



Forum for Islamforskning Nyhedsbrev – e-mail

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ÅRGANG 5, NUMMER 2

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Nyt fra bestyrelsen

Ved FIFOs Generalforsamling d.27. april 2012 blev en ny bestyrelse valgt, der siden har konstitueret sig:

- Formand: Lektor, ph.d. Thomas Hoffmann (th@teo.au.dk)
- Næstformand: Professor Jørgen S. Nielsen (jsn@teol.ku.dk)
- Sekretær: Ph.d. Kirstine Sinclair (sinclair@hist.sdu)
- Kasserer: Ph.d.-stip. Niels Valdemar Vinding (nvv@teol.ku.dk)
- Medlem: Adjunkt Ehab Galal (ehab@hum.ku.dk)
- Medlem: Adjunkt Lasse Lindekilde (lindekilde@ps.au.dk)
- Suppleant: Professor Garbi Schmidt (garbi@ruc.dk)
- Suppleant: Lektor Lene Kühle (lk@teo.au.dk)

Nyt fra forskerverdenen

Nye stillinger:

Lektorat:

2012 er Sune Haugbølle tiltrådt et lektorat i Global Studies ved Institut for Samfund og Globalisering, RUC (suneha@ruc.dk)

Adjunktur:

2012 tiltrådte Brian Arly Jakobsen et adjunktur ved Institut for Tværkulturelle og Regionale Studier, Københavns Universitet (brianj@hum.ku.dk)

Andet

Mikkel Rytter, adjunkt ved Institut for Kultur og Samfund, Aarhus Universitet er pr. 1. august 2012 tiltrådt som ny leder af CESAU – Center for Sociologiske studier, Aarhus Universitet, se <http://CESAU.au.dk>

Ph.d. nyt: Ph.d.-forsvar og afhandlingsresumeeer

Everyday Lived Islam: Religious Reconfigurations and Secular Sensibilities among Muslim Minorities in the West.

Ph.d. thesis defended June 14 2012, by **Nadia Jul Jeldtoft**, Centre for European Islamic Thought, Faculty of Theology, Copenhagen University.

This thesis explores the ways in which members of Muslim minorities in Denmark, Germany and the USA relate to Islam and express being Muslims in everyday life. The main argument of the thesis is that Muslim life in the West should be approached through alternative theoretical and empirical contextualisations in order to avoid reifying 'Islam' as the principal identity for Muslims and thus making Muslims 'all about Islam'. The study is based on 53 life-story interviews with 48 individuals and on participant observation using the criteria that they should self-identify as Muslims, but should not be active in Muslim organisations.

The first part of the analysis shows that the Muslims in this study approach Islam in highly individualised, pragmatic and innovative ways, which are aimed at making sense in everyday life. Although a community of other Muslims and the notion of a reified Islam are important for the ways in which the interlocutors in this study relate to Islam, they also express highly individualised re-appropriations of e.g. the Islamic tradition and what it means to know Islam. They prioritise personal autonomy over religious authority and they place their own 'true selves' at the centre of what it means to be Muslim. Many of them also adapt pragmatic and situational observance of Islamic tradition, sometimes following it and sometimes disregarding it. They highlight personal autonomy, authenticity and anti-authoritarianism, and often do so in contestation with Muslim others. They relate to God stressing emotions and spirituality. In relation to practice, many of them dismiss religious practice altogether, asserting that being Muslim is not about outward practice but about inward emotions and motives, or they define Islam as being mainly a set of universal values – 'Golden Rule Islam' – and this leads them to observe certain moral standards in relation to other people rather than carrying out ritual practices.

In the second part of the analysis, I revisit the findings of everyday lived Islam with reference to power relations and place. I ask the critical questions of why the interlocutors shape and produce religiosities in ways that highlight individualism, personal autonomy and privatisation. When the interlocutors adopt individualising and privatising forms of practice, they are also responding to the often hostile majority representation of Muslims as overtly religious, and as boundary crossers in relation to the 'secular localities' normalised by non-

Muslim national majorities. Furthermore, when the interlocutors stress personal autonomy and anti-authoritarianism in relation to Islam, they are also aligning themselves with certain aspects of secularity. Free choice and a critical-rational approach to religion are expressions of secular sensibilities – sensibilities that also express religion which is ‘authorised’ in secular localities. But the Muslim minorities in this study are not only conforming to secular norms; they are also active contributors of secular norms inasmuch as everyday lived Islam navigates religion through secular sensibilities.

The thesis thus points to the fact that identification as a Muslim is highly situational; Muslim minorities may be positioned as both minorities and majorities depending on the context. I discuss the role and nature of minority agency in the light of the empirical findings, and suggest that we should pay more attention to what other potential identifications are constructed by Muslim minorities. The thesis also sheds light on the various forms of Muslim minority agency that are embedded in the realms of everyday life, and which are shaped not solely in opposition, but are creative, subtle and innovative and aimed at making sense in day-to-day life. The thesis concludes that being Muslim in everyday life in the West is about belongings in the plural: belonging to other Muslim minorities and to an identification as Muslim; belonging to non-Muslim majorities; and finally, belonging in modernity.

Publikationer

Nyt tidsskrift: **Journal of Muslims in Europe.**

Tidsskriftet udspringer af *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* (chefredaktør Jørgen S. Nielsen, CEIT, Det Teologiske Fakultet, Københavns Universitet), og det første nummer er udkommet fra Brill, hvorfra et gratis eksemplar kan anskaffes: <http://www.brill.com/publications/journals/journal-muslims-europe>

Maja Greenwood og Morten Valbjørn (red.): **Temanummer om ‘De arabiske revolter’, tidsskriftet *Politik* nr. 15 med følgende bidrag:**

Introduction: The Arab Revolts in Society and the Social Sciences ved Morten Valbjørn (lektor i statskundskab, Aarhus Universitet)

Maja Greenwood og Ole Wæver: København-Kairo, tur-retur

Jørgen Møller: The (un)predictable Middle East: Social Science,

Point Predictions, and Pattern Predictions

Bjørn Olav Utvik: Islamists in a more open political space: What role in the New Middle East?

Rasmus Alenius Boserup: Repoliticization and postdemocratization: The Study of Middle East Politics in the Context of the Arab Revolts

Laura Toft Nielsen: Social Media before, in and after the first Arab Revolts

Gad, Ulrich Pram(2012), 'Concepts of dialogue as counterterrorism: Narrating the self-reform of the Muslim Other,' *Critical Studies on Terrorism* , vol. 5, nr. 2, pp. 159-178.

Haugbølle, Rikke Hostrup (2012), book review: "Ben Ali's 'New Tunisia' (1987-2009). A Case Study of Authoritarian Modernization in the Arab World. Steffen Erdle", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 2, July

Haugbølle, Rikke Hostrup and Francesco Cavatorta (2012), "The End of Authoritarian Rule and the Mythology of Tunisia under Ben Ali", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 2, July

Haugbølle, Rikke Hostrup and Francesco Cavatorta (2012), "'Dégagé! The end of authoritarianism in Tunisia?'" , *Der Bürger im Staat*, Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, Baden-Württemberg, 1/2 - 2012

Haugbølle, Rikke Hostrup and Francesco Cavatorta (2012), 'Beyond Ghannouchi: Islamism and social change in Tunisia', *Middle East Report*, 262, pp. 20-25.

Haugbølle, Rikke Hostrup and Francesco Cavatorta (2012), "Vive la grande famille des médias Tunisiens"; Media reform, authoritarian resilience and societal responses in Tunisia", *Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 17, No.1

Jørgensen, Signe Kjær (2012), "Why Wear a Headscarf in Parliament? Danish Secularist, Nationalist and Feminist Ideas about Muslims", in Christopher Flood, Stephen Hutchings, and Henri Nickols (eds.), *Political and Cultural Representations of Muslims: Islam in the Plural*, Leiden: Brill.

Nielsen, Jørgen S. (red.) (2012), *Religion, Ethnicity and Contested Nationhood in the Former Ottoman Space*, Leiden: Brill.

Nielsen, Jørgen S. (red.) (2012), *Islam in Denmark: The Challenge of Diversity*, Lanham: Lexington.

Olwig, Karen Fog, Birgitte Romme Larsen og Mikkel Rytter (2012), *Migration, Family and the Welfare State : Integrating Migrants and Refugees in Scandinavia*. London: Routledge.

P. Provençal sammen med Peter Rask Møller og Charlotte Vikkelsø Hansen (2011), "Forsskåls fiskeherbarium – 250 års jubilæum", *Dyr i Natur og Museum*, nr. 2, ss. 20-23.

P. Provençal (2011), "Cedertræet", *Sfinx* (4) ss. 166-169.

P. Provençal (2012), "Arabic Plant Names and Botany in Arabic Civilisation. The Contribution of Peter Forsskål (1732-1763) and Others", i D.A. Agius, J.P. Cooper, C. Zazzaro & A. Trakadas (eds), *Navigated spaces, connected places. Proceedings of the Conference Red Sea V*. Oxford: Archaeopress BAR International Series 2346, pp. 241-244.

Mikkel Rytter (2012, "Between Preferences: Marriage and Mobility among Danish Pakistani Youth", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18(3)572-590.

Mikkel Rytter (2012), "Semi-legal family life : Pakistani couples in the borderlands of Denmark and Sweden", *Global Networks* 12(1): 91-108.

Mikkel Rytter (2012), "Familielivets skyggesider: Religiøs genforhandling af transnationale steder og relationer", *Tidskriftet for islamforskning*, nr. 1: 106-128.

Vinding, Niels Valdemar og Lisbet Christoffersen (2012), *Danish Regulation of Religion: State of Affairs and Qualitative Reflections*, København: Det Teologiske Fakultet.

Konference

Time: Thursday, 8 November 2012 from 14.00 – 17.00

Venue: Kulturarvssalen, Diamanten (the Royal Library)

Program:

14.00 Welcome

14.15 **Reflections on 'Lived Piety'**

Lecture by Karin van Nieuwkerk, Professor, Radboud University

The new trend within anthropology and religious studies to study 'lived religion' in order to destabilize fixed notions of Muslim religiosity and de-essentialize Islam is promising. Instead of locating religion in rules and doctrines that prescribe actions, thoughts, and feelings of Muslims, this perspective situates religion in daily practices, opening up space for flexibility and ambivalences of religious experiences and the embodied character of religious practice. It raises important questions with regard to how we study religion and where we locate "the religious".

Based on the different researches I have conducted – female singers and dancers in Egypt; converts to Islam in the Netherlands; changing religious celebrations among Moroccan immigrant women in the Netherlands; 'repentant artists' in Egypt and the development of pious art productions – I will trace the different ways I have studied Muslim religiosity and ferret out the different ways I have situated piety.

Yet does this approach not inadvertently sustain images of Muslims as predominantly religious beings? I will suggest some additional perspectives for future research besides studying 'lived piety'.

15.00 Discussion

15.30 Coffee break

15.45 **Whose everyday Islam?**

Lecture by Nadia Jul Jeldtoft, University of Copenhagen

In this presentation, which is based on the research from my Ph.D. dissertation, I will deal with the benefits and limitations of working with the framework of everyday lived religion in the study of Muslims in the West. I will particularly discuss how in the course of my research project I found that this framework (especially as it has been developed in the tradition of the sociology of religion) has a bias towards the study of white,

middle class members of the majority population. I will also discuss how this bias might be seen as an advantage in the study of religiosity with minority groups, particularly within the study of Muslim religiosity. Furthermore, I will reflect on the methodology I used in my project (life story interviews) and its usefulness (or lack of) in relation to examining the significance of religion in everyday life. Lastly, I will discuss how the category of what religion is (and is not) came into play in my work.

16.30-17.00 Discussion

The seminar is organized by the Danish Folklore Archives, the Royal Library, in cooperation with SOCED (www.soced.dk) and the University of Copenhagen.