



Religious Speakers and Religious Speech

Authority and Influence of Word and People

The workshop is part of the C04 project of the SFB 1070 RESOURCECULTURES

Venue: Goethe University, Frankfurt (Main), Germany

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The use, significance and impact of religious resources in various communities in an interesting area of study for anthropologists, theologians and historians. The collaborative research center SFB 1070 RESOURCECULTURES defines resources “as the tangible and intangible means by which actors create, sustain or alter social relations, units and identities” (Scholz et al. 2017: 7). The main focus of our project C04 “Religious Speakers” is on religious speeches and their transformative effect on its audience. This workshop seeks to address topics of religious speakers and religious speech from an interdisciplinary perspective and in regard to different religious and geographic settings.



Description:

A religious speech is understood to be an oral performance open to a broader public that mostly refers to sacred texts and seeks a transformative effect on its audience. Our interest in religious speech as a resource aims at exploring ways in which religious speeches are used, specifically in regard to following three aspects:

- 1) religious speech as an **instructive and normative resource** that aims at creating, maintaining, or changing practices in a given community;
- 2) their **medialization**, that is, the means for the communication and transmission of religious speeches in the form of books, brochures, cassettes, videos, CDs, DVDs, via social networks, and other channels on the internet;
- 3) the **commodification and commercialization** of religious speeches, i.e. how virtual and materialized forms of these speeches are purchased and consumed.

The tentative questions that inform the workshop are: Who are the speakers and how did they become prominent? What are the contents of the speeches and what kind of issues they address? How do religious speeches influence and shape the relations between speakers and listeners and the relations in communities? What kind of changes do these speeches bring about? Where do religious speaker's charisma and authority emanate from?

Those topics will be presented at the workshop, but it's not limited to them. Against the backdrop of the aforementioned aspects, the workshop "**Religious Speakers and Religious Speech – Authority and Influence of Word and People**" seeks to address these topics from an interdisciplinary perspective and in regard to different religious and geographic settings. The main goal of the workshop is to facilitate exchange between anthropologists, historians, and theologians who have been working on the topic of religious speeches, sermons, and religious speakers in three major religions, i.e. Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

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