

Gendered Memories: Cultural Representations, Local Practices, and Transnational Regimes in the Middle East and North Africa

In the Middle East and North Africa, as elsewhere in the world, gender issues have significantly gained in importance since the mid-1980s. The local and regional activism of women's rights groups, the politics of reform on the state level, and last but not least international legal and development policies have all contributed to putting not only issues of rights and democracy, but also of gender justice on the political agenda. This has opened up new possibilities for feminists, but also created a situation in which women's and gender issues may be used for different political purposes.

Critical academic research on these developments has mainly focused on their political and socio-economic facets. Here, the contradictory dynamics between state cooptation and the autonomy of women's rights groups, as well as the complex relationship between strategic and practical gender interests, have been studied. Research also looked into the gendered dimension of recent global developments like the assertion of the neo-liberal paradigm, environmental change, and the diverse devices of the exclusion of women.

This workshop will instead privilege the gendered character of ways of representing and configuring processes of societal and political change by looking at the diverse forms of (re-)constructing collective memory involved. During the last three decades, the making of collective memory in situations of societal and political transformations has gained growing attention in the humanities and social sciences. In recent years this subject has also been researched with respect to the Arab Middle East. Here, approaches are highly diverse, ranging from cultural studies to psycho-social perspectives. But whereas analyses have focused on the role played by history writing and political myths in legitimizing contemporary politics, gender as a category and a site for contestation has been largely neglected in this context.

The papers presented during the workshop will look at how the politics of memory serves to strengthen and/or reconstruct gender norms, while, at the same time, they may provide opportunities for negotiating gender relations. It is the twofold character of the construction of collective memory as a gendered and as a gendering exercise that will be scrutinized. The workshop will also examine the transfer of regulatory and normative concepts and regimes. The focus here will be on the intersection of different levels of the articulation of gender and gender interests (grassroots activities, organized political forces and state policies, international discourses, and legal regimes).

In bringing together the two perspectives of gender and the politics of memory, the workshop wishes to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of ongoing processes of change in the Middle East and North Africa. At the same time, the focus on gender and women's rights activism aims at contributing to further developing the academic field of memory studies. Finally, the workshop will critically review notions of collective memory and trauma, taking up some of the recent criticism of these ideas.

Workshop

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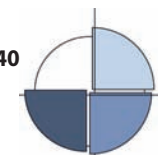
Venue: Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), Berlin

Date: June 11-12, 2009



Universität Zürich
Orientalisches Seminar

Sonderforschungsbereich 640
Repräsentationen sozialer
Ordnungen im Wandel



Thursday, 11 June 2009, 18:00 – 21:00

Gendered memory in the Middle East and North Africa

Welcome, film screening and joint dinner

Venue: Zentrum Moderner Orient, Kirchweg 33, 14129 Berlin

Friday, 12 June 2009

9:00 Coffee / Tea

9:15-10:30 **Panel I**

Prof. Bettina Dennerlein (Universität Zürich): Gender and Difference. The Gender Approach of the Moroccan Equity and Reconciliation Commission

Prof. Nadje el-Ali (SOAS, London): Gendering Memory, Truth & History: Contestations of Iraq's Past and Present

Discussant: **Prof. Cilja Harders** (FU Berlin)

10:30-11:00 Tea / Coffee

11:00-13:00 **Panel II**

Dr. Choman Hardi (Guest scholar SFB 640): Gender, Memory and Political Discourse: Suppressed Voices of Anfal-Women in Iraq

Karin Mlodoch (ZMO): „We want to be remembered as strong women, not as shepherds“. Women survivors of Anfal struggling for agency and acknowledgement

Dr. Andrea Fischer-Tahir (SFB 640, ZMO): In search for explanation: Peshmerga remember the Anfal Campaign

Discussant: **Anne-Kathrin Will**, (HU Berlin, Institut für Europäische Ethnologie)

13:00 – 14:15 Lunch at ZMO

14:15 – 14:30 Presentation of the Arab Working Group on Transitional Justice by **Salwa El Gantri** (KADEM Tunis)

Friday, 12 June 2009

14:30 – 15:45 **Panel III**

Dr. Sune Haugbolle (University of Copenhagen, Guest scholar SFB 640): The Little (Wo)man vs. the Militia(man) - Femininities and Masculinities in Lebanese Memory Culture

Dr. Saadi Nikro (Notre Dame University, Beirut, ZMO associate scholar): Melancholy, Masculinity, Memory: Mohamed Soueid's Tango of Yearning

Discussant: **Dr. Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr** (ASSR, University of Amsterdam)

15:45-16:00 Coffee / Tea

16:00 -18:00 **Panel IV**

Rana Issa (CNMS, Marburg): Ghazal for its Own Sake. On the Function of the Love Poetry of Ibrahim Tuqan in Constructing Palestinian Identity

Dr. Achim Rohde (Georg-Eckert-Institut, Braunschweig): Literature as Counter Memory Exemplified in the Works of Lutfiyya al-Dulaymi: Subverting Ba'thism from Within?

Dr. Noga Efrati (Truman Institute, Hebrew University, Guest scholar GEI): Unearthing Jewish and Palestinian Gendered Memories: 'Women's Historical Collection and Research Center'

Discussant: **Barbara Winckler** (ZfL Berlin)

18:00-19:00 Summary and final discussion:

Prof. Vincent Houben (SFB 640, HU Berlin)

In cooperation with:

