

## Decolonizing Research Methodologies Virtual Seminar



## Spirituality and Religion on the Swahili Coast

With **Paula Uimonen**, professor, Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University  
And **Hussein Masimbi**, PhD student, Department of Creative Arts, University of Dar es Salaam

This seminar interrogates how we can study spirituality and religion ethnographically, while broadening our theoretical framework through a pluriversal approach. The seminar draws on a recently published article, which was based on fieldwork in Kaole. Located on the Swahili coast in Tanzania, with a long history of transoceanic connections, Kaole is a fishing community where everyday life is lived alongside and through the ocean. Drawing on exploratory fieldwork in preparation of our new research project Swahili Ocean Worlds, in the article we share some of our initial findings, which we contextualise with the help of scholarly work on the Swahili world and Islam in Africa. In conceptualising Swahili ocean worlds, we draw on the anthropology of water, which has ascertained the centrality of water in the making of social worlds. But to grasp the spiritual relationality of the ocean, we adopt a pluriversal approach, with an emphasis on multiple worldings in an emergent world of many worlds. Our aim is to go beyond the focus on materiality and sociality in the anthropology of water, to interrogate the spirituality of the ocean in terms of spiritual beings as well as becomings. We argue that this ontological openness to spirituality offers new insights into human coexistence with the ocean on the Swahili coast, and beyond.

**Keywords:** Swahili, Islam, ocean, spirituality, pluriverse, worlding

**When:** September 15, at 15.00-17.00 (CEST)

**Online:** <https://uu-se.zoom.us/j/68944529486>

The presentation will be in English, with provided French translation. Most Welcome!