



## **– Institute’s Colloquium –**

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### **“Let’s clean up our house” Muslim Militants as Political Entrepreneurs in Contemporary Northern Mali**

In January 2012, the northern regions of Mali turned into a battlefield. This development started with violent confrontations between the Tuareg secessionist movement (MNLA) and the Malian army. It subsequently became a highly complex conflict between opposing ethnic groups and sub-segments of ethnic groups that had been sharing the same territorial space in northern Mali. The complexity of the situation was exacerbated further by the emergence of several Salafi-Jihadi factions intent on implementing an Islamic political order symbolized by what they referred to as ‘sharia law.’ The sharia rule that these groups attempted to impose consisted of a set of behavioural codes, such as the obligatory wearing of a headscarf by women and severe punishment for smoking cigarettes and consuming alcohol. Drawing on recent anthropological debates on religious/political entrepreneurs, this paper reflects on the arguments by which the Tuareg former slaves, Bellah-Iklan from/around Menaka resignified the shari’a rule implemented by Muslim militants as a corrective to an existing political imbalance in northern Mali. An examination of these arguments, I argue, will allow us to view contemporary Muslim militancy as a religious phenomenon that brings new ways of understanding politics, religious pluralisms and social conflicts in the northern Sahel.

**Wednesday, December 19th 2018**

**4-6 p.m.**

**Institute of Ethnology**

**Stuttstraße 21, Raum STU 105 (2.10)**

**Everybody is welcome!**