

Trento
19-21 November, 2018

Religion in the Innovation Landscape

**Final Conference of the
2018 FBK-ISR Series
“Religion and Innovation”**

The FBK-ISR conference Religion in the Innovation Landscape concludes the 2018 series Religion and Innovation. Developing the action research work pursued by the Center since the adoption of the mission on religion and innovation in 2016, the final conference will continue to engage scholars of religion in a sustained dialogue with innovation researchers and practitioners. The conference, which will be held in English, is open to the public.

Against the backdrop of the three-dimensional model of *religion in innovation* – *innovation in religion* – *religion of innovation* introduced in FBK-ISR's mission statement, the aim of the final conference is to consolidate the exploration of the manifold interactions between religion and innovation in contemporary societies, as well as to envisage novel perspectives for future research:

- *Innovation in religion*: how is innovation understood, experienced and practiced within religious traditions and communities of faith or belief (new religious movements, novel interpretations of sacred texts, novel forms of organising religious practices, new forms of religious leadership)?
- *Religion in Innovation*: how do religious traditions and communities of faith or belief contribute to innovation in the areas of culture and society, science and technology, politics and the law (religious communities as agents and drivers of innovation processes, religiously grounded values and beliefs as motivating factors of cultural and social innovation, the role of religious actors in shaping research and development in the field of science and technology)?
- *Religion of innovation*: has the vocabulary of innovation itself become a vehicle for (quasi-) religious discourses? Has innovation itself turned into a belief system and become a sort of religion (religious or quasi-religious attitudes and practices in relation to new technologies and technological progress)?

In a multi-disciplinary spirit, three conference sections will explore the emergence of European Islam (*innovation in religion*), the relation between religion and spirituality on the one hand, Post- and Transhumanism on the other (*religion of innovation* and *innovation in religion*), and the role of religious communities in questioning and reshaping consolidated understandings of democracy, the public sphere, and the distinction between public and private law (*religion in innovation*).

Section 1

The Emergence of European Islam*

Programme

Islam is often perceived as an immutable religion, unchanging in time and space. Since the classical era, however, it has continuously proven to be anything but static and monolithic. Over the centuries, Islam has adapted to the different historical and geographic contexts in which it arrived through military conquests and migrations. Significant and continuous debates within Muslim communities around the concept of innovation in religion (*bid'ah*, in Arabic) have produced a rich tradition of reform and change in Islam, which regards religious beliefs and practices as well as the interpretation of sacred texts. Today, this tradition of change seems particularly alive and productive. This conference section intends to analyse the continuous tension between tradition and innovation in Islam, focusing on contemporary Islamic thought and communities in the European context. The growth of Islam in Europe, as well as in the rest of the "West", offers an emblematic field of observation for innovations in lived religion and the capacity of religious groups to become drivers of innovation in the socio-cultural fabric.

9.30 **Welcome and Introduction**

Valeria Fabretti, Fondazione Bruno Kessler

Boris Rähme, Fondazione Bruno Kessler

9.40 **European Islam: Approaches of Study and Theological Trends**

Mohammed Hashas, LUISS University, Rome

10.10 **Discussion**

10.25 **"Transmissions", "translations", "betrayals": Italian Muslim youth between tradition and innovation**

Renata Pepicelli, University of Pisa

10.55 **Discussion**

11.10 Coffee break

11.30 **British Muslim Culture as a manifestation of European Islam**

Sadek Hamid, Independent Scholar

12.00 **Discussion**

12.15 **Questioning the authority and leadership of imams**

Elena Arigita, University of Granada

12.45 **Discussion**

13.00 Lunch buffet

* In collaboration with the University of Pisa, Department of Civilizations and Forms of Knowledge

Section 1

The Emergence of European Islam

Abstracts

European Islam: Approaches of Study and Theological Trends

Mohammed Hashas

This paper-presentation outlines some major aspects of the emerging European Islamic thought, or what is termed here interchangeably as “the idea of European Islam.” While Islam in Europe is a centuries old fact, it is Islam in Western liberal Europe post-World War II that has become a controversial topic and reality over the last few decades. Socio-anthropological and political-security approaches have dominated the study of Islam and Muslims in Europe since the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1978-79, and there is hardly any serious work that examines European Islam from a theological-philosophical perspective. This paper, which is the result of a long period of study of the topic, as recently demonstrated in *The Idea of European Islam* (Routledge, 2018), first outlines the major trends in the study of Islam and Muslims in Europe, and subsequently presents some major theological advances of the emerging European Islamic thought, based on three axes of the study of religion: world axis, society axis, and individual axis. To each of these three axes correspond some theoretical and theological advances made by some prominent European Muslim theologians, thinkers and public intellectuals.

“Transmissions”, “translations”, “betrayals”: Italian Muslim youth between tradition and innovation

Renata Pepicelli

Although the presence of Islam in contemporary Italy is a rather recent phenomenon in comparison with other European countries, the number of Muslims has grown significantly in the last two decades. Nowadays they represent 4.2% of the Italian population and descendants of Muslim migrants - with or without Italian citizenship - are reshaping the public sphere as well as the Islamic scene in the country. With their multiple, intersectional and transnational belongings, they are drivers of innovation both in the Italian society and in the Islamic communities. Faced with the general repositioning of Islam in the private and public sphere, young people position themselves in multiple ways. “Transmissions”, “translations”, “betrayals”, “adaptation”, “innovation” characterize the generational passage of Islam from parents to children. After drawing a general picture of Muslim youth in Italy, this paper analyses religious practices, narratives and political activism within an Islamic transnational framework. Thus, discussing young Muslims’ attitudes towards the Islam of first generation migrants, the legacy of XX century Islamic thought in their lives and the context in which they grown up, the paper focuses on the contribution of Italian Muslim youth to the establishment of the nascent European Islam.

British Muslim Culture as a manifestation of European Islam

Sadek Hamid

Over the last two decades, global transnational influences and their interactions with local processes have led to multiple constructions of indigenised Western Muslim identities. This has manifested in both the reproduction of global paradigms and articulations of organic religious formations that have been described as “European

Islam." In this presentation, I trace the emergence of a nascent British Muslim culture developed by second and third-generation artists and activists. This trend is crafting new Muslim subcultures in the arts, music, media and fashion by synthesising their religious values with a British flavour. The formation of these innovative cultural products is an example of work-in progress that has not occurred without controversy and one which is sometimes challenged by other critical voices within Muslim communities. The visibility of these new encultured British Muslim identities reflect patterns across the globe in which a growing, young, educated middle class is shaping the tastes and consumption patterns for those that aspire to be faithful, successful, and "cool." I illustrate this argument with a set of case studies that reflective of these imaginative tensions and point to interesting future developments.

Questioning the authority and leadership of imams

Elena Arigita

The terrorist attacks to Madrid in March 11, 2004 were followed by a thorough examination of the Muslim population of Spain: where they lived, prayed, meet together, how were their attitudes, behaviours... Particularly relevant was the public debate on the measures that should be taken to prevent a new type of violence coined as "the Islamic threat". With attacks and riots taking place in other European cities that were rapidly categorize as the same type of violence, the Muslim population gained a new visibility marked by suspicion and public fear. In the months that followed the attacks of Madrid, the Muslim leaders of Spain and particularly imams were compelled to take a public position, a role as representatives of Islam and mediators with the host society, with outcomes that showed not only their heterogeneity but particularly their difficult position and public exposure in a climate of hostility and suspicion that was new to them. This paper presentation will examine how the politics of Islam have influenced the transformations of Muslim leadership in Spain. I am particularly interested in looking at how the State narrative on Islam and Spain and its legal framework shape the forms and the limits of representation in the public space.

Section 2

Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Religion and Spirituality

Programme

Posthumanism and Transhumanism are among today's most influential paradigms of thought concerning the future of humanity. Due to their close association with technoscientific thought and innovation in, for instance, the fields of artificial intelligence, robotics, nanotechnology and biomedicine, it is sometimes claimed that both paradigms are inherently non- (or even anti-) religious. At the same time, however, it has repeatedly been noted by scholars that post- and transhumanist discourses are suffused with religious and/or spiritual vocabularies. This conference section will address the question of whether religious and/or spiritual vocabularies, imageries and ideas figure as merely rhetorical devices in trans- and posthumanist discourses or rather serve to communicate religious and/or spiritual attitudes, contents and claims that are central to Posthumanism and Transhumanism.

- 16.00** **Welcome and Introduction**
Valeria Fabretti, Fondazione Bruno Kessler
Boris Rähme, Fondazione Bruno Kessler
- 16.10** **Posthuman Divine**
Francesca Ferrando, New York University
- 16.50** **Response to Francesca Ferrando**
Boris Rähme, Fondazione Bruno Kessler
- 17.00** **Discussion**
- 17.45** **Conclusion**

Section 2

Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Religion and Spirituality

Abstract

Posthuman Divine

Francesca Ferrando, New York University

This talk aims to reflect upon future evolutions of religions and their related narratives from a critical and generative understanding of Posthumanism and Transhumanism, on one side, and of our ancient sources, on the other. We will address questions such as: can God be represented as a cyborg? Could robots and avatars be prophets? Is internet a suitable setting for a posthuman theophany? From the matrifocal symbols of the Goddess in prehistory to the patriarchal tones of the Abrahamic God, this talk argues that in future theologies the notion of "God" may lose any human features. Anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism are still deeply ingrained in the narratives of the majority of religions alive today, which might have to evolve in a future of humans co-existing with robots, sentient AI and bio-technological chimeras. To these new believers, anthropocentric, biocentric and sexist doctrines may not seem adequate to manifest their relation to God. Such trends are already present, as contemporary post-industrial societies are currently witnessing a shift in the way the divine is perceived, by addressing technology not only as a site of self-identity, but also as a possible path towards enlightenment.

Section 3

Religion and Innovation beyond the Public/Private Divide

Programme

Leaving their traditional confinement to the private sphere behind, religious practices are reacquiring a central role in the life of individuals and collectives. At the same time, international migration calls for increased reflection on the political and juridical accommodation of conflicting normativities. These dynamics deeply challenge consolidated understandings of democracy, the public sphere, individual and group rights, common/private goods, etc. This conference section is dedicated to a discussion of the innovative potentials of ideas that respond to the ongoing weakening of the modern foundational binary public law vs. private law. States are increasingly no longer the only legitimate sources of legal normativity. Many social collectives become the bearers of a “private autonomy” that makes them the producers of bodies of public law, more or less independent from state law. The hypothesis this workshop takes up is that the conventional conceptual grids are not well-equipped to account for this phenomenon, as most of them tend to reduce it to normativity “in the shadow of law”. On the contrary, groups of various types (such as religious, cultural, labour-based, community-based ones) are autonomous sources of a “law of the private subjects” that does away with the traditional chain of law-making and legitimation. This key transition calls for a wide-ranging interdisciplinary discussion of how a neither-private-nor-public law opens up to the rearticulation of the existing forms of political organization along the lines of multiple, coexisting forms of mediation.

9.00 **Welcome and Introduction**

Valeria Fabretti, Fondazione Bruno Kessler

Boris Rähme, Fondazione Bruno Kessler

9.10 **A different kind of contractualism: the deposit**

Paolo Napoli, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris

9.50 **Discussion**

10.10 **Ma(r)king cont(r)acts**

Mariano Croce, Sapienza Università di Roma

10.50 **Discussion**

11.10 Coffee break

11.40 **What Kind of a Collectivity is a Church? A Legal Inquiry**

Michele Spanò, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris

12.20 **Discussion**

12:40 **Post-Secularism and the Shifting Boundaries of Identity**

Petr Agha, Czech Academy of Sciences

13.20 **Discussion**

13:40 Lunch buffet

Section 3

Religion and Innovation beyond the Public/Private Divide

Abstracts

Post-Secularism and the Shifting Boundaries of Identity

Petr Agha, Czech Academy of Sciences

For decades religion appeared to be, if not fading from the public purview, at least to have an increasingly non-controversial presence there, while the toleration of different private beliefs was seen as an unproblematic allowance. In our world today, religion seems to have once again become a topic of multiple public contestations - religion is often presented as a pernicious force with deleterious social consequences. Public manifestations of religion, can now be regarded as unacceptable, while on the other hand, religious identity is the subject of legal protection. What is paradoxical is the coincidence of a rise of religious influence with a continued decline in religious practice and participation and religious impact upon many aspects of daily life. Coupled with the emptying of politics and the rise of globalisation which make collective political projects very difficult to build and sustain, actively religious projects can become one of the few genuine public (political) ventures. One consequences follow from this: the public symbolic presence of religion its interweaving with civic life, no longer appears so innocuous. The same consideration applies to the rights to introduce such symbols into any neutral, secular context. What happens then with the notion of secularism as one of the main organizational principles? So how should we understand the religious dimensions of political conflict? Religiously inspired conflict is best subsumed under political conflict, on this view, religious claims may mask other, more important causal factors; religion is a causal texture of the political conflict.

Ma(r)king cont(r)acts

Mariano Croce, Sapienza Università di Roma

Conventionally, the faculty of making contracts has been regarded as a basic prerequisite for the bestowal of rights on individual rational agents. In this traditional frame, a contract is the agreement between two or more (private) parties which the law recognises and enforces by governing the rights and duties arising from it. As argued by the founding fathers of legal institutionalism, who problematised the division between public law and practice-based (private) sources of law, the separation of contracts and law is contingent and artificial. It was basically meant to shore up a state-based and public-law-based conception of law modelled on the politico-judicial framework of the modern state. Although this bipartite model has largely become the standard imagining of the legal order, this paper makes the claim that the law at present can serve a better purpose. By inverting the role of maker and marker, the legal practice can incline towards the ethnographic practice of marking the relations constructed by the agents as they set up their own normative contexts. The paper makes the case for a kind of legal practice that traces connections and, by doing so, lends itself as a specialised jargon for the consolidation of the networks these connections set up. The law therefore becomes an inhabitable space where the agents who make contacts among themselves negotiate the regulation of their nodes based on contractual models or modules. The nature of these modules makes sure that different networks

are compatible as they try to adapt their singular nature to the abstractness of the legal form and the legal language. In this novel frame, the distinction between the public and the private withers away, while the role of the political changes considerably.

A different kind of contractualism: the deposit

Paolo Napoli, EHES

In my presentation I will try to outline a historico-conceptual analysis based on primary sources in order to describe the emergence of an institution – the Church. These documents give us a ‘real-time’ picture of a social phenomenon around the 1st century AD that allows for a reflection on the way people and material and intellectual constructions converge towards the achievement of a defined goal: the social institution of a legally grounded religion. To reach this goal the three pseudopaulinian Epistles to Timotheus and Titus rely on a typical construction of Civil Roman Law : the deposit. Every christian should guard the faith as does the depositary with an item someone entrusted him. Christian “faith” and Roman “good faith” are eventually entangled. I will try to explain the technical implications of this Roman Law transplant into theological corpus. Finally I will suggest a revisited assessment of the motto “In God we Trust” which appears on american currency.

What Kind of a Collectivity is a Church? A Legal Inquiry

Michele Spanò, EHES

In the aim of pursuing a vast research project on how law composes and fashions collectivities, I will tackle the discussion of what kind of a collective is a Church from the point of view of the law. I will deal with all the conundrums, running from Roman law until today, concerning the production and the legal performances of such a special collectivity. I will take into account the techniques of personification, the problems tied to liability, as well as the special qualification of the legal acts performed by such a collectivity. We might see, in the end, that an institutional approach to Church as a legal order could prove to be a good answer for a long, and historically rich, series of legal predicaments.

Petr Agha is director of the Centre for Law and Public Affairs, a researcher at the Institute of State and Law, Czech Academy of Sciences, and a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law of Charles University in Prague. He graduated from Queens University Belfast and University of Antwerp. He publishes internationally in the field of human rights, sociology of law and political science. Petr Agha is the editor of *Law, Politics and the Gender Binary* (Routledge) and *Human Rights Between Law and Politics. The Margin of Appreciation in Post-National Contexts* (Hart/Oxford)

Elena Arigita holds a Ph.D. in Semitic Studies at the University of Granada. After graduating, she moved to Cairo where she was language lecturer at the Universities of Cairo and Al-Azhar (1994-98). Her PhD thesis, published as *El islam institucional en el Egipto contemporáneo* (Granada, 2005), got the extraordinary doctorate award of the doctoral programme and focused on the adaptation of the traditional religious institution and religious authority to the State in contemporary Egypt. From 2004 to 2006 she was postdoctoral fellow at ISIM (Leiden) and from 2007 to 2012 she was senior researcher at Casa Árabe (Cordoba), where she was responsible for the programme *Muslims of the West*. In 2012 she joined the University of Granada where she currently holds a position as assistant professor. She is the Director for Internationalization at the International School for Postgraduate Studies and a member of a research group on Contemporary Arab Studies. Her research interests and publications deal with religious authority and institutionalization of Islam, and the politics of inclusion and exclusion of Islam in Europe. She is currently PI at the University of Granada of RETOPEA (Religious Toleration and Peace), a project funded under Horizon 2020.

Mariano Croce is Associate Professor of Political Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy of Sapienza Università di Roma. He is also Research Associate at the University of Antwerp, where he co-conducts the research project “Multi-parenthood, kinship terminology and the role of law: A critical analysis”, and Research Fellow at the Centre for Law and Public Affairs of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. His primary research interest lies in the relation between the social world and the language of institutions with a view to understanding how the constitution of social groups, as well as their socio-political struggles, are to be read against the languages of the institutional fields where these groups operate. His articles have appeared in various international scientific journals, such as *Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence*; *Cultural Critique*; *Law & Critique*; *European Journal of Political Theory*; *European Journal of Social Theory*; *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*; *Ratio Juris*; *Social & Legal Studies*; *Sociological Theory*; and others. Among his recent books: *The Politics of Juridification* (Routledge 2018) *Undoing Ties: Political Philosophy at the Waning of the State* (Bloomsbury Academics 2015, co-written with A. Salvatore).

Francesca Ferrando, Ph.D., teaches Philosophy at NYU-Liberal Studies, New York University, USA. Dr. Ferrando was the recipient of the Philosophical Prize “Sainati”, with the Acknowledgment of the President of Italy in 2014. She has written extensively on the subject of the posthuman. Her book “Postumanesimo Filosofico e le sue Alterità” was published in Italian by ETS in 2016. The updated English edition “Philosophical Posthumanism” is being released by Bloomsbury in 2019. Ferrando was the first speaker to give a TED talk on the topic of Posthumanism, called ‘Humans, Cyborgs, Posthumans’. US magazine ORIGIN named her one of the 100 Top Creatives making change in the world.

Sadek Hamid is an academic and writer who have held teaching and research positions at the University of Chester, Liverpool Hope University and most recently at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies at Oxford University. His research interests focus on British Muslims, Muslims in Europe and America and he has written extensively on Muslim young people, Islamic activism, religious radicalisation, inter-faith relations, religion and public policy. He is author of *Sufis, Salafis and Islamists: The Contested Ground of British Islamic Activism* (I.B Tauris, 2016) and co-author of *British Muslims: New Directions in Islamic Thought, Creativity and Activism* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018) editor of *Young British Muslims: Between Rhetoric and Realities* (Routledge, 2018) and co-editor of *Political Muslims: Understanding Youth Resistance in a Global Context* (Syracuse University, 2018).

Mohammed Hashas is an Adjunct Professor at the Department of Political Science of LUISS Guido Carli University of Rome, and at the American University of Rome. He holds a PhD in Political Theory from LUISS (2013). He was a Research Fellow at Babylon Center for the Study of the Multicultural Society in Tilburg, the Netherlands (2010), the Center for European Islamic Thought at the University of Copenhagen (2011 – 2012), a Visiting Research Fellow at Oxford Center for Islamic Studies (2017), and a Guest Scholar at Leibniz-ZMO Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin (2017). Besides various journal papers, Hashas has authored *Intercultural Geopoetics: An Introduction to Kenneth White's Open World* (Cambridge S. Publishing, 2017), and *The Idea of European Islam: Religion, Ethics, Politics and Perpetual Modernity* (Routledge, 2018), and has co-edited *Islam, State and Modernity: Mohamed Abed al-Jabri and the Future of the Arab World* (Palgrave, 2018), and *Imams in Western Europe: Authority, Training and Institutional Challenges* (Amsterdam UP, 2018).

Paolo Napoli is Directeur d'études at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris where he teaches Histoire des catégories et des pratiques normatives. Initially interested in the juridical-political thought of M. Foucault his main field of interests revolves around a genealogy of administrative rationality, with particular reference to secular institutions (the police) and religious. In this sense, the corpus of the theology of primitive Christianity, of medieval and modern canon law and of pastoral care delimit the sources on which it currently works. Main publications: *Naissance de la police moderne* (2003); *L'istituzione oltre il soggetto-persona*, «Rivista critica del diritto privato», 3, 2017; «Il deposito. Genealogia di un archetipo amministrativo», in *Il culto del capitale. Walter Benjamin, capitalismo e religione*, 2014; «Foucault et l'histoire des normativités», *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, octobre-décembre 2013; «Indisponibilità, servizio pubblico, uso. Concetti orientativi su comune e beni comuni», *Politica e società*, 3, 2013; «Ratio scripta et lex animata. Jean Gerson et la visite pastorale», in L. Giavarini (dir.), *L'Écriture des juristes (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles)*, 2010.

Renata Pepicelli is Assistant Professor of “History of Islamic countries” and “Islamic Studies” at the Department of Civilization and Forms of Knowledge of the University of Pisa. Her current research interests include social and cultural history of contemporary North Africa, gender issues, youth, social movements, Islam in Europe. Among her publications: “Femminismo Islamico. Corano, diritti, riforme” [“Islamic feminism. Quran, rights, reforms”], Rome, Carocci, 2010; “Il velo nell'Islam. Storia, politica, estetica” [“The veil in Islam. History, politics, aesthetics”], Rome, Carocci, 2012; “Giovani musulmane in Italia: percorsi biografici e pratiche quotidiane” [“Young Muslim Women in Italy: biographical journeys and daily practices”], Bologna, Il Mulino 2015 [co-edited with I.

Acocella]; Cittadinanza, transnazionalismo, pensiero islamico. *Giovani musulmani in Italia e nuove forme di attivismo* [“Citizenship, transnationalism, Islamic thought. Muslim youth in Italy and new forms of activism”], Il Mulino 2018 [co-edited with I. Acocella].

Michele Spanò is Associate Professor in Law at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris. Before joining the EHESS, he was Research Fellow in Private Law at the University of Turin. He is Faculty Member and Deputy Academic Coordinator at the International University College of Turin. He has also held academic posts at the University of Rome, Columbia University in NYC, and the Institute for Historical Studies in Naples. He is the author of *I soggetti e i poteri. Introduzione alla filosofia sociale contemporanea* (Rome 2013), and *Azioni collettive. Soggettivazione, governamentalità, neoliberalismo* (Naples 2013). He co-edited with Alessandra Quarta, *Beni comuni 2.0. Contro-egemonia e nuove istituzioni* (Udine 2016) and *Rispondere alla crisi. Comune, cooperazione sociale e diritto* (Verona 2017). He edited and translated the Italian edition of Aihwa Ong’s *Neoliberalism as Exception* (Florence 2013) and he is the editor of the Italian edition of the works of the French legal historian Yan Thomas: *Il valore delle cose* (Macerata 2015) and *Fictio legis* (Macerata 2016).

**Fondazione Bruno Kessler
Centre for Religious Studies**

Via Santa Croce 77

I-38122 Trento

T. +39 0461 314 238/232

mail | isr.fbk.eu

web | segreteria.isr@fbk.eu