



Islamic Authority Figures in Changing Contexts - Speakers

Saturday 13 September 2014, Queen Elizabeth House, 3 Mansfield Road



Sufyan Abid

Research Student, Department of Anthropology, School of Global Studies, University of Sussex

Sufyan Abid did his MPhil in Anthropology from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. He has submitted his PhD thesis titled 'Islam Reform, Piety and Charity among Muslim Businessmen and Entrepreneurs in Birmingham' at University of Sussex, UK. He will be defending his PhD thesis in mid-October 2014. Sufyan explores the dynamics of Muslim Charity Organisations in Britain and their connections with various local and transnational reformist Muslim individuals and groups. His main research interest is looking into how practicing Islam in everyday life in Britain is being influenced by reformist Islamic trends from across the world and how it is shaping and influencing practicing Islam in everyday life across the Muslim World. Recent conference papers include: "Purifying and multiplying the profits: Motivations, aspirations and practices of doing charity and philanthropy among Birmingham Muslims" presented at the international conference on *Why Charity? Politics and Ethics of Charity* at University of Brighton, UK on 7-8 July 2014; "In search of utopian 'role models': Public performance of piety and moral lives of Birmingham Muslims" presented at South Asia Anthropology Group Conference 2014 on *South Asian Utopias* held at Brunel University, London on 3-4 July 2014; and "Muslim Charity Organizations in Birmingham and Arab Spring" presented at Second Annual Conference on Arab Philanthropy and Civic Engagement: Takaful 2012 held at The American University in Cairo, Egypt on 10-12 June, 2012.

Yahya Barry

Research Student and Outreach Assistant, The Edinburgh Alwaleed Centre, University of Edinburgh

I picked up my interest in Religious Studies during the final year of college in London. After taking a year out to do voluntary work in Gambia, I did my BA at the Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia (2009). After that, I did a PGDip in Religious leadership at the Muslim World League Institute in Mecca (2011) followed by an MA in the Religious Roots of Europe at the University of Copenhagen (2013) and then a second MA in Religion in Peace & Conflict at Uppsala University concurrently with the first year of my PhD at Edinburgh. My current research focuses on the influence dynamics between Islam and the European Far Right although I have research interests in almost all aspects of contemporary Islam. I currently run two projects: <http://www.creationsofpeace.com/> and <http://www.livedislam.com/>

Laurence Deschamps-Laporte

Research student, Modern Middle Eastern Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford

Laurence Deschamps-Laporte is a DPhil candidate in Modern Middle Eastern Studies at the Oriental Faculty at the University of Oxford. She holds an MPhil in Development Studies (Oxon) and a BA in International Studies and Islamic studies (UNC-Chapel Hill), and has studied Arabic at the University of Damascus. Her current research focuses on the Da'wa Salafiyya, Egypt's main Salafi movement and on its political party Al Nour. She has previously studied the role of Islamic traditional healers (Marabouts) and their relationship to international development and public health organizations in Mali and Senegal. She is passionate about deciphering the relationships that link religious leaders and development organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as understanding how Islamic social movements emerge and new Islamic leaders gain legitimacy. Her most recent publications and conference papers include: "From the Mosque to the Polls: The Emergence of the Al Nour Party in Post-Arab Spring Egypt." *New Middle Eastern Studies (BRIMES)*, no.4 (2014).; "The Da'wa Salafiyya: Waltzing Between Purity and Politics." University of Sussex, Brighton, 2014.; "The Implosion of the Salafi Political Project: The Da'wa Salafiyya and Al Nour in Post-Revolutionary Egypt." DPhil Seminar Series, Middle East Centre, Oxford, 2014. She also wrote about the political crisis in Mali for Democracy in Africa (<http://democracyin africa.org>).



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Arndt Emmerich

Research Student, Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford

Arndt-W. Emmerich is a doctoral researcher in the Department of International Development and St Antony's College at the University of Oxford. In his DPhil thesis, Arndt analyses current political shifts within India's Islamist movement and minority politics over the last 20 years, using an ethnographic case study approach in South India. He worked in India for a non-government organisation from 2005 until 2007, focusing on juvenile justice. Due to this experience, Arndt has developed long-lasting interest in studying social change, conflict and development in South Asia. He also worked and travelled widely in Myanmar, Pakistan, Iran and various countries in East - West Asia and speaks in Hindi and Urdu. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology (Essex) and a Master of Philosophy in Development Studies (Oxford).

Najia Mukhtar

Research Student, Department of Politics and International Studies, SOAS

Najia will be starting the fourth year as a PhD student in Politics at SOAS. Her research traces the motivations and ideas of Muslim actors critiquing religious "extremism" in a context of high levels of religious violence in contemporary Pakistan. She has an MSc in Comparative Politics from LSE and a BA Hons in Economics from the University of Cambridge. Najia is one of the founding members of MUSA (the Muslim South Asia Research Forum). MUSA is a student-led, interdisciplinary research network that brings together PhD students and early career researchers working on any aspect of Muslim society in the countries of South Asia and their diasporic communities.

Anneke Newman

Research Student (Social Anthropology), School of Global Studies, University of Sussex

Anneke Newman is a fourth year ESRC-funded PhD candidate in social anthropology at the University of Sussex. At the intersections between anthropology, development studies and comparative education, her doctoral research explores the lived relationship between secular and Islamic schooling, parental decision-making, and young people's educational trajectories in a community in northern Senegal. She has presented at the 5th European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) in 2013; the UK Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET) in 2013; a symposium on Islamic Education Reform in West Africa while on a visiting fellowship to SciencesPo, Bordeaux (2013); the Ngender Conference at the University of Sussex (2014); and the Religion as Resource Summer School at the University of Tübingen (2014). She has convened a panel and workshop on the theme of 'Islamic Education in Africa: Changes, Continuities and Contestations' at the African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) biennial conference (September 2014).

Dr Nathan Spannaus

Research Officer, CSIAS, University of Oxford

Nathan Spannaus is a Research Officer at University of Oxford's Department of International Development with the project *Changing Structures of Islamic Authority and Consequences for Social Change*. He is a graduate of McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies and Harvard University's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and he has previously held positions at Princeton University and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. He specializes in Islamic intellectual history, and his research focuses on modernity and secularization in the Islamic world and their impact on forms of religious and social thought, particularly from the mid-eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries. His work has appeared in *The Muslim World, Arabica* (forthcoming), *Islamic Law and Society, Ab Imperio* and the *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*. His monograph, *Preserving Islamic Tradition: Abu Nasr Qursawi and the Beginning of Modern Reformism*, is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.



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Christopher Pooya Razavian

Research Student, Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies, University of Exeter

My research is focused on the relationship between autonomy and tradition in Shi'ism. I argue that greater attention needs to be paid to the discursive nature of autonomy and tradition within Shi'i thought. My PhD was under the supervision of Professor Sajjad Rizvi at the University of Exeter. I also have spent many years in Iran at both the Islamic Seminary and the University of Tehran. My last conference paper was titled "Autonomy and the Internalization of Shi'i Tradition" presented at the Religion in Public Life Conference at the University of Exeter.

Dr Latife Reda

Research Consultant (Islam and Labour Law), International Labour Organization, Beirut Regional Office for the Arab States and Part-time Instructor in Political Thought, Lebanese American University, Beirut Campus

Latife Reda holds a PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Her thesis is in essence a critical reading of Khomeini's discourse, which led the 1979 revolution in Iran. The thesis presents the bends and uses of Islamic teachings in Khomeini's discourse. She worked at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut, taught comparative politics and research methods at the Universidad del Norte in Colombia and worked as a teaching fellow at SOAS. She is currently a research consultant at the International Labour Organization (ILO) and teaches political philosophy at the Lebanese American University. Her research interests are Arab and Islamic political thought, medieval Islamic thought, critical theory, and comparative politics and philosophy of the Islamic world and Latin America. Her current research looks at the concept of labour in Islam and the socio-economic aspects of *hijra*. She has contributed with a chapter to the edited book *A Critical Introduction to Khomeini* published by Cambridge University Press, and her paper on international labour law and Islamic teachings for the ILO will be published later this year.

Matluba Anvar Wakefield

Research Student, School of Global Studies, University of Sussex

I am awaiting the completion of my PhD in Social Anthropology at the University of Sussex, School of Global Studies. I have extensive research experience in the field of Islamic Studies and I am currently working towards the publication of my thesis, 'Women and religious practices in Uzbekistan: transformation and changes in the capital of Uzbekistan in the light of the post-Soviet period'. I have gained professional experience throughout my academic studies from the completion of methodology courses whilst doing my MA in Development Studies and throughout my PhD in Anthropology. I conducted fieldwork in the Ferghana Valley while working at the Institute of History, Tashkent. I also have professional research experience gained from the Centre for Social Research 'Expert', Tashkent, and experience of conducting research within the Uzbek state archives. I will start teaching at the University of Sussex (September) and I am extremely keen to continue working on Islamic Studies, especially on different 'Islamic' practices and life cycle rituals in Islamic societies. I presented a paper on 'Transformation and changes in the capital of Uzbekistan in the light of the post-Soviet period, *Marriage practices in Uzbekistan*' at the 2011 European Society for Central Asian Studies (ESCAS) Conference in Cambridge (20-22 September, <http://www.escas.org>).



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Ganjar Widhiyoga

Research Student, School of Government and International Affairs, University of Durham

Junior Lecturer, Department of International Relations, Slamet Riyadi University, Surakarta, Indonesia

I am working on a research project, titled “Islam and globalization: understanding the umma as an Islamic global society.” The main argument of this project is that the teachings and rituals of Islam instilled a global consciousness to the early Muslims and motivated them to integrate into a certain type of global society. My research interest are the interaction between Islam and politics and international relations in Southeast Asia. Recent publications and conference presentations include “Norms of War in Islam,” *Jurnal Politik Profetik*, State Islamic University (UIN) Alauddin Makassar, September 2014 forthcoming; and (with C. Damayanti) “The Effects of Democratization and Decentralization in Fostering International Cooperation in Indonesia,” in *New Landscape of International Politics*, Association of International Relations Departments of Indonesia, 2011; “The impact of marginalizing heroines in Indonesia’s nation-building process”, presented at “Identity, Nation and Nationalism in a Changing World” Graduate conference, ENNIN, University of Edinburgh, May 22, 2014; and “Indonesia’s Role in Building More Just Global Health Governance”, presented on Foreign Policy Discussion Forum organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 20, 2012.