partnership with Hanns Seidel Foundation and the International University of Rabat Organizes

The 2nd Annual International Conference on Middle Eastern and North African Studies

Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion in the MENA: Minorities, Subalternity, and Resistance

March 10-11, 2018
Marrakech-Morocco

Call for Abstracts

Takamul Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies and Research is pleased to invite you to participate in the 2nd Annual International Conference on Middle Eastern and North African Studies to be held on March 10-11, 2018 in Marrakech, Morocco. The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion in the MENA: Minorities, Subalternity, and Resistance Conference will examine patterns and modalities of socio-political inclusion and exclusion in interactions between ‘state’ and ‘society,’ with special reference to the minority question along the lines of religion, sexuality and race. Recent developments across the world, from the so-called Arab Spring and subsequent authoritarian resurgence, to the growing specter of religious extremism, have all contributed to a significant reshuffling of the political geography of the MENA region. Challenges to state-sanctioned socio-political subjectivities abound
in popular demands for political reforms and the protection of legal and socio-economic rights. In this vein, re-problematizing the ‘minority question’ becomes particularly pressing. Further, as political instability has increased cross-border movement, complex identity politics have re-emerged, calling for a critical consideration of the production of novel minority identities in contexts of geographic and political displacement.

The conference aims at deconstructing ‘minorities’ as a categorical framework in examinations of MENA politics and society. Minorities are presented as the paradigmatic ‘other’, yet they resist their ‘othering’ by making claim to national belonging and thus re-problematize the ‘homogeneous nation-state’ construct. The conference seeks to engage with the concept of ‘minority’ as a product of existing structures, processes and relations of power, rather than as a self-evident category defined in opposition to a ‘coherent majority’. The latter includes a discussion of systemic marginalization and the use of coercive mechanisms of social control against minorities. The conference tends to go beyond the majority-minority binary in order to explore the ways in which marginalized groups negotiate power and contest the contours of socio-political change by seeking to appropriate mainstream public space. How do ‘minorities’ and marginalized groups construct new spaces within which they can express dissent and normalize their visibility? Can any patterns be surmised regarding the shifting dynamics of socio-political inclusion and exclusion including, but not limited to, cases of militarized conflict, massive population transfers, and economic deprivation across the MENA region?

This international conference aims to provide experts, scholars, and civil society activists from the MENA and around the world with the opportunity to consider and revise existing theories on religion, race, ethnicity and gender as they pertain to the condition of minorities and marginalized groups more broadly across the region. We expect intellectually rigorous paper abstracts and policy-oriented projects of empirical, methodological and theoretical relevance. Submissions on, but not limited to, the following topics are highly encouraged:
- The “Arab Spring” and pluralism in the MENA region: a legal perspective
- The meaning of being a minority and the minority self-identification in the Middle East and North Africa
- Minorities’ forms of resistance against authoritarianism and the threats to their cultural identity
- Minorities and the public sphere
- Islam and modernity in the era of globalization
- Democracy, constitutionalism, and human rights
- Experiencing religion at the margins
- How the religious majority constructs ‘otherness’
- Religious minorities in contexts of violent extremism
- Religious minorities in light of the ‘Declaration of Marrakech’
- State religion and the challenge of religious diversity
- Ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities in the MENA
- Sub-Saharan migrants in North Africa, racism, and the prospects of inclusion
- LGBTQ communities within oppressive settings, cultural rejection and absence of legal protection
- Social media, resistance and the normalization of the queer
- Cultural ambivalence and the reshuffling of the symbolic order of gender

Submission Guidelines

Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for individual papers. Submissions are due January 30, 2018. Paper abstracts must be no more than 300 words and submitted as a Microsoft Word or PDF file. The submission must include the title, the presenter’s name, affiliation, email address, as well as a short biography. Please submit your abstracts to menaconference2018@gmail.com. Review results will be communicated via email by February 7, 2018. All abstracts and all paper presentations must be in English. Please, do not hesitate to submit your inquiries to tayebi@takamulcentre.com and meriem.elhaitami@gmail.com.
Notes:

- Thanks to the support of Hanns Seidel Foundation, Takamul Centre will provide the participants with accommodation and meals.
- Due to the big number of submissions we received last year, Takamul Centre will contact only the accepted applicants this time.
- Domestic doctoral students who register before **February 15, 2018** may attend but will be responsible for their accommodation. They should E-mail tayebi@takamulcentre.com and meriem.elhaitami@gmail.com to register *(proof of student status and English proficiency are required).*
- The accepted applicants must submit their papers by **March 1, 2018**. The papers will be reviewed by Hanns Seidel Foundation’s scientific committee and appear in the conference proceedings by **November 2018**.

**Conference Organizing and Scientific Committee:**

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- **Hamza Louizi**, Moroccan graduate in International Management, Morocco