



Call for Participants:

**Working Group Meeting for Researchers and Scholars working on
transnational pietist movements; women actors and agents in normative
Islamic religiosity and new currents of popular Islamic praxis.**

4-5 November 2005

At the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO)
Berlin, Germany

The study of Muslim societies and movements has revealed new areas that have been relatively under-researched: the transnational linkages between Muslim pietist organisations such as the *Tablighi Jama'at* and Muslim educational (*madrasah*-based) networks; the important role played by Muslim women in the rites and rituals of normative religiosity in the Muslim world; the evident emergence of globalised networks and communication systems between disparate localities across the Muslim world (that have really been built on long-established norms and patterns that date back to the colonial and even pre-colonial era as well as earlier patterns of diasporic expansion.)

Yet scholars and researchers of these areas often tend to work in isolation from each other for a number of reasons: the compartmentalising logic of 'Area Studies' tends to cut up inter-connected regions (such as Southeast Asia from South Asia, South Asia and Central Asia, North Africa from Sub-Saharan Africa, etc.) despite the fact that there has always existed well-established trade and communication networks between them. Increasingly there is an awareness of the extent of South-South linkages and co-operation between these societies and communities, and interest in these areas of research is mounting.

The influence of certain disciplines (such as Security/geo-strategic studies) tends to highlight specific elements of certain cultural/geographical communities while downplaying other alternative currents that may exist in the same locality (as in the case of Pakistan, Indonesia, Central Asia where the growing focus on 'militancy' has marginalised other currents of popular Sufi Islam, etc).

At times the nature of the groups/cultures/social phenomena itself determines the scope and extent of the researcher/scholar's work, where the subject-position of the scholar may help or hinder the research process itself. (As in the case of the *Tablighi Jama'at*, where a strict heterosexist demarcation is enforced and where male scholars have no access to the lives of *Tablighi* women and their role in the evolution and daily life of the group.)

The aim of this working group meeting is to bring together scholars and researchers who are working on the following areas:

1. Transnational networks of pietist groups such as the *Tablighi Jama'at* and educational exchange networks that may be based on institutions such as the *madrasah* system;
2. Women as actors and agents of religious propagation and producers of religious knowledge within the abovementioned networks;
3. Newly emerging currents/trends of popular Islamic religiosity that have developed via long-established communication networks, pointing to South-South networking and co-operation.

Zentrum Moderner Orient · Center for Modern Oriental Studies

Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin e.V.

Kirchweg 33, 14129 Berlin

Telefon (030) 80307-0 Fax (030) 80307-210 email:zmo@rz.hu-berlin.de



Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33, 14129 Berlin

The aim of the working group meeting is to help scholars and researchers make contact with each other, share information about their respective research areas, and link up for future joint collaborative projects (seminars, conferences, joint publications) that will help them work towards a more inclusive and comprehensive academic portrait of their respective research topics/interests. (eg. connecting scholars working on the masculine world of the *Tablighi Jama'at* with those who have thus far focused on the women of the *Tabligh*, etc.)

This will be a two-day working group meeting where participants are expected to give an up-to-date picture of 'work in progress' as well as an account of the present state of research in their respective research areas.

Papers are *not* expected, but a 30-minute presentation that covers both the scholar's own research as well as a description of the blindspots, under-researched areas and other possible avenues for future collaborative work should be outlined.

Date: The working group meeting will take place over two days, **4-5 November** (Friday and Saturday), 2005.

Venue: The working group meeting will be hosted by the **Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO)** in **Berlin** and take place at the ZMO itself. (See link: <http://www.zmo.de>)

Organisers and contacts: The primary organisers and contacts for the meeting are Dr Farish A. Noor (farishahmadnoor@yahoo.co.uk) and Dr Dietrich Reetz of the ZMO, who are both undertaking a joint project on the transcultural transfer of religious knowledge and education between South and Southeast Asia. (See project links: <http://www.zmo.de/Mitarbeiter/Noor/project.htm> and <http://www.zmo.de/Dietrich/Transculture%20Project/Foreign%20Students%20of%20Islam.htm>)

Transport and accommodation: The ZMO will undertake to cover the costs of transport to Berlin and accommodation while there. A modest *per diem* allowance will also be given to the participants during their two-day stay in Berlin.

Application: All applications for participation should be sent directly to Dr. Farish A. Noor at farishahmadnoor@yahoo.co.uk

All applicants should include their CVs, listing both their academic qualifications, current project/research concerns (both doctoral and postdoctoral), previous fieldwork and research information, as well as a list of relevant research materials and publications (books, monographs, essays, papers) related to the theme of the working group meeting.

Applicants are also expected to submit a **one-page outline of their present and/or intended research work related to the theme of the working group meeting.**

Deadline: the deadline for submission is **30 September 2005**