The Impact of Religion
Challenges for Society, Law and Democracy

The Second International Interdisciplinary Conference
Uppsala University, Sweden, 24-26th April 2018

Welcome to
The Impact of Religion
Challenges for Society, Law and Democracy

The second international interdisciplinary conference
Uppsala University, Sweden, April 24-26th 2018

The Impact of Religion conference offers an interdisciplinary forum to disseminate, share and discover current research on the role of religion in both the public and the private sphere—locally, nationally and internationally.

Religion (in all its diversity) influences different sectors of society and how they in turn influence religion. Migrations, provoked by international conflicts and poverty, have brought new challenges to secular states regarding the handling of religious and cultural pluralism. Religious traditions and convictions raise new issues for states, local governments, lawyers, healthcare workers, and teachers—in practice for all citizens. At the same time secularist counter-reactions oppose religious visibility in the public sphere and religious/ethnic pluralism is questioned by right-wing groups. Increasing racism related to religion and religiously motivated terror, adds energy to growing polarizations. Additionally, new existential issues appear due to feelings of insecurity arising from war, terror, global warming and advancing technology. In such circumstances, religion appears in a positive as well as negative light. These ongoing changes provoke new questions regarding the role of religion in democracy, human rights, law, family life, healthcare, well-being, welfare and science. Religion has become a crucial research area in a wide variety of academic disciplines.

The Uppsala conference provides an opportunity to disseminate, share and discover a wide range of data and ideas within this expanding field. Paper presentations include contributions from lawyers, human rights experts, social scientists, specialists in social policy, health and welfare, philosophers and scientists, as well as those engaged directly in theology and religious studies. The conference marks the end of the 10-year research programme The Impact of Religion: Challenges for Society, Law and Democracy, and the merging of the Impact programme with Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre (CRS).

We look forward to three days filled with plenary sessions, panel discussions and parallel paper sessions.

Uppsala April 3rd 2018

The conference planning committee
Prof. Per Petterson, Director of the Impact of Religion Research Programme
Prof. Anna-Sara Lind, Deputy Director of the Impact of Religion Research Programme
Dr Martha Middelhuis LeMèo, Director of Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre

The conference is hosted by The Impact of Religion Programme and Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre (CRS). It is financially supported by the Swedish Research Council (VRF), Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (RJ) and Uppsala University.
### Authors index

Numbers in the right column refer to the number of the respective abstract, according to scheduling in the programme of paper sessions, and the order in the list of abstracts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Abstract number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdel-Fadil, Mona</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abubakar, Dauda</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>af Klinteberg, Brit</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahlin, Emma</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad, Nadira</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahonen, Talvikki</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akmehrova, Elina</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almari, Chyra</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amoo-P'Olak, Kennedy</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areza-Johnsson, Seema</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atri Sangari, Fatessah</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atri Sangari, Zahra</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axetian, Tomas</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axter Ims, Marta</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batanov, Polina</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baumann, Martin</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beechero, Kim</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beggar, Abderrahman</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behrens, Kathrin</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belyarova, Anastasia</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertram, Burkhard</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyer, Heiko</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boinevain, Katia</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boervi, Karin</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourain, Marie-Laure</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowser De Toi, Nadine</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley, Hannah</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunet, Jonathan</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brakenholt, Carl Reinhold</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchholz, Gabriele</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castel, Amy</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comes, Oliver</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemin, Eduardo</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14:00 - 16:00 **31 The Social and Political Role of Religion and Religious Communities, Síðurummet**
- Chair: Anders Sjöborg
  - 125 - Impacts of a religious ritual (mourning) on socio-political constructions in Slovakia
    - Zahra Khoshk Jan
  - 126 - Public Administration of Zalád and the Making of Social Relations in Northern Nigeria
    - Danads Abiohokor
  - 127 - Encouraging democratic development and good governance in sub-Saharan Africa: Evaluating the potential of Christianity
    - Nicola De Jager
  - 128 - Framing Religion: A Social Cohesion Perspective on Public Religion as a Right to be Tolerated or a Value to be Promoted
    - Kristin Skarøen Eriksson
  - 129 - The Impact of Islam on Post-Independence Malaysian Society and Rule: Challenges and Prospects
    - Emira Abubaker
  - 130 - A wish for social resilience – Participation and perspectives on local inter-religious councils in contemporary Sweden
    - Tomas Axelson

15:00 - 16:00 **3K Results of Research Projects on “Religion and Public Politics”, Lárosal X**
- Convenor and Chair: Solange Lefebvre
  - 131 - Comparing Public Commissions on cultural and religious diversity (Belgium, Canada, France, United Kingdom, Norway, Australia, etc.)
    - Solange Lefebvre
  - 132 - Can Public Policy concerning Economic Support be Equality within Religious Communities?
    - Lisbet Christianesen

**Thursday 26 April 2018 10:30 – 12:00**

10:30 – 12:00 **4A Acknowledging Diversity, Claiming Equality, Lárosal VIII**
- Convenor: Katia Boissevain, Christophe Pons
  - Chair: Omar Cruz
  - 133 - African Migration in the Maghreb and Religious Conversion. An ethnographic comparison between Morocco and Tunisia
    - Katia Boissevain
  - 134 - Looking for religious' pluralism in North and South. The problems of Universalism and of the men who did not want to act by themselves
    - Christophe Pons
  - 135 - The invisible Rise of Latin-American Evangelical Christianity in Sweden
    - Emir Mahieddine
argument, and uses perspectives from the theoretical construct of social cohesion to unfold how religion is framed in public debate. Perceptions of religion as a phenomenon to be ‘promoted’ or just ‘tolerated’ will be central. In this paper, I will discuss differing constructions of the societal role of religion and hence, arguments for supporting religious organisations based on an analysis of a Norwegian public commission report and the response to the report. Norwegian authorities grant generous public funding to all recognised faith and worldview organisations. The Commission on Faith and Worldviews was established as a first step in a revision of the relation between religion and state in legislation and public policy. Applying the concept of social cohesion in the analysis may contribute to a useful development of the concept, and to the understanding of religion in contemporary society.

129 - The impact of Islam on Post-Independence Malaysian Society and Role: Challenges and Prospects
Ezita Akhmadova, Ass. Prof. Dr., International Islamic University Malaysia
Jahira Ahmad, Ass. Prof. Dr., International Islamic University Malaysia

This paper discusses the relationship between the state, civic society, and the country’s dominant religion, Islam, in Post-Independence Malaysia. When Malaya obtained its independence from the British in 1957, Islam has been expected to play a declining role in national affairs. The Constitution guaranteed Islam to be the religion of the state, while religious freedom for non-Muslims should be assured without any discriminations. Since then, religious affairs remained under a state responsibility and Malaysia has been hailed for decades as an oasis of moderate Islam. Within last few years, however, increasing religiously motivated hatred gains popularity in Malaysia. This paper accordingly endeavours to underline the main factors for a decline of moderate and enlightened attitude of Islam in Malaysia. It proposes that the politicisation of Islam in the government affairs, combined with the simultaneous authoritarian tactics in policing opposition as one of the main factors for the decline in religious freedom. The external factors for an intensifying role of political Islam in Malaysian state affairs by highlighting the impact of globalisation, the global "War on Terror" and Islamophobia on wellbeing and security of Muslim communities are discussed thoroughly. Conclusions and recommendations are highlighted in the last part of the paper.

130 - A wish for social resilience – Participation and perspectives on local inter-religious councils in contemporary Sweden
Tomas Axelsson, Associate Professor Sociology of Religion

Swedish society is characterised by secularisation but as a result of migration during the last decades Sweden has developed into a more pluralistic society. On local level this is also detectable through a development of inter-religious councils in a growing number of Swedish cities. Often local political authorities has decided to play a crucial part in the councils, seemingly out of a growing awareness of faith-based organisations vital role in promoting social cohesion in local settings. This paper presents a case study where the formation of an inter-religious council is taking place in a mid-sized Swedish town. It presents the result of interviews with three kind of actors: (1) elected politicians responsible for strategic policymaking in local community, (2) civil servants responsible carrying out these policies and (3) representatives of participatory Christian and Muslim faith-based organizations active in the local community. Main research questions: What are the key expectations on the council from the different actors' point of view? What kind of challenges should be dealt with in the short and long perspective from different actors' point of view? Analysis will be made comparing similarities and differences in various views.
The Impact of Islam on Post-Independence Malaysian Society and Rule: Challenges and Prospects

(The paper was prepared under the support of Fundamental Research Grant Scheme from Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia)

DR. ELMIRA AKHMETOVA, IIUM, MALAYSIA
DR. NADZRA AHMAD, IIUM, MALAYSIA
INDEPENDENCE IN 1957

One of the most significant countries in the Muslim world with sustainable rapid economic growth.

Independence ceremony in Merdeka Stadium.
August 31, 1957
INDEPENDENCE IN 1957

- One of the most significant countries in the Muslim world with sustainable rapid economic growth
- No expected decline in the role of Islam in national affairs in a favour of the Western-style secularism
INDEPENDENCE IN 1957

- One of the most significant countries in the Muslim world with sustainable rapid economic growth
- No expected decline in the role of Islam in national affairs in a favour of the Western-style secularism
- Islam becomes progressively important in politics, economic, legal and educational spheres of Malaysia

Independence ceremony in Merdeka Stadium. August 31, 1957
BACKGROUND

INDEPENDENCE IN 1957

- One of the most significant countries in the Muslim world with sustainable rapid economic growth
- No expected decline in the role of Islam in national affairs in a favour of the Western-style secularism
- Islam becomes progressively important in politics, economic, legal and educational spheres of Malaysia
- Relatively plural and moderate state

Independence ceremony in Merdeka Stadium.
August 31, 1957
INDEPENDENCE IN 1957

- One of the most significant countries in the Muslim world with sustainable rapid economic growth
- No expected decline in the role of Islam in national affairs in favour of the Western-style secularism
- Islam becomes progressively important in politics, economic, legal and educational spheres of Malaysia
- Relatively plural and moderate state
- Radicalization of some social segments due to spread of foreign cultural elements at societal and the state level
DEMOGRAPHICS

- Total population - 28.3 million
- Of which 91.8% are Malaysian citizens and 8.2% were non-citizens
- *Bumiputras* (Austronesian origin, natives) - 68.8%
- Chinese minority - 23.2% and
- Indian minorities - 7.0%
- Others – 1%

*CENSUS 2010*
RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

- Islam is the most widely professed religion - 61.3%
- Buddhism - 19.8%
- Christianity - 9.2%
- Hinduism - 6.3%, and
- 1.3% - Confucianism, Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions

(“Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristic Report 2010”)
A Federal Constitutional Elective Monarchy

Modelled on the Westminster parliamentary system

The head of State is Agong (King) elected to a 5-year term among other hereditary rulers of Malay states

The government is lead by the Prime Minister

**PARLIAMENT**

**DEWAN RAKYAT**
House of Representatives

- 222 members
- Elected for maximum 5 years

**DEWAN NEGARA** (Senate)

- 70 senators
  - (26 are elected by the 13 state assemblies)
  - (44 are appointed by the Agong upon PM recommendations)
- 3-years term
When UMNO obtained independence in 1957, no prominent role for Islam in governance

**Constitutional position:**
Islam is the religion of the Federation

3. (1) Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation

(2) In every State other than States not having a Ruler the position of the Ruler as the Head of the religion of Islam in his State in the manner and to the extent acknowledged and declared by the Constitution of that State, and, subject to that Constitution, all rights, privileges, prerogatives and powers enjoyed by him as Head of that religion, are unaffected and unimpaired; but in any acts, observances or ceremonies with respect to which the Conference of Rulers has agreed that they should extend to the Federation as a whole each of the other Rulers shall in his capacity of Head of the religion of Islam authorize the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to represent him.
The position of Islam in Malaysian State affairs had gradually intensified since its independence.

The secular orientation of the governance did not mean the diminution of religious and traditional influences in state affairs and educational spheres.
The position of Islam in Malaysian State affairs had gradually intensified since its independence.

The secular orientation of the governance did not mean the diminution of religious and traditional influences in state affairs and educational spheres.

“Over 70% of Malays surveyed nationwide in 2006 said they view themselves as Muslims first, Malaysians second and Malays third” (Hong)
The position of Islam in Malaysian State affairs had **gradually intensified** since its independence.

The **secular orientation** of the governance did not mean the diminution of religious and traditional influences in state affairs and educational spheres.

“Over 70 % of Malays surveyed nationwide in 2006 said they view themselves as **Muslims first**, **Malaysians second** and **Malays third**” (Hong)

---

“The very pluralism of the system has led to a society in which ethnicity and religion have become intimately entwined and in which social, policies, politics, and economics are heavily influenced by communal considerations”

*(Fred R. Von Der Mehden, “Malaysia and Multiethnic Polities, 1987)*
The position of Islam in Malaysian State affairs had gradually intensified since its independence.

The secular orientation of the governance did not mean the diminution of religious and traditional influences in state affairs and educational spheres.

“Over 70% of Malays surveyed nationwide in 2006 said they view themselves as Muslims first, Malaysians second and Malays third” (Hong).

“The very pluralism of the system has led to a society in which ethnicity and religion have become intimately entwined and in which social, policies, politics, and economics are heavily influenced by communal considerations.”

(Fred R. Von Der Mehden, “Malaysia and Multiethnic Polities, 1987”)
The position of Islam in Malaysian State affairs had gradually intensified since its independence.

The secular orientation of the governance did not mean the diminution of religious and traditional influences in state affairs and educational spheres.

“Over 70% of Malays surveyed nationwide in 2006 said they view themselves as Muslims first, Malaysians second and Malays third” (Hong)

“The very pluralism of the system has led to a society in which ethnicity and religion have become intimately entwined and in which social, policies, politics, and economics are heavily influenced by communal considerations”

(Fred R. Von Der Mehden, “Malaysia and Multiethnic Polities, 1987”)
The position of Islam in Malaysian State affairs had gradually intensified since its independence.

The secular orientation of the governance did not mean the diminution of religious and traditional influences in state affairs and educational spheres.

“Over 70% of Malays surveyed nationwide in 2006 said they view themselves as Muslims first, Malaysians second and Malays third” (Hong).

“The very pluralism of the system has led to a society in which ethnicity and religion have become intimately entwined and in which social, policies, politics, and economics are heavily influenced by communal considerations” (Fred R. Von Der Mehden, “Malaysia and Multiethnic Polities, 1987”).
The position of Islam in Malaysian State affairs had gradually intensified since its independence.

The secular orientation of the governance did not mean the diminution of religious and traditional influences in state affairs and educational spheres.

“Over 70% of Malays surveyed nationwide in 2006 said they view themselves as Muslims first, Malaysians second and Malays third” (Hong).

“The very pluralism of the system has led to a society in which ethnicity and religion have become intimately entwined and in which social, policies, politics, and economics are heavily influenced by communal considerations” (Fred R. Von Der Mehden, “Malaysia and Multiethnic Polities, 1987”).
Radicalisation of Islam in Malaysia

- Islam is represented by PAS (Islamic Party of Malaysia) established in 1951 – increasingly conservative
- Focus on hudud and Shariah
- Lack of openness and inclusivity
- Prohibition of the usage of the word “Allah” for non-Islamic literature in Malay in 2015
- Marginalisation of non-Muslims as Islamist parties try to ‘out-Islam’ each other
- Islam became a political tool of parties to marginalise the opponents
- The virtues of Islam as civilization such as balance, moderation and justice are not highlighted

(Joseph Liow, 2015)
Malaysia has arrested hundreds of people over the past few years for suspected links to militant groups.

- **Islamic State declares war on Malaysia**

- **FMT Reporters**

- **May 18, 2016**

PETALING JAYA: Zainuri Kamaruddin, a former Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM) leader known for several attempted murders and his involvement in armed bank robberies, has announced the Islamic State’s (IS) plan to “lead a charge” against Malaysia.

- **2018 January:**

- 2 men were arrested for allegedly walked around KL armed with a knife aiming to kill Buddhist monks.
REASONS FOR RADICALISATION

WAHHABISM

- Takfirism
- Dichotomous worldview

Two distinctive sides – Islam and infidelity. War between these two is an unavoidable until the right fight will be established.
REASONS FOR RADICALISATION

WAHHABISM

• Takfirism
• Dichotomous worldview

Two distinctive sides – Islam and infidelity. War between these two is an unavoidable until the right fight will be established.

Islam becomes essentialized as Islamism – a supremacist and ethnocentric dogma that instrumentalizes coercion and violence as its most potent weapon” (El Fadl, 2005)
REASONS FOR RADICALISATION

**WAHHABISM**
- Takfirism
- Dichotomous worldview

Two distinctive sides – Islam and infidelity. War between these two is an unavoidable until the right fight will be established

**ARABISATION**
- due to self-loathing, ignorance and insecurity

Islam becomes essentialized as Islamism – a supremacist and ethnocentric dogma that instrumentalizes coercion and violence as its most potent weapon (El Fadl, 2005)
**REASONS FOR RADICALISATION**

**WAHHABISM**
- Takfirism
- Dichotomous worldview

Two distinctive sides – Islam and infidelity. War between these two is an unavoidable until the right fight will be established.

**ARABISATION**
- Due to self-loathing, ignorance and insecurity

Islam becomes essentialized as **Islamism** – a supremacist and ethnocentric dogma that instrumentalizes coercion and violence as its most potent weapon (El Fadl, 2005)

“For some reason the Malays often feel very low about themselves. So when they ape the Arabs they believe they are the more authentic (Muslims),” (Syed Farid Alatas)
**REASONS FOR RADICALISATION**

**WAHHABISM**
- Takfirism
- Dichotomous worldview

Two distinctive sides – Islam and infidelity. War between these two is an unavoidable until the right fight will be established.

**ARABISATION**
- due to self-loathing, ignorance and insecurity

**CORRUPTION**
- economic insecurity
- Media speculations

Islam becomes essentialized as **Islamism** – a supremacist and ethnocentric dogma that instrumentalizes coercion and violence as its most potent weapon (El Fadl, 2005)

“For some reason the Malays often feel very low about themselves. So when they ape the Arabs they believe they are the more authentic (Muslims),” (Syed Farid Alatas)
REASONS FOR RADICALISATION

WAHhabism
- Takfirism
- Dichotomous worldview

Two distinctive sides – Islam and infidelity. War between these two is an unavoidable until the right fight will be established.

ARABisation
- due to self-loathing, ignorance and insecurity

CORRUPTION
- economic insecurity
- Media speculations

Islam becomes essentialized as Islamism – a supremacist and ethnocentric dogma that instrumentalizes coercion and violence as its most potent weapon (El Fadl, 2005)

“For some reason the Malays often feel very low about themselves. So when they ape the Arabs they believe they are the more authentic (Muslims),” (Syed Farid Alatas)

International developments/ current geopolitics

Social Media/ propaganda
Recent radicalisation of Islam at political and social levels should be evaluated within the framework of the current geopolitics rather than localising it into national faults.

Religious extremism is a reality which may jeopardise the well-being of Malaysians.

The rise of extremism in Malaysia is not necessarily the indication of the lack of secularism.

Finding solutions

- Good governance
- Following the universal principles of Islam such as moderation, balance, openness, respects of human rights, equality of all citizens regardless their religious and ethnic backgrounds.
- Amanah Party (Trust) was established in 2015 (from PAS) with the aim of establishing good governance.
- It shows the shift from political (radical) Islam towards civilizational and inclusive interpretation of the Islamic way based on good governance.
Thank you