

Call for Papers
Conference on
**"Shia Minorities in the Contemporary World: Migration,
Transnationalism and Multilocality"**

University of Chester, Chester (UK), 20-21 May 2016

Global migrations flows in the 20th century have seen the emergence of Muslim diaspora and minority communities in Europe, North America and Australia. In addition to these new Muslim presences in the global "West", there have been, since the late 19th century, migration flows from the Middle East (Lebanon and Syria in particular) to South America and West Africa. Likewise, South Asian Muslims settled in East and South Africa in the 19th century. While there is a growing body of research on these Muslim minorities in various regional contexts, the particular experiences of Shia Muslim minorities across the globe has only received scant attention.

As "a minority within a minority", Shia Muslims face the double-challenge of maintaining an Islamic as well as a particular Shia identity in terms of communal activities, practices, public perception and recognition. Often coming from minority contexts of marginalisation and discrimination, their experience of migration and settlement in other parts of the world, whether enforced or voluntary, is often different from those of other Muslim immigrants. The rich tradition of Shia ritual practices and the authority structures specific to different forms of Shia Islam likewise shape the post-migratory minority experience of Shia. The conference will bring together researchers working on Shia minorities outside of the so-called "Muslim heartland" (North Africa, Middle East, Central and South Asia). The conference will focus on Shia minorities in Europe, North and South America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Australia, the Pacific Rim and East Asia that emerged out of migration from the Middle East and South Asia in the 20th and 21st centuries, in particular. The papers presented at the conference will offer unique comparative insights into Shia minorities in a variety of contexts across the globe.

Paper proposal can address but are not limited to the following topics:

- dynamics between centre and periphery in global Shia Islam
- multilocality and transnationalism of global Shia networks
- transnational impact of events in the Middle East on post-migratory Shia minority communities
- institutionalisation and organisation of post-migratory Shia minorities
- public representation and perception of post-migratory Shia minorities and their interaction with state and majority-societies
- sectarianism and Sunni-Shia relations in minority contexts
- gender and generational dynamics within post-migratory Shia minorities
- ritual practices and their adaptation in post-migratory minority contexts
- adaptation of legal practices and legal reforms in minority contexts
- role of clerical authority and leadership (whether transnational or local) in Shia minority contexts

Key note speakers:

Prof Liyakat Takim, McMaster University, Canada

Dr Sabrina Mervin, L'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales,
Paris / Centre Jacques Berque, Rabat

Dr Mara Leichtman (Michigan State University) will launch her book *Shi'i Cosmopolitanisms in Africa: Lebanese Migration and Religious Conversion in Senegal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015) at the conference.

The conference is organised by the new [**Chester Centre for Islamic Studies**](#) and held in conjunction with a research project on transnational Shia networks that operate between Britain and the Middle East, funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation. A limited number of travel bursaries is available for PhD students and early career researchers whose paper proposals are accepted. The publication of a selection of papers in an edited volume is also planned.

The deadline for abstract submission is 15 December 2015. Abstracts of up to 300 words and a short bio of (up to 200 words) should be sent in MS Word format as an email attachment to ccis@chester.ac.uk. Notifications of acceptance of papers will be sent out by 20 January 2016. Early career researchers should indicate whether they would like to receive a travel bursary when submitting the abstract. Presentations of papers should be 15 minutes long, followed by 10 minutes for questions and discussions. Full papers should not exceed 8,000 words, including references and footnotes, and should be submitted, in full, prior to the conference by 1 May 2016. For general enquiries, email Prof Oliver Scharbrodt, Director of Chester Centre for Islamic Studies, o.scharbrodt@chester.ac.uk.

Timeline:

Abstract submission:	15 December 2015
Notification of acceptance:	20 January 2016
Full paper submission:	1 May 2016
Conference:	20-21 May 2016