Workshop Programme

"Mosques, power and politics"

Copenhagen, Denmark

22-24 January 2020

Venue:

University of Copenhagen,
South Campus
Karen Blixens Plads 8,
2300 Copenhagen, Denmark

Workshop theme

For this workshop we address the changing politics of mosque building, the different kinds of conflict surrounding the building of a mosque and the symbolic appropriation of territory by the mosque. The building of a mosque can be seen as a social transformative interaction and accounts for the many stakeholders involved in the construction of mosques (e.g., Muslim organizations, international donors, local politicians, anti-Islam groups and other critics). As such, the mosques and the politics of construction can be seen as microcosms of the discourse on Muslims in a country.

Concerns with security, extremism and visibility of Muslim institutions in the Nordic and Western European countries are causing "existential" difficulties for mosques. The state criticizes mosques and change the politics of religion with reference to incidents in mosques as in Denmark in 2016-18. This seminar will examine the power strategies used by national and local politicians, examining national legislation and municipal planning on mosques, and will investigate a number of concrete cases of contested mosque building. The operable questions are what are the political power dynamics at play in mosque building? Do the mosques challenge the existing models of state-religion-relations? How may mosques present and organize themselves to defuse these tensions of power?

Paper abstracts of 300 words and a short CV to be submitted to Niels Valdemar Vinding, lbm993@hum.ku.dk, on November 15th 2019 at the latest.

Read more on: https://mosques.ku.dk/nordic-mosques/

Expenses

The project covers reasonable expenses from transport. Hotel and meals are already booked. Please contact Niels Valdemar Vinding, lbm993@hum.ku.dk, if you have expenses.

Workshop series

This is the second in a series of three workshops on *Nordic Mosques in Context – On the institutional embeddedness of Islam in the Nordic countries* sponsored by a NOS-HS Workshop Grant. The third seminar is on "Mosques, communities and finance," in Oslo, Norway, August 2020. The purpose of the workshops is to investigate the dimensions of institutional embeddedness of Islam in the Nordic countries as mosques seek to be responsive institutions for the needs of Muslims, challenged by economic, legal and political alternatives. We are considering mosques as the focal point of Islam in economic, legal and political terms, the primary objective of this research project is to study the institutional strategies of mosques and Muslims in embedding Islam in the Nordic wider societies. The key here is to see to what extend mosques are responsive institutions for the needs of Muslim in soliciting the wider public, or if Muslims go beyond the mosque in the pursuit of other more apt forms of institutionalized religious life such as invoking Islamic economic, legal and political responses. We argue that the entire future of mosques depends on whether they can give and refine responsive and meaningful answers and make them coherent with the economic, legal and politics questions that Muslims seek the answers to. As such, this may result in the secularization of mosques as they negotiate and find their place in society. Will these new or re-interpreted institutional expressions clash with the general public, will they fail Muslims or will they be viable alternatives for embedding Islam in the Nordic countries?

A call for the workshop "Mosques, communities and finance," in August 2020, in Oslo, Norway, will be circulated in February, 2020.

On behalf of the conveners

Brian Arly Jacobsen, assoc. professor, Sociology of Religion, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Torkel Brekke, Research Professor, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Norway
Göran Larsson, Professor in Religious Studies, Göteborg University, Sweden
Niels Valdemar Vinding, post.doc., Islamic Studies, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

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