

Presenter: Andreas Benl, Mideast Freedom Forum Berlin

Title: **“Cultural Relativism and Anti-Zionism in the West”**

Panel: Political Studies

Since 9/11 there has been a broad debate about immigration, Islamism, discrimination and antisemitism in the West. The lecture refutes the dichotomy between immigrants of Muslim descent on the one hand and indigenous inhabitants seen as a homogenous bloc on the other. Cultural relativism transcends this dualism – it is a political game between different parties. Antisemitism and anti-Zionism are at its center but often a blind spot at the same time.

While secular Western laws and politics in general are painted as discriminatory against Muslims by Islamists and cultural relativists alike, the state of Israel is often condemned as the peak of neo-colonial repression against the oriental ‘Other’. The lecture shall show instead, how the different brands of cultural relativism and anti-Zionism in Western countries relate to the history of Islamism, the colonial past and the Holocaust and its remembrance.