

## **II. Moral Cities: Religious Belonging and Cohabitation in Urban Spaces**

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In recent years, religious ideas, practices and materialities have substantially transformed urban life worlds and reconfigured cities' moral, political, architectural, and affective-sensorial landscapes. These dynamics – and the way they have become subject to contestation and engagement from a wide range of religious and secular actors – can be exemplified with regard to the ongoing inscription of Pentecostal and Muslim spaces in the highly diversified urban settings of Africa and Europe. In these settings, the sonic and architectural dominance of mega-churches – and the (partly emerging) presence of Muslim ways of living and building in public space – go hand in hand with the articulation of claims about the right to the city, as well as with the borrowing and imitation of forms of religious expression, worship, and the appropriation of urban space. Furthermore, the attraction of religious practices and teaching – and the services religious actors provide to parts of the urban populations – result in the recruitment of new members and/or the expansion of religiously informed practices into domains that were previously controlled by the state and mainly secular and other religious organizations. This plenary discusses how the presence of a multitude of religious actors and modes of expression in urban spaces shapes new routes for belonging and identification and how, at the same time, the transformation of cityscapes through religious practices and materialities poses moral, affective, and political challenges for the cohabitation of urban actors in the secular order. The presenters will also ask how the ongoing shifts in the moral, political and material setup of urban contexts are experienced and embodied by citydwellers who face both the opportunities and promises of their respective religious communities as well as processes of demographic, religious and socio-economic diversification in an interconnected world.

### **Religious Matters in Urban Spaces**

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Cities are environments in which various, old and new religious traditions and groups relate to and interact with each other in specific pluriform configurations. In cities as Berlin and Amsterdam, Europe's others, long imagined as far away and ideologically and conceptually distanced through colonialism, co-exist with secular atheists, protagonists of Western Christianity and spiritual seekers. Understanding this complicated co-existence calls for new post-colonial and post-secular frameworks. The guiding proposition of this presentation is that a focus on "religious matters" offers a productive empirical and conceptual entry point into the transforming dynamics of religion in urban space. It brings into view not only the presence of religious newcomers and the familiar material culture of Christianity, but also the material remains of unchurched (such as abandoned church buildings which are up for a new purpose) and the new appearance of

Christian symbols framed as cultural heritage (such as the cross on the Humboldtforum). Controversies around such and other religious matters crystallize conflicting political and moral imaginaries of the malaise and merits of co-habitation.

### **Moral Cities: Religious Belonging and Cohabitation in Urban Space - Three hypotheses**

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The new presence of the religious in urban spaces coincides with the extraordinary growth of the urban spaces since the seventies. The initial carriers of the religious turn were migrants pouring from the peripheries into the megacities. Religion was an effective means to cope with the complexities of the urban environment. One of the particular strengths lay in the formation of religious milieus (rather than class based interest groups) allowing the formation of effective networks. In the process of urbanization religion was re-invented. The new urban religious movements were typically non-conformist and anti-establishment in the beginning. These were characterized by a new interpenetration of market logic and religious thinking, by a connection of inner-worldly and extra-worldly salvation, strong familialism and self organization.

This process of place making is extremely dynamic. The case of Turkey exemplifies well the successive stages of an initial phase of place-making through self-organization (1); the creation of an economic base (2) and the conquest of state power (3).

### **Belonging in Berlin's Cityscape: Affective Place-Making among Diasporic Neo-Pentecostal and Sufi Groups**

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In the city, often experienced as an affectively charged site of political contestation and moral ambivalence, religion serves as a powerful means to belong. In this paper, we focus on how migrant-centered religious groups in Berlin engage in bodily-focused and affect-driven practices as a way to establish their members' moral, social and spatial sense of belonging. With ethnographic accounts from a Turkish Sufi prayer circle and a West-African neo-Pentecostal congregation we highlight these groups' practices of place-making in relation to Berlin's cityscape. In studying the place of affect in ritual, we thereby seek to capture the translocal and transtemporal dynamics of belonging, highlighting especially its bodily and moral implications. A discussion of religious place-making in a socially, materially, and morally contested urban space like Berlin points to the ways in which these groups deal with shared conditions of urbanity. An inter-religiously comparative analytical framework holds the potential for affective continuities to emerge across different religious communities and settings despite their distinct historical trajectories in the city.