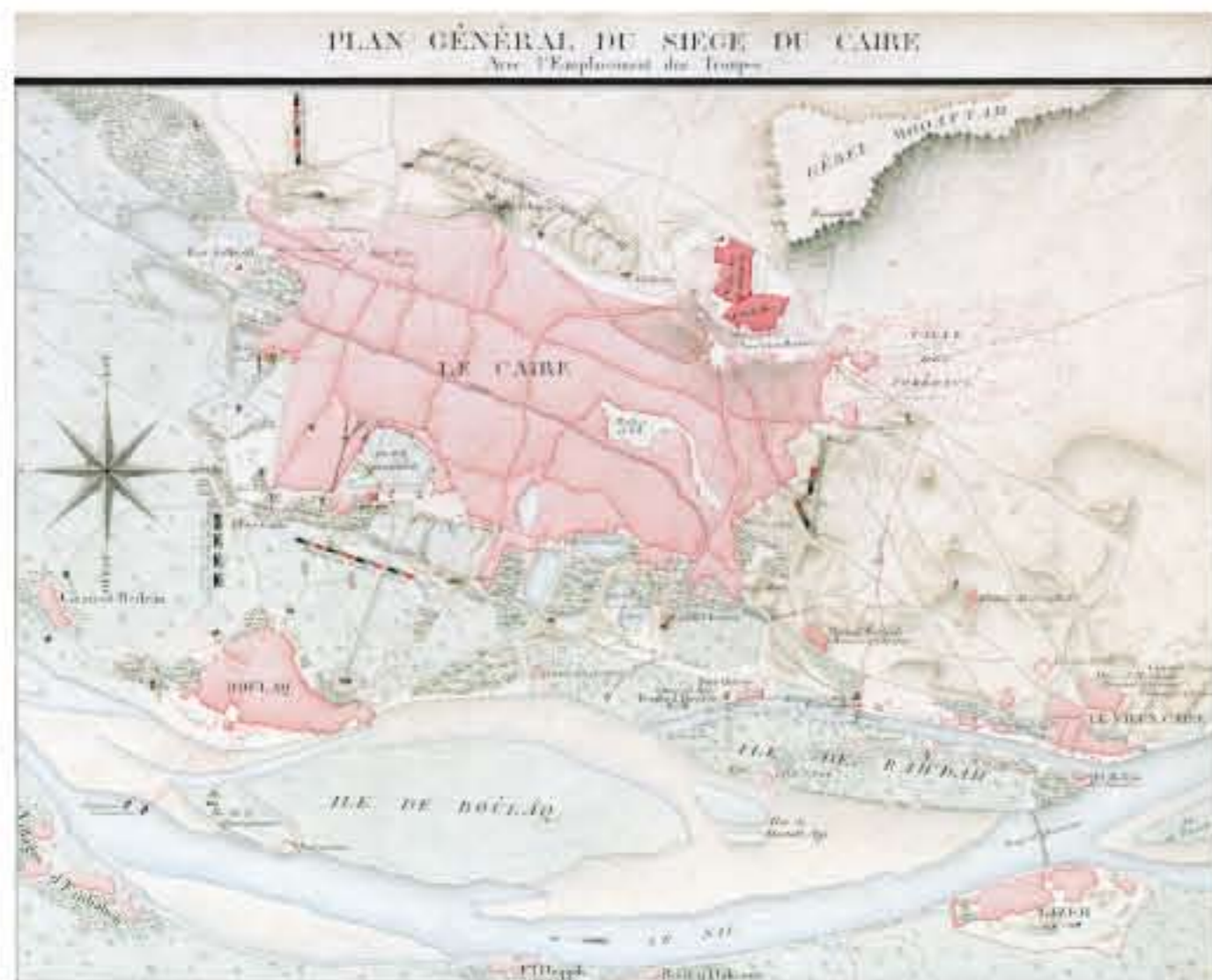




Cities as Laboratories of Change



Advertisement for a Muslim housing complex in suburban Jakarta, 2013



Map of besieged Cairo during the French Campaign 1798. Source: Service Historique de la Défense



Damascus, Sāhat al-Marjah, also known as Sāhat ash-Shuhadā' (martyrs' square), 1950s

Sites of Inclusion and Exclusion: "New" Muslim Places in Urban Indonesia and Malaysia

Dr Wai Weng Hew

This project is a study of Muslim identities and aspirations in contemporary urban Malaysia and Indonesia; it examines the constructions of place, claims on space and the architecture of built forms. It highlights the material dimensions of spatial formation by looking at sacred places (Chinese-style mosques), eating places (Chinese Halal restaurants) and living places (the development of Muslim gated communities and "Islamic cities"). It examines how minority Chinese Muslims express their identities through place-making in the city centre, as well as how the Muslim middle class manifests its aspirations through new housing development in the suburbs.

Who are the actors of the production and deployment of these places? What do these places tell us about Muslim piety and urban politics? How do these places engage with the existing religious plurality and cultural diversity in Malaysia and Indonesia? This project of urban Muslim places could provide us deeper insight into the multifaceted and intertwined processes of "Islamisation" and urbanisation in contemporary societies, as well as the inclusionary possibilities and limitations of these processes of place-making.

The Ottoman and Post-Ottoman City as a Laboratory of Change: Urban Integration and Disintegration on the Margins of Aleppo, Cairo and Tunis

PD Dr Nora Lafi

This research project draws on the idea that the margin constitutes an entry to a better understanding of urban societies and their evolution not only in an Ottoman context, but also in that of the later evolution of such cities from colonial times to the present.

The margin is conceived here from a variety of perspectives, ranging from urban morphology to social history. The project not only explores issues of social and spatial marginality. It also includes considerations of the marginality of minority factions and of all these organised social groups that were not part of the pact of urban governance with the Ottoman Empire or with power in general and that under certain circumstances became the social basis of rebellious movements.

The margin is also seen here as the result of a limit in the integrative capacity of urban systems: all these places, times or subjects that were left outside by the dominant deal in urban governance and governance of diversity – like minorities within communal minorities, dominated factions, weakened clans and segregated groups – are all entities subject to centrifugal clientele games in times of troubles or of international rivalries.

Damascus 1946-1963: From the Reinvented City to the Populist Authoritarian State

Claudia Schröder

This project engages with the appropriations and reinventions of the city of Damascus by its old and new inhabitants in the post-independence period from 1946 until the political takeover by the Ba'ath party in 1963. It investigates practices and imaginations of urban life of post-war Damascus – a socio-political microcosm that illustrated the process of transformation into the populist authoritarian state. Yet, alternative models of society, shaped and experienced in the transforming old quarters and newly emergent suburbs of the city, will be examined as well with regards to the possibilities they held for the nascent Syrian state, for which authoritarian one-party rule and sectarian factionalism might have been not the only probable outcomes.