

List of Publications

Dr. Christoph Günther

Self-Selected Best Publications

Monographs

(2021) (in press / publishes November 2021) *Entrepreneurs of Identity: The Islamic State's Symbolic Repertoire*. New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Understanding the Islamic State's ideologues as 'entrepreneurs of identity', this book explores how the group defined categories of social identity and used these categories as tools of communicative and cognitive structuring. Based on a wide dossier of original texts, speeches, images, and videos, the book examines how the Islamic State's ideologues have built a symbolic repertoire around the black flag as well as ideas and social practices such as the dictum to command good and forbid wrong (*al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-l-nahy 'an al-munkar*), the supervision of public behaviour (*hisba*), the *shūrā* council, and the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) to the Caliph. It shows that the enactment of this symbolic repertoire helps to coordinate a shared sense of 'we-ness' but also lends potential stability to the Islamic State's vision of governance and society even after the Islamic State as such had ceased to exist.

Edited Collections

(2020) (with Simone Pfeifer) *Jihadi Audiovisuality and its Entanglements. Meanings, Aesthetics, Appropriations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Through 12 case studies, this book examines the different ways in which Jihadi groups and their supporters use visualisation, sound production and aesthetic means to articulate their cause in online as well as offline contexts. Divided into four thematic sections, the chapters probe Jihadi appropriation of traditional and popular cultural expressions and show how, in turn, political activists appropriate extremist media to oppose and resist the propaganda. By conceptualising militant Islamist audiovisual productions as part of global media aesthetics and practices, the authors shed light on how religious actors, artists, civil society activists, global youth, political forces, security agencies and researchers engage with mediated manifestations of Jihadi ideology to deconstruct, reinforce, defy or oppose the messages.

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

(2020) Iconic Socioclasm: Idol-Breaking and the Dawn of a New Order. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, pp. 1830–1848.

This article uses the case of the 'Islamic State' (IS) to bring forth the concept of *socioclasm*. It argues that iconoclastic acts and attacks on cultural properties are most often embedded in a comprehensive strategy of spatial, material, ideational, and intellectual purification of the socioreligious landscape. Integral elements of social identities of local and transnational communities and their individual members are hence targeted in order to build a new social framework on their ruins.

Chapters in Peer Reviewed Edited Collections

(2021) (in production) Al-Dawla al-nabawīya: Appropriating the Prophet's Authority in the Islamic State's Media. In: Rachida Chih et al. (eds.) *The Presence of the Prophet in Early Modern and Contemporary Islam*. Vol. 2. (Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 1, Vol. 155/2). Leiden: Brill.

This chapter scrutinizes the ways in which ideologues of the Islamic State and its predecessors have appropriated the paragon that is the Prophet in terms of his role as a worldly and spiritual leader of the Muslim community and a warrior prophet in various media. Specifically, I examine the ways in which they have used the figure of the Prophet as a source of authority in creating the black flag as a powerful symbol, in framing their leader as a descendant of the Prophet, in rendering the Islamic State's practices an epitome of the 'prophetic way' (*minhāj al-nubuwwa*), and in formulating personal traits that distinguish the IS fighters from their environment.

(2020) (with Simone Pfeifer) Jihadi Audiovisuality and its Entanglements – A Conceptual Framework. In: Christoph Günther and Simone Pfeifer (eds.): *Jihadi Audiovisuality and its Entanglements. Meanings, Aesthetics, Appropriations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp. 1-19

The introduction to this edited volume proposes the concept of audiovisuality as a heuristic to explore the links between actors generating meaning and knowledge through audio-visual media, people's sensations and the mediations they encounter. We argue that audiovisuality not only denotes "representations" of something but includes mediation, sensations, and interpretations. We locate audio-visual media productions and their dissemination by jihadi groups and movements within a field of global media aesthetics and practices with culturally distinct manifestations. This helps to identify the ways in which jihadi actors incorporate various artefacts and techniques of material and immaterial culture, re-codify them, and appropriate them to articulate their cause.

Monographs

- 2014 *Ein zweiter Staat im Zweistromland? Genese und Ideologie des „Islamischen Staates Irak“*. Würzburg: Ergon.
- 2021 (in press) *Entrepreneurs of Identity: The Islamic State's Symbolic Repertoire*. New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books

Edited Collections

- 2020 (with Simone Pfeifer) *Jihadi Audiovisuality and its Entanglements. Meanings, Aesthetics, Appropriations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

- 2020 Iconic Socioclasm: Idol-Breaking and the Dawn of a New Order. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, pp. 1830–1848.
- 2017 (with Tom Bioly) Regulative Autorität und Ikonoklasmus beim Islamischen Staat. *Totalitarismus und Demokratie*, 14 (2).
- 2016 (with Tom Kaden) Beyond Mere Terrorism: The Islamic State's Authority as a Social Movement and as a Quasi-State. *Sicherheit und Frieden*, 34 (2), pp. 134-140.
- (with Tom Kaden) The Authority of the Islamic State (*Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Papers N° 169*).
- (with Tom Kaden) Mehr als bloßer Terrorismus. Der Islamische Staat als soziale Bewegung und Para-Staat. *Zeitschrift für Politik*, 62 (1), pp. 93-118.
- 2015 Presenting the Glossy Look of Warfare in Cyberspace – The Islamic State's Magazine Dabiq. *Cyber Orient. Online Journal of the Virtual Middle East*, 9 (1).
- Al-Qaida in Iraq beyond Rhetoric: The Visualization of an 'Islamic State of Iraq'. *Sociology of Islam*, 3 (1-2), pp. 30-48.
- (with Tobias Funke) Religiöser Nonkonformismus als Machtinstrument: Die Makkabäer und der Islamische Staat. *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft*, 23 (1), pp. 88-115.
- 2014 Obey the Emerging Caliphate. The Ideological Framework of the "Islamic State" in

Iraq and the Levant. *Orient*, 55 (4), pp. 16-21.

The Land of the Two Rivers under the Black Banner: Visual Communication of al-Qa'ida in Iraq. *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies*, 8 (1), pp. 35-53.

Chapters in Peer Reviewed Edited Collections

- 2021 (in production) Al-Dawla al-nabawīya: Appropriating the Prophet's Authority in the Islamic State's Media. In: Rachida Chih et al. (eds.) *The Presence of the Prophet in Early Modern and Contemporary Islam*. Vol. 2. (Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 1, Vol. 155/2). Leiden: Brill.
- 2020 From the Darkness into the Light. Narratives of Conversion in Jihadi Videos. In: Christoph Günther and Simone Pfeifer (eds.): *Jihadi Audiovisuality and its Entanglements. Meanings, Aesthetics, Appropriations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp. 148-170.
- (with Simone Pfeifer) Jihadi Audiovisuality and its Entanglements – A Conceptual Framework. In: Christoph Günther and Simone Pfeifer (eds.): *Jihadi Audiovisuality and its Entanglements. Meanings, Aesthetics, Appropriations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp. 1-19
- (with Hanna Pfeifer) ISIS und die Inszenierung von Kulturgutzerstörungen für ein globales Publikum. In: Gabi Schlag and Axel Heck (eds.): *Visualität und Weltpolitik*. Wiesbaden: VS. pp. 149-178.

Chapters in Edited Collections

- 2021 (in press) Islamistische Akteure: Teil globaler Medienlandschaften mit unbestimmter Wirkung. In: Björn Milbradt et al. (eds.) *Handbuch Radikalisierung im Jugendalter*. Leverkusen/Berlin: Verlag Barbara Budrich.
- 2020 (with Simone Pfeifer et al.) Inside the Islamic State's Media: Eine kollaborative Videoanalyse. In: Bernd Zywiets (ed.) *Propaganda des "Islamischen Staats"*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS. pp. 365-414.
- 2019 (with Tom Bioly) Testimonies to a New Social Order: The Islamic State's Iconic Iconoclasm. In: Kerstin Schankweiler [et al.] (eds.) *Image Testimonies. Witnessing in Times of Social Media*. London: Routledge. pp. 152-164.
- 2018 (with Tom Bioly) "Wir halten es für notwendig, alle Formen der Vielgötterei zu zerstören." Ikonoklasmus und Ikonografie des Islamischen Staates. In: Birgit Münch [et al.] (eds.) *BilderGewalt: Zerstörung – Zensur – Umkodierung – Neuschöpfung*. Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag.
- 2016 Ein Staat der Emigration und des Ġihād: Das Staatsmodell des 'Islamischen Staates'. In: Peter Lintl [et al.] (eds.): *Religiöse Bewegungen als politische Akteure im Nahen Osten*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 125-158.
- (with Mariella Ourghi et al.) Dschihadistische Rechtfertigungsnarrative und ihre Angriffsflächen. In: Janusz Biene [et al.] (eds.): *Salafismus und Dschihadismus in Deutschland. Ursachen, Dynamiken, Handlungsempfehlungen*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus, pp. 159-198.
- 2015 Der Islamische Staat und die Islamisierung des Abendlandes. In: Janusz Biene; Martin Schmetz (eds.): *Kalifat des Terrors. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf den Islamischen Staat*. Frankfurt/Main: epubli, pp. 13-18.

Other Publications (selection)

- 2015 Der Islamische Staat und die Islamisierung des Abendlandes. *Sicherheitspolitik-Blog* 2/9/2015; <http://www.sicherheitspolitik-blog.de/2015/02/09/der-islamische-staat-und-die-islamisierung-des-abendlandes/> (last accessed 11/2/2015).
- 2012 (with Tobias Funke) Religiöse Nonkonformisten und das Ringen um Macht. (*Working Paper of the Graduate Centre Humanities and Social Sciences of the Research Academy Leipzig* N° 11).
- 2011 Corpus Delicti – Der Körper als Tatwerkzeug. Märtyreroperationen im irakischen Kontext. *Arbeitstitel. Forum für Leipziger Promovierende* 3(1), pp. 21-33.