

**Urban Studies Seminar
2014 - 2015****Twice a month,
Mondays 5 pm - 7 pm****Venue:**
Conference Hall
Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin-NikolasseePlease register
at the following address:
Dr. Nora Lafi
nora.lafi@zmo.de
Phone: (+49) (0) 30 80307- 0

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Senatsverwaltung
für Wirtschaft, Technologie
und Forschung**Annual Theme: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on
Urban Marginality in Africa, the Middle East and Asia****Chaired by Prof Ulrike Freitag and Dr Nora Lafi****Monday, January 12th, 2015, 5 pm****The Manyema of Dar es Salaam
(Tanzania) between urban margin and
regional connections****Lecture by Katharina Zöller (University of Bayreuth)**

This presentation examines the social and political history of the 'Manyema' community in colonial Dar es Salaam, whose members were overwhelmingly living at the social margins of the African center of town. This highly diverse group of actors, originating from a vast area in eastern Congo, has been crossing Lake Tanganyika towards the Indian Ocean coast and back for varying reasons including slavery from the 18th century onwards. Up to today, this mainly urban based group is strongly identified, and identifying itself, as 'Manyema' in Tanzania, denoting the idea of a 'foreign' origin from eastern Central Africa and stressing the importance of Islam, mobility and urbanity.

Dar es Salaam was, besides Tabora and Ujiji, one of the major urban nodes of the Manyema network in German East Africa and Tanganyika Territory. It was a site where translocal Manyema connections were implemented through institutions like mosques or ethnic organizations, but also an arena in which Manyema as individuals and as a group continuously struggled to cope with the implications of being regarded as 'strangers' or 'slaves'. Interestingly, many Manyema managed to get their voices heard and were prominently involved in religious, cultural and political organizations and contributed to their diffusion to other towns.

Based on narrative interviews with 'Manyema' and other inhabitants of Dar es Salaam, and on a variety of written and archival sources, I argue that besides their strong identification with the Muslim community, their ongoing mobility and regional connectivity was an important means to overcome their social marginality in Dar es Salaam and led to the continuing self-designation with the umbrella term 'Manyema'.

Katharina Zöller is a junior fellow at the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies and a lecturer of African History at Bayreuth University. She studied African studies, Anthropology and Communication at Humboldt and Free University Berlin and, as research assistant at the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin, developed a sound interest in Islam and issues of translocality. Her doctoral research on *'The Manyema Connection': Islam, mobility and urbanity in eastern Congo and Tanganyika, 1910s to 1950s* combines these interests with a focus on modern urban history and questions of shifting identifications.