



berlin graduate school
muslim cultures and societies



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

International Summer School in Berlin, July 29th – August 2nd 2013

(Re-)Configurations of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Summer School on Islamic Practices, Imaginations, Groups, and Actors in the African Context

**Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies and
Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies**

The Muslim presence in Sub-Saharan Africa has a long and varied history. African Muslims have taken part in the making of local social relations and habitats, creating institutions, and relating to other religious groups. They have been and are engaged in different networks, practices, and debates through which they relate to each other, both on the local and the global level. Several Islamic proselytization movements and NGOs have established themselves in Sub-Saharan Africa where their concepts and practices have been challenged and were (re)shaped in encounters with fellow Muslims as well as other (individual and institutional) actors of their respective societies. People, ideas, and materials have traveled within, to, and from Africa, leaving their marks in various forms and contexts. These movements, which have an impact on Muslim identities and practices in the context of globalization and socio-economic transformations, do not go uncontested. Accordingly, attempts for reform have always been an integral part of the Muslim communities and their divergent histories in Sub-Saharan Africa.

African Muslims are active members of the global *umma*. Simultaneously, Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa has been subjected to the 'African experience'. Muslims in Sub-Saharan Africa have grappled with colonialism and post-colonial politics in many different ways. They have become an integral part of or were excluded by the emerging nation states, where they strive for presence or hegemony in the public space. Hence, they have become actively involved in the ongoing transformations of the social, economic, and political spheres, which in turn have profound effects on the various Islamic practices. Muslims in Sub-Saharan Africa thus relate to the global *umma* as well as to the local context, creating a 'glocalized' field of religious and socio-cultural practice which shall be taken into account at the discussions of the summer school.

The summer school, organized by the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies and the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies, aims at bringing together scholars from various disciplines and institutions who conduct empirical research on Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa. Papers presented at the summer school should be based on the participants' own research and address one or more of the following subjects:

- 1. Piety and self-cultivation:** How is religion informing the self? What 'moods and motivations' are produced in religious practices? How is piety performed and perceived in public and private settings?
- 2. Islamic organizations:** Which organizations are set up by Muslims in Sub-Saharan Africa? Which role do Islamic organizations from outside Sub-Saharan Africa play in the region? How are Muslims (trans)nationally engaged with each other? Which role do proselytization and itinerant preachers play?

3. Islamic healing and magic: How is healing practiced in Muslim contexts? What kind of medical practices and conceptions are current among Muslims in the region? How are jinn and witchcraft dealt with in Muslim contexts?

4. Internal diversity: What are the ongoing debates influencing the lives of Muslims in Sub-Saharan Africa? In which ways do they have an impact on current Islamic discourses and practices? How is the idea of 'reform' negotiated in these Islamic debates?

5. Muslims and the state: How are Muslims living in and coping with the state in Sub-Saharan Africa? What are the commonalities and the differences between minority and majority settings? How is the *sharia* negotiated in these discourses and processes?

6. Religious education: How are Muslims in Sub-Saharan-Africa engaged in education? How is Islamic knowledge transmitted in secular and religious educational settings?

By addressing these questions we aim to critically assess the possibilities and the limits of an academic approach to the study of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Eligibility of Applicants

We invite PhD students to submit abstracts for presentations (max. 500 words) and a letter of interest no later than March 8th, 2013. Applications should also include the applicant's CV (max. 2 pages) and his/her PhD project proposal (max. 5 pages). Given the success of the organizers' fund-raising, travel and accommodation for up to six students from African countries who are affiliated with an African university will be covered. Decisions regarding presentations and participation will be made until March 30th.

The summer school will include lectures and workshops in which the mentioned subjects will be addressed. The selected papers will be read beforehand by the invited lecturers and participants and discussed in one of the thematic panels. In addition there will be a round-table with invited scholars for a wider public.

One of the envisioned goals of the summer school is to provide constructive feedback on the participants' papers as well as learning about publication opportunities and ways of publishing in peer-reviewed journals. A workshop on publishing strategies is planned for the last day of the summer school.

As this is designed as an international summer school, it is envisioned to hold a further meeting in the summer of 2014 at the University of Jos, Nigeria, to further the exchange of ideas and to establish firm connections among the participants and their institutions.

Organizing Team:

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Applications should be sent in pdf format
(including letter of interest, abstract, PhD project proposal, and CV)
no later than **March 8th, 2013** to the following email address:
berlinsummerschool@outlook.com