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**IUAES**

Commission of Anthropology of the Middle East

Institut Français d’Ếtudes Anatoliennes (IFEA)

**Istanbul, Turkey**

September 6-8th, 2023

**Identity, Separation, and Belonging**

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***Chair of the Commission: Dr. Soheila Shahshahani***

***Executive Secretary of the Commission: Dr. Farniyaz Zaker***

**Regional Representatives:**

***Dr. Soraya Tremayne: Europe***

***Dr.  Mary Hegland: United States and Canada***

***Dr. Paulo Pinto: South America***

***Dr. Tomoko Yamagishi: East Asia***

**I U A E S**

**Commission on Anthropology of the Middle East**

**First Day: September 6, 2023 – 9:00 Istanbul Time**

09:00-09:30 Registration

09:30-10:00 Welcome Note to Participants:

Director of the French Institute: Professor Philipp Bourmaud

Chair of the Commission: Dr. Soheila Shahshahani

**10:00 Panel 1: Foodways, Homemaking and Mobility**

Convenor: Dr. Susan Beth Rottmann, Ozyegin University

10:00-10:20 Zeynep Yilmaz Hava: Syrian Foodscapes and Homemaking Practices in Fatih, Istanbul

10:20-10:40 Yusef Salih: Culture, Food Practices and Belonging: Where do Syrian Turkmens Stand in Turkey

10:40-11:00 Assoum Bedavi: Changing Food Habits for Syrian Migrants in Gaziantep and Adana

11:00-11:20 Nour Zanjer: Food and Everyday Agency of Syrian Refugee Women in Istanbul

11:20-11:40 Canan Şeyma Demir: Economic Dimensions of Lebanese Restaurants in Turkey

11:40-12:00 Discussion and Coffee Break

**12:00 Panel 2: Urban Displacement: Space, Place and Belonging in ‘Cities of Refuge’**

Convenor: Dr. Are John Knudsen and Souad Osseiran

12:00-12:20 Souad Osseiran: Complicating the Migrant and Refugee Category Boundaries, Syrian Refugee Experiences in Esenyurt

12:20-12:40 Kristen Biehl (Sabancı University) and Marhabo Saparova (Northeastern U):

Understanding migration and urban incorporation through an ‘arrival infrastructures’ lens: The case of Istanbul’s Fatih district

12:40-12:50 Discussion

12:50-13:40 Lunch Break

13:40-14:00 Are J. Knudsen: Emergency Urbanism: Self-Settled Syrian Refugees in Two Beirut Tenement Buildings

14:00-14:20 Kamel Dorai: Refugee Camps and the Urban Fabric in Northern Jordan

14:20-14:45 Discussion and Coffee

**14:45 Panel 3: The Middle Eastern Diasporas in East Asia**

Convenor: Dr. Sachiko Hosoya

14:45—15:05 Reiko Ogawa: Evacuation from Afghanistan and Challenges to Resettlement in Japan

15:05-15:25 Fukuda Tomoko: Used Car and Auto Parts Trading Industry by South Asian Migrant Entrepreneurs in Japan and the Combined Factors of the Increase of South Asian Migrants in Chiba Prefecture

15:25-15:45 Farrah Sheikh: Exploring Refugee Discourse in South Korea: Comparing the Cases of Afghan and Yemeni Refugees

15:45-16:05 Yol Nakanishi: Between Citizens and Community Members: Wellbeing of Hazara Women and Children in Japan

16:05-16:25 Reiko Otsubo: Working Refugees, Yemenis in South Korea

16:25-17:00 Discussion

**Second Day: September 7, 2023 – 09:00 Istanbul Time**

**09:00 Panel 4: Camels, Horses and Cars: Means of Transportation and/or Status Symbol**

Convenors: Professor Mary Hegland and Dr. AbdolReza Hosseini

09:00-09:20 Professor Aref Abu-Rabia: Camels and Pastoral Identity among the Negev Bedouins

09:20-09:40 Mary Hegland: Aliabad Traders and Shopkeepers: Change over time from Donkey to Vehicle of Transport

09:40-10:00 AbdolReza Hosseini: Our Lost Spaces: Anthropology of Car-Dependent Policy of Urban Design in Tehran

10:00-10:30 Discussion and Coffee

**10:30 Panel 5: Women and Violence**

Convenor: Professor Esther Hertzog

10:30-10:50 Janet Afary: Patriarchalism, Male Abuse and the Sources of the #Me Too Movement in the Muslim Middle East

10:50-11:10 Maha Alsejari: Physical and Verbal Aggression, Anger and Hostility among Females During the Total Ban in Kuwait during the Covid-19 Pandemic

11:10-11:30 Yazdaninasab, N.K. Alavijeh & Sa. Taheri: Power and Iranian Women: A Narrative of Lived Powerlessness

11:30-11:50 Shamim Sherafat: Gynecological Violence from a Structural Point of View: An Ethnographic Study in Iran

11:50-12:15 Discussion

12:15-13:00 Lunch Break

**13:00 Panel 6: Polygamy, Religion and Gender in Central Asia: Social and Economic Implications**

Convenor: Dr. Rano Turaeva

13:00-13:20 Michael Commercio: Don’t become a Lost Specimen: Polygyny and Motivational Interconnectivity in Kyrgyzstan

13:20-13:40 Niginahon Uralova: Patriarchal Appropriation of Islam and Polygamy in Uzbekistan

13:40-14:00 Anna Cieslewska: Negotiations in the Transborder Polygynous Families in Central Asia

14:00-14:20 Discussion and Coffee

14:20-14:40 Rano Turaeva: Second Wives, Kelins and Others: Gender and Family in Uzbekistan

14:40-15:00 M.A. Abidova: Polygamy and Violence Against Women in Uzbekian

15:00-15:20 Discussion and Coffee

**15:20 Panel 7: Visual Anthropology**

Convenor: Professor Nacim Pak-Shirazi

15:20-15:40 Magdalena Rodziewicz: The Visual Representations of Shi’i Clerical Garb (lebas-e rouhani) in Iranian Cinema Farah Taleb: Women, Artists or Themes?

15:40-16:00 Nacim Pak-Shiraz: Exploring Populist Discourse in *Aghazadeh*: Unveiling the Role of Television Series as Propaganda

16:0016:15 Discussion

16:15-16:35 B.F. Ghadimi: Active Engagement of Second-Generation Afghans in Iranian Visual Media

16:35-16:55 Farah Taleb: Women: artists or themes?

16:55-17:15 Z.M. Uygun, Z. Inci, O. Turgut: All Whispering: The Reproduction and Representation of Famous Paintings via Chat GPT, Midjourney, Dall-E and Stable Diffusion

17:15-17:35 Discussion

**17:35-18:45 Commission Business Meeting**

Convenor: Dr. Soheila Shahshahani

Agenda: Discussion on next year’s CAME topics for research and papers

Nominations and self-nominations for a vote for next Executive Secretary of CAME

Everyone is invited to this meeting.

**Third Day: September 8, 2023-09:00 Istanbul Time**

**09:00 Panel 8: Ethno-history of the Middle East**

Convenor: Dr. Fakhri Haghani

09:00-09:20 Dr. Nozhat Ahmadi: Archival Documents: Anthologies and their Importance for Ethno-History of Iran

09:20-09:40 M.A.Keikha Shahinpour: The Identity of Iran in the Travelogue of Evliya Çelebi

09:40-10:00 Gulistan Unal: On 17th Century Istanbul Identity

10:00-10:20 Discussion and Coffee

**10:20 Panel 9: Religious Charisma in the Middle East and Its Diasporas: Authority, Succession and**

**Devotion**

Convenors: Dr. Liza Dumovich and Dr. G.F. Chagas

10:20-10:40 Gisele Fonseca Chagas: Religious Identity and Belonging in a Challenging World: The Charismatic Shaykh and his Power within a Sufi Damascene Order

10:40-11:00 Paulo Pinto: Sacred Homeland: Sainthood and Miracles in the Construction of a Syrian Religious Diaspora

11:00-11:20 Meral Durmas: Ethnographic Case Study of a Centenarian Modern State: A Post-Weberian approach to the Analysis of the Re-emergent Charismatic Leadership on the Birthdate of a 100 years old Country: Turkey

11:20-11:40 Fouad Gehad Marei: Objects of Walaya: Charisma and the Power of ‘Things’ in Shi’I Political Ecology

11:40-12:00 Youcef Hamitouche: Nationalism and Religion in the Algerian Nationalist Movement

12:00-12:30 Discussion

12:30-13:20 Lunch Break

**13:20 Panel 10: Seven Sleepers Legend in the Mediterranean and Silk Road Areas**

Convenor: Dr. Anna Tozzi Di Marco

13:20-13:40 Paolo La Spisa: The Seven Sleepers Legend, A Case of Universal Hagiography: The Christian and Arabic Versions

13:40-14:00 Hatice Kubra Uygur: Seven Sleepers Narrative in Mardin

14:00-14:20 Nicola Camerlenge: Religious Influences along the Silk Road in Connection to Ashabal-Kahf

14:20-14:40 Anna Tozzi Di Marco: The Symbolic Role of the Dog Qitmir in the Turkish Religiosity to Ashab-Kahf

14:40-15:00 Discussion and Coffee

**15:00 Panel 11: Conditions of Exercise of Social Sciences in the Middle East**

Convenor: Dr. Mehrdad Arabestani

15:00-15:20 Dr. Jabbar Rahmani**:** Native Anthropologists are still Key Informants

15:20-15:40: Dr. I. Esmaelpour Qoochani**:**Online Teaching Abroad: Navigating the Traumatizing Signifier of ‘Kharejneshin’ through Contemplative Interactions

15:40-16:00 Dr. Amir Hashemi Moghaddam**:** The role and position of anthropology in identifying and solving tourism problems in Iran

16-16:20: Moslem Ghomashlouyan**:** Fighting for Mobility Justice: Practicing Feminism in a Kurdish Border Village in Iran

16:20-16:40 Yusef Sarafraz**:** The Suspended Step of the Ethnographer: Autoethnography of Doing Anthropology between Field and Project in Iran

16:40-17:00 Dr. Mehrdad Arabestani**:** Politics of Anthropology of Iran

17:00-17:30 **Discussion**

**17:30 Panel 12: Research in Progress**

Convenor: Dr. Soheila Shahshahani

17:30-17:50 Amina Tawasil: Act of Giving: Sisters from a Family of Martyrs and War Survivors

17:50-18:10 Danila Mayer: Migration to the Origins: A Case Study from Vienna and Western Turkey

18:10-18:30 Amir H. Moghaddam: The Image of the Foreign Tourist in the Mentality of Iranians: An Anthropological Study

18:30-18:50 M.G. Talab: Discourse Analysis of Extremist Currents (with an emphasis on Human Security in the Teachings of Islam)

18:50-19:10 Discussion and Farewell

**ABSTRACTS**

First Day, September 6th

Panel 1: Foodways, Homemaking and Mobility

Convenor: Susan Beth Rottmann, Ozyegin University

Zeynep Yilmaz Hava: Syrian Foodscapes and Homemaking Practices in Fatih, Istanbul

Yousef Salih: Culture, Food Practices and Belonging: Where do Syrian Turkmens Stand in Turkey

Assoum Bedavi: Changing Food Habits for Syrian Migrants in Gaziantep and Adana

Nour Zanjer: Food and Everyday Agency of Syrian Refugee Women in Istanbul

Canan Seyma Demir: Economic Dimensions of Lebanese Restaurants in Turkey

This panel investigates how migration impacts foodways and homemaking for people in the Middle East. Foodways - the study of food and its cultural significance - is deeply intertwined with notions of home. The preparation and consumption of food creates meaningful family routines and memories and provides important ways of experiencing living spaces. Restaurants and food markets also reflect an important aspect of home, specifically of belonging in public social and political spheres. Although often perceived to be an unremarkable part of everyday life, foodways and homemaking are deeply impacted by economic, political and social processes. From the price of ingredients to perceptions of safety, health and “proper parenting” food and home are often contentious topics in society.

For migrants, these economic, political and social impacts are even more stark as they have been uprooted from their homes, customary foodways and social networks. Many experience economic precarity, lack of political-legal rights and discrimination. Migrants are forced to create new public and private lives while learning about and exchanging culinary traditions. This panel will explore the complex relationships between foodways and homemaking for mobile people in different cultures in the Middle East. Paper topics include the role of food and homemaking in shaping cultural identities, heritage and authenticity; the ways in which mobility affects the economics of homemaking and food production; gender and class dimensions of cooking; and inclusion, exclusion and societal acceptance for migrants across culinary boundaries. By bringing together a range of case studies and disciplinary perspectives, this panel deepens our understanding of the interplay between food and homemaking for people on the move in the Middle East.

Zeynep Yilmaz Hava: Syrian Foodscapes and Home-Making Practices in Fatih, Istanbul

This research explores the link between food, culture, and migration by examining the Syrian food premises in Istanbul’s Fatih district -one of the most popular settlement areas for Syrian refugees in Turkey- by conducting semi-structured deep interviews (82 people) and participant observation. Rather than focusing on the refugee households, I concentrate on the public café-restaurants, food markets, delis, herbalists etc. as places of contestation and negotiation for Syrian people to construct new homes through social/economic ties and to claim a right to the city. Social networks for Syrian migrants are of utmost importance because they struggle to build new lives in the metropolitan cities almost completely relying on their own social networks and financial capital. The food premises (mainly café-restaurants) in Fatih emerge as a simulation of homeland for many Syrian refugees who re-create social bonds, shared identities, cultural traditions, socio-economic ties, daily-life habits, and certain consumption-production patterns through culinary practices. However, these foodscapes might also counteract as mechanisms of exclusion for Syrian migrants both hindering social cohesion with the receiving society and continuing the fellowship- kinship ties. My study offers field-driven discussion points to gain more insight into these intricate relationships among migrant foodways, the idea of “home” for refugees, and socio-cultural integration in Türkiye.

Yousef Salih: Culture, Food Practices and Belonging: Where do Syrian Turkmens stand in Turkey?

This paper examines how Syrian Turkmen migrants to Turkey locate themselves via food practices. Research shows that food is an important way of expressing belonging because it links individuals to collective pasts and identities (Avieli & Grosglik 2013; Janowski 2012). But what happens when the collective past and identity are challenged by circumstances of migration? Drawing from autoethnographic reflections and interviews with members of the Syrian Turkmen community in Istanbul, this paper examines how Turkmen experiences of being between cultures is expressed via food practices, particularly for women. When they first fled the Syrian civil war, many Turkmens felt that they had returned home by arriving in Turkey. They share a language and those from Aleppo (in particular) found many cultural similarities between themselves and locals in Turkey (Rottmann and Kaya 2020). However, more than 12 years later, due to the political, economic, and social situation in Turkey, they feel less at home than ever before. The research shows that Turkmens are unsure about what it means to be “Turkmen.” They struggle to defend Syrian Arab food, even as they exist in both Syrian and Turkish food cultures simultaneously. The paper also explores their plans for the future and suggests ways that food practices may change in the coming years.

Assoum Bedavi: Changing Food Habits for Syrian Migrants in Gaziantep and Adana

Forced migration typically entails adapting to a completely different lifestyle as well confrontation with economic and social adversities. Even when refugees share some aspects of the new host culture, difficulties arise. The civil war in Syria led to the migration of large numbers of Syrians to Türkiye. Today, the country hosts one of the largest refugee communities in the world, with most of the refugees coming from Syria. Drawing from in-depth interviews in Gaziantep and Adana, this paper explores how the arrival of Syrian refugees led to culinary exchanges between the two countries and challenges for the Syrian migrants who want to continue their food culture. Syrian cuisine is known for its variety of flavors, spices, and the use of fresh ingredients. It reflects a mixture of Arabic, Mediterranean and Levantine influences. Not surprisingly, it has become a popular and even an integral part of the diversity of dishes in Türkiye. For example, we found that the famous Syrian dish, falafel, has become very popular. However, the paper also shows that refugees encounter multiple food-related challenges, such as reduced food availability, low-quality ingredients, and the necessity to change dietary habits coupled with little knowledge on how to use available resources. The economic situation of Syrian migrants in Turkey plays a role in shaping their food habits. It influences their food choices, consumption patterns, and the extent to which they can maintain their culinary traditions. These difficulties make the integration process more challenging, but over-all many Syrian migrants find ways to adapt and maintain their cultural identity through food.

Nour Zanjer: Food and Everyday Agency of Syrian Refugee Women in Istanbul

The existing literature highlights the relationship between food and migration. Cultural food and culinary practices serve as ways to cope with social exclusion after migration. Yet, food preparation and culinary practices are often linked to gendered roles and the division of labor. Refugee women have been constructed as passive victims, and their everyday agency is often overlooked in mainstream migration research. In the case of Syrian refugees in Turkey, little is known about Syrian women’s everyday agency and their food-making practices. Also, how these homemaking practices have been influenced by the context of political uncertainty, economic pressure, and gender relations. Through qualitative interviews and participant observations conducted with Syrian refugee women in Istanbul, this research investigates their everyday agency through culinary practices. How they creatively engage in food practices to negotiate their agency, self-expression, and re-create a sense of home. Moreover, this study seeks to analyze the impact of economic precarity and gender power relations on the Syrian culinary traditions and practices in exile. The findings reveal that Syrian refugee women navigate their political uncertainty and economic challenges by engaging in food-making practices. The study uncovers Syrian women’s everyday agency in negotiating the tensions between cultural preservation and adaptation to the new environment.

Canan Seyma Demir: Economic Dimensions of Lebanese Restaurants in Turkey

Lebanese restaurants in Turkey have constituted a significant portion of the hospitality sector, particularly in Istanbul - the city with the highest concentration of these establishments. They have attracted a multitude of both Arab and foreign tourists who seek a unique experience and distinctive taste from an Arab country, known for its openness to foreign cultures, notably French. Through research, it has been ascertained that there are over 50 such Lebanese restaurants in Turkey. Some of these establishments were launched as early as 2014 and continue to operate today. The proliferation of Lebanese eateries is ongoing, despite numerous challenges. The most recent restaurant, according to my findings, opened in the third month of this year. Others have opened and subsequently closed due to varying circumstances - a topic worthy of deeper exploration. In terms of employment, Lebanese restaurants provide a substantial source of jobs, especially in sectors requiring specialized skills such as cooking and hospitality. Several Lebanese restaurants employ Turkish staff, both in reception areas and in dining halls. Discussing their impact on the local market, the economic strength of Lebanese restaurants in Turkey becomes evident. These restaurants add a new and diverse layer to the local restaurant market, attracting customers seeking different experiences. This, in turn, reflects consumers' willingness to try new dishes, thereby stimulating innovation and renewal in the food sector. The touristic influence of Lebanese restaurants in Turkey is another aspect that merits consideration. Tourists typically seek unique and authentic food experiences. Therefore, Lebanese restaurants attract visitors who wish to sample authentic Lebanese cuisine. This appeal to tourists leads to an increase in touristic expenses in the country. Finally, it is worth to mention that Lebanese restaurants enhance cultural exchange and understanding between the two countries. By offering Lebanese cuisine, these restaurants expose Turkish people to Lebanese culture, potentially opening channels for mutual understanding and appreciation among the people.

Panel 2: Urban Displacement: Space, Place and Belonging in ‘Cities of Refuge’

Convenor: Are John Knudsen and Souad Osseiran

Souad Osseiran: Complicating the Migrant and Refugee Category Boundaries, Syrian refugee Experiences in Esenyurt

Kristen Biehl (Sabancı University) and Marhabo Saparova (Northeastern U): Understanding migration and urban incorporation through an ‘arrival infrastructures’ lens: The case of Istanbul’s Fatih district

Are John Knudsen: Emergency Urbanism: Self-Settled Syrian Refugees in Two Beirut Tenement Buildings

Kamel Dorai: Refugee Camps and the Urban Fabric in Northern Jordan

An increasing number of refugees live in poor neighborhoods in towns and cities across the Middle East, a premier refugee region with one of the world’s highest urbanization levels. Although countries in the region are hosting millions of refugees, the host states do not have the resources to provide for them. Aiding refugees living in cities and urban areas is therefore a major challenge to humanitarian policy. For many refugees, cities are viewed as the best option to provide for themselves and their families. However, cities can also turn into “poverty traps”, were the refugees survive below subsistence levels. Urban refugees also compete with other urban dwellers for housing, jobs and services. This can strain host-guest relations causing a backlash against refugees both on the local and national level. Neither displaced nor emplaced, they are suspended in what Turner (2016) has labelled “diaplacement”. While the size and complexity of cities account for some of the problems facing refuges, they are also part of the solution. Cities have larger and often unregulated labour markets, more shelter options and ready access to health and school facilities. Cities and towns can also offer greater freedom of movement and foster self-reliance as well as better prospects for successful socio-economic integration and social interaction. The daily challenges that displaced persons experience range from material and financial to emotional and moral. This panel takes on the question about how displaced persons in Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan take on those challenges. Based on new research from across the Middle East region, the panel examines the displaced creation of place and its impact on Istanbul host communities (**S. Osserian**), and the role of ‘arrival infrastructures’ in urban incorporation in Istanbul (**K. Biehl**), refugee housing and emergency urbanism in Beirut (**A. Knudsen**) and the the creation of urban spaces and city-making in refugee camps in North Jordan (**K. Doraï**).

Souad Osseiran: Complicating the Migrant and Refugee Category Boundaries, Syrian refugee Experiences in Esenyurt

Syrian refugee presence in Istanbul is marked by their dispersal across the city. Esenyurt is one of several districts that is home to many Syrian refugees and migrants of different nationality. Over the past decade, the area has become an area of migrant reception witnessing the development of services and infrastructure catering to arriving migrants and refugees. Recent migration policy changes have closed the area off to incoming migrants denying them the option of registering in the district in the midst of an overall discourse that problematizes Syrian refugee presence and overall migrant presence in Istanbul specifically and Turkey overall. This paper takes as its point of departure the formation of the district as a migrant friendly space and Syrian refugees’ experiences there as a means to explore the blurring of refugee and migrant categories in a rapidly changing migration context.

Are John Knudsen: Emergency Urbanism: Self-Settled Syrian Refugees in Two Beirut Tenement Buildings

The Syrian refugee crisis is predominantly urban, but what does urban displacement, self-settlement and indeed being an “urban refugee” entail? Reflective of the urban dimension of the crisis and the “urban turn” in refugee studies, this presentation examines the causes and consequences of refugee self-settlement in two Beirut tenement buildings and discusses the connection between urban displacement and the built environment for an understanding of emergency urbanism in Middle East host cities. Micro-studies of tenement buildings in two Beirut neighborhoods reveal differences in both settlement processes and outcomes, as well as housing and rental dynamics between (slum-)landlords and impoverished tenants. The run-down tenement buildings’ history, contested ownership and location are important examples of the urban dimension of the current displacement crises and offer a glimpse into the self-settlement of Syrian refugees in middle-class (Hamra) and poverty-stricken (Sabra) areas. The transformation of neighborhoods and multi-story buildings represent an informalization of refuge, whereby displaced people seek refuge in cities and transform neighborhoods and shelters not only as city dwellers but as city makers.

Kamel Dorai: Refugee Camps and the Urban Fabric in Northern Jordan

Can refugee camps be considered as urban spaces? How can we qualify these spaces, subject to specific legal regimes, whose inhabitants when they are themselves refugees, have a legal status which limits their access to property, labor market, health or education. From a morphological point of view, camps seem similar to the informal settlements of the main Middle Eastern cities, although, often due to demographic pressure, they are more densely built. Camps are the result of a long history of hosting and settling refugee groups, since the creation in the 1920s of camps to host Armenian refugees fleeing the genocide. Jordanian urban growth is strongly related to the settlement of refugees since 1948, and the arrival of the first Palestinian refugees in the kingdom. Since then, different groups of refugees, mainly Iraqis and Syrians, have contributed to the urban fabric, by settling in urban areas or through the urbanisation of refugee camps. The role of refugees as city makers will be analysed with a focus on the effects of long-term settlement of refugees and the changing role of UNHCR policy. The presentation will focus on refugees’ settlement in Northern Jordan outside and inside camps. A focus will be put on the urbanisation process of Syrian camps in Jordan will be explored through the example of Zaatari camp. The camp has been deeply transformed by the refugees themselves, with the appropriation process of their shelters as well as the creation of small businesses and economic activities all around the camp. The role of forced migrants in the urban fabric in Jordan can be thus understood through a double dynamic: the settlement of refugees in urban areas and the ongoing urbanisation of Jordan’s refugee camps.

**Panel 3:** The Middle Eastern Diasporas in East Asia

Convenor: Sachiko Hosoya

Reiko Ogawa: Evacuation from Afghanistan and Challenges to Resettlement in Japan

Fukuda Tomoko: Used Car and Auto Parts Trading Industry by South Asian Migrant Entrepreneurs in Japan and the Combined Factors of the Increase of South Asian Migrants in Chiba Prefecture

Farrah Sheikh: Exploring Refugee Discourse in South Korea: Comparing the Cases of Afghan and Yemeni Refugees

Yol Nakanishi: Between Citizens and Community Members: Wellbeing of Hazara Women and Children in Japan

Reiko Otsubo: Working Refugees, Yemenis in South Korea

Countries in East Asia have also received immigrants and refugees from the Middle East. However, their countries of origin, ethnicities, the circumstances in their home countries, the affected factors for their destination choices, their residency status, and the regulations of immigration policies in the host countries differ from those in the UK, Europe, and the United States. In this panel, we will discuss the situations of immigrants and refugees from the Middle East in East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea and the policies of those host countries. Presentations will be based on the speaker's field research in the host countries (including progress reports of ongoing research).

Reiko Ogawa: Evacuation from Afghanistan and Challenges to Resettlement in Japan

The seizure of Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2021 resulted in many people fleeing from the country in fear of persecution. Although many have fled to the Western countries or their neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan, several hundred have arrived in Japan through government or private sponsorships. The presentation first elaborates on how the Japanese state responded to the crisis, followed by how the "well-founded fear of persecution" stated in the International Refugee Convention was experienced by the evacuees who arrived in Japan. The refugee recognition rate is meager in Japan, or less than 1%, where the state institutions uphold a narrow definition interpretation. The narratives of the evacuees constitute an essential contribution to what it means to be a refugee.

Secondly, it touches upon the Afghan diaspora's multiple challenges in navigating their resettlement in Japan. Although Afghan evacuees have some relationship with Japan, resettlement, mostly with their families, is an entirely new experience. Moreover, the level of recognition and support towards Afghan evacuees contrasts sharply with the Ukrainian evacuees, where both state and society responded promptly. The presentation shed light on the experience of Afghan evacuees and contends that how the Japanese state responded to the crisis is based on the intersection of race, gender, class, and religion embedded within the racialized state institutions.

Fukuda Tomoko: Used Car and Auto Parts Trading Industry by South Asian Migrant Entrepreneurs in Japan and the Combined Factors of the Increase of South Asian Migrants in Chiba Prefecture

In Japan, Chiba Prefecture is characterized by a large population of South Asian migrants. Among the 47 prefectures in Japan, Chiba Prefecture has the largest populations of Sri Lankans and Afghans. The populations of these two countries have increased rapidly in recent years. The main reason for many South Asian migrants in Chiba Prefecture is primarily economic background. Chiba Prefecture has many used car and auto parts traders, and many South Asians are engaged in these businesses. Sri Lankans live in the dispersed area throughout Chiba Prefecture, but their presence is significant in Sammu City. There are multiple reasons for the increase in Sri Lankans in Sammu City. Firstly, geographical and economic factors. Sammu City is adjacent to the Imba area, where used car and auto parts traders concentrate, and large tracts of land are readily available. Land prices are lower than those in the surrounding areas. Secondly, there are policy factors. Sammu City was Sri Lanka's host town for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Thirdly, there is the religious factor. Sammu City has had an Islamic Mosque since 1998.

Furthermore, economic, political, and educational factors on the part of the country of origin have led to the recent rapid increase in the number of Sri Lankans living in Japan. Sri Lanka had been politically and economically stable after the Sri Lankan Civil War ceasefire. Subsequently, it became politically unstable. In addition, the Covid-19 lockdown halted educational activities and destabilized the economy. In response, traders with ties to Japan may have decided to move to Japan with their families. This paper examines the background of the increase in South Asian migrants in Chiba Prefecture from a sociological perspective.

Farrah Sheikh: Exploring Refugee Discourse in South Korea: Comparing the Cases of Afghan and Yemeni Refugees

2018 was a politically tempestuous time for Korea as around 500, mostly male, Yemeni asylum-seekers landed on Korea’s Jeju Island. Their unexpected arrival caught Korean society, already in the midst of its own #MeToo wave, off guard. Tensions running high, we saw a wave after wave of anti-refugee backlash as Yemeni refugees were framed as dangerous to Korean society, especially women. As we will see, much of this anxiety and anti-refugee action was fueled by fake & distorted news inspired by or sourced from Europe’s refugee crisis in 2015. Fast-forward to 2021 when Korea conducted its first ever humanitarian mission to airlift 390 Afghan helpers out of Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, this paper maps the twists and turns in the discourse about refugees, particularly when Muslim and male in the Korean context using digital ethnographic methods.

Yol Nakanishi: Between Citizens and Community Members: Wellbeing of Hazara Women and Children in Japan

Hazaras of Afghanistan, who have endured a history of systematic discrimination and social and political oppression among others, have been migrating and displaced to other countries. Their migration and displacement have diverse contexts, such as being refugees, students, employers, or as family of such. In Japan, however, it is striking that there is a large diaspora of Hazara businessmen, their employers, and other family members. This has especially been observed in prefectures home to second-hand car dismantling industries. These business and special employment visas are tickets to survive, in a country that does not acknowledge refugees in most cases.

Usually, women and children are brought to Japan after the father has been settled in Japan, under the framework of ‘family visa’. However, while most Hazara families are willing, or have no other choice than to continue living in Japan, the government regards holders of such visas as temporary citizens. While this visa technically provides people with health insurances, allows people to have part-time jobs, and children to get education, the reality is that they have limited access to such matters. At the same time, the “Hazara community” is still in its maturing process, holding information from being spread and might lead to people being isolated.

To explore the wellbeing of Hazara women and children in Japan, data is collected using transdisciplinary methods. The presentation will carefully address the attempt to understand the broad theme of ‘wellbeing’ among this group, by sharing scenes from cases and its analysis.

Reiko Otsubo: Working Refugees, Yemenis in South Korea

The Arab Spring began in Tunisia and spread to the Republic of Yemen, where the long-term dictatorship of President Ali Abdullah Saleh was overthrown. The new president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, was unable to contain the rebels, and the country has been mired in a civil war since 2015. Because of the ongoing civil war, many Yemenis need humanitarian aid, and the number of internally displaced people and refugees is increasing. Those fleeing the war are going to Africa, Europe, and Asia.  
More than 500 Yemenis arrived in 2018 at Jeju Island, South Korea. They were seeking a better life than that available in their country or in Malaysia, where many of them had lived. Due to the fact that Malaysia has not ratified the Refugee Convention, they were compelled to work for meager wages as they had no work permit. Most of Yemenis at Jeju Island have not been recognized as refugees but have been granted humanitarian status and are currently living in South Korea. Because there are limited job opportunities on the island, many of them have moved to the mainland to take jobs referred to as 3D (difficult, dangerous, and dirty), which Koreans do not like taking. Even if their wages are low in terms of Korean society, they can earn enough money to send to their families at home in Yemen or save up enough for a bride price to get married. Additionally, some have developed ethnic businesses and have become financially successful.

**Second Day, September 7th**

Panel 4: Camels, Horses and Cars: Means of Transportation and/or Status Symbol

Convenors: Mary Hegland and AbdolReza Hosseini

Aref Abu-Rabia: Camels and Pastoral Identity among the Negev Bedouins

Mary Hegland: Aliabad Traders and Shopkeepers: Change over time from Donkey to Vehicle Transport

Seyed Abdolreza Hosseini: Our Lost Spaces: Anthropology of Car-Dependent Policy of Urban Design in Tehran

The advent of mechanized means of transportation brought about dramatic changes in Middle Eastern societies. On the one side, it is about the social status. Powerful and wealthy persons could buy cars for transportation and to demonstrate their high status. Gradually cars became ubiquitous, and the make, year, and origin of cars became crucial status symbols. In recent decades, with increasing consumerism and emphasis on showing status, wealth, and power through materialism, families and young people want the latest and most expensive means of transportation. Young men must have a motorcycle and even better a car to demonstrate their independence and the financial status of their families. One might see a group of young men gathered to chat while sitting on their motorcycle—a young man could not be part of such a group without a motorcycle. Cars could become a way for young men to interact with females, offering to give them a ride and hoping to get a phone number. Sometimes horses and camels can become status symbols, for example in racing, demonstrating wealth and power, or used by a community or political leader for pageants and rituals.

Cars are also involved in marriage decisions and arrangements. A bride and her family often demand that a groom come equipped with his own car, as well as a house and a well-paid, high-status job. Owning and riding motorcycles and cars is a gender issue. Women are not seen often operating a motorcycle, and in fact, this has now been outlawed. Women have not much in the past learned how to drive, although this is now becoming more common, and like other areas of activity, can be a site of gender dispute. When women do drive, this may become a means of earning money, for example, a young woman may be engaged to drive children to their school. Gender rules are against women taxi drivers or using a car to take on passengers as males are able to do. However, in cities some females as well as many more males practice driving around, often with several in a car, for enjoyment, maybe calling out to others, and meeting people.

On the other side, the changes are related to the utility and economy of transportation. Traders, nomads, and long-range merchants could use pickups and trucks. People could earn money by becoming drivers. Owning a car can earn money, as people could pay the owner to take them to their destinations, especially in economically-challenging times. Uber and Lyft-type organizations are becoming successful in the ME.

We shape vehicles/animals to suit our contextual needs and they impose their (bio)structural necessities on our lives. They form the shape of streets, cities, and houses and we form their capabilities, functions, and faces. They necessitate care and maintenance, and we use them inevitably for different purposes. It's an active interaction of constant spatial/(bio)structural genesis, alongside the psycho/sociogenesis of societies.

The articles for this panel could be on many different issues: entrance of cars in ME; a historical look with politico-economic concerns; import of cars vs. development of railroad; cars assembled in ME; contracts with foreign companies, issues in political economy; highways, bridges ... and traffic jams: time wasted and pollution produced; riding in a car (savầreh), as opposed to walking; cars as a status symbol, cars as part of marriage contracts; dowr-dowr or driving continuously on the same street to find a date (e.g. in Shahrak Qarb, Fereshteh, and Andarzgu in Tehran); the hierarchy of cars: classification of cars, taxi driving, bus driving, truck driving, motorcycles, delivering parcels, food, etc.; hazards of all means of locomotion in ME, statistical study of deaths and injuries which are results of bad roads, deficient cars, or hazardous driving.

**Aref Abu-Rabia: Camels and Pastoral Identity among the Negev Bedouins**

By means of participant observation during 2008 to 2023, this paper provides an analysis of why some Bedouins continue to raise camels in spite of the expense and burden, and why and how they encourage and train their children to keep their pastoral identity, despite urbanization, modernization, and severe bureaucratic restrictions.

Camels have been a symbol of social and economic status among the pastoral tribes in the Middle East. For the noble Bedouin, raising camels in the interior of the desert is widely considered to have greater prestige than for any other people in the region. Camels were used for trade, transportation, and food during times of peace and war. They were one of the major modes of transporting pilgrims to the Hijaz.

In the early 20th century, vehicles started to replace the camel for transportation. As a result of settling the Bedouins in new towns and villages, the combination of paved roads and cars finally turned the camel into a burden. However, roads and vehicles (front wheel drive pickup trucks) also make it easier for camel owners to take their camels to pastures.

I shed light on how the camels occupy an important place in the Bedouin’s network of cultural symbols and in the patterns of their beliefs and thoughts. The Bedouins treat the flock of camels with devotion as if they were members of the family. Moreover, the bond between humans and camels is as strong as the bond between human beings. Every camel is given a name. It is no wonder that the camel sometimes serves as a substitute for a human being, as in a sacrifice. For some Bedouin, their camels are central for keeping their pastoral identity and the cultural patterns of their beliefs and as a safe economic source.

**Mary Hegland: Aliabad Traders and Shopkeepers: Change over time from Donkey to Vehicle Transport**

By the early decades of the 20th century, the rural settlement of Aliabad had become a significant center for trade. Located only four to six hours by donkey away from the provincial capital of Fầrs, Shirầz, Aliầbầd men worked as middlemen between outlying rural areas of Beyzầ, Kầmfiruz, Sepidần, Ardakần, Mamasani, and Boir Ahmad, and the shopkeepers and markets of Shirầz. A few men owned a number of donkeys for transporting regional produce to southern ports and bringing back tea, spices, cloth, sugar, etc. from other countries. Men who ran shops in Aliabad were better off, since the way to Shiraz was safer and their profits better than those who ran shops in outlying areas or even worse, roamed around as itinerant traders in small villages. These pilevar or moầmelegar took goods from Shiraz such as cloth, tea, sugar, hard cones of sugar for sugar lumps on the back of a donkey, gathered local produce in exchange, and stayed with acquaintances in the various areas they visited. They feared thieves who might attack, taking the Shiraz goods, and might injure or even kill traders. Like most Aliabad residents, they faced poverty and insecurity.

Some Aliabad shopkeepers were able to deal with the tribespeople who attacked villages and took goods during the 1940s insecurity; what these tribespeople didn’t want, they sold to these local men who sold to local people or took into Shiraz. By this and other means, by the 1960s and 1970s, through doing well with this trade, some men were able to obtain vehicles and make better profits by engaging in higher levels of exchange and conveying other men and/or their goods for a fee. Men who couldn’t manage vehicle purchase could not compete; many turned to other developing areas such as construction, factory work, or service. As time passed, men from outlying rural areas also gained access to vehicles. Better roads were built, and minibuses and buses provided transportation. The period of itinerant traders ended. With the rural areas becoming more developed, tiny villages have turned into towns and cities, and factories and stores have become available in these formerly remote areas. Now people with the money who want to make a purchase can go on-line to view merchandise, make their order, pay with the store’s credit card, and an employee on motorcycle will deliver their purchase shortly.

**Seyed Abdolreza Hosseini: Our Lost Spaces: Anthropology of Car-Dependent Policy of Urban Design in Tehran**

Increasingly over the last decades, Tehran has become a car-centric city. Car ownership multiplied quickly in several phases and has grown almost inexorably due to the government's unquestioning support of monopolies (Iran Khodro & Saipa) and the granting of loans from banking facilities to organizations, leasing companies, and people. These conditions, boosting the automobile market, turned the use values of vehicles into exchange values. Many people began investing in cars just as they would in gold or stocks.

The infrastructure accommodation to car parking demands has negatively changed urban policies, building codes, and construction regulations. On the one hand, the passage of the rule of Provision for Parking Places and Lots in Tehran means that basements and ground floors of apartments took up any spaces for yards and green areas. To provide for legally required parking spaces, construction companies were forced to forego upper-floor balconies and to make homes more wall enclosed. On the other hand, the requirement for street parking, especially in residential neighborhoods, made streets narrower and minimized space for sidewalks. Therefore, the rule for construction companies to build walls more setbacks did not result in space for sidewalks. Consequently, people in Tehran lost their yards and terraces in their private spaces and the sidewalks in their public areas. My mixed methods approach and multidisciplinary data-driven analyses show the concrete and gradual changes in space during the last two decades in Tehran. My ethnographic study demonstrates that residents of Tehran, although nostalgic about their lost yard and sidewalk spaces, still unconsciously and uncritically hold fast to car-dependent policies.

**Panel 5:** Women and Violence

Convenor: Esther Hertzog

Maha Alsejari: Physical and Verbal Aggression, Anger and Hostility among Females During the Total Ban in Kuwait during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Janet Afary: Patriarchalism, Male Abuse and the Sources of the # Me Too Movement in the Muslim Middle East

Maha Alsejari: Physical and Verbal Aggression: Anger and Hostility among Females During the Total Ban in Kuwait during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Esther Herzog: Playboy's entrance to Israel: Legitimizing violence against women

Yazdaninasab, N.K. Alavijeh & Sa.Taheri: Power and Iranian Women: A Narrative of Lived Powerlessness

Shamim Sherafat: Gynecological Violence from a structural point of View: An Ethnographical Study in Iran

Contemporary society, especially in western countries, triumphs the advancement of women in most spheres of life. Women have gained access to high education, to the labor market, to military service, to high administrative jobs, to prestigious positions in the media etc. Nevertheless, women's self-security appears to be shaky despite the important achievements gained in the last few decades. Patriarchy still reigns and the gender power structure continues to sustain men's dominance, mainly by the use of coercion and violence. This becomes clear when we consider the threats on women's lives and dignity in family crises, when relating to the cultural and religious dictates that are enforced on women, when realizing the extent of sexual harassment within the hierarchal gender relations at the work place, at the academia, in the army, in the media and in other places.

As technology and media have become a major force in contemporary times, society faces new challenges in protecting and advancing human rights and values. Intensive exposure to violence on virtual and digital media accelerates the legitimacy of using violence in all spheres of life. As the use of violence reflects the power structures embedded in society, the underprivileged and marginalized groups are more susceptible to experiencing violence and exploitation. Women are a conspicuous group among the victims of violence. Despite the ongoing struggle against violence toward women, women (and their children) are a major victim of males' violence. Women's vulnerability with regard to the manifold kinds of violence exerted toward them is still a major problem that must be addressed by the feminist movement as well as by human rights organizations. Although the feminist movement has gone a long way in confronting violence against women, yet it appears that violence continues to represent its hard-core struggle, demanding great efforts to abolish this unbearable phenomenon.

Janet Afary: Patriarchalism, Male Abuse and the Sources of the # Me Too Movement in the Muslim Middle East

The #MeToo movement exploded on the U.S. scene in 2017 with the desperate hope that women who had been sexually harassed, molested, or violated would finally be heard in the public sphere. Women hoped to change both male behavior and the law to protect them from male aggression. It has since become a transnational feminist movement. In 2018, just after the #MeToo movement burst onto the scene in the Middle East/North Africa region, we surveyed tens of thousands of primarily younger adults about their intimate lives, including their experiences with molestation and violence. Using Facebook banner ads in Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, Palestine, Tunisia, and Turkey, we were able to garner a significant degree of information on such practices. This paper first reviews the rise of the #MeToo movement in the countries we surveyed and then analyzes the types of harassment and the individuals most likely to engage in public harassment and domestic violence.

Maha Alsejari: Physical and Verbal Aggression, Anger and Hostility among Females During the Total Ban in Kuwait during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Objective: The study objective was to detect differences between aggressive (anger, hostility, and violence) and socio-demographic variables among a sample of females who lived in Kuwait. Method: A non-random sample was recruited from 495 female participants via the WhatsApp platform. The study’s tool is an online survey consisted of two parts sociodemographic information, and Aggression questionnaire (AQ) that composed of 29 self-report items Likert scale with a higher score indicating more aggressive. Results: The current study’s outcome identified that during the total curfew females who are young, student, and single or divorced were at high risk and reported higher scores of physical and verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. Conclusion: These findings create the need to find effective solution to prevent violence during social distancing.

Esther Hertzog: Playboy's entrance to Israel: Legitimizing violence against women

My paper will elaborate on the entrance of Playboy channel into Israel. It will be argued that this event served to introduce pornography, perceived as sexual violence against women, into Israeli society by providing its legitimization. Presenting Playboy as a legitimate entertainment of harmless eroticism, widely accepted by most countries, paved the way for pornography to be accepted in Israel as a harmless leisure associated with the right of free speech. This “success” was made possible by the sweeping support of the Supreme Court, of the media and of the Knesset.

Hugh Hefner’s death (September 27, 2017) raised public attention to some provoking issues related to the commercialization of young women’s sexuality. The significant contribution of Hefner’s Playboy to the popularization of pornography as a legitimate form of social and cultural leisure will be discussed.

From a feminist perspective, Playboy, aiming to fulfil men’s sexual desires and to reclaim manhood, is inspired by sexist and misogynist approach that perceives men’s rights to enjoy women’s sexual services, at any age and setting, as self-evident. It will be contended that establishing the Playboy “empire” on the objectification and commercialization of young women and their sexuality, entails a symbolic degradation of all women, and not only that of the women who are directly involved in the Playboy industry.

Thus, Playboy, marketed by Hefner as soft eroticism, normalized the pornography industry and cleaned it of its “sleazy” image. I shall elaborate on this process that accompanied its entrance to Israel and on the struggle of the radical feminists attempting to prevent the broadcasting of Playboy.

The presentation will be based on my experience participating in the struggle against pornography and in the appeal to the Supreme Court against broadcasting Playboy programs in Israel. It will also be based on my ongoing acquaintance with feminist activism in Israel, and with contemporary Israeli feminist discourse on the Internet.

Yazdaninasab, N.K. Alavijeh & Sa.Taheri: Power and Iranian Women: A Narrative of Lived Powerlessness

In studies of everyday life and power relations, resistance tends to dominate, leaving other aspects of power relations unexplored. According to our participants' lived experiences, power relations in the public space are frequently characterized by subjective powerlessness. Foucault's famous grand narrative "Where there is power, there is resistance" needs to be seriously reconsidered and re-evaluated in light of the historical and social context. Using an interpretive hermeneutic approach, we interviewed 20 unmarried females living in Tehran, Iran and explored their experiences of dealing with power. This study examines power in four dimensions or meanings, and the public space, including streets, parks, and shopping malls, is the field of study. According to the results, the feeling of powerlessness is a common experience among all respondents when faced with power, which is more than just resistance. The results also show that constant exposure to power, a lack of support from the law, and failures to resist have led to a decrease in resistance and a feeling of powerlessness. Therefore, where there is power, resistance and powerlessness coexist.

Shamim Sherafat: Gynecological Violence from a structural point of View: An Ethnographical Study in Iran

Women must refer to gynecologists for checkups, childbirth, or gynecological diseases at different stages of their lives. This visit is primarily due to women's conditions, which also may refer to the private parts of their bodies. For this reason, feeling safe and comfortable when visiting a female gynecologist becomes very important. The present study investigates hidden violence in the relationship between female gynecologists and their clients. The research is done with semi-structured interviews with women referring to female gynecologists and female gynecologists in Iran so that the lived experience of both can be examined. The findings show that gynecological violence is applied to clients in verbal, non-verbal, and direct and indirect ways. Gynecological violence may sometimes accompany obstetric violence. Women's privacy is violated when multiple clients are admitted for a visit, and sometimes they are judged about their lifestyle. The gynecologist’s beliefs and the counterculture between the client and the gynecologist may bring conflicts in the relationship, resulting in verbal or psychological violence against the client. On the other side, female gynecologists go through a challenging training course at university, and also during medical practice, the importance of the birth rate and the infant and maternal mortalities become factors in their job being stressful. It seems that female gynecologists and clients are placed in an inappropriate context with each other, damaging the relationship between the gynecologist and her client and creating the conditions for structural violence between them.

Panel 6: **Polygamy, Religion and Gender in Central Asia, Social and Economic Implications**

Convenor: Rano Turaeva

Michael Commercio: Don’t become a Lost Specimen!: Polygyny and Motivational Interconnectivity in Kyrgyzstan

Niginahon Uralova: Patriarchal Appropriation of Islam and Polygamy in Uzbekistan

Anna Cieslewska: Negotiations in the Transborder Polygynous Families in Central Asia

Rano Turaeva: Second Wives, Kelins and Others, Gender and Family in Uzbekistan

Makhirova Akida Abidovna: Polygamy and Violence against Women in Uzbekistan

Increasing uncertainties due to the increased mobilities, economic and political insecurities (environmental and political turbulences in the region coupled with health and economic crisis), Arabisation of the region and consolidation of authoritarian and corrupt patriarchal regimes created multiple challenges for average citizens particularly for women. Polygamy has become not only a more popularised form of household management but also an alternative for economic security and social status depending on the role of the partner within polygamous relationship. One would expect that re-traditionalization of Central Asia and the return of Islam, which to some degree contributed to the process of re-patriarchalization of the kinship structures and social organization of Central Asian societies, would automatically imply women’s passivity as well as lack of voice and absence of women’s agency. However, this would be an oversimplification of the situation which is far more complex. In the panel we would like to discuss how much of economic hardships, globalization, and increased migration have created not only challenges for female members of these Muslim dominated societies but also have created opportunities to negotiate between modernity and tradition. Women’s situation is not as clear cut as women often depict it as they recall the “good old times” of the Soviet rule as the period of liberation and of the golden age of “real communism,” and the post-Soviet period as the time of “darkness” and of “turning backwards” or “de-development.” The post-Soviet period is marked with the creation of another image of women: specifically, women as fighters and as leaders who have survived economic difficulties and who have been the central figures in supporting their families fitting changing family structures, gender roles, as well as negotiating their agency in polygamic relationships. There are underlying common themes of women’s agency, decision-making power, and their ability to cope with various types of social, cultural, and economic situations. While women, are sometimes viewed as weak or powerless, they do demonstrate considerable control over their lives. Women innovatively negotiate and cope with the hurdles of often complicated traditional family arrangements and the challenges posed by their work life, and they find their own ways to actively create their own social networks.

Michael Commercio: Don’t become a Lost Specimen! Polygyny and Motivational Interconnectivity in Kyrgyzstan

Why would a woman agree to wed a legally married man when the state would neither recognize her marriage nor grant her alimony, child support or inheritance rights? Although the Communist Party curtailed the rate of openly acknowledged polygynous marriages among the Kyrgyz, its work was undone by glasnost and perestroika, which ushered in a permissive environment. This article highlights constructions of gender as a driver of polygyny in Kyrgyzstan from the perspective of women who voluntarily become second wives. The Kyrgyz case suggests that the cultural value of marriage and motherhood – traditions that grant women communal identities, power and prestige – might lead a woman to consent to second-wife status. I employ the concept of motivational interconnectivity, defined as two or more related reasons women make important personal decisions that have societal repercussions, to explain a woman’s decision to become a second wife.

Niginahon Uralova Patriarchal Appropriation of Islam and Polygamy in Uzbekistan

The research basically focuses on Islamic revival after the Soviet collapse where religious publications and preachings are dominated by men. By means of discourse analysis (of published books and online content) on polygamy, my research aims to find if male dominated islamic revival contributes to the prevalence of polygamy in Uzbekistan. I intend to look for differences between publications of male and female local authors post-independence and if the exegesis of Quran and interpretation of Islam in general by two genders differ from one another.

**Anna Cieslewska**: Negotiations in the Transborder Polygynous Families in Central Asia

This presentation focuses on transnational polygamous marriages of migrants from Central Asia in Russia and how transnational polygynous practices influence people’s understanding of marriage, love, and family. It will explore in which ways migrants engaged in transborder polygynous marriages negotiate their position within families. What are the perspectives of individuals involved in polygynous practices abroad considering the wider context of Islam, social perception of polygamy, and migrants’ situation in Russia. In which way do people manage their strategies, and how their cope with daily pressures to assert control in their marriages. How transborder polygyny affects the relationships with their extended families in Central Asia and Russia. And how polygyny can be seen as coping strategies related to economic survival as well as loneliness and psychological tensions experienced by migrants. The presentation will be based on the case studies of migrants from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan met by an author during field research conducted in Moscow between 2017- 2019. The findings show a variety of practices and strategies used by individuals who live in multiple relationships. From the “true love story” of their own choice to pleasing their family by marrying the person selected by them to upgrading their status [in the case of women]. People are involved in temporary love affairs concluded only by the nikāḥ to follow the norms recognized by society, or they find a partner for pragmatic reasons.4. Rano Turaeva, Ludwig Maximillian University, title of the paper: Second wives, kelins and other women in Central Asia.

Rano Turaeva: Second Wives, Kelins and Others, Gender and Family in Uzbekistan

The status of women in Central Asia is defined not only through age, gender, kinship and other factors as we know it from the existing literature on gender in Central Asia but largely also through their partnerships or romantic relations. Second wives, kelins and others who are unmarried for instance stay outside of the academic discussions or even live almost invisible lives in the empirical reality. Invisible lives or their status within the discussions of marriage, kinship politics and other important issues related to family and gender roles are understudied and not discussed. Women’s “double burden” or even “multiple burden” brought on by the economic and political turmoil and challenges after the collapse of the Soviet Union significantly worsened the situation of Central Asian women. One would expect that re-traditionalization of Central Asia and the return of Islam, which to some degree contributed to the process of re-patriarchalization of the kinship structures and social organization of Central Asian societies, would automatically imply women’s passivity as well as lack of voice and absence of women’s agency. However, this would be an oversimplification of the situation which is far more complex. In the panel we would like to discuss how much of economic hardships, globalization, and increased migration have created not only challenges for female members of these Muslim dominated societies but also have created opportunities to negotiate between modernity and tradition. While women, are sometimes viewed as weak or powerless, they do demonstrate considerable control over their lives. Women innovatively negotiate and cope with the hurdles of often complicated traditional family arrangements and the challenges posed by their work life, and they find their own ways to actively create their own social networks.

Makhirova Akida Abidovna: Polygamy and Violence against Women in Uzbekistan

This contribution is derived from activist engagement with instances of gender violence in Uzbekistan, specifically focusing on case studies originating from rural areas of the country. Notably, the contribution deviates from conventional formats and methodological approaches in addressing the pressing challenges confronted by women in Uzbekistan. Rather than stemming from academic research, the presentation emerges from direct involvement in tackling existing problems, adopting the viewpoint of a Muslim feminist influencer, volunteer, activist, and blogger. As such, the presentation aims to pose fundamental questions grounded in empirical relevance, prioritizing practical solutions over theoretical frameworks.

**Panel 7**: **Visual Anthropology: AI-Generated Art and the Representation of Women Artists from Middle East**

Convenor: Nacim Pak-Shirazi

Magdalena Rodziewicz: The Visual Representations of Shi’i Clerical Garb (*lebas-e rouhani*) in Iranian Cinema

Nacim Pak-Shiraz: Exploring Populist Discourse in *Aghazadeh*: Unveiling the Role of Television Series as Propaganda

Bahar Fayeghi-Ghadimi: Active Engagement of Second-Generation Afghans in Iranian Visual Media

Farah Taleb: Women, Artists or Themes?

**Zeynep Merve Uygun, Zeliha İnci Asal, Onur Turgut**: AI Whispering: The Reproduction and Representation of Famous Paintings via, ChatGPT, Midjourney, Dall-E, and Stable Diffusion

The panel explores the multifaceted dynamics of representation and visual discourse in contemporary Iranian society. The thread that runs through all three presentations is the use of visual media in an effort to either challenge or shape an alternative image of those employing the media. The first paper examines the visual representations of Shi‘i clerical garb in Iranian cinema by analyzing films produced between 2001 and the present. The study explores whether these cinematic portrayals aim to rehabilitate the clergy’s image or express lost sentiments towards religious scholars and spiritual leader. Television series as propaganda is examined with a specific focus on the popular show Aghazadeh. By exploring the strategies employed in Aghazadeh's populist discourse, the paper highlights the program’s attempts to influence audiences' perceptions of the security forces. The third paper studies the use of visual media by the second-generation Afghans in Iran as a way to challenge prevailing narratives and portray an alternative image of themselves.

Through these diverse perspectives, this panel examines the role of visual media in shaping narratives, challenging stereotypes, and influencing public sentiment in contemporary Iran. By analyzing the engagement of marginalized communities, the impact of television series as propaganda, and the visual portrayal of the Shi'i clergy, this panel contributes to a deeper understanding of the power dynamics inherent in visual media and their influence on social dynamics and cultural discourse.

Magdalena Rodziewicz: The Visual Representations of Shi’i Clerical Garb (*lebas-e rouhani*) in Iranian Cinema

In recent years, resentment towards the Shi’i clergy has become increasingly evident in some sections of Iranian society. This can be seen in verbal criticism, social behaviour, and even physical attacks on turban wearers, including the recent phenomenon of *amameh parani* (turban throwing). The politicisation of the clergy and the *houzeh,* the traditional centres of religious learning, financial privileges, distance from society and indifference to social injustice are cited as the main reasons for the growing resentment towards the entire clerical class. Although Iranian sociologists have diagnosed the image crisis of the clergy already few years ago, little action has been done to counteract the decline in respect and status of the clergy in society. The exception is Iranian cinema, which has been addressing this issue since 2001, when the first post-Revolutionary film on the clergy was produced.

The aim of the study is to identify how the clerical garb (*lebas-e rouhani*), a visual symbol of Shi’i clergy in contemporary Iran, is represented in Iranian cinema in the context of the image crisis facing this group. It examines the extent to which the images contained in the cinematography are a deliberate attempt to rehabilitate the clergy in the eyes of the people, and the extent to which they are an expression of lost and erased sentiments towards members of this group as religious scholars and spiritual leaders providing assistance to the people. The study is based on an examination of full-length and short films made between 2001 and the present, analysing both the content and the visual aspect of the productions.

Nacim Pak-Shiraz Exploring Populist Discourse in *Aghazadeh*: Unveiling the Role of Television Series as Propaganda

*Aghazadeh* (Behrang Towfiqi, 2020-21), is Owj’s first foray into streaming services that broke all viewing records on the domestic streaming service. This paper examines the strategies through which *Aghazadeh’*s populist discourse attempts to persuade audiences about the righteousness of the security forces and by extension the position of the Supreme Leader. Disseminating the Islamic Republic’s propaganda through film and media goes back to the very early days of the Revolution. The regime aggrandised those who sacrificed their lives for the revolution and in the frontline of the Iran-Iraq war. However, *Aghazadeh* turns its lens onto a different and arguably more insidious villain, the enemy within: Those hailing from the frontlines of the Iran-Iraq war, the heroes of yesterday who now head the financial corruption that is crippling the country.

Bahar Fayeghi-Ghadimi: Active Engagement of Second-Generation Afghans in Iranian Visual Media

Since the late 1970s, a significant number of Afghans have sought refuge in Iran. Despite initially welcoming them as Muslim brothers, the government's attitude gradually shifted towards implementing more stringent policies, starting from the 1990s. Since then, the government's policymaking has grown increasingly non-transparent, vague, and, at times, even contradictory. Its underlying focus on the repatriation and deportation of Afghans, as well as the prevention of new arrivals, has persisted to this day. Consequently, Afghans live with the uncertainty and fear that new regulations compromise their legal status and prompts their deportation.

Iranian media has played an important role in echoing and legitimizing the government’s policies by portraying Afghans as criminals, drug smugglers or ridiculous characters in films and television series. Even Iranian filmmakers such as Makhmalbaf, Majidi and Kiarostami, who portray a more benevolent image of Afghans as honest laborers or victims deserving of the pity of Iranians, still represent them as “the other”, which reflects an underlying conception of Afghans as strangers who do not belong. The term “guest”, used often by the government and the media, remains a metaphor in practice. Afghans do not receive hospitality but are instead treated as uninvited guests who have overstayed their welcome.

Second and later generations of Afghans educated in Iran have, nonetheless, been increasingly engaged in cultural activities. Filmmaking, acting and writing have become not just hobbies or sources of income but, most importantly, ways to portray an alternative image of themselves. Their active involvement in diverse Iranian visual media platforms, assuming roles as directors (e.g., the Mahmoodi brothers), actors in television series, and participants in television competitions as comedians, athletes, and musicians, has enabled these individuals to shed light upon the obstacles they face, including policies that deprive them of citizenship, and demand their rights. In fact, they are building a set of narratives that directly challenge those of Iran’s government, media and society. This paper aims to provide an overview of their engagement in various visual media platforms.

In early 2022, when Alireza Mohammadi, a young comedian, dedicated his performance in the famous talent show Asre Jadid to daily issues of Afghans living in Iran, including having to deal with racism, the jury bashed him for focusing on negative aspects of life in Iran while ignoring the generosity of a country that had hosted his countrymen for years. But his performance was meaningful in a different, more subtle way: as a proclamation that, as a person born and raised in Iran, he was not a guest anymore.

Farah Taleb: Women, Artists or Themes?

Since the early 2000s, western museums and galleries have been increasingly exhibiting works by artists from the Middle East and North Africa. This recent interest was partly due to the globalization of the art world since the 1990s. However, for women artists from MENA, some other factors contributed to this rising attention, including the politically charged context after the events of 9/11, the ‘war on terror’, and the discussions around clash of civilizations between the west and Islam. Within this context, the topic of women and their ‘life under Islam’ became one of the most controversial and debated areas. The topic is not new to western discussions as it was highly visible in Orientalist studies and art. However, these representations were mostly done by European men who had little to no contact with Middle Eastern women, hence they produced many stereotypes and hypersexualized tropes of the harem that dominated the western perception for a long time. With the recent exhibitions in western museums, an interesting shift has occurred, the lives, images and topics related to women in MENA are presented by women from MENA. At first, this seems like a significant change that would allow the women to reclaim agency over their bodies and voices that have been overshadowed and scrutinized. However, I would argue that such agency and role are compromised by the choices and interpretations by western museums and curators. Moreover, by emphasizing the themes of women over the artistic practices, visions, and diversity, and focusing on certain visual characteristics, the work of many established modern women artists remains obscured and neglected.

Zeynep Merve Uygun, Zeliha İnci Asal, Onur Turgut: AI Whispering: The Reproduction and Representation of Famous Paintings via, ChatGPT, Midjourney, Dall-E, and Stable Diffusion

By critically examining the choices made by both AI tools and western museums, the panel aims to challenge dominant narratives and explore possibilities for alternative representations and creative content creation. It examines the representation and agency of women artists from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in the context of western museums and galleries. With the increasing interest in exhibiting works by female artists from this region since the early 2000s, the dynamics of representation have become complex and politically charged. The emphasis on certain themes related to women can overshadow the artistic practices, visions, and diversity of the established modern women artists from the region. The second paper focuses on the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and art, particularly in relation to reproducing and interpreting well-known paintings. These AI mediums offer tailored content based on machine learning algorithms, raising questions about how representations and perceptions are re/framed. Through these papers, the panel seeks to engage with the complexities of representation, identity, and power dynamics in the contemporary art world.

**Third Day September 8th**

Panel 8: Ethno-history of the Middle East

Convenor: Fakhri Haghani

Nozhat Ahmadi: Archival Documents: Anthologies and their importance for Ethno-History of Iran

Mohammad Amin Keikha Shahinpour: The Identity of Iran in The Travelogue of Evliya Çelebi

Gülistan Ünal: On 17th century Istanbul identity

Scholars of the History of the Middle East have often used travelogues and travel accounts as one the most important sources of their research and writings. Examples of non-native travel accounts produced by famous European and non-native writers and missionaries are numerous, such as Chardin, Edward Brown, D’Allemagne, Madame Dieulafois, David Livingstone, Richard Burton, and Lady Many Wortley Montague. While these documents have in general been addressed as “primary” source documents, question of the accessibility of their authors to the inner circles of the societies to which they refer has often complicated such a validity. Edward Said’s groundbreaking book Orientalism, for example, is the best well-known scholarly work addressing and discussing the importance of these complexities. How do travel writings and travelogues produced by the natives and indigenous people of the region, such as Ibn Battuta, Ibn Khaldun, Naser Khosrow, Abulfazl-e Bayhaqi, and so forth, differ from these travel accounts? Can the assumptions that these sources convey views from the “inside,” instead of the “outside,” place them in a different set of categories from those travel writings by non-native writers? Have these sources been able to re-write the history of these societies in the way the real history is, not the way history is often been written or imagined? Have these “primary” sources been able to document and convey the complexities of theses societies in a more translatable lights, when they address the questions of economy, politics, society, religion, minority groups, justice, discrimination and so forth? What about genres? Can biographies, autobiographies, poetry, novels, just to name a few, be considered as “travel writings?” In this panel, we intend to address as well as discuss these and many more relevant issues to the question of “travel accounts and writings” in the Middle East. While contributions from scholars in the field on these topics and questions are welcomed, proposals are not limited in exploring relevant other topics and questions.

Nozhat Ahmadi Archival Documents: Anthologies and their importance for Ethno-History of Iran

Anthology or compilation of literary or artistic works, such as poems, short stories, paintings provide a glimpse into the beliefs and attitudes and even private life of people of different historical periods of Iran. Some special features of anthologies are the following:

Anthologies are not books, rather they are like notebooks that have been prepared by a specific person(-s) based on their personal taste and preferences in choice of topics, needs and interests. They are usually family-owned and have passed down as inheritance from one generation to the next.

They were ordered by a specific head of the household to a calligrapher to be written.  At times the writing could continue at a different time, as the inheritor would find it necessary, and so another calligrapher would continue the task.

They were kept within families and they could have been guidelines for descendants of a family throughout centuries. For us they are excellent windows into the daily life of people and show daily exercises, various people giving service to families and morals of society, therefore valuable for ethno-history.

Mohammad Amin Keikha Shahinpour: The Identity of Iran in The Travelogue of Evliya Çelebi

Evliya Çelebi was a Turkish-Ottoman traveler who began his journey in the 17th century AD, exploring various lands of the Ottoman Empire and neighboring countries. During his travels to Asia, Europe, and Africa, he provided valuable information about the history, geography, culture, customs, languages, and traditions of diverse ethnic groups. His travelogue covers a vast geographical area, encompassing a rich encyclopedia of knowledge.

This research focuses on examining and explaining the Iranian identity in Evliya Çelebbi's travelogue as a Turkish globetrotter. By analyzing the text of Evliya Çelebi's travelogue and emphasizing his two journeys to Iran, while relying on the information the author provided about the customs, culture, myths, religion, and language of Iranians, we aim to identify the Iranian identity from the perspective of an Ottoman traveler."

Gülistan Ünal: On 17th century Istanbul identity

Istanbul has been an important economic and social center throughout history. This feature has enabled it to host different identities. It became a city that attracted people from Anatolia, Europe and elsewhere. Among these people were also merchants and travelers. In this study, we will examine which groups in Istanbul in the 17th century lived in the city. Which trades groups these people belonged to and information will be provided on what kind of work they are engaged in. The groups existing in the city in which regions they live will be mentioned. Cultural aspects of their lives will be taken. The reason for choosing Istanbul as the city for this study is that it is an important is that it is a transit point. In addition, the fact that Istanbul was It was the capital even before it was taken over. In the 17th century, Istanbul's social and cultural life will be tried to create a framework. To this end, information from the literature, travelogues and chronicles will be analyzed.

Panel 9: Religious Charisma in the Middle East and Its Diasporas, Authority, Succession and Devotion

Convenors: Liza Dumovich and G.F.Chagas

Gisele Fonseca Chagas: Religious Identity and Belonging in a Challenging World: Charismatic shaykh and his power within a Sufi Damascene Order

Paulo Pinto: Sacred Homeland: Sainthood and Miracles in the Construction of a Syrian Religious Diaspora

Meral Durmus: Ethnographic case study of a centenarian modern state: A post-Weberian approach to the analysis of the re-emergent charismatic leadership on the birthdate of a 100 years old country, TÜRKİYE.

Fouad Gehad Marei: Objects of Walāya: Charisma and the Power of ‘Things’ in Shi’i Political Ecologies

Youcef Hamitouche: Nationalism and religion in the Algerian nationalist movement

Max Weber (1978[1921], 215-242) defines “charisma” as a certain personal quality that is considered extraordinary or supernatural by others, an exemplary or even God-gifted power which gives the individual concerned a “leader” status. On the one hand, the legitimacy of a charismatic authority stems from free recognition on the part of those under the authority, that is, followers or disciples. More importantly, the latter must believe it is their duty to recognize the genuineness of the authority and devote themselves to the leader. On the other hand, the reason for this legitimacy rests on evidence of “divine grace”, which must reflect the sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of the leader and the normative patterns, as well as the order, prescribed by him/her. Such evidence may even be expressed in the personal successes and prosperity of followers/disciples. In other words, the recognition of the leader’s charismatic authority requires proofs of his charismatic qualification. If the leader is unsuccessful or uncapable to prove his extraordinary powers for long or, more importantly, if his leadership fails to benefit his followers, his charismatic authority may vanish away. Also, in accordance with Weber, as charismatic authority and the social relations involved are strictly personal and emotionally charged, charismatic community faces the “problem of succession” with the disappearance of the leader. According to Weber’s model, charismatic authority would be the direct antithesis of both rational/bureaucratic and traditional authorities, thus, alien to everyday routine structures. In order to guarantee the survival of the community, charismatic authority would have a tendency to “routinization” and would eventually become either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both. In turn, charismatic community, which would be an organized group based solely on an emotional form of communal relationship, lacking hierarchy, a system of formal rules, and rationality, would eventually disappear as such as it would “routinize” into an institution.

However, Eisenstadt (1968) suggests that “charisma” and “organized routine” should not be taken as opposed realities, for they intertwine in concrete situations. Moreover, contrary to Weber’s claims, ethnographies have shown that charismatic authority, as well as charismatic relations, endure as ordinary phenomena in many social and religious contexts (Lindholm 1993; Pinto 2016). Charismatic domination and bureaucratic domination may coexist in different levels and with more or less intensity in a variety of institutions, whether religious, secular or state-like institutions (Shils 1965). Furthermore, ethnographies conducted in religious contexts in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as its diasporas, have encountered different configurations of charismatic communities, movements, and relations, which produce diverse forms of emotional manifestation and religious experience (Chagas 2011; Dumovich 2018; Pinto 2016).

Gisele Fonseca Chagas: Religious Identity and Belonging in a Challenging World: the Charismatic shaykh and his power within a Sufi Damascene Order

This paper explores the dynamic and creative ways in which the charisma of Shaykh Ahmed Kuftaru continues to resonate and circulate among his followers, even after his passing in 2004. As the former Syrian Grand Mufti and founder of the Naqshbandiyya-Kuftariya, a prominent Sufi order based in Damascus with thousands of male and female followers both within Syria and abroad, Shaykh Ahmed Kuftaru's spiritual influence remains central to the religious life of the tariqa, since he did not indicate a successor. The main institution related to the tariqa is the Shaykh Ahmed Kuftaru Foundation. Through an examination of my fieldwork conducted at the Shaykh Ahmed Kuftaru Foundation between 2009 and 2010, as well as an exploration of the social media content dedicated to honoring his legacy, this study delves into how the devotees of this Sufi order perpetuate their spiritual connection with the Shaykh and uphold or, sometimes, blur, the bureaucratic structure of the tariqa.

Paulo Pinto: Sacred Homeland: Sainthood and Miracles in the Construction of a Syrian Religious Diaspora

Until the war that has been ravaging Syria broke out in 2011, the cult of saints featured conspicuously in Sunni Muslim religiosity in both urban and rural contexts throughout the country. This paper will analyse the trajectory of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Fatah Aminu from a popular charismatic Sufi shaykh from Aleppo to a new saint in the sacred landscape of Aleppo and, later, of the Syrian diaspora created by those who left Syria during the war. I order to do so, I will draw on ethnographic material from my research in Syria (1999-2010) and my research with the former followers and devotees of Shaykh Aminu in Jordan, Lebanon and Germany (2019-2021).

Meral Durmus: Ethnographic case study of a centenarian modern state: A post-Weberian approach to the analysis of the re-emergent charismatic leadership on the birthdate of a 100 years old country, TÜRKİYE.

Weberian social action theory helps explain how surviving “charisma” (borrowing from Weber’s sociology of religion) always necessitates “routinization” when relating to the institutionalization of authoritarian leadership, especially as more visibly observable in the last quarter-century of modern Türkiye. Yet the Weberian model of “routinization” which can be summed up as the “survival of the ‘fitting’ ,” whether traditionalizing, rationalizing or both, has the handicap of missing the continuing role of religion as a long-established cultural identity marker, put more precisely, religion as a key concept representing constitutional culture vigorously shaping nations and states alike in the post-modern era. As is the case with the Turkish nation-state, authoritarian regimes seem to emerge regardless of constitutional democracy and despite the democratic leadership it proposes, because living cultural heritage can reproduce divinity and heroism as innate attributions to the charismatic leader, to rule as he wishes, for the sake and survival of society. Most of the population being Muslim, religion has never functioned as a tool for separation; instead, it identifies and holds together the nation on the premise of devotion and belonging to the Turkish community. Whether religious commitment and belonging in religious contexts or emotional attachment to a religious leader, community and/or movement, the key concept of religious experience as established culture is where to look for, not just to find the possible answers to the “problem of succession” resolved with its exemplary solutions but to make sense of the persistent materialization of belonging in impeding the charismatic authority from vanishing every time he reappears as the saviour.

Fouad Gehad Marei: Objects of Walāya: Charisma and the Power of ‘Things’ in Shi’i Political Ecologies

This paper examines the place of objects belonging to Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenai, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic in Iran, in the political ecologies of his supporters in the Middle East and the diaspora. Focusing on a prayer rug and a scarf gifted by Hajj Dr. Meysam Motii, Professor of Hadith and Quranic Studies at Imam Sadiq University in Tehran and prominent ritual eulogy reciter and regime mouthpiece, to two Shi’i congregations in Beirut, Lebanon, and Berlin, Germany, respectively, I call into question the role of objects in cultivating affective connections between the Rahbar, or Supreme Leader, and his supporters. I argue that these seemingly inanimate objects bond members of the worldwide community of followers with their leader through ‘constant encounter’, allowing the Rahbar to be ‘affectively present’ amongst his followers worldwide. Moreover, I observe how the Rahbar’s personal belongings are not treated with a corporeal reverence comparable to that with which objects associated to, for example, the holy wo/men of Ahl al-Bayt, or the progeny of the Prophet Muhammad are likely to be treated. However, I posit that the affective power of these objects draws on Islamic understandings of the role of sacred objects in materially realizing, mediating, and transferring baraka (blessing), walāya (the actual living spiritual power of initiation and guidance) and ḥudūr (metaphysical presence). According to this religious understanding, sacred objects extend the presence of a sacrosanct across time/space, from the then-and-there (the metaphysical and otherworldly) to the here-and-now, not merely by representing the former, but by becoming identical with it (Rytter 2017). Drawing on these religiously informed attitudes to materiality, Khamenai’s prayer rug and scarf become nodes in a dense network of human relations, which includes human/ animate subjects and nonhuman/ inanimate objects or ‘things’, and where ‘things’ possess a power and agency (Bennett 2010) central to the cultivation of charisma in Shii political ecologies and life-worlds.

Youcef Hamitouche: Nationalism and religion in the Algerian nationalist movement

This contribution focuses on the place of religion and charismatic leaders in Algerian nationalism. Islam religion played a major role in mobilizing Algerian people against French colonialism since 1830. However, the leaders of the indigenous popular resistance contesting French occupation belonged to big tribes. They relied for the assistance of *zawaya* which taught the precepts of holy war (Djihad) and the values of fighting foreigners. As a response, French colonial troops succeeded in breaking down this resistance, and issued laws which targeted the confiscation of lands from indigenous tribes as it was able to weaken the authority of the *zawaya* whose role in displaying education was restricted. With the political struggle against the French colonialism that started at the beginning of the 20th century, a conservative group appeared within the religious national trend, that was influenced by the ideas of the Islamic Renaissance (*nahda*). Then, the Association of Muslim Algerian Ulama(a reformist religious tendency) was founded by the charismatic Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis. The members of this association were influenced by Arab Islamic culture and civilization. They devoted their efforts to restore the moral supremacy of Islam and the Arab identity. In parallel, there was revolutionary tendency movement led by the charismatic Messali El Hadj, who inscribed his struggle on the framework of the religion education he received from the Darkawa zawiya. He succeeded in mobilizing Algerians working in France then in Algeria by using religious vocabularies in his discourses.

**Panel 10: The Seven Sleepers Legend in the Mediterranean and Silk Road Areas**

Convenor: Anna Tozzi

Paolo La Spisa: The Seven Sleepers legend, a case of universal hagiography: the Christian Arabic versions

Hatice Kübra Uygur: Seven Sleepers Narrative in Mardin

Nicola Camerlenge: Religious Influences along the Silk Road in Connection to Ashabal-Kahf

Anna Tozzi Di Marco: The Symbolic role of the Dog Qitmir in the Turkish Religiosity to Ashab al-Kahf

Paolo La Spisa: The Seven Sleepers legend, a case of universal hagiography: the Christian Arabic versions

The legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus spread in the hagiographic traditions of East and West among Christians and Muslims alike. The study of this legend touches many aspects such as manuscript traditions, Christian-Muslim relations, history of religions, places of worship and so on. For this reason a team of experts in various fields is needed in order to analyse the legend from all these points of view. In this paper I will present the research Unit project called “Cultures, Texts and Traditions of the Christian East in dialogue with Europe and Islam” (EuTradOr) based at the University of Florence, which has the aim to study both Eastern and Western traditions of the legend. Ignazio Guidi (1884) published some important texts of various Eastern Christian traditions, such as Coptic, Syriac and Ethiopic, but did not provide a complete edition of the Christian Arab texts. A first step of my research aims at preparing the critical edition of the Christian Arab recensions. The first case in point will be the oldest version of the Legend witnessed by two manuscripts: the London, British Library, Or. 5019 (X-XI sec.), ff. 40v-47r and the Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Arabe 6256 (1694-1707), ff. 14v-30r. An edition of the text with an Italian translation has been prepared (La Spisa 2024). A general presentation of the results of this first step of the project will be held by the present proponent.

Hatice Kübra Uygur: Seven Sleepers Narrative in Mardin

The myth of “Ashab al-Kahf”, which means ‘the companions of cave’ in Arabic, is told in many beliefs. Thus, the narrative has many variations. The mausoleums belonging to Seven Sleepers, who has great significance in Christianity and Islam, are seen in different countries. In Qur’an, the verses 9-26 of Surah al-Kahf (The Cave) tells about Seven Sleepers. On the other hand, the details are given in public narratives. Some of the issues that differ in variations are these: how many people were they, if they had a dog, for how many years they stayed in the cave, how many years they lived after they woke up etc.

**Nicola Maria Camerlengo: Religious Influences along the Silk Road in Connection to Ashab al-Kahf**

The theme I intend to address will focus on religious influences along the Silk Road in connection to Ashab al-kahf. Within this geographical and religious context I will try to dissect what can be considered the elements or segments and the relative cardinal sub-elements in both a historical and mythological chronological vision. As a model it will be useful to dwell on the Zoroastrian religion, as the central pivot of these influences. The elements that will be examined are Creation, Angelology and Demonology, the Principle of Good and Evil, the Personification of Good, the Personification of Evil, Individual and Collective Eschatology. The religions that will be mentioned within these elements are Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Gnosticism, Mandeism, Yazidism, Manichaeism and Tengrism. The sub-elements will be described in what are the Points of Influence and in what are the Points of Autochthony of the various religious systems. In particular the theme will be treated in a very specific topic that outlines on Ashab al-kahf and on the influence of the story of the Seven Sleepers in other legends such as that of King Arthur, King Matjaz and the sleeping kings under the mountain. In the latter case, historically, there are many examples both at European and Asian levels. To name a few we find: Kay Khosrow, Genghis Khan, Zhu Youjian, Gesar di Ling, Vainamoinen, Dietrich von Bern, the Armenian Mher, the Georgian queen Tamar and many others. In conclusion, examples will be cited within the various religions relating to sleeping kings or characters waiting to return including anti-heroes and "villains". There are both differences and resemblences between Christian and Muslim narratives of Seven Sleepers. According to the Christian belief, the cave of Seven Sleepers is in Ephesus. While talking about Seven Sleepers who is known as ‘Yemliho and his companions’ among Syriac people, it is also necessary to talk about Mor Abhay, who was one of the significant saints of Theodosius period. Apart from the fact that he was the guardian of 38.000 saints’ bones and 40 Martyrs, Mor Abhay is a saint who witnessed the resurrection of The Seven Sleepers. In this paper, the narrative of Seven Sleepers, which has a significant place in Christian sources that tells about Mor Abhay, in Muslim sources and in public, is going to be evaluated according to the Syriac narrative.

Anna Tozzi Di Marco: The Symbolic role of the Dog Qitmir in the Turkish Religiosity to Ashab al-Kahf

The symbolic role of the dog Qitmir in the Turkish religiosity to Aṣḥāb al-Kahf Anna Tozzi Di Marco (independent researcher) In the Islamic religion the dog has always had an ambivalent position over time, both at the level of the sacred scriptures (Koran and Sunna) and in the popular religiosity. In early Islam, as reported by al-Buhāri, dogs entered and left the place of prayer without the believers being concerned. However, the Prophet Mohammad, as reported in the Sunna, stated that when a dog drank from the container of the faithful, it had to be washed seven times. Although in another hadith he had ordered to kill the dogs, he spared those guarding the properties, fields and pastures, or where they concerned the sphere of domestic utility and work. In the Koranic story of the Aṣḥāb al-Kahf (the Companions of the cave) told in the sura al-Kahf (9-26) the figure of the dog stands out as an innovation compared to the Christian Seven Sleepers legend (V century). Allah placed a dog with its paws stretched out on the threshold of the cave to guard the seven sleepers. In this sura not much is said about this dog but it is extensively mentioned in the writings of the exegetes of the Koran (Tafsir). The dog of the Aṣḥāb al-Kahf is a talking animal, named for some Raqim for others Qitmir, which acts as God's mouthpiece. In the religious experience of Muslims, the names of the seven and of the dog Qitmir were engraved on the talismans to wear or/and to hang on the wall of the house. Furthermore, in some Turkish Aṣḥāb al-Kahf caves (Tarsus and Lice caves) where I have carried out fieldworks, there are rocks which, due to their conformation, symbolize Qitmir, to which various healing rituals in the context of litholatry are connected.

Panel 10: The Seven Sleepers Legend in the Mediterranean and Silk Road Areas

Convenor: Anna Tozzi

Paolo La Spisa: The Seven Sleepers legend, a case of universal hagiography: the Christian Arabic versions

Hatice Kübra Uygur: Variations on the Myth of Ashab al Kahf

Nicola Camerlenge: Religious Influences along the Silk Road in Connection to Ashabal-Kahf

Anna Tozzi Di Marco: The Symbolic role of the Dog Qitmir in the Turkish Religiosity to Ashab al-Kahf

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Panel 11: Conditions of Exercise of Social Sciences in the Middle East

Convenor: Mehrdad Arabestani

Jabbar Rahmani: Native Anthropologists Are Still Key Informants

Yusef Sarafraz: The Suspended Step of the Ethnographer: Autoethnography of Doing Anthropology Between Field and Project in Iran

Moslem Ghomashlouyan: Fighting for Mobility Justice: Practicing Feminism in a Kurdish Border Village in Iran

Iraj Esmailpour Ghoochani: Online Teaching Abroad: Navigating the Traumatizing Signifier of ‘Kharejneshin’ through Contemplative Interactions

Sadegh Shadmani: Decolonizing Social Sciences in Iran, Toward an Anthropological Approach

Saeid Eslamirad: Neither Queer Identities nor Queer Inquiries, Queer Studies and Its Discontents in Iran

Mehrdad Arabestani: Politics of Anthropology in Iran

This panel will explore the complex factors that shape and influence all aspects of anthropological and social science practice in the Middle East. These multifaceted dimensions encompass various areas, such as education, research, recruitment of academic personnel, research funding, fieldwork, culturally significant research and pedagogical materials, academic institutions, academic freedom, and publication. Through critically examining these aspects, this panel aims to deepen our understanding of the challenges and opportunities that arise in conducting social science research in the Middle East.

While some ethnographic studies are widely regarded as politically neutral and innocuous academic inquiries, other topics, such as gender or religion studies, may be viewed as politically charged and sensitive. As a result, these topics often require a more nuanced and careful approach in their investigation and presentation. This necessitates a heightened awareness of the potential political implications of such research and a sensitivity to the cultural and social context in which it is conducted.

Securing an academic position and joining the ranks of privileged scholars is a highly competitive endeavor. While the recruitment process is ostensibly based on the knowledge and capabilities of the candidates, other factors, such as gender, ideological or political commitments, and acidic tribes’ affiliations, can also play a role in determining who ultimately lands the job. This can result in a biased and uneven playing field, where certain candidates are advantaged or disadvantaged based on factors beyond their control.

In recent years, academic careers have become increasingly precarious as market forces have led to the proliferation of short-term contracts and more demanding “academic position” roles. However, the sources of precarity in academia are not limited to market forces alone. Ideological and political motives can also pose a significant risk to scholars, potentially jeopardizing their job security and even exposing them to prosecution. These circumstances can create a climate of fear and self-censorship, where scholars are reluctant to engage with controversial or sensitive topics, for fear of retribution. On the other hand, precarity always comes with anxiety, stress, and jeopardizing academic freedom.

Field workers, whether local practitioner or foreigner, have their own stories about their field experience. These stories run the gamut from building rapport with the people and the dangers of working in areas of heightened emotions to bureaucratic and institutional challenges. These narratives could import genuine insights into our understanding of what it means to do fieldwork in a specific place.

North-South academic relationships, including theoretical and practical aspects of anthropological investigation, from unbalanced (colonial) to collaborative and dialogical relationships, could be another possible topic to be discussed in this panel.

Jabbar Rahmani: Native Anthropologists Are Still Key Informants

In this article, relying on the review of the works of scholars like Morteza Farhadi, Javad Safinejad and Abul Qasem Anjovi Shirazi I try to find an answer to this question. My findings indicate that factors such as language skills for writing in non-Persian languages (especially in English, French, and German languages) along with international social capital in Western academic networks play a key role in the status of these researchers and their mutual access to powerful academic centers. These professors have rarely been consulted by international researchers working in Iran.

As a result of this situation, this group of native anthropologists has a precarios position and sometimes no contribution in the projects of western researchers. Basically, there is no discussion on theories and analyzes of these researchers in the available sources, their works are ultimately used as information sources and they are referred to as a key informant. This issue is not only from the point of view of foreign researchers, but internal researchers of social sciences who have an international presence also refer to these scholars as important informants, and their views and theories are generally not taken into account, read and criticized. As a result, it can be said that this group of native anthropologists, in the end, have the same role as native informants for international researchers, and they are still confined to the role of key informants through their books and articles.

Yusef Sarafraz: The Suspended Step of the Ethnographer: Autoethnography of Doing Anthropology Between Field and Project in Iran

During moments of downtime in the field, where intimacy and privacy among fieldworkers foster open conversations and occasional complaints about the nature of fieldwork, an assistant professor, with whom I had been working as a research assistant, shared with me the following insight: "To establish a strong position within the university and avoid any issues leading to dismissal or conflicts, I must actively pursue numerous projects to expand my network." As a master's student, participating in this project was a strategic move on my part to gain practical field experience and bolster my curriculum vitae. At the University of Tehran, where I completed my bachelor's, master's, and now pursue my PhD, the presence of a designated field has remained, and continues to be, an uncommon occurrence among most professors. Furthermore, our academic programs do not actively encourage fieldwork and ethnography. In essence, conducting fieldwork was not a prerequisite for becoming an anthropologist. The only means available to us for engaging in field ethnography were through undertaking applied projects and completing theses. Having participated in eight such projects, I have come to contemplate the distinct forms and types of fieldwork and ethnography that emerge from such endeavors, which, in my opinion, represent the prevailing mode of conducting ethnographic research in Iran. By reflecting on my own experiences as an anthropology student and research assistant, I aim to explore this specific method of ethnographic knowledge production through an auto-ethnographic lens.

Moslem Ghomashlouyan: Fighting for Mobility Justice: Practicing Feminism in a Kurdish Border Village in Iran

During my fieldwork researching mobilities in a Kurdish border village in Iran (July 2021-June 2022), I came across a group of woman feminists fighting against what I call the “gender grid” in the village and mobility injustice. Nicknamed “fake intellectuals” and having only a few allies among men, their feminism focuses on disseminating knowledge about women’s rights. However, keeping what they shared with me in my writings meant I had to leave out details about many women in the village to protect them from possible retaliation by some of the village’s men or the Iranian state. Therefore, I experiment with alternative forms of knowledge production by including characters from novels and poetry collections already published in Kurdish by one of those feminists inspired by true stories of women in the village to my data. In light of the importance of mobility in Kurdistan, i.e., a commodity in high demand, against the backdrop of what I call the historical colonial lockdown of the Kurds, I argue that we can understand why fighting against mobility injustice in the village is the core of their efforts. Echoing what I learned from them throughout my fieldwork, I generate knowledge with a marginalized community that has the potential to decolonize knowledge production in academia. I also argue that their feminism challenges the postcolonial perspectives on the Middle East.

Iraj Esmailpour Ghoochani Online Teaching Abroad: Navigating the Traumatizing Signifier of ‘Kharejneshin’ through Contemplative Interactions

As an online professor teaching psychoanalysts in Siavoushan Center and students at Tehran University from abroad, I have experienced a growing sense of disconnection and distance from my students. The word "*kharejneshin*" or abroad-resident, has gradually become a traumatizing signifier that regulates everything without being addressed directly but it is always present in the background busy in creating a sort of peculiar silent *hate-speech*.

This paper explores the challenges of conducting anthropological research and teaching online, especially in the Middle East, where cultural and political sensitivities add another layer of complexity to the practice.

Using my experience as a case study, I argue that the traditional methodology of “participatory observation” is continuing to produce its colonial perspective and notwithstanding how problematic they are today, they are apparently continued to be taught in Iranian universities as one of the achievements of humanity in the field of Anthropology. Through the lens of this old methodology every online interaction in which the researcher's physical presence is replaced by virtual interactions falls short. In my presentation I want to propose a new approach based on "contemplative interaction" borrowed from Gerd Becker[[1]](#footnote-1), as well as the *“Honest Sharing”* (Ehrliches Mitteilen) of Gopal Norbert Klein, which emphasizes deep listening, empathetic understanding, and reflexivity. This approach acknowledges the role of the researcher's subjectivity and more importantly, the impact of new online technologies on the research process.

Finally, I will discuss the implications of AI in online teaching and research, and the need for ethical guidelines to ensure that technology serves the interests of learners and educators, rather than replacing them. The question is that how will the academy dance with this huge awakened body of information in a space that is already poisoned with plagiarism? By embracing the challenges of online teaching and the new AI technology, this speech will try to share some field-practices for adopting a contemplative approach to create a more inclusive and collaborative learning environment that transcends physical boundaries. There is a personal component in this, to follow the “Honest Sharing” from this very beginning: I do not want to feel excluded as a 'Kharejneshin' خارج نشین.

Sadegh Shadmani: Decolonizing Social Sciences in Iran, Toward an Anthropological Approach

Despite anthropology being introduced in Iran decades ago, it remains overshadowed by sociology. This is evident in the ratio of doctoral students in sociology versus anthropology, which is 150 to 5. Consequently, many aspects and issues of Iranian society are expressed in sociological language, leaving anthropology students to rely on sociological literature to address their concerns. The small size of the anthropology community, coupled with the lack of experts in various fields, forces anthropology students to adopt the research results of sociologists. However, Iranian sociology is predominantly theoretical and translational. In this presentation, I will demonstrate how the threat of "conceptual colonialism" and "translational sociology" undermines Iran's anthropology and social sciences, based on my experience writing my master's thesis on the relationship between disabled people and disability organizations. Drawing on Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's ideas, I will argue that we must avoid falling into the trap of ideological localization promoted by the government or relying solely on translational sociology in our anthropological studies of Iranian society. Instead, we can find a common language game between anthropologists and the native by studying how Iranians appropriate foreign concepts.

Saeid Eslamirad: Neither Queer Identities nor Queer Inquiries, Queer Studies and Its Discontents in Iran

Gender studies in Iran are synonymous with women's studies, as they exclusively focus on women's issues. This narrow perspective reflects the patriarchal and heteronormative policies prevalent in the country, which deny the existence of queer individuals. Furthermore,  
masculinity and gender minorities are frequently neglected in the field of gender studies. Moreover, universities' dependence on government resources restricts research agenda so that academia is increasingly territorialized as police space as a result. This can entail surveillance, academic censorship, and persecution of scholars for dissenting viewpoints or involvement in queer activism and advocacy. The invisibility of queers in society perpetuates the  
marginalization of queer studies in academia, and the prohibition of queer identity creates additional obstacles for researchers, including limited access to study participants and legal restrictions on publication. However, undertaking queer research risks slipping into  
two opposing camps: replicating an ideological and pathological vision of this community alongside existing policies, or reflecting orientalist conceptions about queer individuals under the guise of human rights discourse. Thus, anthropological inquiry into the Iranian  
queer community must involve a critical examination of queering the existing discourses both in society and academia. This entails confronting and questioning prevailing narratives, assumptions, and stereotypes about Iranian queer experiences.

Mehrdad Arabestani: Politics of Anthropology in Iran

Ethnographic research in a politically charged country like Iran holds profound political implications, as politics pervade all aspects of social and private life. The dominant political discourse revolves around nodal points such as "anti-imperialism," "indigenization," and "moral puritanism," with a cautious view towards foreigners as potential threats to national "security" and political integrity. The "cultural revolution," which sought to Islamize higher education and resist Western influences, aimed to strengthen the "authentic" identity and knowledge. This primarily targeted humanities and social sciences content that could potentially challenge the dominant political discourse.

Consequently, research on topics including ethnicity, religion, social problems, politics, and sexuality, which critically examine official policies or deviate from the central tenets of the political discourse, is considered sensitive and requires a careful approach. This situation not only affects funding but also impacts the choice of research subjects, writing style, publication, and even the job security of academics. Moreover, the involvement of foreign researchers adds another layer of complexity due to the chronic suspicion towards outsiders.

However, perceiving ethnographic practice on sensitive topics solely as a matter of state prohibition or resistance is overly simplistic. Any social system exhibits leaks, while the ideological system endures precisely because it allows partial disidentification with its discourse.

Consequently, the transgression of the "unwritten laws of prohibition" is partially tolerated. In other words, ethnographers and social researchers enjoy a certain degree of permissiveness within a "tolerated zone of violation." Nevertheless, as the authorities reserve the right of investigation, this permissiveness paradoxically engenders a sense of precarity and anxiety among academics. This state of affairs can be referred to as "anxious academic freedom." In this article, we will explore the aforementioned issues based on ethnographic evidence from the academic field.

Panel 12: Research in Progress

Convenor: Dr. Soheila Shahshahani

Every year some of the papers cannot fit in any panel. Some of the papers need more work, some are new and creative as topic or theoretical direction or use of methodology are concerned. So, in one way or the other, while they are totally acceptable papers, they cannot be presented in other panels, and maybe in a few years the topic will catch attention and will form a new topic for research and then it could become an independent session. This last panel of all our Conferences is dedicated to such papers.

Amina Tawasil: Act of Giving, Sisters from a Family of Martyrs and War Survivors

Danila Mayer: Migration to the Origins: A Case Study from Vienna and Western Turkey

Amir H. Moghaddam: The image of the foreign tourist in the mentality of Iranians: an anthropological study

Mahboobe Ghaemi Talab: Discourse Analysis of Extremist Currents (with an emphasis on human security in the teachings of Islam)

Amina Tawasil: Act of Giving, Sisters from a Family of Martyrs and War Survivors

The 1979 Iranian Revolution enabled conservative women previously limited in mobility to partake in building a Shi’i revolutionary state by expanding access to the women’s seminaries unparalleled in the history of Shi’i Islam. I lived in Iran for 15 months to explore what the consequences have been for some of them. Of the eight women I did my research with, five of them were students of the Supreme Leader and over 20 were active in the Basij, the volunteer paramilitary organization, and Jahầde Sầzandegi, the Reconstruction Corps. The sisters, Fatemeh and Hoda, come from a family of martyrs and war survivors, and were seminarian students at Howzeh-ye Kowsar. By virtue of their association with the Islamic regime, they remain faceless for secular Iranians and those who are in opposition to the regime. In this presentation, I draw on their ethnography as students of Howzeh-ye Kowsar and as daughters of a martyr, who saw themselves as vanguards of a state with the maxim to derail western political domination in the Middle East. I pose an alternative look at their lives, by moving analysis away from a dehumanizing narrative, into one that focuses on how they experience the act of giving. I then reposition them within the existing overarching narrative about them for their association with the Iranian government. This paper comes from chapters that were removed from a book project currently under review, “Paths Made by Walking: The Work of Howzevi (Seminarian) Women in Iran,” at the intersection of state, Islam, and education.

Danila Mayer: Migration to the Origins: A Case Study from Vienna and Western Turkey

Migration is always in flow and entails the myth of return:*'*Return is an integral part of the migration experience … and has important political, social, economic and cultural consequences’(Long and Oxfeld 2004:2f.).

Returning 'back home’ to the Middle East is often in context of transnational migration, e.g., after retirement from jobs in 'the West’, and includes the migrants’ experiences and cultural change abroad.

The case study of a third-generation migrant’s return to the region of his family’s origins in Western Turkey is set in the context of the harsher political and economic climate in Austria, and its capital, Vienna.

While the post-Covid economy is in dire demand for unskilled labor, positions in the academic field are few and hard to come by. M., after obtaining an art academy degree and several years’ work experience as an assistant at the academy, had to face the termination of his contract. So, he started planning for his return to Turkey, when his parents had left Vienna for good and migrated back to their town of origin. His decision has as its central motive the longing for new beginnings in the homelands of the past.

His adventurous first two years, related in his own words, are the material of my presentation. As an 'ethnography at a distance’, the methodological issue of analyzing written sources is part of my presentation.

Amir H. Moghaddam: The image of the foreign tourist in the mentality of Iranians: an anthropological study

Iran is a country full of historical, cultural and natural attractions, but it has not had a successful record in accepting foreign tourists and the number of foreign tourists entering this country is not comparable to the number of tourists entering neighboring countries such as Turkey or the UAE. It seems that one of the main reasons for this is inconsistency between the government's view of foreign tourists and the definition of foreign tourists by the Iranians. While the government has no desire or at least no specific plan to accept western tourists due to security reasons and has focused on the development of religious tourism and hosting Shia tourists from neighboring countries, from the point of view of many Iranians, Arabs, Afghans or Pakistanis cannot be considered as foreign tourists and even in many cases they are against the presence of this group of tourists in Iran.

This lecture is based on the document studies that the researcher had, especially focusing on the reflection of the topics related to tourists entering Iran in the media, as well as the field research that is currently being conducted in the north of Iran, where Arab tourists are very interested in being there, seeks to show the reasons and cultural and social contexts of such a contradiction in the view to the foreign tourists in Iran.

Mahboobe Ghaemi Talab: Discourse analysis of extremist currents (with emphasis on human security in Islamic teachings)

Based on the 1994 report of the United Nations Development Program, "human security" refers to a condition where individuals are liberated from the restraints and mental or psychological pressures that have inhibited and restricted their human development. Today, unlike the past, it is not possible to ensure a country's security solely through protecting its borders. Security is no longer defined within the confines of a country's domestic borders, but rather as a global and transnational concept. The emergence of extremist groups and currents all over the world shows that the issue of human security is not only specific to third world countries, but also relevant to developed countries.

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to examine "extremist currents with emphasis on human security in the teachings of Islam", which has been studied from the perspective of discourse analysis. The author has also tried to extract the concepts related to human security from the Quran and present the abundance of verses in this field in the form of tables at the end of the article. It seems that the religion of Islam is a protector of peace, justice, equality, and brotherhood and does not reflect violent ambitions. The Holy Qur'an also speaks about human security and dignity in various cases and emphasizes their importance as the cornerstone of human development.

**Short Biographies**

* **Abidova, Makhirova Akida** is a female Muslim feminist and activist standing against violence against women in Uzbekistan through her active blogging and in the meantime an influencer. She is also curating “Sevimli TV“ (private TV channel ) since 2017, coordingating programs on gender and women in Uzbekistan. She is also a volunteer for the project “Pokiza Insonlar“ which can be followed under: t.me/pokizainson, the projects can also be followed in twitter under: #pokizainson Other volunteer activities include charitable actions to be followed also in twitter: #BizBirgamiz The same action has successfully collected: 744 million soums, as well as food for more than 200 million soums which were distributed to poor families in several regions of Uzbekistan.

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* Afary, Janet holds the Mellichamp Chair in Global Religion and Modernity at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she is a Professor of Religious Studies and Feminist Studies. Previously she taught at Purdue University, where she was appointed a University Faculty Scholar. Her books include: Sexual Politics in Modern Iran (Cambridge University Press, 2009, winner of the British Society for Middle East Studies Annual Book Prize); (with Kevin Anderson) Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism (University of Chicago Press, 2005, winner of the Latifeh Yarshater Book Award for Iranian Women’s Studies); (with John R Perry) Charand-o Parand: Revolutionary Satire from Iran, 1907- 1909 (Yale University Press, 2016), and The Iranian Constitutional Revolution: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Origins of Feminism(Columbia University Press, 1996, winner of Dehkhoda Institute Book Award.

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* Commercio, Michael specializes in Central Asian and Russian comparative politics. Her research focuses on issues concerning gender and ethnic conflict in Kyrgyzstan. Professor Commercio's research has been funded by IREX (International Research and Exchange Board), NCEEER (National Council for Eurasian and East European Research), APSA (American Political Science Association), and the University of Vermont. Her work appears in Central Asian Affairs, Central Asian Survey, Politics and Gender, Politics, Groups, and Identities, Political Science Quarterly, Studies in Comparative International Development, Nationalities Papers, Problems of Post-Communism and Post-Soviet Affairs. Professor Commercio's most book, "Polygynous Marriages Among the Kyrgyz" was published in 2022 with the University of Pittsburgh Press. She is currently working on women's political participation in Kyrgyzstan.

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* Haghani, Fakhri teaches comparative and transnational history of the Islamic, Middle Eastern, and Iranian cultures at Rutgers. She has taught courses with wideranging scopes in methodologies, key theoretical debates and issues of representation and identity in pre-modern and modern West Asia and North Africa. Dr. Haghani has embraced the idea of borders, as fluid, flexible, and nomadic (between languages, identities, cultures, and disciplines) as the thematic framework both of her research and teaching philosophies. Her research interests explore the intersection of gender, aesthetics, critical theory, popular culture, politics, and social and intellectual history of modernism, secularism, and liberalism from the standpoint of visual cultures, shaped by post-colonial discourses. She is working on a book manuscript, which traces the historical roots of the emergence of the "new woman" in Egypt and Iran, as an interlocutor of a visual public sphere, and as symbols, carriers and actors for continuity and change present both in discourses and practices about the nation, social justice, and liberal modernity. Dr. Haghani has an eclectic educational formation, studying between Europe, Middle East, and the US. She holds an advanced degree in Art History from Facolta di Magistero at University of Rome (Sapienza) in Italy, M.A. in Women's Studies and a Ph.D in History from Georgia State University.

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