



## **Christians and Muslims in Africa. Towards a Framework for the Study of Multi-Religious Settings**

**Summer School, ZMO, Berlin, 14-20 July 2016**

**Convened by Birgit Meyer (Utrecht University/ZMO), Abdoulaye Sounaye (ZMO), Marloes Janson (SOAS), Kai Kresse (Columbia University/ visiting fellow BGS MCS)**

Across Africa, Christians and Muslims co-exist in shared settings, defining themselves in distinction to each other and at times engaging in heavy, violent conflicts, but also being entangled in complicated ways and showing unexpected similarities. In current scholarly research on religion in Africa, the study of Christianity and the study of Islam are thriving, but alas so far these study fields exist more or less independently from each other. This trend is to some extent further enhanced by the recent deployment of distinct anthropologies devoted to separate religious traditions. Scholars with expertise regarding either Christianity or Islam barely engage in conversations with each other. And yet, the long history of encounters between Muslims and Christians – involving a complicated dynamic of becoming similar and asserting difference or involving a complex dynamic of approach and detachment – calls for an encompassing conceptual framework that is devoted to draw out similarities, differences and entanglements. There is need for a broader conceptual umbrella, which entails a comparative orientation, a concern to synthesize the domains of text and doctrine *and* everyday religious practice, and a combination of historical and ethnographic research. This calls for a multidisciplinary collaboration among scholars from history, religious studies, anthropology, Islamic Studies and the study of world Christianity. Building upon a number of recent scholarly works,<sup>1</sup> it is the central aim of this summer school to further the

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Akinleye, A., Janson, M. (2014) *The Spiritual Highway: Religious World Making in Mega-city Lagos*. Catalogue. London: Brunei Gallery; Deacon, G., Hassan, M., Justin, W. (fc 2016) *Preaching Politics: Islam and Christianity on the Kenya Coast*, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*; Dilger, H., Schulz, D. (eds) (2013) The Politics of Religious Schooling: Christian and Muslim Engagements with Education in Africa." Special issue. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 43(2); Frederiks, M. T. (2009) Methodists and Muslims in the Gambia. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 20(1): 61-72; Hassan, M. and Justin, W (fc 2016) *Islam and Democracy; Debating Electoral Involvement on the Kenyan Coast* forthcoming in *Islamic Africa*, vol. 7; Janson, M, Meyer, B (eds) *Muslims and Christians in Africa*(fc in August 2016), special section of *Africa*; Larkin, B. and Meyer, B. (2006) Pentecostalism, Islam and culture: new religious movements in West Africa, in E. K. Akyeampong (ed.), *Themes in West African History*. Oxford: James Currey; Loimeier, R. (2005) Is there Something Like "Protestant Islam?" *Die Welt des Islams* 45 (2): 216–54; Peel, J.Y.D. (2015) *Christianity, Islam, and Orisa-Religion: Three Traditions in Comparison and Interaction*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Soares, B. F. (ed.) (2006) *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*. Leiden: Brill. See also the research project *Knowing each other: Everyday religious encounters, social identities and tolerance in*

development of a conceptual framework for the study of Christianity and Islam in multi-religious settings in Africa, and beyond. We seek to do so by synthesizing conceptual reflection about comparison and comparability in regard to multi-religious settings with detailed historical and ethnographic studies that focus on concrete encounters and interactions among Christians and Muslims in such settings, which also include other religious traditions (e.g. Hinduism, Buddhism, and so-called traditional religion).

This summer school is an initiative of the project *Habitats and Habitus. Politics and Aesthetics of Religious World-Making* hosted at the ZMO, which seeks to further the development of comparative approaches to the study of Christians and Muslims in Africa, especially in urban multi-religious settings, and beyond.<sup>2</sup> We have invited 25 junior scholars – advanced PhD students and postdocs – whose research focuses on Muslims *and* Christians in Africa or who study either Muslims or Christians and feel the need to situate their research against a broader comparative horizon.<sup>3</sup> During the summer school, all invited PhD students and postdocs will present their work and there will be ample formal and informal opportunities to get feedback and engage in discussions. Every day, there will be lectures by senior scholars. Themes addressed include the question of comparison and comparability in a setting of religious diversity; a critical review of terms denoting religious mixing (from syncretism to assemblage); the articulation of both religions in the public domain; practices of piety in everyday life; convergences and differences regarding attitudes to health, education, and the state; conflict and violence, interfaith dialogue and peace initiatives. Lasting for one week, the summer school will be held in the premises of the ZMO.

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*southwest Nigeria* chaired by Insa Nolte:

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/historycultures/departments/dasa/research/knowning/project.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Directed by Birgit Meyer, the project involves two PhD students, Murtala Ibrahim and Hanna Nieber, who study Muslim-Christian encounters in Abuja, Nigeria and Zanzibar, Tanzania. The project (hosted at the ZMO between 2012 and 2017 and taking place in collaboration with Utrecht University) is funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in the framework of the Anneliese Maier Research Award. For more information see:

[https://www.zmo.de/forschung/projekte\\_2008\\_2013/Habitats\\_Habitus\\_e.html](https://www.zmo.de/forschung/projekte_2008_2013/Habitats_Habitus_e.html)

<sup>3</sup> We are able to fund travel costs and stay for a limited number of participants. Participants in graduate programs are encouraged to investigate possibilities of receiving (partial) funds from their own institutions.

## **Draft program**

### **Thursday 14 7**

13.00 Arrival

13.30-15.30 Panel 1. *Introduction: Towards a framework for the study of multi-religious settings*

**Chair:** Ben Soares

Marloes Janson: From “Syncretism” to “Assemblage“: Studying Chrislam’s Religious Pluralism in Lagos

Birgit Meyer: “Pentecostalism, Islam and Culture” Revisited

Abdoulaye Sounaye: Studying Islam, Keeping in Mind Christianity

Kai Kresse: A “Double Periphery”: Senses of Marginalization and Rivalry as Starting-points for Research

15.30-16.00 Break

16.00-17.30 *First meeting working groups (parallel)*

17.30 Drinks and Buffet (ZMO)

### **Friday 15 7**

09.30-11.00 *Lecture 1. Insa Nolte: “Muslim husbands, Christian wives: marriage, gender and religious difference in SW Nigeria”*

11.00-11.30 Break

11.30-13.00 *Working groups*

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.30 *Panel 2. Muslim-Christian Interactions in Everyday Life*

**Chair:** Marloes Janson

Ben Soares: Reflections on Muslim-Christian Encounters in West Africa and Elsewhere

Joseph Wandera: Living Together in ‘Little Mogadishu’: Conviviality in Nairobi’s Urban Space

Samuel Ntewusu: ‘Too Much Meat Does not Spoil Soup’: A Historical Analysis of Muslim-Christian Relations in Ghana

15.30-16.00 Break

16.00-17.30 *Working groups*

### **Saturday 16 7**

09.30-11.00 *Panel 3. Comparison and Comparability*

**Chair:** Brian Larkin

Kai Kresse: Working ourselves into an understanding of comparison from within

Roman Loimeier: Why do we compare religions at all? The traps of comparison

Birgit Meyer: Comparison in action – how to study it

11.00-11.30 Break

11.30-13.00 *Working groups*

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.30 *Lecture 2. Brian Larkin: "Media, form and religious movements"*

### **Sunday 17 7**

10.00- 12.30 *Citytour*

"Moving Religions: an interreligious tour through the Schillerkiez in Neukölln"

Meeting point: Rathaus Neukölln

14.00-16.00 *Service at International Christian Revival Church*

### **Monday 18 7**

09.30-11.00 *Panel 4. Islam and Christianity in the Public Domain*

**Chair:** Birgit Meyer

Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu: Religion and the Quest for Public Presence in Africa: Perspectives on Christianity and Islam in Ghana

Jörg Haustein: Contesting Religious Boundaries: Politics and the (Im)possibility of "Religious Neutrality" in Ethiopia

Corey Williams: Interreligious Encounter in Nigeria's Public Domain: Chrislam and Multiple Religious Belongings and Identities

11.00-11.30 Break

11.30-13.00 *Working groups*

13.00-14.00 Lunch, BGMCS

14.15-16.15 *Lecture 3. Amr Ryad: "Muslim Reform at the Periphery in the colonial age: Rashid Rida's Views of Islam and Christian Missions in Sub-Saharan Africa"; with responses by Jörg Haustein, Hassan Mwakimako and Amidu Sanni,*

16.15-16.45 Break

16.45-17.45 Presentation of research at BGMCS

Drinks

19.00 Biergarten Josef und Maria, Drinks and Food

## **Tuesday 19 7**

09.30-11.00 *Panel 5. Confrontation, Conflict and Violence*

**Chair:** Samuel Ntewusu

Abdoulaye Sounaye: "I'm Christian...I'm not Charlie"

Hassan Mwakimako: Hero or Villain: Aboud Rogo and Re-Interpreting of Religious Violence on the Coast of Kenya

11.00-11.30 Break

11.30-13.00 *Lecture 4. Louis Brenner: "Religious Quests for Wellbeing: a Comparative Approach."*

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.30 *Panel 6. Health and Healing*

**Chair:** Hansjoerg Dilger

Rijk van Dijk: Counseling as a Socio-Religious Technology of Disclosure

Kodjo Senah: Healing Practices across Religions: The Ghanaian Experience

Felicitas Becker: Health Concerns in the Growth of Muslim and Christian Communities in the Twentieth Century: Convergences and Divergences

15.30-16.00 Break

16.00-17.30 *Working groups*

## **Wednesday 20 7**

09.30-11.00 *Panel 7. Education*

**Chair:** Kai Kresse

Hansjoerg Dilger: Learning Morality in (New) Christian and Muslim Schools in Dar es Salaam

Britta Frede: Girls and women education in Muslim African communities

11.00-11.30 Break

11.30-13.00 *Panel 8. Practices of Piety – Religious Reform*

**Chair:** Marloes Janson

Abdoulaye Sounaye: Yan Agaji: Pious Servants of the Sunna

Amidu Sanni: Religiosity and Piety in Contemporary Sudanic Africa: A Narrative from Nigeria

Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu: "Meccanizing" Jerusalem: Christianization of Islamic Traditions in Contemporary African Christianity

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-14.45: *Concluding Discussion*  
Departure