

Press release

“Religions are important for dealing with climate change and hunger”

US anthropologist Naveeda Khan from Johns Hopkins University will talk at the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” – Lecture about the importance of religion for dealing with the effects of climate change, such as hunger – COP29 observer of Bangladesh delegation to come to Münster – Public evening lecture in English next Tuesday

Münster, 06 December 2024 (exc) US anthropologist Naveeda Khan from Johns Hopkins University will be speaking at the University of Münster’s Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” next Tuesday about the complex interplay between religious traditions, climate change and hunger. “Religious traditions have always been tied to ideas about the relationship between humans and their natural environment”, explains anthropologist Dorothea Schulz from the Cluster of Excellence. “Climate change often sees religious traditions gain in importance because they can help – or, indeed, hinder – people when it comes to coping with the daily effects of climate change such as hunger”. Schulz, together with Jelena Radovanovic, Rоиi Ball and Nandagopal Menon, has invited Naveeda Khan, who was born in Bangladesh, to Münster to speak on the importance of religion for climate change through the example of the Muslim population along the Jamuna River in Bangladesh.

“Khan’s research shows how religious interpretations of Islam, for example, shape how people respond spiritually and physically to famines, while also influencing their feelings of belonging to a river landscape that is exposed to the disastrous effects of climate change”. Entitled “Ensoulng Hunger”, the lecture will take place at Johannisstraße 1, Room JO 01 on 10 December 2024 at 6:15 pm. The event is part of the research that the interdisciplinary working group “Religious Landscapes and Environmental Devotion” is carrying out at the Cluster of Excellence on the relationship between religion, landscape and environment.

Naveeda Khan’s research on the relationship between religions, the environment and climate is related to current political attempts to combat global warming internationally. Khan recently participated as an observer of the Bangladesh delegation at the 29th UN Climate Change Conference COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, at which representatives of several poor and island nations left in protest over what they considered to be insufficient commitments from Western industrialized nations towards combating the negative impacts of climate change in their countries.

In her book “In Quest of a Shared Planet: Negotiating Climate from the Global South” (Fordham University Press, 2023) Khan presents a careful analysis of global climate policy. Drawing on her experience of nine world climate conferences, she shows why countries of the Global South participate in protracted climate negotiations despite the odds being against favorable results for them, and what narratives, political styles and strategies have guided the negotiations.
(tec/vvm)

Attached: Poster for the lecture “Ensoulng Hunger. Religious Perspectives on Everyday Food Insecurity in the Jamuna Chars”

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The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”

The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics. Dynamics of Tradition and Innovation” has been investigating since 2007 the complex relationship between religion and politics across eras and cultures. The 140 researchers from 20 disciplines in the humanities and social sciences focus in the funding phase (2019 to 2025) on the “dynamics of tradition and innovation”. They analyze in transepochal studies ranging from antiquity to the present day the conditions and factors that make religion an engine of political and social change. The focus of interest is on Europe and the Mediterranean region, as well as on their entanglements with the Near East, Africa, North and Latin America. The research network is the largest of its kind in Germany; and, of the Clusters of Excellence, one of the oldest and the only one to deal with the issue of religion. It will receive funding of 31 million euros from 2019 to 2025.