



Religious Activism between Politics and Everyday Life:

Mobilizing and Mediating the Religious in Eastern Europe and in the Caucasus

Convenors: Tsypylma Darieva (ZOiS, Berlin); Regina Elsner (ZOiS, Berlin), Jeanne Kormina (HSE St. Petersburg/Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin)

Contemporary discussions on the resurgence of religion in Eastern Europe and Eurasia are controversial and the pathways of de-secularization processes can take different forms. There is a rise of critical views towards ‘improper’ religiosity that may go back to the legacies of the Soviet atheist understanding of religious traditions, on one hand, and to emerging alternative religious concepts of life, on the other hand. In this context, post-socialist Eurasia offers fruitful arenas for the study of new religious activism and aspirations (believing without belonging) in those domains where religion is seen as a source of mobility, morality, and heritage, where legal and social frameworks are constantly being changed, negotiated, and contested. To serve particular purposes, sacred is mobilized and mediated in a variety of ways and transactions often merging with social, political and economic activities. The main question of the workshop is how diverse faith-based activities (large and small scales, formal and informal) are mobilized and mediated among citizens by religious institutions and informal believers in Eastern Europe and in the Caucasus? *Mobilizing and mediating the religious* may produce conservative, but also innovative ways of identification, morality, human rights solidarity and concepts of being successful in unstable societies. For that the religious may use different communication ways and networks beyond traditional prayer houses and church systems. The 1,5-day workshop “Religious Activism” seeks to discuss concepts and practices of mobilizing and mediating the religious in post-socialist Eastern Europe and in the Caucasus from different disciplinary points of views: anthropology, theology, sociology.

Thursday, 12th of March 2020

2:00 p. m. Welcome

Section I Civic religious activism

2:15-4:00 Catherine Wanner (Pennsylvania State University): Militarized care or spiritualized healing? Religious activism and cultivating the empathetic impulse

Regina Elsner (ZOiS, Berlin): Who is 'the Church'? – Negotiating the social role of Orthodoxy in Russia

Discussant and chair: Detlef Pollack (University of Münster)/ Tsypylma Darieva (ZOiS, Berlin)

4:00 Coffee Break

Section II Religious activism in the urban context

4:15-6:15 Tsypylma Darieva (ZOiS, Berlin): Claiming the city: faith-based activism in the post-socialist Batumi

Ketevan Khutsishvili (TSU, Tbilisi): How to open the doors: different mobilizing strategies of religious communities in Batumi

Dmitry Uzlaner (Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Moscow): Post-secular hybrids in contemporary Russia: from 'punk-prayer' to traditional values

Discussant and chair: Agnieszka Halemba (University of Warsaw/ Xóchitl Bada (University of Illinois/ Wissenschaftskolleg, Berlin)

6:15 Dinner

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Section III Materiality of religious activism

9:00-10:30 Yulia Aliyeva (independent scholar): Exploring (neo)Charismatic Christian communities in Baku: Artistic performances and struggle for acceptance and recognition

Hamlet Melkumyan (National Academy of Sciences, Yerevan): Vernacular sacred sites: A pattern of social modernization in Yezidi community in Armenia?

Discussant and chair: Jeanne Kormina (HSE, St. Petersburg/ Wissenschaftskolleg)/ Tijana Krstic (CEU, Budapest/ Wissenschaftskolleg)

10:30 Coffee Break

Section IV Pilgrimages as a form of religious mobilization

10:45-12:45 Jesko Schmoller (Perm State University): Brothers without borders: Sufi connections between Russia and Kazakhstan

Elza-Bair Guchinova (Russian Academy of Sciences, Elista): Organized pilgrimage as a special project of Central Khurul (Temple) of Kalmykia

Sergey Shtyrkov (European University, St. Petersburg): Fear and loathing in North Ossetia: Objectification of ethnic religion as an anti-colonial project

Discussant and chair: Manja Stephan (Humboldt University, Berlin) and Tsypylma Darieva (ZOiS, Berlin)/ Piotr Goldstein (ZOiS, Berlin)

12:45 Lunch

Section V Politics and Counter-politics?

2:00-4:00 Altay Goyushov (Baku Research Institute/ Wissenschaftskolleg): Politicization of hijab in post-Soviet Azerbaijan

Vlad Naumescu (CEU, Budapest): A new ‘Great schism’? On the theopolitics of communion and territory in the postsocialist space

Jeanne Kormina (HSE, St. Petersburg/ Wissenschaftskolleg): Marking space religiously: Orthodox Christians as publics and counterpublics

Discussant and chair: Catherine Wanner (Pennsylvania State University) and Regina Elsner (ZOiS)/ Balázs Trencsényi (CEU, Budapest/ Wissenschaftskolleg)

4:00 Coffee break

4:15-5:00 Final discussion

7:00 Dinner

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For directions please visit: <https://www.wiko-berlin.de/kontakt/>