



ics
Universidad
de Navarra

Institute for Culture and Society



Call for Papers

ICS, University of Navarra, the 14th -15th of December 2018

Title: The Narrative of Islamic violence in History. Creation, artifice and reality.

In the last two centuries, Western colonialism has developed and convinced the majority of the world's cultural areas that the best and strongest state institution is rooted in the ideology of a "national state" and a free-market economy.

With the end of the Cold War the same position has been updated through a wider ideological inspiration based on the ethical "superiority" of the Democratic system, but also on an economic "neo-liberalist" attitude, which in contrast with previous Democratic values, emphasized the disempowerment of the "welfare system" and trade unions (the Reagan-Thatcher model based on the Chicago Boys' theory).

The huge difficulties of the world to adapt itself to this "position" have been seen in the contemporary age and part of the instability of the world's economy has remained deeply related to the "laissez-faire" economic ideology and the increasing abduction of CEOs by "politicians".

In parallel, and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, a "generally" identified Islamic religion in its most conservative and fundamentalist attitude, although exploited in the 1980s during the last military confrontation against Russia in Afghanistan, became, in the popular US narrative and collective imagination, the new enemy.

Its anti-global and anti-Western attitude was depicted, presented and analyzed, with terrorist groups banned while their was ideologically described.

However, was this narrative real or has it been artificially created?

During Post-colonialism, Arab terrorism was unequivocally identified with the Palestinian secular organizations such as al-Fatah, PFLP, Black September etc. However, in the 1990s, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process attempt partially weakened the imagery of the Palestinian threat to world peace, focusing only on Hamas and the Islamic Jihad Movement of Palestine or towards short-lived "state autocratic figures" such as Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic.

However, since the 1970s new-Conservative thought in the USA and with greater impetus after the 1990s, with the "Clash of Civilization theory," has generally identified Islam and its violence as a threat to World Peace.

Even though Islamic global terrorism (al-Qaeda) started to materialize through the terrorist attacks in Kenya and Tanzania (1998), the narrative on a "general" Islamic inability to be part of the world community, their anti-Global inability to believe in a "Plural world", together with their attempt to purify the Middle East from religious minorities, their unfitness to share common – democratic

values, their misogynist behaviour, has been “launched” as something to fight and be annihilated through a new form of “Cultural” colonialism.

This Call for Papers would like to focus on the binomial real vs. artificial imagery of Islamic religious violence referring to historical- religious narratives as expressions of inter-faith violence in different geographical areas of the Islamic world, from *al-Andalus* to the Indian Subcontinent and from the contemporary age to early Islamic centuries.

The Early Arab-Islamic conquests (7th-8th centuries), the anti-Byzantine campaigns in the early centuries (8th-10th centuries), the Crusades, the conquest of Constantinople (1453), the Ottomans’ attempts to conquer Vienna (1529, 1688) or the Battle of Lepanto (1571), the Sudanese Mahdist revolt (1881-1899) etc. have been symbolically identified in the last decades as historically Islamic anti-Western postures.

In parallel, the Quranic “verses of war” have been literally identified as expressions of the tangible foundations of Islamic religious violence against otherness.

The assumption that Islam and Muslims are religiously as well as socially unable to integrate is the “easiest” outcome reached by people through “Islamophobic” content which emerged in continuity with a previous “Orientalist” (E. Said and post-Said studies) and “Occidentalism” (Ian Baruma, Avishai Margalit, 2004) narrative. Anti-Semitism, Islamic Supremacism and anti-Globalization positions have been shaped to be trivially accustomed to Islam.

This call for papers is interested in studying in further depth historical events, Quranic-religious views, understanding of Islamic political thought, new Orientalist- Occidentalism narratives as well as new forms of racism, which have the prominent goal of emphasizing attention on the Islamic capability to be part of the world in antithesis with the common narrative which has arisen in the last three decades.

Papers on the following topics are welcomed:

Guest Speaker: Prof. Fred. M. Donner (University of Chicago)

1. Islam-Christian and inter-religious (anti-Judaic, anti-Zoroastrian etc.) violence in History, their concrete as well as invented narrative (7th-19th centuries)

- The Early centuries of Islam
- The Crusades and their invention (Tyreman, 1998)
- The historical phase of the Gunpowder Empire
- Colonialism and anti-Colonialist struggles (18th-20th centuries)
- Muslims and non-Muslim historians who have written on inter-religious violence or its contrary in the *Dar al-Islam*

Guest Speaker: Prof. Mehdi Azaiez (KU Leuven University)

2. Islam and the “Verses of War”, from literary to historical-critical understanding

- Quran and the “verses of War”, the identification of the enemy
- The verses of War and its narrative over the centuries (7th-20th)
- Qital, Jihad, Harb etc. Arabic terminology on war in the past and in the present
- Islamic religious thought and analysis of specific authors

Guest Speaker: Dr. Andrea Mura (Goldsmiths, University of London)

3. Orientalism, Occidentalism and the “Clash of Civilizations”, the creation of a narrative of the conflict

- Ed. Said “Orientalism” and its cultural heritage, post-Orientalism and new- Orientalist positions
- The adoption of Western concepts and positions and their customization to Islam, the ongoing “Occidentalism” attitude and narrative
- The “Clash of Civilizations” narrative: Islamophobia, War on Terror, anti-Islamic Neoconservative movements and ideology
- Political and religious thought on the “perennial” state of world- conflict

Guest Speaker: Dr. Marco Demichelis (ICS, University of Navarra)

4. The Academic crisis of the Humanities and the “Engineers of Jihad’s theory” (2016). The advent of Islamic religious fundamentalism as a cultural factor

- New-Age and the Crisis of the Humanities; academic hyper-specialization and historical common understanding
- The Islamic world and its Academic system, the lack of Humanities and the advent of religious ignorance (O. Roy, La Sainte ignorance, 2013)
- “Bad teachers” new figures, ignorant politicians and the global economy. Islamic political thought and religious fundamentalism

Conclusions: Prof. John Tolan (Université de Nantes)

Schedule:

Task	Deadline	Description	Other Info
Submission of singular Abstract	30 th April 2018	Abstracts max 500 words	mdemichelis@unav.es lovalle@unav.es
Notification of Acceptance/Rejection	31st May 2018	Via email	
Opening-Final date of registration	1st June -31st July 2018	Within conference website	
Final Programme	31st August 2018		
Pre-finalized paper circulation	30 th October 2018	Among all participants (per section 1,2,3,4)	
Conference	14 th -15 th December 2018	Unav Campus, in Pamplona	

The Conference proceedings (the most interesting contributions) will be published in an eminent Academic journal of Islamic/Middle Eastern Studies the following year.

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Marco Demichelis (Torino, 1979) is Marie Curie Fellow (IF, 2016) in Islamic Studies and History of Middle East within the ICS at the University of Navarra. He previously worked as Research Fellow within the Dept. of Religious Studies at the Catholic University of Sacred Heart in Milan (2013-2016) and as Adjunct Prof. in History of Islamic World at the University of Turin (2010-2012). He recently published for Gorgias Press (eds. with Paolo Maggiolini), *The Struggle to Define a Nation: Rethinking Religious Nationalism in the Contemporary Islamic World*, while a monographic work entitled *Salvation and Hell in Classical Islamic Thought: Can Allah Save Us All?* is in press for Bloomsbury (2018). A second edited work, entitled: *Narratives of Islam-Christian and Gender violence in contemporary age. A plural perspective*, published by OLMS, Religion and Society series, is forthcoming. He also published several essays in Italian: *Il Pensiero Mu' tazilita* (PhD Diss., Torino: Harmattan, 2011), *Storia dei Popoli Arabi. Dal Profeta Muhammad al XXI secolo* (Torino: Anankelab, 2ed. 2015), *L'Islam Contemporaneo. Sfide e Riflessioni tra Modernità e Modernismo* (Torino: Anankelab, 2016), *Etica Islamica. Ragione e Responsabilità* (Milano: Edizioni Paoline, 2016). His academic articles have appeared on *Oriente Moderno*, *JNES*, *Parole de l'Orient*, *ASQ*, *Archiv Orientalni*, *ASR*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*.