



## Africa, Globalization and the Muslim Worlds

*Harvard Divinity School, September 19-21, 2019*

*Conference organized by The Alwaleed Professorship of Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society at Harvard Divinity School and the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA) at Northwestern University.*

Scholarship on globalization of Islamic Africa has been focused either on merely describing (if not romanticizing) African Muslims' experiences abroad, on one hand, or on exploring how Muslim societies in Africa are affected by global Islamic trends, on the other hand. Little attention has been paid to the ways in which Islam and what it means to be African and Muslim have been and are being negotiated at the intersection of local, regional and global encounters, narratives, perceptions and exchanges.

Questions that we seek to investigate include but are not limited to: How to account for the dynamics of continuity and change in forms of Islamic piety, authority and knowledge production in Africa, in a context of increased global connections? How do African Muslims articulate their religious life in a globalized world? For African Muslims in the diaspora, how do religious links with their homelands shape their relationship to Islam? How do diasporic religious or non-religious experiences affect or alter aspects of lived Islam in Africa? To what extent has the interaction between the so-called Muslim world and Africa shaped Islamic practices and thought or the perception of the so-called Umma? What role does pilgrimage play in connecting African Muslims with other Muslims from distant lands? How do African Muslims navigate notions of Africa and Islam, faith, foreignness and modernity in a globalized world?

This conference will be organized around six panels. The first panel will address the long presence of African Muslims in the Americas. The second, third and fifth panel will deal with transnational Islam, and the sixth panel with emerging paradigms in the study of Islam in Africa. In addition, the conference will bring a group of young Muslim artists called Baraka Boys for a roundtable (fourth panel) followed by a musical performance.

*This conference is a follow-up to "Islam in Global Africa: African Muslims in the World, Muslim Worlds in Africa" conference organized by ISITA at Northwestern University in April 2018.*

## **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19**

Location: Thompson Room, Barker Center, 12 Quincy St., Cambridge MA 02138

5:00-5:30 PM

### **Welcome Addresses**

David Hempton, Dean of Harvard Divinity School

Ousmane Kane, Harvard Divinity School

5:30-6:30 PM

### **Opening Lecture**

Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem, Northwestern University

*“Global Shinqit. Mauritanian Islamic Scholars and the Re-Making of Religious Authority in the Muslim World”*

## **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20**

Location: Harvard Divinity School, 60 Oxford Street, Room 119

### **PANEL 1: THE LONG PRESENCE OF AFRICAN MUSLIMS IN THE AMERICAS**

8:30-10:00 AM

Chair: Charles Hallisey

Diego Giovanni Castellanos, “Muslim Identity and Social Marginality among an African Descendant Colombian Community”

Madina Thiam, “‘Beyond Timbuktu’: Sahelian Networks and Textual Practices in Pre Emancipation Jamaica”

Ayodeji Ogunnaike, “Bilad al-Brazil: The Importance of West African Scholars in Brazilian Islamic Education and Practice in Historic and Contemporary Perspective”

**Friday, September 20 (Continued)**

**PANEL II: TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM, PART 1**

10:30 AM-12:00 PM

Chair: Ousmane Kane

Irit Back, “Sufis from West Africa in Jerusalem: Dynamic of Religious Exchange during Colonial Times”

Rhea Rahman, “Racializing the Good Muslim: The Whiteness of ‘Soft Power’ and Black Muslim Activism in South Africa”

Steve Howard, “On the Path of the Prophet in Unsettled Times: Sudan’s Republican Brotherhood Looks Abroad”

**PANEL III: TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM, PART 2**

1:00-2:30 PM

Chair: Rebecca Shereikis

Amidu Sanni, “Glocalization in Globalization: New Epistemology and Source on African History and Scholarship”

Cheikh Niang, “Beyond Senegal: The Socio-Political Perspectives of a Globalized Muslim Community”

Youssef Carter, “Tarbiyah as Liberation. From Senegal to the American South”

**PANEL IV: ASSERTING IDENTITY AND EXPRESSING SPIRITUALITY: YOUNG MUSLIMS IN THE WEST**

Chair: Zachary Wright

**Roundtable with the Baraka Boys**

3:00-4:30 PM

**Concert by the Baraka Boys**

4:30-6:00 PM

# **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21**

Location: Center for African Studies, 1280 Massachusetts Ave., Floor 3

## **PANEL V: TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM, PART 3**

8:30-10:30 AM

Chair: Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem

Mara Leichtman, "Transnational Networks and Global Shi'i Islamic NGOs in Tanzania"

Ezgi Guner, "Turkish State and Sufi Brotherhoods in Muslim Africa"

Gadija Ahjum, "Constructing a South African Shi'ism: The Case Study of a Cape Town Shi'i Community"

## **PANEL VI: NEW PARADIGMS IN THE STUDY OF ISLAM IN AFRICA**

10:30 AM-12:30 PM

Chair: Sean Hanretta

Zachary Wright, "The Metaphysical Human Being in African Islam: Reflections from 'Alī Ḥarāzīm's *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī* and 'Umar Tāl's *Rimāḥ*"

Samiha Rahman, "Pedagogy of Place and Classical Islamic Education in Contemporary Senegal"

Oludamini Ogunnaike, "*Have the Poets Left a Place for a Path to be Stitched?* Intertextuality and Creativity in Contemporary West African Madīḥ Poetry and Song"

Felicitas Becker, "Divergent Temporalities of Progress and Religious Reform in Swahili Muslim Sermons"