



# Abrahamic Traditions, Patriarchy & Sustainability

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

Monday, February 8, 2021 • 8:45 AM to 2:30 PM • Virtual

A UConn Abrahamic Programs for  
Academic Collaboration in the MENA Region Workshop  
Learn more at [www.abrahamicprograms.uconn.edu](http://www.abrahamicprograms.uconn.edu)

# WORKSHOP CONCEPT NOTE

Are nature, the environment, sustainability, and ecology feminist issues? What is the link between different structures of patriarchy and the damage being done to planet earth? What solutions can activists working within the different Abrahamic religious and secular traditions bring from a feminist perspective to the pressing environmental and sustainability questions of our time? While eco-feminism has been a framework since Françoise d'Eaubonne coined the terms in 1974, its use has been limited within the full spectrum of the Abrahamic religions and more particularly the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region. This workshop aims to bring together perspectives from Abrahamic religious and community traditions on the relationships between gender roles, patriarchal social and political arrangements and environmental sustainability. Participants are invited to address any theme broadly related to how women movements within various Abrahamic traditions and institutions contribute new pathways for environmental sustainability, equity, and ecological balance through imagining new ways of organizing the family, society, and life on earth. Some questions to consider are as follows:

1. How women's movements within different traditions contribute to environmental sustainability;
2. The challenges that eco-feminists and other groups face in their struggles for social and environmental justice;
3. Covid-19 and its effect on women and gender roles from an ecological perspective;
4. Experiences of women from different traditions working on projects related to economic, social, and/or environmental sustainability;
5. Gender-based Violence and its relation to economic and environmental sustainability;
6. Policy and planning issues related to ecological justice, sustainability and women.

## **ORGANIZERS:**

Nawal Ammar, Dean, College of Humanities & Social Sciences, Rowan University

Hind Ahmed Zaki, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and Literatures, Cultures, and Languages, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, University of Connecticut

# PROGRAM | MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2021

## 8:45 AM WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Hind Ahmed Zaki, Ph.D., University of Connecticut, United States

## 9:00 AM SESSION I – THE INTERSECTION OF ETHNIC, SPIRITUAL, GENDER & SEXUAL IDENTITIES ON THE PATH TO ECO-JUSTICE

**Discussant:** Nawal Ammar, Ph.D., Rowan University, United States

**“Ecofeminism and the Resurgence of the ‘Spiritual’ in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic”**

Meriem El Haitami, Ph.D., Université Internationale de Rabat, Morocco

**“What is the Interplay Between Ecologism and Feminism in Morocco? A political comparison of two normative struggles”**

Yusra Abourabi, Ph.D., Université Internationale de Rabat, Morocco

## 10:45 AM BREAK

## 11:00 AM SESSION II – NEGOTIATING GENDERED RELIGIOUS SPACES: SISTERHOOD IN STRUGGLE

**Discussant:** Hind Ahmed Zaki, Ph.D., University of Connecticut, United States

**“Sisterhood Ethics: Lessons from Female Jewish-Muslim Activists in the UK”**

Lea Taragin-Zeller, Ph.D., Cambridge University, United Kingdom and Technion, Israel

**“Motherhood, Mobilization, Resistance and Reclaiming: Jewish Religious Women’s Feminist Activism in Israel”**

Tanya Zion-Waldoks, Ph.D., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

## 12:00 PM BREAK

## 12:15 PM SESSION III – ISLAMIC AND JEWISH NOTIONS OF ECOFEMINISM

**Discussant:** Catherine Keller, Drew University, United States

**“Ecofeminism and the Religion of the Market in Islamic Societies”**

Nawal Ammar, Ph.D., Rowan University, United States

**“Is There Gender Equity in the Islamic Environmental Ethic? An Introspect based on Islamic Sources”**

Noha El-Bassiouny Ph.D., Hagar Adib, Ph.D., and Hadeer Hammad, Ph.D., German University in Cairo, Egypt

**“Against Sustainability: A Critique from Jewish Ethics”**

Laurie Zoloth, Ph.D., University of Chicago, United States

## 1:45 PM CLOSING – THE WAY FORWARD

**Discussant:** Nawal Ammar, Ph.D., Rowan University, United States

# PROCEEDINGS

8:45 AM

## WELCOME & PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS

Hind Ahmed Zaki, Ph.D., University of Connecticut, United States

Professor Hind Ahmed Zaki opened the workshop, noting that it had been in the making for a long time. This workshop started as a talk between Dean Nawal Ammar, Vice President Daniel Weiner, and Ahmed Zaki thinking about the effect of COVID-19 on world affairs, particularly regarding women, gender, and patriarchal societies. Ahmed Zaki, Ammar, and Weiner thought that it would be interesting to bring in a group of scholars working on different intersections of women's rights, ecofeminism, environment, and religion to engage on these issues. For the purposes of discussion, Ahmed Zaki made the distinction to refer to the Abrahamic faiths as traditions, noting that people within Islam, Christianity, and Judaism could interpret their respective religions in different ways. Ahmed Zaki pointed out that while issues of ecofeminism are not often present in discussions of the Middle East and North Africa region, the group knows that through current scholarship and research, an exciting agenda is emerging when it comes to issues of patriarchy, ecofeminism, and women's rights within the Abrahamic traditions and the MENA region. Ahmed Zaki opened the floor for participants to introduce themselves, stating that every member of the group had been selected for their research and ability to think of these issues from different interdisciplinary traditions broadly, and also from within the MENA region.

Vice President Daniel Weiner gave additional opening remarks, as the organizer of the UConn's Abrahamic Programs for Academic Collaboration in the MENA Region initiative more broadly. As a professor of geography who specializes in the political economy of development, he stated that he believes patriarchy is a metanarrative that is powerful and important. He thanked Ahmed Zaki and Dean Nawal Ammar for their facilitation of the discussion.

9:00 AM

## SESSION I – THE INTERSECTION OF ETHNIC, SPIRITUAL, GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITIES ON THE PATH TO ECO-JUSTICE

### **“ECOFEMINISM AND THE RESURGENCE OF THE ‘SPIRITUAL’ IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC”**

Meriem El Haitami, Ph.D., Université Internationale de Rabat, Morocco

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted religious behavior in significant ways. Since then, the fabric of congregation and ritual praxis, and the geographies of faith have been reshuffled, as worship services have gone online and became accessible to larger publics, and calls for collective prayers and meditations to heal the earth became a dominant theme. This was particularly marked by the emergence of an 'ecofeminist spirituality' that challenges systemic patriarchy and the disconnection from the environment, and generates a 'marketplace' of new spiritual beliefs and revisited practices. Such emergent spiritual norms use a wide range of physical and virtual spaces, and are marketed as products or services that include retreats, spiritual counseling and coaching, self-care products, and health paradigms that are made accessible to larger publics and bring to the fore ecological discussions. This article therefore examines the resurgence of the spiritual in the context of the pandemic and the subsequent connection between embodied healing and social change, and particularly explores whether the rise of 'ecofeminism' carves a new feminist consciousness that envisions new ways of knowing and change-making, or

rather essentialises the connection between women and nature by emphasizing spirituality, holistic knowledge, and restoring harmony with nature.

**“WHAT IS THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN ECOLOGISM AND FEMINISM IN MOROCCO?  
A POLITICAL COMPARISON OF TWO NORMATIVE STRUGGLES”**

Yousra Abourabi, Ph.D., Université' Internationale de Rabat, Morocco

Norms refer to the set of agreed and non-formal, but also sometimes formal and legal rules within a society. They are based on beliefs, values, customs or habits. They can be reproduced, ignored or contested. In any case, the more normative sets and subsets there are, the more a subject or phenomenon grows, even if it is contested. This is precisely the case of ecology and feminism, both considered as major Western themes of the 21st century and paradoxically carried by marginal epistemic communities in the form of opposition to the dominant norms. Linked by intersectional theories, these two subjects are also carried by eco-feminist movements that are even more marginal than the two movements taken separately.

In the case of Morocco, these two sets of norms are not yet fully represented. The mobilization of young people for the climate is almost non-existent, compared to that of German high school students. Those of women for the right to abortion are even more timid, compared to Mexican or Spanish women. Environmentalist political agendas are weak, compared to those of the European political parties. Moroccan feminist political agendas remain confined to associations or "gender budgeting" in niche areas. Economic stimulus packages during the COVID-19 crisis did not take into account the climate threat or domestic violence, although several countries, including China, have taken proactive measures in this regard.

A constant parallel can thus be drawn between environmentalist and feminist movements in Morocco: almost fifteen years after the reform of the Family Code, gender equality is struggling to make progress for three fundamental structural reasons. The first is the population's lack of information about their rights, due to a lack of state education and self-education. The second is the lack of awareness of what constitutes gender bias and its lack of political prioritization. The third is a defeatist representation of the outcome of a complaint or a lawsuit because the authorities (police, judge) may favor patriarchal interests, legitimized by political interpretations of Islam.

In the field of the environment, these three reasons seem to apply: people are generally not informed or do not know enough about the impact of environmental degradation; consequently awareness of what constitutes an ecological problem and its importance in relation to other political priorities is still low. Finally, when this problem is identified, the chances of winning a case can be discouraging due to the lack of case law on the subject and the resistance of traditional actors.

The aim of this presentation is to show that, although there is no eco-feminist movement in Morocco, a comparison of the ecologist movement on the one hand and the feminist movement on the other shows that the dynamics they face are of the same nature. To this end, we plan to carry out a comparative study of these two movements and to analyze the way in which they can co-construct themselves.

**DISCUSSION**

Led by Nawal Ammar, Ph.D., Rowan University, United States

Ammar noted the connection between both El Haitami's and Abourabi's presentations that the disruptiveness of the outside world has taken on interesting specific cultural implications within the MENA region. Regarding Abourabi's presentation – both feminist and ecological movements are present in Morocco, however it is the

ecofeminist movement that is limping. Those who look at ecology are privileged—they are often more educated and have access to information. The feminist movement on the other hand seems underdeveloped in comparison. Therefore, one can draw conclusions about the availability of information and how sectors suffer from this lack of access. Moreover, the patriarchal interest of the law must be dealt with, as well as the hindrance of certain norms that are imported into the region by Western culture and societies. Ammar discussed how El Haitami's presentation shows the disruption of technology that has moved something that we haven't been able to move for years, that is, the religious way we deal with norms. These norms are moving in a direction that is more spiritual, feminist, egalitarian, and more connected to the environment. Ammar reference an example from the presentations—yoga—though yoga is a strange foreign import, it has come in and has adapted to the needs of Moroccan upper middle class, and perhaps a trickle down beyond yoga that could infuse spirituality. Ammar noted that Islam has a spirituality component that has been ignored in the face of efficiency.

11:00 AM

## SESSION II – NEGOTIATING GENDERED RELIGIOUS SPACES: SISTERHOOD IN STRUGGLE

### **“SISTERHOOD ETHICS: LESSONS FROM FEMALE JEWISH-MUSLIM ACTIVISTS IN THE UK”**

Lea Taragin-Zeller, Ph.D., Cambridge University, United Kingdom and Technion, Israel

Female interfaith activists in the UK have developed new, and somewhat surprising, alliances. Amidst growing instances of antisemitism and Islamophobia in the UK, female Jewish-Muslim alliances reflect a reconfiguration of power dynamics among two minority groups, who have been at the heat of xenophobic discourse, in everyday life and within mainstream British politics. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted among female Jewish and Muslim activists in the UK (between 2018-2020), I examine how Jewish and Muslim women form grassroots alliances to bring forward a better future, while negotiating differing notions and political interests. I demonstrate the ways Jewish and Muslim women join forces to fight inner-communal patriarchy and British xenophobia, while cultivating innovative ethics of social activism. Building on the case study of Jewish-Muslim female alliances, this paper offers a fresh perspective on the imaginaries and limitations of mutual responsibility.

### **“MOTHERHOOD, MOBILIZATION, RESISTANCE AND RECLAIMING: JEWISH RELIGIOUS WOMEN'S FEMINIST ACTIVISM IN ISRAEL”**

Tanya Zion-Waldoks, Ph.D., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Dominant patriarchal constructions of motherhood are often imposed to discipline and limit women's activism in the public sphere. Yet around the globe and across generations, motherhood has been a powerful catalyst for women's mobilization around various causes, such as environmental justice, anti-racism, education, anti-war protests etc. Such movements are often conceptualized as forms of “Maternal Activism”, whereby women deploy their social and cultural capital *as mothers* to voice concerns in the public sphere, as part of a politics of visibility. Motherhood can provide women with a legitimizing framework for political agency: women draw respectability, moral standing, and political power by identifying with a mother's responsibility and care for the well-being of her children. Yet a performative adoption of the maternal role in politics is a complicated maneuver that may enable and limit women's impact since Maternal Activism potentially relies on, reifies and/or resists patriarchal notions of family that tie women to maternal roles and the domestic sphere. Indeed, the maternal position, as a discursive and affective frame, is employed by social movements with contradictory political goals – ranging from transformational to conservative, emancipatory to patriarchal – and that represent different gender ideologies – from essentialist to constructivist and feminist or queer.

Thus, the interesting question becomes what can be gleaned about the dynamics between structure and agency by examining how motherhood and activism shape one another in different contexts. More specifically: How do different groups of women, positioned at different intersections of class, race, nationality, citizenship etc., access and perform maternal activism? What resources are available to them? What discourses do they contend with? How do they perform boundary work around what constitutes “good mothering”? And how does motherhood limit, empower or challenge their ability to resist racial, gendered and/or classed hierarchies?

This paper examines these questions within a religious context, examining a contemporary case study of Jewish-Israeli Orthodox Agunah activists advocating women’s right to divorce. Within Orthodox Judaism, a conservative religious tradition, and within Israeli society at large, motherhood is considered a national duty, serving as both a strong justification for women’s ongoing link to the private sphere where their primary duties lie, and as a unique pathway to republican citizenship and rights-claims within the Jewish collective. My paper examines how maternal politics play out within the context of a distinctly feminist Israeli movement led primarily by Jewish religious female activists. These activists are women heavily socialized into motherhood, modesty, and an ethic of care by religious and gendered cultural forces. Yet despite this, they choose to enter the public sphere as harsh critics who struggle to free women from male control within patriarchal marriages upheld by religious law and state institutions. These activists do *not* openly put motherhood at the forefront of their struggles yet my analysis shows that motherhood shapes their negotiations of risk, as well as their political actions, means, and goals.

My analysis suggests that the activists construct their motherhood and activism as both opposing and correlating elements. I show how analyzing these complex relations formulates new conceptions of risk, security, care, and responsibility, and articulates new claims regarding leaders’ ability to successfully parent families, the collective, and future generations.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Led by Hind Ahmed Zaki, Ph.D., University of Connecticut, United States

Due to timing constraints, the discussion for this session was cut short. Questions were raised regarding Zion-Waldocks assessment of motherhood as a value for Jewish women contributing to their moral standing in public life, with examples of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett, Vice President Kamala Harris, and former Special Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump. As well, the group discussed the possibility of hosting a future event at the Cambridge Central Mosque, Europe’s first eco-friendly mosque and the first purpose-built mosque within the city of Cambridge, England.

**12:15 PM**

#### **SESSION III – ISLAMIC AND JEWISH NOTIONS OF ECOFEMINISM**

##### **“ECOFEMINISM AND THE RELIGION OF THE MARKET IN ISLAMIC SOCIETIES”**

Nawal Ammar, Ph.D., Rowan University, United States

In this presentation I expound on the argument that Islam has a perspective that is both pro-environmental and pro-women and hence it can be compatible with ecofeminism. I examine this argument in five parts. Part one summarizes the theological elements of the argument. Part two briefly explores the facts on the ground concerning both the status of women and the environment in majority Muslim countries. Part three compares

the theological perspective and the reality on the ground. Part four proposes an analytical examination of the comparison which sheds light on the role religion of the market (Loy, 2000) plays in adjusting both the pro-environmental and pro-women's theological perspective in Islam. Part five summarizes the major points of the presentation and suggests a framework for both policy and further research. This presentation utilizes two of the agreed on theological texts of Islam: Qur'an and Hadith as well as religious studies research, empirical research data, census data, and international indices.

**“IS THERE GENDER EQUITY IN THE ISLAMIC ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC?  
AN INTROSPECT BASED ON ISLAMIC SOURCES”**

Noha El-Bassiouny, Ph.D., Hagar Adib, Ph.D., and Hadeer Hammad, Ph.D., German University in Cairo, Egypt

Modern sustainability literature addresses the importance of wisdom and what is termed “the sustainability mindset” (Heinberg and Lerch, 2010). Endorsing this mindset entails living in a manner that assumes the pro-environmental behavior ethic from economic, ecological and social perspectives (Heinberg and Lerch, 2010). Since Islam, as an Abrahamic religion, is the fastest growing religion in the world (Uddin, 2003; Helfaya, Kotb, & Hanafi, 2018), understanding the Islamic perspective – from both macro (societal) and micro (individual) levels – is deemed necessary. Islam advocates sustainable development and there is indeed an Islamic environmental ethic (Ahmadi, 2016; Helfaya et al., 2018; Kuşakcı, 2018; Shaharir, 2012).

Islam mandates that human beings are part of the holistic environmental system, yet they assume the role of responsible leaders, i.e. vicegerents of God (Allah) on Earth. This responsible leadership intercedes the concept of gender equity in Islam where both men and women assume complementary – rather than competitive – roles (Badawi, n.d.). Nature is to be preserved and, in order to achieve justice, respect to the limits of the natural ecosystem is essential (Rice, 2006).

According to Rice (2006: 380), the Islamic environmental ethic encompasses:

- *“Stewardship”* as the Holy Qur'an says *“And we have given you [humans] mastery over the earth and appointed for you therein a livelihood”* (Qur'an 7:10)
- *“Preservation and Protection of Creation in all its Forms”*: The environment is a sign of Allah's existence and of His attributes so that Man can contemplate the creation and realize Allah's presence. According to the Holy Qur'an, *“Work not corruption in the earth after it has been set in order, and call on Him in fear and hope. Surely the mercy of God is near to those who act with excellence.”* (Qur'an 7:56)
- *“Respect for the Privileges of Other Species”*: According to the Holy Qur'an, *“There is not an animal in the earth, nor a flying creature, flying on two wings, but they are communities like you”* (Qur'an 6:38)
- *“Using no more than what is Necessary”*: This is analogous to the contemporary notion of sustainable consumption. According to the Holy Qur'an, *“...and do not waste in excess, for God loves not those who waste”* (Qur'an 6:141)

The above four pillars rest on the shoulders of both Muslim men and women who assume equity in rights and responsibilities before Allah.

To conclude, from a research perspective, conceptually, the interceding relationship between gender roles and the Islamic pro-environmental behavior ethic is there. However, much empirical research is still needed in the literature to further understand this complex relationship on the ground.

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### **“AGAINST SUSTAINABILITY: A CRITIQUE FROM JEWISH ETHICS”**

Laurie Zoloth, Ph.D., University of Chicago, United States

Much literature in ecology is based on a concept from the Greek: Gaia. Gaia as female, Gaia as both infinitely vulnerable and infinitely wise animates a trope of natural law, nature as providing, in its stasis, a model for moral worth. Jewish thought, however, does not see nature as normative. In fact, Jewish thought problematizes the natural world as unjust, violent, and potentially a place of danger. Fundamental to this formulation is both the prophetic call for attention to the vulnerable and the overlooked within the natural order of things and the rabbinic insistence on human scaled systems of organization and fairness against the disorder of the natural. I will argue that current calls for sustainability accept a view of the given hierarchies in the world, systems that need disruption. Further, calling of sustaining practices maintain a view of history that privileges continuity over interruption, are resist creative technologies that historically have been liberatory for women. Yet it is only in interruption that the possibility of redemption is visible, an idea that we must make legible in the narrative of global justice in a warming world.

### **DISCUSSION**

Led by Catherine Keller, Ph.D., Drew University, United States

As the only member of the workshop representing the Christian point of view, Professor Catherine Keller offered another dimension to the conversation, quoting the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change, which states, “If we each offer the best of our respective traditions, we may yet see a way through our difficulties,” even with respect to climate. Keller pointed out that the topic of this workshop was interesting given that the ultimate figure of a patriarchy is Abraham himself. She noted that many call for the rejection of patriarchal traditions, but cautioned that with that rejection might also lead to that of the wisdom inherent within those same traditions. Keller discussed the Greek word *oikos*, meaning dwelling place, which is also the root of the English words *economy* and *ecology*. She used this thread to connect the fact that we as humans stand together on this inhabited space and face serious economic and environmental degradation at the hands of capitalism, as Zoloth had discussed in her presentation. Keller pointed out El Bassiouny’s presentation of the Qu’ranic verse (6:38) “There is not a living creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you” to continue this theme of a shared community, both human and animal, on this earth. Keller posed that Mohammad wanted to bring us to that *oikos* and feel the communality of the contradiction with the economy and necessity of our home. To achieve sustainability, it is necessary to build community, as alliances have the power to make significant difference. While Keller acknowledged Zoloth’s critique of sustainability, she suggested that rather than erase problematic notions, we need to recognize its problems. If we want to be sustained by the earth, we need to do radically sustaining acts.

1:45 PM

**CLOSING – THE WAY FORWARD**

**Nawal Ammar, Ph.D., Rowan University, United States**

Ammar thanked all the participants in the workshop, noting that it was difficult to bring this particularly well curated group together. While patriarchy and ecofeminism as academic subjects are not commonly addressed areas, they impact something as important as the air we breathe. The subject of ecofeminism was dormant for a while, but it is waking up a bit now. Ammar posed that the oppression of women is the oppression of the environment and of human rights. The goal of this group will be to discuss the diversity of this topic and redefine it. Now that this group has presented papers, it can reformulate this workshop in an edited volume or a journal.

El Bassiouny asked if the group already had an agreement with a particular publisher or formulated a special issue? Ammar responded that there is currently not an agreement, but they would look into further options and look to feature this group specifically, with some additional contributors who were unable to make the workshop. Zoloth added that it is very hard to get multi-author books published, and given the importance for junior colleagues to publish to achieve tenure, it would be wise to focus on peer-reviewed journals.

Ahmed Zaki stated that for next steps, she and Ammar have ideas for journals, but would welcome any further suggestions from the group. She offered to start contacting journal editors to see if they are interested in having a special file or symposium. Once they have secured a publication, they would invite the group to come back together to go over a first draft for submission in a sort of writing workshop.

Weiner also offered his thanks to the group, noting that it is not his area of expertise, but that he enjoyed the workshop and was delighted to see the intellectual community growing from these connections. He is looking forward to see future opportunities for this group.

## PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES



### **YOUSRA ABOURABI**

Yousra Abourabi, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Political Sciences at the Université Internationale de Rabat, whose research focuses on Moroccan African Policy, Moroccan Foreign Policy, African International Relations, and Climate Change in Africa. She holds a Ph.D. in Political Sciences and International Relations.



### **HAGAR ADIB**

Hagar Adib, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of International Business Management & Organization at the German University of Cairo (GUC). She holds a Ph.D. in Marketing GUC. Adib's research focuses on sustainability, materialism, religiosity and renewable energy. She has several publications in reputable journals and has received Emerald Highly Command Paper Award for the year 2013. She is currently working as an international business assistant professor at the GUC.



### **HIND AHMED ZAKI**

Hind Ahmed Zaki, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Political Science, with a joint appointment in the department of Language, Culture, and Literature. She is specialist in comparative politics with a special emphasis in gender and politics and the Middle East and North Africa. Her research focuses on theories of state feminism, feminist movements, gender-based violence, and qualitative research methods. Her current book project focuses on the politics of women's rights in Egypt and Tunisia in the period following the Arab spring. The book manuscript analyzes how historical constructions of women's rights, as represented in institutions and narratives of state feminism, shaped feminist mobilization in the course of the Arab Spring, resulting in surprisingly empowering episodes of legal and political mobilization for women's rights. The broader implication of these findings questions the assumption that democratic transition and gender justice go hand-in-hand. Her broader research interests includes understanding different models of state feminism in the region and how they influenced the history and development and agenda of feminist movements in the Arab world.

Ahmed Zaki received her Ph.D. in political science from the University of Washington in 2018; her MA in political science and gender studies from the American University in Cairo in 2008; and her BA in political science from Cairo University in 2001. Before joining UConn, she was the Harold Grinspoon Research Fellow at Brandeis University. She previously served as a postdoctoral research associate and postdoctoral fellow at the Middle East Initiative at Harvard University. In addition to her academic work, Ahmed Zaki serves as a consultant to a number of local women's rights organizations in Egypt and the broader Middle East.



### **NAWAL AMMAR**

Nawal H. Ammar, Ph.D., is a Professor of Law and Justice and Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Rowan University in New Jersey, USA. Ammar's areas of research and teaching focus on minorities and social justice. She has explored research on immigrant battered women in the U.S. and Canada, Muslims in U.S. and Canadian prisons, Muslim women and the law and environmental justice in Islam.

Ammar has an extensive administrative record and has served in numerous capacities including Women Studies Department Chair, Graduate Studies Director, Program Director of Paralegal Studies and Associate Dean. Before coming to Rowan she spent nine years as the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. Prior to that she spent 15 years at Kent State University, Ohio and moved up in the academic ranks from Assistant to full professor in 12 years. Before her tenure at Kent State Ammar worked in a variety of organizations both in the United States and abroad.

Ammar has participated in a number of United Nations Conferences, has served as a consultant and authored or coauthored several reports for the organization. She is a frequent speaker at conferences with close to 150 presentations both invited and refereed. She has served on review panels for the Soros Foundation (Open Society Institute), National Institute of Justice, Social Science and Humanities Council and Department of Justice on research proposals addressing violence against women and underserved communities. She also served as a participant in or consultant to activities of the governments of Bahrain, Lebanon, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and the USA to address issues of women, development and victimization.

Ammar received her Bachelors of Science (Honours) and Masters of Science degrees in Sociology from Salford University, Greater Manchester University, United Kingdom and she earned her Ph.D. degree in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Florida in Gainesville, USA.



### **NOHA EL-BASSIOUNY**

Noha El-Bassiouny, Ph.D., is Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, Professor and Head of Marketing at the Faculty of Management Technology, the German University in Cairo (GUC), Egypt. Her research interests lie in the domains of consumer psychology, Islamic marketing, ethical marketing, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability. She has wide international exposure and has published her works in reputable journals including the *Journal of Business Research*, the *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, the *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, the *Social Responsibility Journal*, the *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, the *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, the *International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing*, *Journal of Cleaner Production* as well as *Young Consumers*. She is currently the Associate Editor of the *Journal of Islamic Marketing*. El-Bassiouny has also received many international awards including the prestigious Abdul Hameed Shoman Arab Researchers Award (2019) on the level of the whole Arab world as well as several Emerald Outstanding Reviewer Awards and Highly Commended Paper awards.



### **HADEER HAMMAD**

Hadeer Hammad, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at the Faculty of Management Technology, the German University in Cairo (GUC), Egypt. She is also an Assistant Editor at The Journal of Islamic Marketing. Her research interests include the highlight of the social aspects of the marketing field in general. Hammad is interested in researching the areas of marketing ethics, social marketing, sustainability, and consumer psychology. She has several publications in reputable academic journals.



### **MERIEM EL HAITAMI**

Meriem El Haitami is an Assistant Professor of Communication and Gender Studies at the International University of Rabat. She holds a jointly-supervised PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah in Fez and SUNY Binghamton, USA. Her research explores the emerging trends of Islamic feminism in post-2003 Morocco. During 2015-2016, El Haitami was a Rice Fellow and Lecturer at Yale University, where she taught courses on Islam and gender in North Africa. In spring 2015, she was a Carnegie Fellow at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, where she was conducting research relating to modes of religiosity and attitudes towards human rights in Morocco. She has recently received the Global Religion Research Initiative Award (2018–2019) from the Center for the Study of Religion and Society at the University of Notre Dame (IN, USA) to collaborate on a research project on Morocco's deradicalisation, as well as the American Academy of Religion's International Award to collaborate on a research project on Sufism and youth in Morocco. Her research interests include the emergence of female religious authorities; religious performance; social movements and body politics.



### **CATHERINE KELLER**

Catherine Keller, Ph.D., has taught for over two decades in the Theological School of Drew University and its Graduate Division of Religion. In her teaching, lecturing and writing, in a multiplicity of religious and secular, scholarly and activist settings, she seeks to midwife a theology of becoming. A work of complicated lineage and open future, it interweaves a postmodern biblical hermeneutic with process cosmology, poststructuralist philosophy and an evolving feminist cosmopolitics. At once constructive and deconstructive in approach, such theology engages questions of ecological, social and spiritual interdependence amidst an irreducible indeterminacy.

After studies in Europe and in seminary, she did her doctoral work at Claremont Graduate University with John Cobb and sustains a warm and active affiliation with the Center for Process Studies. Its pioneering work in postmodernism pluralism, both by way of a Whiteheadian philosophy and progressive Christian activism, continue to inform her work.

As director of the annual Drew Transdisciplinary Theological Colloquium since its inception in 2000, Keller works with colleagues and students to foster a hospitable local setting for planetary conversations. Its postcolonial and pluralist ecumenism involves

confessional as well as secular faiths. With the collaboration of Fordham Press, the TTC is producing a rich series of co-edited volumes.

She meets monthly and happily for symposia over dinner with her graduate students, an international collective finding their own theological voices rather than echoing hers.

Keller is currently writing on issues of incertitude and interrelatedness as they unfold at once a tradition of Christian mysticism and recent physical cosmology. The thread of radical relationalism that runs through her work here engages the heritage of negative theology, with its deconstructive edge. The robust contemporary affirmations of embodiment characteristic of ecofeminist and Whiteheadian thought tangle with the indeterminacy of postmodern pluralism.



### **LEA TARAGIN-ZELLER**

Lea Taragin-Zeller, Ph.D., is a social and medical anthropologist, with research interests situated at the intersection of reproduction, religion and health. She is a Research Fellow at the Woolf Institute and an affiliated scholar at the Reproductive Sociology Research Group (ReproSoc), University of Cambridge. Lea has published in leading international journals, such as *American Anthropologist* and *Medical Anthropology*, and serves as a section editor in Cambridge's journal of *Reproductive Biomedicine and Society Online*.

As an ethnographer of biomedicine and society, Taragin-Zeller's research explores how scientific knowledge and technologies are negotiated among ethnic and faith minorities - influencing their reproductive decisions and raising new ethical dilemmas. She examines everyday projects of knowledge and decision-making vis-à-vis state-minority relations, intersectional dynamics and transnational networks. Her field sites span medical clinics, classrooms, adult education, and Jewish and Muslim grassroots organizations in Israel and the UK. Most recently, Taragin-Zeller is taking her interests in health, religion and education to understand the impact of COVID-19 on religious minority groups in Israel, the UK and USA.



### **TANYA ZION-WALDOKS**

Tanya Zion-Waldoks, Ph.D., a lecturer in the Seymour Fox School of Education at Hebrew University, is a gender scholar, feminist activist and mother of four. She is fascinated by the intersection of religion, gender, and politics, with a focus on social change. Current research explores feminist activism and women's political subjectivities in religious communities or traditional contexts in Israel, examined through qualitative studies with a comparative lens. Her work has been published in leading journals such as *Gender & Society* and *Signs*. Zion-Waldoks received her Ph.D. from Bar-Ilan's Gender Studies program, a Kreitman and Israel Institute post-doctoral fellowship at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and a Rothschild and ISF postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University.



## **LAURIE ZOLOTH**

Laurie Zoloth, Ph.D., is a leader in the field of religious studies with particular scholarly interest in bioethics and Jewish studies. Her research explores religion and ethics, drawing from sources ranging from Biblical and Talmudic texts to postmodern Jewish philosophy, including the writings of Emmanuel Levinas. Her scholarship spans the ethics of genetic engineering, stem cell research, synthetic biology, social justice in health care, and how science and medicine are taught. She also researches the practices of interreligious dialogue, exploring how religion plays a role in public discussion and policy.

Zoloth is author of *Health Care and the Ethics of Encounter: A Jewish Discussion of Social Justice* and co-editor of five books, including *Notes from a Narrow Ridge: Religion and Bioethics* and *Jews and Genes: The Genetic Future in Contemporary Jewish Thought*.

Zoloth has been the president of the American Academy of Religion and the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities. She was the inaugural director of the Jewish Studies program at San Francisco State University and director of graduate studies in religious studies at Northwestern. She is an elected member of the Hastings Center and a life member of Clare Hall, University of Cambridge. She is a founding board member of the Society for Scriptural Reasoning.

Her work on bioethics and health care led her to serve on the NASA Advisory Council, the space agency's highest civilian advisory board; the International Planetary Protection Committee; the National Recombinant DNA Advisory Board, and the executive committee of the International Society for Stem Cell Research. She served as chair of the first bioethics advisory board at the Howard Hughes Medical Research Institute and has testified in front of Congress, the President's Commission on Bioethics, and state legislatures.

Zoloth began her career as a neonatal nurse working in impoverished communities; she holds a bachelor's degree in women's studies from the University of California, Berkeley and a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of the State of New York. She received a master's degree in Jewish studies and a doctorate in social ethics from the Graduate Theological Union. Zoloth also holds a master's degree in English from San Francisco State University.

Prior to joining the University of Chicago, Zoloth served as a Charles McCormick Deering Professor of Teaching Excellence at Northwestern University, holding appointments in the Department of Religious Studies in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and in the Feinberg School of Medicine. At Northwestern, she was founding director of the Brady Program in Ethics and Civic Life at the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and founding director of the Center for Bioethics, Science and Society at the Feinberg School of Medicine. She currently serves on the Ethics Advisory Board of NASA; the steering committee of The Engineering Biology Research Committee; on the CDC (Biological Agents Working Group); and on the Ethics Board of the American Heart Association.

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