

Transnational Salafism (or Wahhabism). Connecting the Global with the Local, the Textual with the Contextual: Discourses and Practices

Workshop held at the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies

Date:

Thursday, May 10, 2012; 9am – 6pm

Preparatory Meeting:

Tuesday, April 24, 2012, 5pm – 6pm

Organiser:

Dr. Chanfi Ahmed, Post-Doctoral Fellow at BGSMCS

Participants:

doctoral students of the BGSMCS

doctoral students and fellows from associated institutions

Readings:

- Al-Rasheed, Madawi, “The Locale and the Global in Saudi Salafi-Jihadi discourse” in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism. Islam’s new Religious Movement*, London: Hurst and Co., 2009, pp. 301-320.
- Amghar Samir, “Salafism and Radicalisation of Young European Muslims”, in Samir Amghar, Amel Boubakeur, Michael Emerson (eds), *European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2007, pp. 38-51.
- Birt, Jonathan, “Wahhabism in the United Kingdom: Manifestation and Reaction”, in Madawi Al-Rasheed (ed.) *Transnational Connection and the Arab Gulf*, London: Hurst, 2005, pp. 168-84.
- Bonnefoy, Laurent, “How transnational is Salafism in Yemen” in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism. Islam’s new Religious Movement*, London: Hurst and Co., 2009, pp. 321-341.
- Knysh, Alexander, “Contextualizing the Salafi-Sufi Conflict (from Northern Caucasus to Hadramawt)”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 43, n°. 4 (2007), pp. 503-30.
- Lincoln, Bruce, (ed.), *Religion, Rebellion, Revolution*, London: Macmillan, 1985.
- Roff, William R., (ed.), *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning*, London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987.
- Roy, Olivier, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, London: Hurst and Co, 2002.
- Wiktorowicz, Quintan, *Management of Islamic activism: salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood and State Power in Jordan*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000.

Credit Points:

1 CP

Application:

The deadline for application is April 30 (via e-mail to ahmed.chanfi@cms.hu-berlin.de)

Contact:

For any queries or questions, please contact ahmed.chanfi@cms.hu-berlin.de

Workshop Outline:

Salafism has several currents but the most well-known one is *Wahhabism*, so much so that *Salafism* and *Wahhabism* have come to mean the same thing. The workshop will focus on *Wahhabism* and its relationship with the other currents of *Salafism* and other Islamist movements.

Since at least the 1990s, in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America, wherever Muslims are living as a minority or majority, there is in its midst an active minority of Muslims who challenge the Islamic character of the local Islamic practices of the majority (such as the celebration of Prophet Muhammad's birthday, visiting graves, Sufi practices, etc.). The majority call them by different names such as *wahhâbi*, *salafî*, *anti-bid'ah*, etc. They distinguish themselves by different symbols: symbols on their bodies (long beards and short *qamis* for men and *niqāb* for women), symbols in the social space (they often live together in places away from the others).

In terms of religious doctrine, they are scripturalists and literalists. They see themselves as the only good Muslims, the saved group (*al-firqa an-nâjiya/al-firqa al-mansûra*). In terms of political doctrine, they form two broad categories. The first consists of those who preach a quietist and apolitical position. The second consists of those who take a legitimist position supporting the established power or an oppositional stand to established power. This oppositional stance may be moderate (limited to criticism and admonition), but can be also extreme (rebellion, jihâd).

The idea of the workshop is to encourage participants to reflect on the wahhâbi/salafî, based on their respective regional/local and academic specialisation. This reflection should consider the existing literature as well as the personal experience of the participants.

The leading themes of the workshop are: How are the wahhâbi/salafî perceived by others, how do they perceive themselves, and what links do they have with the outside? What are their discourses and their local practices and what links do they have with the global discourses and practices of wahhabism/salafism?

If time permits we can watch a film about Wahhabism in the Balkans today and discuss it.