**Panel 6**

**Boundaries and Identity Spaces in the contemporary Middle East**

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Recent political turmoil in the Middle East has led to reshaping borders and identity spaces. The fall of long-standing regimes or the eruption of socio-political crises have redefined the geography of identity communities, in both the domestic arenas and in a transnational dimension. In some cases this has led to the strengthening of legal international borders (e.g. The GCC, which has securitized its frontiers, thus preventing insecurity spillover from the Levant sub-region); in some others, to the weakening, if not a quasi-collapse of them (e.g. the Libya-Egypt border, the Syria-Lebanese border, etc.). The focus on borders and boundaries in the Middle East can, therefore, highlight the current process of identity building in borderlands or cross borders relationships (along sectarian/ethnic or political lines). We welcome contributions from various disciplines or border studies which could articulate space with identity issues in the following themes:

a) The changing relationship between security orders and identity spaces (monopoly of violence, territorial control, the relation between the military and the militias).

b) Critical analysis of the relation between ‘state’ and ‘non-state’ actors.

c) The shaping of collective identities and their effects on borders as well as the development of new borderlands/enclaves (as a result of fluxes of migration, new ethnical/confessional equilibrium, trans-national social allegiances) and their impact on the political order and local groups.