

## **Transformations of Female Islamic Authority: Of Muftiyas, Qadiyas, and Mujtahidahs**

Workshop held at the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies

### *Date:*

Monday, May 21, 2012; 9am – 6pm

### *Preparatory Meeting:*

Tuesday, May 8, 2012, 5pm – 6pm

### *Organiser:*

Prof. Mirjam Künkler, Princeton University

### *Participants:*

doctoral students of the BGSMCS  
doctoral students and fellows of associated institutions  
- open to any interested researcher -

### *Format:*

seminar-style discussion

### *Readings:*

- Irene Schneider, 'Gelehrte Frauen des 5./11. bis 7./13.Jh.s nach dem biographischen Werk des Dhahabi (st. 748/1347)', in *Philosophy und Arts in the Islamic World. Proceedings of the 18th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants held at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Sept. 3-9, 1996)*, eds. U. Vermeulen & D. de Smet. (Leuven, 1998), 107-121.
- Karen Bauer, 'Debates on Women's Status as Judges and Witnesses in Post-Formative Islamic Law,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 130.1 (2010), 8.
- Mirjam Künkler, "Of 'Alimahs, Wa'izahs, and Mujtahidahs: Forgotten Histories and New State Initiatives for Female Religious Authority in Islam" in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Fall 2012.
- Hilary Kalmbach, "Introduction," in Masooda Bano and Hilary Kalmbach (eds.) *Women, Leadership and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority*, Brill Publishers, 2011.
- Rozaliya Garipova, *Russian "civilizing mission" and the transformation of Muslim women in the Russian Empire: The case of Muhlisa Bubi* (article manuscript)
- Eka Srimulyani, *Women from Traditional Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia. Negotiating Public Spaces*. Selections.

### *Requirements:*

attendance at preparatory meeting, one response paper (reflections ) of 7-9 pages to three of the readings

### *Credit Points:*

1

*Application:*

The deadline for application is May, 8 (via e-mail to [office@bgsmcs.fu-berlin.de](mailto:office@bgsmcs.fu-berlin.de)).

*Contact:*

For any queries or questions, please contact:  
kuenkler@princeton.edu

*Workshop Outline:*

Women have served in positions of religious leadership in the history of Islam in various capacities: as prayer leaders, transmitters of hadiths, preachers, scholars of Islam, as *muftis* and, at times, even *qadis*. When were they able to take on which role where, and what factors facilitated, and conversely limited, their performance in these roles?

The workshop will provide an overview from the classical to the modern period of the type of roles in religious leadership available to women and discuss the geographical and diachronic variation. We will read case studies from Fatimid Egypt, Qajar Iran, imperial Russia, and contemporary Indonesia. Why were women particularly active as hadith transmitters from the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries but not before and not thereafter? How come women had access to the madrasa education in 10<sup>th</sup> century Isfahan, but hardly in the rest of the Islamic world, certainly not Egypt, where women were otherwise particularly active as hadith transmitters? Why is it that women can serve as full-fledged *qadis* in Islamic family courts today in Indonesia and the West Bank, but nowhere else in the Muslim world? Why are the monarchy of Morocco and the republic of Syria particularly invested today in promoting women as *mufityas*, but not as *qadiyas*? And how come the Islamic Republic of Iran sponsors more religious seminars for women than any other country, and why in that light, do we hear relatively little about Iran's *mujtahedas*?

We will discuss these and other questions during the one-day workshop, catching a glimpse at an exciting young research program which, it is hoped, will receive much more scholarly attention in the near future, and hopefully persuade a few aspiring doctoral students to conduct research in this area.