

Lecture

Monday, 21 October 2019, 5 pm

From 'Post-' to 'Trans-'? Why and How Translocality Matters in New Central Eurasian Studies

Lecture by **Prof. Dr. Manja Stephan-Emmrich** (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin) as part of the lecture series *Central Eurasian Studies and Translocality: A Debate Unfolding*

Venue

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33, 14129 Berlin

In recent years, an explosion of interest in the study of connections, mobilities, and circulations has generated a wide range of spatial approaches in Central Eurasian Studies. Designated as 'alternative spatializations' or 'time-space reconfigurations', a new epistemological vocabulary aims to re-fashion Central Asia as a fixed geographic category, 'peripheral space', or 'space in-between' more significant regions such as East Asia, Eastern Europe, or the Middle East. In due course, translocality has become a momentous, cross-cutting research perspective that allows for rethinking past and present mobilities, and for reflecting the historical and the lived nature of connectivities in, across, and beyond Central Eurasia from a non-elitist mobile actor approach.

But how does all of this translate into empirical practice when it comes to providing thick descriptions of interconnected Muslim societies in Central Eurasia and beyond? I want to reflect on this question by thinking translocality through the lens of material studies. Tracking the 'translocal life' of religious objects across places in Central Eurasia and the Middle East, I argue, offers insights into

how religious utopia, Islamic lifestyles as well as ideas of place circulate across single religious traditions, national territories, and across temporalities as produced by, for example, postsocialism.

Manja Stephan-Emmrich is Junior Professor for Islam in Asian and African Societies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her research interests are in the anthropology of mobility, migration, work, Islamic education, and transregional Islam, with a regional focus on Central Asia, particularly Tajikistan, and the Middle East. She has worked in various transdisciplinary and transregional research contexts such as "Re-configurations" at Philipps-Universität in Marburg and IGK re:work at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She is a Principal Investigator of the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies and co-editor of the edited volume *Mobilities, Boundaries, and Travelling Ideas. Rethinking Translocality Beyond Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Open Book Publishers 2018).

