

Workshop Programme

## **Islam, Urban Life and the Production of (Moral) Norms**

26-27 May 2016

Zentrum Moderner Orient, Kirchweg 33, 14129 Berlin

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**Convenors:**

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## Concept Note

The issue of the normative framework of both private and public lives has been a major preoccupation in predominantly Muslim societies. How moral norms are negotiated, invented and ultimately produced has been central to the academic engagement with these societies, especially in a context where they experience a rapid urbanisation, an increasing social mobility, political reforms and an opening to the market economy. As a source of norms and values, Islam is subject to various appropriations in this process, gaining additional public visibility, displaying more pluralism while it also becomes more argumentative, debated and even contested, especially among ordinary Muslims. In parallel, numerous Muslim associations and scholars are making claims to authenticity and propagating an allegedly more puritan version of Islam while competing with local traditions and versions of the faith. Obviously, such developments warrant thorough examination and critical engagement beyond individual cases and single locales.

This workshop explores the scope of these recent developments in predominantly Muslim societies by focusing on the ways in which Islam as a public force shapes urban space and is shaped by the livelihood of Muslims. Our aim is to break up narratives of local uniqueness and open up our views to global influences by contributing to scholarly conversations among various regional experts on the theme of Islam as a transversal public force. We invite these experts to investigate the production of norms in the urban setting in its plural dimension through issues such as moral policing, preaching and religious education, ritual practice, political contestation, business development, place-making, as well as consumption and entertainment. The production of norms is addressed by focusing on three sets of questions:

*First*, what are the main institutions involved in the production of these norms? Who are the actors and what social, political and cultural mechanisms are involved in this production? How do different actors (religious authorities, preachers, political parties, NGOs, business people, ordinary Muslims) relate Islam to the mundane in order to further explore the



complex, plural, and changing articulations of Islam to social, economic, political and historic processes?

*Second*, the claims of authenticity and the debates that unfold bring to the fore the issue of the ideal Muslim polity. This set of questions will focus on the expression of utopia in predominantly Muslim societies. What do various competing local Islamic utopia look like? What temporality and perceptions of the future, the past and the present drive these utopia? What social problems, political views and communal aspirations are Muslim discourses responding to? What normative orders emerge from these debates, arguments and confrontations, especially during periods of moral outrage?

*Third*, how are these norms popularised, established and challenged in their respective contexts? While this set of questions highlight the channels of dissemination and popularisation of the moral norms, it also seeks to investigate why as an ethical force Islam has become more visible in the production of norms and morality in urban context? Why do some issues (sexuality, Halal, etc.) draw more attention than others (social injustice, inequalities, etc.)?

Through this workshop, the conveners hope to initiate a conversation on the moral city, promote a more locally informed and simultaneously comparative analysis of Islamic practices, and examine the ways in which Muslim-majority societies struggle to produce their norms today.



## **Thursday May 26**

### **9:30 Coffee**

### **10:00 – 10:30 Opening Ceremony:**

Welcome by Ulrike Freitag (Director of ZMO)

Introductory remarks by Abdoulaye Sounaye and Hew Wai Weng

### **10:30 – 11:50 Panel 1: The Ahmadiyya Question**

*Ahmadiyya Islam and the production of morality in West Africa*

Katrin Langewiesche (Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien, Mainz)

*Indonesian Ahmadiyya and notion of "True Islam"*

Saskia Schäfer (Columbia University)

Chair: Nora Lafi (ZMO)

Discussant: Kai Kresse (Columbia University)

### **11:50 – 13:10 Panel 2: Space and time**

*Urban Islamic spectacles: transforming the space of the shopping mall during Ramadan in Indonesia*

Leonie Schmidt (University of Amsterdam)

*The maquis: a space of entertainment at the margins of public morality in Odienné, a secondary town of northern Côte d'Ivoire*

André Chappatte (ZMO)

Chair: Florian Riedler (ZMO)

Discussant: Ulrike Freitag (ZMO)

### **13:10 – 14:30 Lunch**



### **14:30 – 16:30 Panel 3: Popular Culture**

*Rapping Islam: cultural strategies to adapt to Izala norms in Niamey, Niger*

Elodie Apard (IFRA-Nigeria, French Institute for Research in Africa)

*Mediating Islam: religious piety, urban lifestyle and moral agency in Kuala Lumpur*

Hew Wai Weng (ISEAS/ZMO)

*Popular music, urban youth and Islam in postcolonial Senegal*

Abdoulaye Niang (Université Gaston Berger, Saint-Louis, Senegal)

Chair: David Kloos (KITLV Leiden)

Discussant: André Chappatte (ZMO)

### **16:30 – 17:00 Coffee Break**

**17:00 – 19:00 Colloquium:** *Islamism and Producing a 'Modernist Islam'*, Humeira Iqtidar (King's College London)



## **Friday May 27**

### **9:30 Coffee**

### **10:00 – 11:20 Panel 4: Mediating Norms and Belonging**

*Becoming liminal community: moral engagements of Muslim queers in North Aceh, Indonesia*

Ferdiansyah Thajib (Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, FU Berlin)

*A Muslim radio station and its impact on ongoing religious debates among Muslims in Asante*

Benedikt Pontzen (BIGSAS, University of Bayreuth)

Chair: Elodie Aparad (IFRA-Nigeria)

Discussant: Abdoulaye Sounaye (ZMO)

### **11:20 – 11:30 Coffee Break**

### **11:30 – 12:50 Panel 5: Preaching the Norms**

*Producing moral norms and orthodoxy through the Tafsīr: the role of reformist-minded scholars in Northern Cameroon*

Ahmed Khalid Ayong (BIGSAS, University of Bayreuth)

*"XPDC Dakwah" and the rise of pop-Islamism in urban Malaysia*

Dominik M. Müller (Goethe-University Frankfurt, Germany)

Chair: Hew Wai Weng (ISEAS/ZMO)

Discussant: Humeira Iqtidar (King's College London)

### **12:50 – 14:10 Lunch**



**14:10 – 15:30 Panel 6: Class and Neo-liberalism**

*A modest life: religiosity and social (im)mobility in Aceh, Indonesia*

David Kloos (KITLV Leiden)

*The Islamic ethic and the spirit of neo-liberalism: urbanization and middle-class morality in contemporary Pakistan*

Ali Nobil Ahmad (ZMO)

Chair: Leonie Schmidt (University of Amsterdam)

Discussant: Erdem Evren (ZMO)

**15:30 – 15:45 Coffee Break**

**15:45 – 16:30 Closing Panel: Convenors and Co.**