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Fosu-Ankrah, J.F.B.B.

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Propositions relating to the dissertation

Common Grounds: Urban Spaces, Everyday Religious Encounters, and the Dynamics and Techniques of Coexistence in Madina, Accra (1959–Present)

By Joseph Fiifi B.-B. Fosu-Ankrah

1. Coexistence constitutes a historically sedimented, materially embedded, and performatively enacted phenomenon, articulated through quotidian practices and lived techniques. (This thesis)
2. Common ground denotes shared urban spaces characterised by ambiguous ownership and inherent contestation, serving as critical nodes where social, religious, economic, and cultural interactions become deeply entangled. (This thesis)
3. Not all shared urban spaces are public; some are common ground. (This thesis)
4. ‘Unfriendly tolerance’—a muted disapproval of the religious other, voiced indirectly and often triggered by unrelated acts, is key to understanding coexistence in plural societies. (This thesis)
5. Collaborative research grounded in African epistemologies, lived expertise, and innovative methodologies can challenge dominant narratives and generate new understandings of the social realities and modes of coexistence in plural societies.
6. The contested nature of some shared urban spaces calls for a conceptual rethinking of what constitutes ‘public space’ in Ghanaian cities, particularly amid the contemporary commodification of land.
7. The (re) naming of places such as Madina transcends mere geographical demarcation, but functions as historically situated and strategic acts that articulate collective identity, cultural memory, and political agency.
8. The common ground should be conceptualised as a socio-spatial laboratory where intersecting religious ideologies and secular interactions shape Madina’s complex and evolving framework of coexistence.
9. Theological scholarship on Africa must transcend reductive binaries like ‘peace versus conflict,’ which oversimplify interfaith realities and flatten the complexity of everyday modes of coexistence.
10. African Indigenous religions continue to function as normative moral frameworks that regulate conduct, administer justice, and sustain social order shared in urban spaces in Ghanaian cities.
11. A diverse religious soundscape shapes the acoustic environment and mediates coexistence through both harmony and tension in shared social spaces.
12. Nighttime use of shared urban spaces, often overlooked in studies of interreligious coexistence, is central to understanding the spatial-temporal dynamics and practices through which coexistence is enacted, contested, and sustained.