



Program in Near & Middle Eastern Studies / the Graduate School of Social Sciences (G3S)
University of Basel
Swiss National Science Foundation Research Project “Futures Interrupted”

Call for Applications

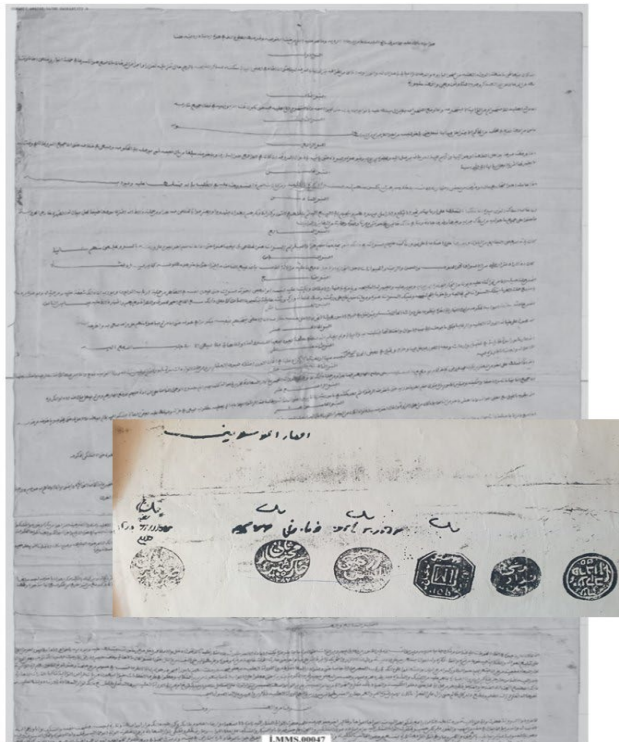
12th Annual MUBIT Doctoral Workshop in Late and Post-Ottoman Studies in Basel
25 – 26 October 2024

The Ottoman Governance of Diversity

with

Dr. habil. Nora LAFI

Senior Research Fellow at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin



Petition of the notables of Tripoli (Libya) to the Sublime Porte. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Dossier Trablus al-Gharb. Original dimensions: 170 × 55 cm. s.d.

Organized and hosted by
Prof. Dr. Falestin Nâili



About

The Annual MUBIT Doctoral Workshop in Late- and Post-Ottoman Studies is a **two-day workshop in Basel, Switzerland**, designed for international doctoral students conducting research on the Near and Middle East. The workshop consists of a two-day, intensive program in which select students work closely with invited experts. Successful completion of the workshop entitles students to 3 ECTS credits.

This year, we are thrilled to host **Dr. habil. Nora Lafi** of the Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin, to lead our 12th annual workshop on the topic of **“The Ottoman Governance of Diversity.”** For more information on the content of the workshop, see below. The 2024 workshop will be held **in person** between **25 October (12:00 p.m.) and 26 October (13:00 p.m.) at the University of Basel.**

Application

Currently enrolled Ph.D. students who wish to attend the workshop should write an email to Falestin Naili (falestin.naili@unibas.ch) with a **short text** summarizing their academic background and explaining how this workshop fits in to their research interests (max. 400 words, in third-person singular, in English). Applicants should also provide a **CV** (PDF, in English). Up to 15 applicants will be selected for participation in the workshop, based on relevance of their research project and a demonstrated ability to contribute constructively to the discussions.

The deadline for applications is 6 September 2024. Applicants will receive an answer regarding their participation by 10 September 2024, at the latest. The workshop is **free of charge**. Unfortunately, funding for travel and lodging is currently unavailable, but participants will have lunch and dinner together as part of the programme. We will provide successful applicants with information about accommodation in Basel.

Requirements for Successful Participation

Participants are entitled to 3 ECTS points for successful participation. Participants will receive by mid-September a list of readings to be completed prior to the workshop. Successful participation at the workshop is subject to the mandatory completion of the required readings in advance and active participation in the workshop discussions.





The Ottoman Governance of Diversity

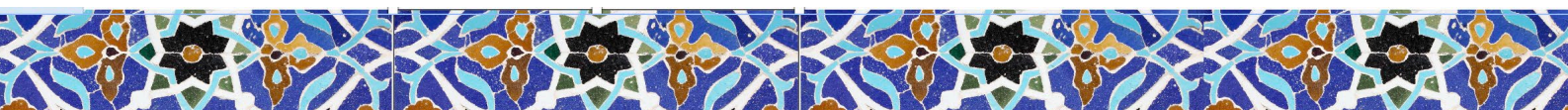
Course Description

Diversity in the Ottoman Empire was part of the basic features of daily life. Not only provinces of very different cultures were part of this political construction, with populations of very different backgrounds, but also at the local scale, diversity was very often an important element, with cities and villages assembling very different groups. Almost nowhere in the Empire, there was anything that could be seen as homogeneity. Diversity was everywhere, at every scale, and it was part of the very nature of the Empire since its beginning. Coexistence was a condition for the very existence of the Empire and diversity was dealt with as part of the basic elements of governance. There were numerous recognized groups, of which we should not have a static vision, as identities were ductile. The Ottoman Empire was in no way a Turkish empire. It was also characterized by a remarkable mosaic of languages. The Ottoman language (*Osmanlı*) was of course the dominant administrative idiom, but at the local scale, local languages were always respected, even for imperial administration. Almost all Ottoman subjects, of all social *milieux*, also lived in an atmosphere of multilingual realities with one language for family affairs, another one for commerce or administration and another one again for cultural or religious practices.

One should of course be wary of irenic visions of the coexistence between all those groups, as the Ottoman centuries have been marked by numerous episodes of conflict sometimes implying a communal dimension, and as the Ottoman *ancient régime* system was based upon the governance of hierarchized differences and not upon equality. That notwithstanding, coexistence was in the Ottoman context the object of a complex and efficient system of regulation. The understanding of this system poses a certain number of conceptual challenges, pertaining not only to the interpretation of the nature of the Ottoman governance of diversity, but also of the nature of the Empire itself. It is the aim of this workshop to discuss such dimensions, through an examination of various situations which allow us to decipher the system of governance and the various challenges it faced.

Workshop Sessions:

- 1 Diversity in (of) the Ottoman and the Complex Regimes of Historicity of its Interpretation: Reflections on the Historiography
- 2 Defining the Early and Classical Ottoman Governance of Diversity: Aleppo as a Case Study
- 3 Diversity in an Age of Reforms and Foreign Interferences: 19th c. Tunis as a Case Study
- 4 The Post-Ottoman Destruction of Diversity: A Critical Discussion (Algeria, Tunisia, Greece, Turkey, the Balkans, Palestine)

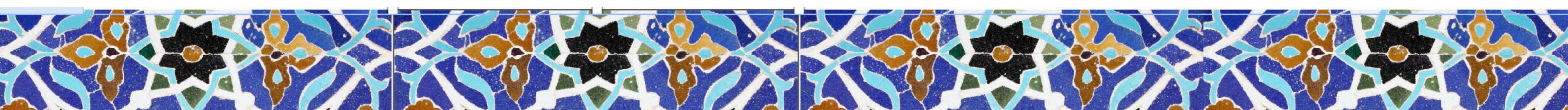




Dr. habil. Nora Lafi

[Nora Lafi](#) (Istres, near Marseille, 1965) is a historian ([PhD](#), 1999; Habilitation, 2011) who specializes in the study of the Ottoman empire and of the societies of the Middle East and North Africa. She works as a Senior Research Fellow at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin. She has been chairing from 2020 to 2023 the international and collaborative research project HISDEMAB of the Leibniz-Association on the theme of the historicity of democracy in the Arab and Muslim Worlds. She now leads, together with Suaad Al-Ghafal the [Ghadames Heritage Project](#), based at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin and funded by the [Gerda Henkel Stiftung](#). She is also a [Privatdozentin](#) at the Freie Universität of Berlin ([Graduate School Muslim Culture and Societies](#)). She was in 2020 a [Senior Fellow](#) of the Max Weber Kolleg at Erfurt University (Research Group Religion and Urbanity) and in 2023-2024 a Senior Research Fellow at MECAM Tunis. She co-chairs the [Cities Compared: Governance, Consultative Mechanisms and Plurality](#) project within the [EUME](#) programme (Forum Transregionale Studien).

Nora Lafi is the author of “[Diversity and the Nature of the Ottoman Empire](#)” (in Vertovec, ed., Routledge, 2014). Also among her publications (selection): [Esprit civique et organisation citadine dans l’empire ottoman](#) (Brill, 2019); [Municipalités méditerranéennes](#) (ed., Berlin, 2005); [Urban Governance Under the Ottomans](#) (co-ed., 2014, Paperback 2017); [Urban Violence in the Middle East](#) (co-ed.); “[The ‘Arab Spring’ in Global Perspective](#)” (2017); “[Daily Life Spatialities and Temporalities of Religion in Ottoman Tunis](#)”, *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* (2023, 25-1, p.309-333).





Further Information

For more information on the MUBIT program, including reports on previous workshops, please visit:

<https://nahoststudien.philhist.unibas.ch/en/phd/mubit/>

For more information on the Program in Near and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Basel, please visit:

<https://nahoststudien.philhist.unibas.ch/en/>

Previous MUBIT Workshops

2013: *Turkish Nationalism: Approaching Ottoman and Islamic Legacies beyond Ethnicity, Secularism, and Westernism*, with Prof. Erik J. Zürcher and Prof. M. Hakan Yavuz.

2014: *Arab Nationalism: From Ottoman Empire to Colonial Mandates*, with Prof. Hasan Kayali and Prof. Dr. Michael Provence.

2015: *A Modern World in Flux. Studying Migration, Refugees, and Settlement Regimes from the Middle East and Beyond*, with Prof. Isa Blumi.

2016: *The Main Intellectual Currents in the Late Ottoman Empire*, with Prof. M. Şükrü Hanioglu.

2017: *From Unionism to Kemalism: Social and Political Transformation of Turkey*, with Prof. Asım Karaömerlioğlu and Prof. Ahmet Kuyaş.

2018: *Digital Media, Islam, and Politics in the Middle East*, with Dr. Akın Ünver.

2019: *Values and Status Negotiation: Media in the Middle East and North Africa*, with Dr. Roxane Farmanfarmanian.

2020: *Arab Marxism: The Global History of Revolutionary Movements in the Middle East in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, with PD Dr. Manfred Sing and Miriam Younes.

2021: *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, with Dr. Berk Esen.

2022: *Palestine Versus the Palestinians? Writing Palestinians into History*, with Prof. Beshara Doumani.

2023: *States and Statelessness in the Post-Ottoman Middle East*, with Prof. Laura Robson.

Contact

Prof. Dr. Falestin Naili
MUBIT Organizer, 2024
Program in Near and Middle Eastern Studies
Maiengasse 51 / 4056 Basel
falestin.naili@unibas.ch
+41 61 207 1272

