



Urban Studies Seminar 2018–2019 Annual Theme: The Urban Spatialities of Religion in the Middle East, Africa and South-East Asia

Monday, 3 June 2019, 5 pm

Religiosity and Spatial Configurations in Pre-Colonial Saharan Cities

Lecture by **Rahal Boubrik** (Institut des Études
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Venue

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient
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In cooperation with:



The aim of this lecture is to discuss the role of Islam in the structuring of space in cities of the Western Saharan area in the pre-colonial era. Questions like how religious notables (*ulema*) considered the city as a physical and social space and how urbanity was dealt with in a hostile desert environment will be addressed. This research mostly focuses on cities that were founded by religious groups. It also questions the relationship of such urban units with the context of regions deeply influenced by nomadic practices and by the existence and evolution of intensively trafficked trade routes. On the basis of this effort of re-contextualization and of examination of the role of religion and/or religiously inspired principles and practices on the structuration of urban spaces, the lecture will finally examine the evolution of the cities under consideration during the colonial period, with a specific attention to the evolution of nomadism, the imposition of colonial principles of urban planning and governance and of Christianity.

Prof. Dr. Rahal Boubrik is a scholar trained in anthropology at Aix-Marseille University and at la Sorbonne Paris 3. He is since 2011 professor at the Dpt of Sociology of Mohamed V University (Agdal, Rabat) and since 2013 director of the Centre des Etudes Sahariennes. He was a fellow of the Berlin based Working Group Modernity and Islam at Wissenschaftskolleg (1998-1999). Among his publications *De la tente à la ville. La société sahraouie et la in du nomadisme*, La Croisée des Chemins, Casablanca, 2017, *Traditions pastorales dans l'ouest saharien*, DTGSN, Rabat, 2014 (ed.) ; *Entre Dieu et la tribu, Homme de religion et pouvoir politique en Mauritanie*, Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines, Rabat, 2011; *La ville dans la société bédouine*, Institut des études africaines, Rabat, 2003 ; *Saints et société en Islam: la confrérie ouest-saharienne Fâdiliyya*, CNRS Editions, Paris, 1999.