

Call for papers Religious charisma in the MENA and its diasporas: authority, succession, and devotion(Feb 23)

I'd like to announce the CFP "Religious charisma in the MENA and its diasporas: authority, succession, and devotion". Papers may be submitted in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese until 23/02/2024.

Max Weber (1978[1921], 215-242) defines "charisma" as a certain personal quality that is considered extraordinary or supernatural by others, an exemplary or even God-gifted power which gives the individual concerned a "leader" status. On the one hand, the legitimacy of a charismatic authority stems from free recognition on the part of those under the authority, that is, followers or disciples. More importantly, the latter must believe it is their duty to recognize the genuineness of the authority and devote themselves to the leader. On the other hand, the reason for this legitimacy rests on evidence of "divine grace", which must reflect the sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of the leader and the normative patterns, as well as the order, prescribed by him/her. Such evidence may even be expressed in the personal successes and prosperity of followers/disciples. In other words, the recognition of the leader's charismatic authority requires proofs of his charismatic qualification. If the leader is unsuccessful or incapable to prove his extraordinary powers for long or, more importantly, if his leadership fails to benefit his followers, his charismatic authority may vanish away. Also, in accordance with Weber, as charismatic authority and the social relations involved are strictly personal and emotionally charged, charismatic community faces the "problem of succession" with the disappearance of the leader. According to Weber's model, charismatic authority would be the direct antithesis of both rational/bureaucratic and traditional authorities, thus, alien to everyday routine structures. In order to guarantee the survival of the community, charismatic authority would have a tendency to "routinization" and would eventually become either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both. In turn, charismatic community, which would be an organized group based solely on an emotional form of communal relationship, lacking hierarchy, a system of formal rules, and rationality, would eventually disappear as such as it would "routinize" into an institution. However, Eisenstadt (1968) suggests that "charisma" and "organized routine" should not be taken as opposing realities, for they intertwine in concrete situations. Moreover, contrary to Weber's claims, ethnographies have shown that charismatic authority, as well as charismatic relations, endure as ordinary phenomena in many social and religious contexts (Lindholm 1993; Pinto 2013). Charismatic domination and bureaucratic domination may coexist in different levels and with more or less intensity in a variety of institutions, whether religious, secular or state-like institutions (Shils 1965). Furthermore, ethnographies conducted in religious contexts in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as its diasporas, have encountered different configurations of charismatic communities, movements, and

relations, which produce diverse forms of emotional manifestation and religious experience (Chagas 2013; Dumovich 2018; Pinto 2016).

We invite papers with ethnographic approaches to charismatic authority and/or community in religious contexts in the MENA and its diasporic communities that refine our understanding of the variety of forms of religious commitment and belonging, as well as emotional attachment to a religious leader, community or movement, in order to establish a productive dialogue between the various perspectives and ethnographic contexts.

According to the evaluation criteria imposed on scientific journals, half of the total number of selected articles may have PhD candidates as single authors, and the other half must have at least one PhD as co-author. All submitted articles will be peer-reviewed by external specialists. In order to promote a productive theoretical and methodological debate, we welcome empirically grounded proposals that address, preferably, the fields of Anthropology or Social Sciences, respecting the exogeny parameter in relation to UFF.

Organizers: Gisele Fonseca Chagas (UFF) and Liza Dumovich (KU Leuven).

PS: As there are more than one open call to special issues, authors should mention the correspondent title ('Religious Charisma') in the field 'Comments to editors'.

Proposals should be submitted by 23/02/2024

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Submission guidelines can be found

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