

Religious Nationalism, Plural Democracy, and Autocratization

22-24 October 2025

Final Symposium of the Freigeist Fellowship
*Secularity, Islam, and Democracy in Indonesia and
Turkey (2018-2025)*



Venue

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Main Building, 1. Mezzanine

Room 2249a "Marmorsaal"

Unter den Linden 6, 10117 Berlin



Hotel

Classik Hotel
Hackescher Markt

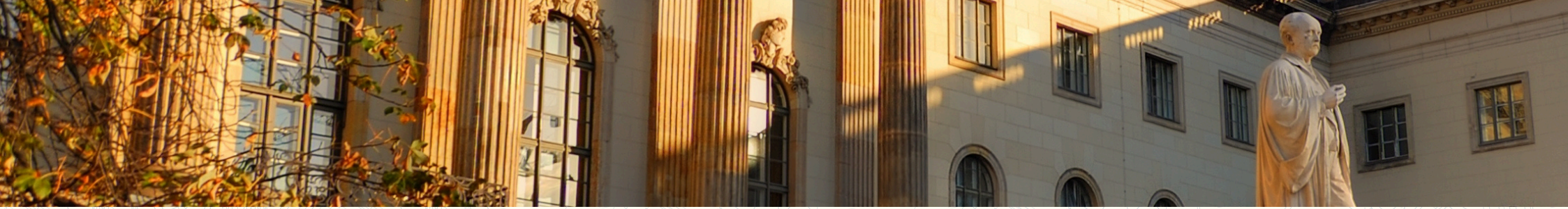
Große Präsidentenstraße 8, 10178 Berlin

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WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2025

INDONESIA FOCUS

14:00 - 14:30 : Coffee

14:30-17:00: Indonesian Studies Community Session
(World Café format)

17:30: Book Presentation and Discussion

Mobilizing Mainstream Islam: The Politics of Orthodoxy in Indonesia in Comparative Perspective
(Cornell UP 2026)

OPEN TO ALL PARTICIPANTS AND PUBLIC

- Saskia Schäfer
- Karen Barkey
- Jeremy Menchik
- Nur Ichwan
- Mirjam Künkler
- Martin Slama
- Chair: Mutmainna Syam

19.30 - 20.30: Reception with light refreshments

THURSDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2025

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

09:15 - 09:30: Welcome & Opening Remarks by Saskia Schäfer

09:30- 11:00: Panel “The Alliances and Blurred Boundaries between Nationalism, Extremist Religion, and Social Conservatism”

- Ian Wilson: Religious polarisation and the politics of democratic brokerage in Indonesia
- Bilge Yabanci : Blurred Boundaries of ‘Mainstream Islam’ in Turkey: New Ordinance of Piety, Nationalism, and Women’s (Abducted) Rights
- Vatsal Naresh: The Promise and Peril of Majoritarian Procedures
- Chair: Chris Chaplin

11:00 - 11:30: Coffee Break

11:30 - 13:30: Panel “Countering Right-Wing Religious Nationalists: Learning from Brazil and Poland”

- Joanna Kulska: Religious nationalisms in Poland and Hungary: twin models?
- Jan Sowa: Religious nationalism - the symptom and the fetish of capitalist modernity as illustrated by the case of Poland
- Camila Rocha: Brazilian far right influencers and politics: faith without churches
- Chair: Karen Barkey

13:30-14:30: Lunch Break

14:30 - 15:45: Panel “Religious Nationalism, Gender, and Heteronormativity”

- Rachel Rinaldo: Religious Nationalism and Gender: Thinking through the Case of Indonesia
- Ferdiansyah Thajib: Anti-Gender Mobilizations and Religious Nationalism in Indonesia
- Chair: Amanda tho Seeth

15:45-16:15: Coffee Break

16:15 - 17:30: Panel “Media and Religious Mobilization”

- Hew Wai Weng: Popular Preaching, Populist Mobilisation: The Making of (Online) Malay Muslim Majoritarianism in Malaysia
- Sangeeta Mahapatra: Discursive Counter-Narratives: Media Interventions Against Religious Nationalism in South Asia
- Chair: Sushmita Nath

17:30-17:40: Closing Remarks

19:00: Conference Dinner at Good Time, Hausvogteiplatz 11

FRIDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2025

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

08.45 -09.15: Coffee & Tea

09:15-10.45: Panel “State Institutions and Religious Nationalism”

- Nur Ichwan: Official Shari’a and Ethno-religious Nationalism: the Case of Aceh
- Mutmainna Syam: Religious Nationalism in the Classroom: Democratic Ambiguities and Educational Competition in Indonesia
- Verena Meyer: The Heritagization of the Past: Islamic Manuscripts, Indigeneity, and the Indonesian Nation
- Discussant: Rachel Rinaldo
- Chair: Abdil Mughis Mudhoffir

10:45-11.15: Coffee Break

11:15-13:00: Panel “Transnational Networks of Religious Movements”

- Jeremy Menchik: Jewish Internationalism
- Alexander Arifianto: Religious Organizations and Their Role in Democratic Regression: The Case of Indonesia
- Chris Chaplin: Radicalised Nationalists? Ideological Contestation, the State, and Populist Muslim Belonging in Indonesia
- Sushmita Nath: The Political Discourse of Illiberalism in India: Speech Acts of a Hindu Nationalist Populist Prime Minister
- Chair: Joanna Kulska

13:00-14:45: Extended Lunch & Friday Prayer Break

14:45 - 16:15: Closing Roundtable “Future Research Directions”

- Participants: Erin Wilson, Jan Sowa, Camila Rocha, Vatsal Naresh, Mirjam Künkler, Saskia Schäfer
- Chair: Karen Barkey

16:15-16:45: Coffee & Tea

SATURDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2025

11.00: OPTIONAL WALKING TOUR
STARTING AT 11.00 AM IN HOTEL LOBBY