

Summer Semester 2022

SDAC Guest Lecture Series

Good Gifts from the Middle East in Indonesia – Expressing Religious Identities, Class Affiliation and Gender Ideals through Consumption and Charity

Mirjam Lücking
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Monday
23.05.22
18-20:00 c.t.
Via Zoom



Mirjam Lücking is an anthropologist and since 2017 a postdoctoral fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Previously she worked as a researcher and lecturer at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Freiburg, Germany, where she completed her PhD. She studied and researched on Islamic education, migration, tourism and pilgrimage, democratization and public policy in Freiburg/Germany, Damascus/Syria, Fès/Morocco, and in several places in Indonesia (North-Sumatra, Nias Island, East-Kalimantan, Madura Island, Central Java and Jakarta).

Her work on transregional connections between Indonesia and the Arab World in the context of labor migration and pilgrimage has been published in her book, *Indonesians and Their Arab World: Guided Mobility among Labor Migrants and Mecca Pilgrims* (Cornell University Press, 2020) and in peer-reviewed journals.

Currently, she researches on Muslim and Christian tourism from Southeast Asia to Jerusalem.

Commercial pilgrimage-tourism is a booming business in Indonesia. Besides Mecca, another highly popular destination in the growing halal tourism industry is Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Strikingly, the Muslim package tours to Jerusalem resemble Christian 'Holy Land Tours' to Israel, the West Bank, Jordan and Egypt, which are popular among Indonesia's Christian minority.

While Christian and Muslim Indonesians' itineraries overlap, the travel narratives often diverge and back home the pilgrims' lives are increasingly separated. Indonesian pilgrimage-tourists, travel agents and guiding clerics engage in the growing market of religious tourism as members of a specific religious group and a specific social class. Distinctive clothing styles, the use of a certain jargon and moral gender ideals mark differences between Christian and Muslim Indonesians, upper- and lower-class citizens among Mecca- and Jerusalem-pilgrims. These differences surface in gendered shopping and charity activities. This concerns, for instance, the concept of spreading blessings through gifts and souvenirs and the idea of solidarity shopping for the Israeli and Palestinian people, such as Muslim alms giving for holy sites and for people in need and the collection of donations during Christian services, which usually go to Christian institutions in the region and sometimes to Zionist organizations. During the Covid19-pandemic, travel agents continued to trade goods from the Middle East and thereby maintained transregional connections, some of which blur the boundaries between pilgrimage and longer lasting migration.

This event will be held via zoom.
Please contact Prof. Dr. Viola
Thimm to register
(viola.thimm@fau.de).