

Ladan Rahbari

Ladan Rahbari (PhD, PhD, MA) is a sociologist based at Ghent University, Belgium. She is the recipient of an FWO (Research Foundation Flanders) post-doctoral fellowship (2019-2022). Rahbari has a PhD in Gender and Diversity (Studies) from the UGent and the VUB and a PhD in Sociology from the University of Mazandaran, Iran (evaluated as "Doctor in de Politieke en Sociale Wetenschappen" by the Belgian Ministry of Education). She also has a Master's degree in Anthropology and a Bachelor's degree in Italian Literature (both from the Tehran University).

Rahbari lectures on religion, gender, sexuality and diversity studies and is now conducting her research project on *Motherhood in Islam*. Her research interests include gender politics; morality and religion; sexuality, space, body; and harmful cultural practices with a general focus on Iran, Islam, and Western Europe, and in the frameworks of postcolonial and critical theories. She is currently affiliated with the Centre for Research on Culture and Gender (CRCG, UGent) and the Centre of Expertise on Gender, Diversity, and Intersectionality (RHEA, VUB) and their alliance research group Ethics, Culture & Society (ECSO.be). As of January 2020, Rahbari is editor of the Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies (DiGeSt).

Termination of Pregnancy in Islam and in the Iranian Shi'i law

Classic and contemporary Islamic jurisprudence within both Sunni and the Shi'a schools of Islam agree that pregnancy cannot be terminated after the fourth month of gestation except when it poses a grave threat to the mother's life. However, the practices and perceptions of Muslims, and laws in Muslim-majority countries around the globe on women's rights to terminate pregnancy, vary. It is not possible to homogenize contemporary 'Islamic bioethics' on this matter as there are diverse positions regarding abortion. In discussions on Islam and abortion in Muslim contexts, there is a tendency to prioritize the theological perspectives on termination of pregnancy. This means that there is more focus on duties and obligations rather than individual rights.

From a theological perspective, some Islamic feminists see Islam and women's rights to abortion as compatible. They complicate the existing interpretations of Islamic texts (the Quran, Hadith and Sunnah) and promote more lenient legal rulings on the matter by drawing on other Islamic principles. In this lecture, Ladan Rahbari briefly outlines prominent Islamic perspectives on abortion before discussing the case of Iranian and Shi'i law on abortion, and its critiques. Finally, she will present some preliminary findings of her research on perceptions of Shi'i women in Belgium on abortion.