The three-day workshop departs from the insight that the much lamented ‘crisis’ of area studies has to be understood and coupled with as a larger ‘crisis’ of the social sciences. Important area studies initiatives have embarked on formulating transregional perspectives in response to internationalization efforts and postcolonial critique, yet many social science faculties have remained remarkably untouched by these developments. In addition, funding for area expertise in social science faculties has been drastically reduced, further widening both the institutional and epistemological gap between the often evoked disciplinary binary of ‘major’ social sciences and ‘minor’ area studies.

We want to use this moment of ‘crisis’ as a productive opening to foster a critical conversation on the interface of area studies and social sciences. Following Chakrabarty’s call to ‘provincialize Europe’, we deploy the notion of ‘provincializing the social sciences’ as a point of departure for such an exchange. The workshop thereby aims not only to foster reflection about false claims to universality and tendencies to marginalize ‘other’ knowledges in the social sciences, but also to work towards a more political and theoretically reflective formulation of area studies.

The workshop is designed as the inauguration of a longer conversation leading to a broader research project located at Freie Universität Berlin.
Thursday, 4 June, 2015

14.00 Welcome Remarks by the Convenors
Schirin Amir Moazami, Ruth Streicher, Freie Universität Berlin

Panel 1: Rethinking the Social Sciences From the Areas

14.30 Fiqh al-Waqi’ and Its Discontents: Contemporary Islamic Legal Debates on the Status of the Social Sciences
Alexandre Caeiro, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar

15.15 Rethinking Society from Elsewhere: Studying Thought and Intellectual Practice on the Swahili Coast
Kai Kresse, Columbia University, New York

16.00 Coffee Break

16.30 Rethinking Humanism and Politics in a Global Age: A View from Southeast Asia
Goh Beng Lan, National University of Singapore

17.15 Panel 2: Contesting Social Science Epistemologies

09.30 Decolonizing State Theory: The Absent Presence of ‘Latin America’
Markus-Michael Müller, Freie Universität Berlin

10.15 Negotiating ‘Area’ and ‘Discipline’ after the Arab Uprisings – Political Sciences in Turbulent Times
Cilja Harders, Freie Universität Berlin

11.00 Coffee Break

11.30 Critical Theory after the Rise of the Global South
Boike Rehbein, Humboldt Universität Berlin

12.15 Discussion

13.00 Lunch Break

Panel 3: Decentering Theoretical Categories of Gender and Religion

Part I: Categories of Gender

14.30 Gender Studies and Its Travels - Discipline and Disciplining
Allaine Cerwonka, University of East London

15.15 Coffee Break

16.00 Beyond Gender and Body: A Queer Case of Fakirs?
Omar Kasmani, Freie Universität Berlin

16.45 Discussion

17.30 End of the Second Day

Saturday, 6 June, 2015

Cont. Panel 3

Part II: Categories of Religion

09.30 The Movement of Critique
Ruth Mas, University of Colorado, Boulder

10.15 Transcultural Perspective on the Sociology of Religion
Armando Salvatore, McGill University, Montréal

11.00 Coffee Break

11.30 A Post-Colonial Critique of Weber’s Theory of Race, Religion and Ethnicity
Manuela Boatca, Freie Universität Berlin

12.15 Knowledge Production as a Secular Practice: The Social Scientific Measurement of Muslims in Europe
Schirin Amir-Moazami, Freie Universität Berlin

13.00 Discussion

13.30 Lunch Break

Panel 4: Genealogies of (German) Area Studies

14.30 History, Primitive Peoples and the Abyss of Race. Territorial and Temporal Orders in German Anthropology and Folklore Studies, 1850s-1930s
Christof Dejung, University of Cambridge

15.15 Coffee Break

15.45 Universalizing the Province: Projections, Stereotypes and Premises in Research on African Law in the German Colonies
Ulrike Schaper, Freie Universität Berlin

16.30 Discussion

17.15 End of the Workshop