



UNIVERSITÄT
LEIPZIG



香港中文大學
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



Muslim Minorities and Questions of Secularity in China and Beyond

International Workshop at the Centre for Advanced Studies
"Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities", Leipzig University

9–10 June 2023

Convenors

Yee Lak Elliot Lee (Institute for the Study of Religions, Leipzig University)

Markus Dressler (Institute for the Study of Religions/Modern Turkish Studies, Leipzig University)

Hubert Seiwert (KFG "Multiple Secularities") and

James D. Frankel (Cultural and Religious Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Approach

This interdisciplinary workshop investigates the role of secularity – that is, conceptual distinctions and institutional differentiations between "religion" and its others – in the formation and normalization of Muslim minorities, with a focus on China. Recent developments in China give a strong impression of Muslim minorities being subjugated under a state-led secularist regime. Therein, Muslims are discursively disciplined by means of semantically overlapping binaries, such as religion/secular, legal/illicit, good/bad, local/foreign, and modern/traditional. While this scenario puts emphasis on the agency of the state, our workshop aims at exploring the roles of various actors (including but not limited to Muslims and state authorities) in resisting, appropriating, altering, and reproducing such binaries to sustain or upset established religious and secular fields. Whereas the Chinese state justifies its approach to regulating Islam by mimicking practices of other countries from which it seeks endorsement, Muslims respond to the secularist regime by drawing on symbolic and material resources from their transregional networks. These actors' manoeuvres point to continuities with and breakaways from longer historical dynamics, as Muslims settled and displaced in and out of China in past exchanges and conquests along the overland and maritime "silk roads", through post-Cold War dynamics of globalization and reterritorialization.

Schedule

Friday, 9 June 2023

09:00–09:30 Registration

09:30–10:00 **Opening and Theoretical Input**

Hubert Seiwert (KFG "Multiple Secularities")

10:00–11:10 **Panel 1: Muslim Leadership in Chinese Secularity**

Chair: Philip Clart (Leipzig University)

Tiffany Cone (Zayed University, Abu Dhabi)

"A Disciplined and Rationalised Charisma: Challenging the Religious (Charismatic) and Secular (Bureaucratic) Binary in a Chinese Sufi Context"

Shaodan Zhang (Xi'an International Studies University)

"Islam in the Chinese Religious Landscape: Secularization of Mosque Leadership in Late Imperial China, 1600–1900"

11:10–11:30 Coffee Break

11:30–12:40 **Panel 2: Muslim Diaspora and Global Connectivity**

Chair: Markus Dressler (Leipzig University)

Yuting Wang (American University Sharja)

"Transnational Resistance in a Digital Age: Chinese Muslims, Halal Bitcoin, and Reimagining Authentic Islamic Identity"

Nur Yasemin Ural (KFG "Multiple Secularities")

"Muslim Burials in Western Europe: Belonging, Citizenship and Secularism"

12:40–14:10 Lunch

14:10–15:20 **Panel 3: Chinese Nationalism and the Remaking of Muslims**

Chair: Katrin Köster (Leipzig University)

Jie Kang (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity)

"Converting Muslims: Chinese Secularity in Religious Encounter"

Gang Li (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)

"From Dying for the Cause of God to Dying for Chinese National Patriotism: Secularization of the Concept of Shahīd in Modern China"

15:20–15:40 Coffee Break

15:40–17:30 Panel 4: Everyday Secularity and Cultural Expression of Muslims in China

Chair: Hubert Seiwert (KFG "Multiple Secularities")

James D. Frankel (Chinese University of Hong Kong)

"Qingzhen is Halāl, but Halāl is Unlawful: Muslims, Islamophobia, and State Ambivalence in China"

Peng Hai (Harvard University)

"Before Social Death: Cultural Rule and Ethnic Expression in 1980s Xinjiang"

Tang Man (Free University Berlin)

"'Religion is in the heart': Contesting Secularity in the Everyday Life of Qinghai Muslims"

19:30 Joint Dinner at PAN Restaurant

Saturday, 10 June 2023

09:30–11:15 Panel 5: Islamic Sites in China and Spatial Differentiation

Chair: Birgit Meyer (Utrecht University)

Sylvia Wu (University of Chicago)

"Moving the Pious Muslim Bodies and Relocating the Prayers: between the Old and New Mosques of Hangzhou"

Yee Lak Elliot Lee (Leipzig University)

"Muslim Graveyards vs. Urban Gentrification: Contending the Religious-Secular Spatial Order in Early Twentieth Century Guangzhou"

Pascale Bugnon (University of Geneva)

"Secularism and Religious Heritage: Reflecting on Muslim Shrines in Southeastern China"

11:15–11:30 Coffee Break

11:30–13:00 Concluding Discussion

13:00–14:45 Lunch