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PLURIEL
3RD INTERNATIONAL
CONGRESS

Islam & Otherness

BEIRUT, LEBANON, 14-15 APRIL 2020

CALL FOR PAPERS

True acceptance of otherness in a globalized and pluralistic world allows us to measure the capacity of religious, philosophical or political thought to fit in and assume the contemporary societal dynamics inherent to globalization (Taylor). This acceptance is not devoid of resistance that stem from the rise of entrenched identity expressions founded in particular on a vision of equality that is based on the "similar" which assumes a historical-ethnic (Rosanvallon)¹ or religious identity. At the same time, the philosophy of interculturality and the policies of multiculturalism consider and support pluralism and multiculturalism (Fornet-Betencourt, Parekh, Taylor, Kymlicka, Tully). These lead to the reassessment of minority cultures, the rewriting of the history of solidarity, and the re-examination of the relationship between the center and the periphery within a national territory and in international relations.

The 3rd International Congress of PLURIEL "Islam and Otherness" aims to address this societal movement from the perspective of Islam and beyond identity-based resistance. It will thus focus on how Islam can be considered a 'resource' (Jullien) in order to approach the other in the globalized world. In this context, what is the other's specific thought that is being expressed to ground and support the dynamics of postmodernity? How is the other presented and brought together within contemporary Muslim movements and the policies of Muslim states to think differently about the legal evolution of personal status and equal civil rights? What thought-provoking strategies are being implemented to go beyond the classical frameworks established as orthodox principles, which are still maintained today to approach the dialogical relationship with the other? How does the rise of an inclusive or pluralistic Islamic thought lead non-Muslim theologians to renew their view of the Islamic reality, particularly with regard to Jews, Christians and atheists?

Three approaches will make it possible to address the reality of otherness in Islam in terms of resources.

1. Pierre Rosanvallon, *La Société des égaux*, Paris, Seuil, 2011.

GEOPOLITICAL APPROACH

In medieval era, Muslim jurists and theologians developed a theory of international relations based on the distinction between two geographical areas; *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* against a supranational conception of the *Umma* (Gardet). The rise of the modern state, the adoption of peaceful principles between nations, however, have overshadowed this classical conception.² How are international relations approached nowadays from an Islamic perspective? What kind of epistemological and methodological principles Muslim thinkers call upon to develop a contemporary Islamic theory of international relations, and what are their different expressions? How can Islam contribute to the creation of the international law? What role do internationally oriented Islamic institutions play in this reshaping of relations between nations?

DIALOGAL APPROACH

In the *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, al-Aṣṣ'arī noted that 'after the death of their prophet, people divided over many things. Some have been misguided, while some others have broken away. Thus, they became distinct groups and disorganised parties, although Islam brings them together and gathers them all'³. How does the recognition of intra-Islamic diversity make it possible to consider otherness beyond Islamic belonging? Does not the inclusive dimension lead to a refusal or even an affiliation of non-Islamic otherness? What types of transcendence, unicity and quest for the Absolute can they introduce as a space of alteration?

From our viewpoint, it also raises the question of how the other can be considered an input to Muslim thought (in Muslim majority countries) and in what context the other is regarded as an asset. In the cases of where Muslims constitute a minority, what is expected from the other is it equally granted to the other in a Muslim majority context? From a historical and theological perspective, we will raise the issue of the othering of Islam, to highlight the socio-political process that depicts how Islam has become the other, and in what ways this othering is mobilized by contemporary political, social and religious figures.

From these new approaches and examinations of otherness in Islam, it will be necessary to raise the question how they fit in and participate in founding and considering interfaith dialogue, and what the non-Muslim theologian can infer from them. To what extent does the approach of the other in Islam challenge the theologian and make it possible to elaborate a Christian theology of Islam?

CITIZENSHIP APPROACH (MUWĀṬĀNA)

In 2012, Wael Hallaq published *The Impossible State*⁴ in which he argues that the Islamic state in a modern conception of the state is impossible and contradictory because in that modern State context the political and legal aspects are emphasised, while the ethical and

2. Procter J.Harris (ed.), *Islam and international relations*, London, Dunmow, 1965.

3. Al-Aṣṣ'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, edited by Muḥammad Muḥyi al- Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Beirut: al- Maktabah al- 'Aṣriyyah, 1995, p. 34, cité par Ahmad Shahab, *What is islam?*, p. 5.

4. Wael Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2012.

moral dimensions that are inherent to all Islamic governance are dismantled. However, 'there is no Islamic identity without ethics [of *ṣarī'a*]' (p. 70). In non-Muslim countries, what are the main principles of reconciliation between Islam and liberal citizenship? How important is citizenship? Which concept of citizenship is being promoted? In these countries where Muslims are in a minority situation, do moral pluralism, solidarity with non-Muslims and equality recognition constitute cyclical tactics or do they respond to a fruitful legal creativity, beyond the *fiqh* of minorities (*fiqh al-aqalliyāt*) (March)⁵? To what extent does neo-liberal thinking within Islam provide a basis for a peaceful coexistence and influence between different cultural and religious fields⁶ and how does Islam contribute to redefining their contours? In contrast, however, to what extent do some movements reject any form of cultural adaptation or interaction within non-Muslim countries, out of loyalty to a tradition or ideology observed in Muslim majority countries. In the light of concrete historical examples, it will be necessary to consider the possibility and implementation of a renewed Islamic normativity around the notion of citizenship.

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5. Andrew F. March, *Islam and Liberal Citizenship. The Search for an Overlapping Consensus*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press, 2009.
 6. Najia Mukhtar, « Citizenship as Inclusion and Exclusion: Arguments against Religious Violence from Contemporary Pakistan » in Heydar Shadi (ed.), *Islamic Peace Ethics: Legitimate and Illegitimate Violence in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2017 p. 113-138.

The Congress will be held in English, Arabic and French.
Your Abstracts should not exceed 2,000 characters, including spaces.
All proposals should be sent electronically to
pluriel@univ-catholyon.fr before or on
September 10th, 2019.

Notification of acceptances of papers will be made in October 2019.

If you have any questions, please contact us at pluriel@univ-catholyon.fr

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