



Università  
Ca'Foscari  
Venezia

**PROJECT ACRONYM AND TITLE:** SSRIME - Sunni-Shii Relations in the Middle East

**FUNDING PROGRAMME:** H2020 Marie-Sklodowska Curie Actions Individual Fellowship

**CALL:** H2020-MSCA-IF-2019-Global Fellowship – Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships

**KEYWORDS:** Islam, Middle East, Political Violence, Religion, Identity Politics, Sectarianism, Sunni, Shia, Authoritarianism

**HOST DEPARTMENT:** DFBC – Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage

**SCIENTIFIC RESPONSIBLE:** Prof. Matteo Legrenzi

**FELLOW:** Toby Matthiesen

#### FINANCIAL DATA:

Project total costs	Overall funding assigned to UNIVE
€ 251.002,56	€ 251.002,56

#### ABSTRACT:

SSRIME investigates the entangled history of Sunni-Shii sectarianism in the Middle East by looking at the case study of Iraq under the Baath Party (1968-2003). SSRIME thus seeks to explain the root causes of instability in the Middle East, which has fuelled the refugee crisis, and thus fits key policy objectives of the European Union. It is thus not only of academic interest but has clear policy relevance. The primary research question is under what circumstances does Sunni-Shii conflict occur? SSRIME studies the relationship between the Iraqi state and the Shia, which will also allow us to draw conclusions as to the importance of the 2003 Iraq War for sectarianism. The lessons from this project can also be applied to other countries in the region, in particular to Syria under the Baath party. I will spend two years at Stanford University, most of which will be spent in the Baath Party of Iraq archives. The archives are a unique source when it comes to the modern Middle East, because they are the only publicly accessible archive of any Arab state. They are thus the best archive to study the process of sectarianisation in the modern period. Given that they are in Arabic, only accessible on site, and have not been distributed via microfilms to other institutions, they have not been used extensively yet, and have not been looked at primarily from the angle of relations between Iraq's main religious communities. My language and research skills will allow me to use the archive to the fullest extent possible. My research project will be the first to combine extensive use of these archives with oral history and fieldwork in Iraq. During two preliminary research trips to Iraq I made important contacts that will facilitate my fieldwork. I have identified possible interviewees, some of whom I will interview outside of Iraq. The return period at Venice will allow me to bring my new skills back to Europe and focus on writing up and disseminating my research findings.

Planned Start date	Planned End date
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2021	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023

#### PARTNERSHIP

1. Ca' Foscari University of Venice	Italia	Coordinator
2. Stanford University	USA	Partner