

## Call for papers

# Secularities: Patterns of Distinction, Paths of Differentiation

Conference of the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences  
"Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities"

Leipzig University, 4 – 6 October 2018

Wherever religion is on the agenda, its boundaries are present as well. Relations as well as separations are at stake, negotiations as well as conflicts arise: people start defining boundaries, making claims and sanctioning the reasonable and unreasonable, the legitimate and illegitimate. We assume that differences in the vehemence and structure of such boundary demarcations can only be explained if the regionally diverging historical experiences are taken into consideration.

Thus, the conference aims to discuss the variety of symbolic and institutional measures that distinguish between the religious and the non-religious (and at the same time relate the two to each other) in modern societies, and find explanations for the multiplicity of "secularities". This implies investigating the pre-modern social and epistemic structures that may have conditioned the path-dependent processes in which "Western" modes of differentiating and distinguishing were appropriated under the global condition. Accordingly, we are particularly interested in boundary demarcations in regions outside the so-called "modern West". Therefore, we are inviting papers, which explore forms of distinction and arrangements of differentiation between social spheres, practices, interpretive frameworks, institutions and discourses in different eras and regions. We consciously abstain from the term "secularism" in order to avoid its strong normative underpinning and the related debates. Instead, we start from a heuristic notion of "secularity" to address distinctions and forms of differentiation between religion and its other.

Our regional focus is on the Islamic world and different regions of Asia. However, papers which deal with other world regions that share our analytic focus, are also welcome.

Proposals should focus on one of the following themes:

1. *Emic classification systems and practices of differentiation*  
What types of distinction and differentiation (resembling the one between the religious and secular) have been developed in different regions before the encounter with the West?
2. *Processes of boundary demarcation, paths of development, and genealogies*  
What was the history of religious-secular boundary demarcation in the areas under research? What are the genealogies of present distinctions? What were the paths that emerged from early differentiations and their interaction with Western forms of secular-religious differentiation?
3. *Reference problems and guiding ideas of secularity*  
To which societal problem did forms of distinction and differentiation respond and with which guiding ideas were they promoted?
4. *Types of cultural interaction and acquisition, transfer and entanglement*  
What are the forms, in which distinctions and differentiations have been transferred and adopted? Which types of cultural interaction took place? What kinds of entanglement exist between different cultural agents and products?

Proposals should include an abstract (500 words max.) and a short bio of the speaker. Please send your proposal to: Judith Zimmermann (multiple-secularities@uni-leipzig.de) to be received by 31 March 2018.