



University
of Glasgow

Politics Seminars
Candlemas Term

Monday 12 March 2012, 15:00-16:45
Adam Smith Building, Room 916

Dr. Fiona Adamson
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Fiona B. Adamson is Senior Lecturer in International Relations and Head of Department of Politics and International Studies at SOAS, University of London. Her work focuses on the intersection of migration, transnationalism, diaspora politics and International Relations theory and has appeared in outlets such as European Journal of International Relations, International Security, International Studies Review and Political Science Quarterly. She is co-convenor of the London Migration Research Group (LMRG) and co-editor of the Routledge series in Security and Governance. Her most recent project on Islamic humanitarianism is being undertaken in conjunction with Dr. Daniel Nilsson DeHanas (University of Bristol).

“For the Ummah or Humanity? Islamic Humanitarianism between Communitarianism and Cosmopolitanism”

Abstract: The founding of Islamic humanitarian NGOs such as Islamic Relief (1984) and Muslim Aid (1985) opened a new chapter in humanitarian aid and development. Such organizations have spearheaded a broader movement of transnational Islamic humanitarianism, which has been understudied in International Relations (IR) theory. This paper attempts to rectify this gap in the literature. Beginning with standard liberal constructivist accounts of trans-nationalism and NGO action in IR, the paper examines the extent to which transnational action by Islamic humanitarian groups is representative of broader categories of transnational humanitarianism motivated by forms of “diaspora politics” or “fictive kinship.” The paper thus seeks to shed light on how humanitarian actions are informed by constructs of “self” and “other.” The paper situates Islamic humanitarian action within a broader field of transnational action and humanitarianism in IR, and analyses the extent to which liberal constructivist frameworks are sufficient for accounting for such actions. Employing a diasporic framework to analyse Islamic transnational humanitarian action is suggestive of how identity frames become utilised in humanitarian campaigns as a means of mobilizing support.

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