

EDITORIAL

Ulrike Freitag

What is the link between value-added tax and academic cooperation? Until some months ago, everyone would have denied such a nexus. And yet, in an interpretation of European law that seems at odds with common sense, the cooperation between universities and between universities and publicly funded extra-university research institutes will be taxed

from 2023 onward. While most people might consider the rather absurd fact that one publicly funded institution pays taxes on cooperation with another publicly funded institution to be simply another aberration, it is an existential question for academic cooperation, as the quite substantial tax will be paid out of budgets that have been allocated without factoring it in.

This means that these institutions will have to make cuts, and the smaller the institution the more these cuts will bite into vital functions. For a small centre like ZMO, this might entail the need to cut a full academic position out of a total of 15. Given the regional, disciplinary, and historical scope of our institute, this amounts to a severe reduction for no obvious reason.

25 years of Research in the Humanities – Some Reflections

Ulrike Freitag

The Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin e.V., the legal entity comprising the Leibniz institutes Zentrum Moderner Orient, Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung (ZfL), and the Zentrum für Angewandte Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS), is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Given their tenuous beginnings as positively evaluated entities of the East German Academy of Sciences for which no one had a clear vision and the present national and international reputation of the three centres, this is a remarkable success story. This success certainly was no foregone conclusion when the German Science Council recommended in 1991 to create research centres in the humanities. The long road to this goal, which was in fact only institutionally achieved in 2017 with the integration

in the Leibniz Association, has been masterly recounted by Sigrid Weigel in a publication entitled **25 Jahre Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin** (GWZ Berlin, 2021). I will use this opportunity to thank the small but determined group of academics involved in the initial evaluations and debates for their determination and the State of Berlin as well as members of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research for their willingness to support what initially looked like a problematic experiment through a series of larval stages to what Weigel calls a model case.

What, then, constitutes a model case for research in the humanities and, in particular, for the special field studied at ZMO? Free from regular teaching obligations,

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scholars at ZMO organize their research in interdisciplinary research units which cover different areas and historical periods. This requires and

enables intense reflection on theories and concepts stemming from Western as well as non-Western traditions. Focus on the latter, which requires knowledge of non-Western languages, is enhanced by cooperation between scholars with different regional and educational backgrounds. Such cooperation, which lies at the heart of the enterprise and takes many different forms in the various projects, often requires long-standing institutional and interpersonal connections of trust – particularly for research in non-democratic or politically instable societies. This requires continuity in the research staff, which became possible only with institutionalization.

“A free space for humanities” – thus the name of a funding initiative of the Federal Ministry from 2007 to 2012 which was based on the experience of the GWZ – offers a number

of different opportunities to reach concrete results in basic research. ZMO has explored new empirical fields, such as non-Western perspectives on the exploitation of natural resources or the conditions for different religions and ethnicities to live peacefully together in urban settings. Researchers at ZMO also contribute to developing a new analytical vocabulary or widening the existing one and opening new horizons, for example regarding African philosophy. The attempt to reverse perspectives and consider matters from the viewpoint of non-Western societies, based on close cooperation between colleagues with different backgrounds, can be an important addition to academic debates. It can, however, also have very practical consequences, for example for understanding Syrian refugees’ perspectives on Germany against the background of their ex-

periences in Syria. Only when we understand that we are dealing with individuals who also have a particular experiential baggage will we be able to communicate effectively – which is needed as a basis for mutual understanding.

Why should a centre in Berlin analyse scholarly networks based in early 20th-century Cairo or investigate intergenerational relations in Central Asia? Based on the premise that an understanding of the past is essential to an understanding of the present and that, in a globalizing world, it is insufficient to understand solely the past (and present) of one’s own country or region, we argue that all of our projects contribute to an important reservoir of knowledge. In their manifold writings and activities, members of ZMO contribute to the crucial contextual understanding how our world is constituted.

PROFILES

Reflections on the Historicity of Democracy in the Arab and Muslim Worlds: HISDEMAB, international and collaborative research project (2020–2023)

Nora Lafi

Contemporary debates on democracy in the Arab and Muslim worlds are dominated by bitter impressions following the return to authoritarian regimes after the short parenthesis of what mainstream media have often labelled as the “Arab Spring”. After a few months or years of enthusiasm, considerations have now been raised again about the alleged incompatibility of democracy with societies of the broader region. HISDEMAB, as a collaborative and international research network, moves beyond this dichotomy. It investigates what the historicity of democracy and deliberative practices in the societies of the region has been and what it is today and critically discusses the various layers of culturalist reifications that have accumulated. The aim is to explore this crucial issue by examining the forms of political organization



Archives nationales de Tunisie. Photo: Nora Lafi

that were inherent in societies of the region. The project discusses their impact on various forms of modernity, including late Ottoman, colonial, and national, in challenging Eurocentric interpretations. It is also to propose a critical examination of this heritage and its historical evolution between the accommodation of circulating forms, the negation of local existing forms, the dilution of local governance schemes, and ambiguous resurgences of old forms under

the lens of ideologically oriented solutions. The forms of collective deliberation that are relevant in a discussion of inherent, possibly early democratic impulses include numerous councils and assemblies at various scales, from villages and cities to provinces, and deliberative institutions in the world of guilds and in confessional communities.

The project seeks to establish an innovative research network that connects three institutes of the Leib-



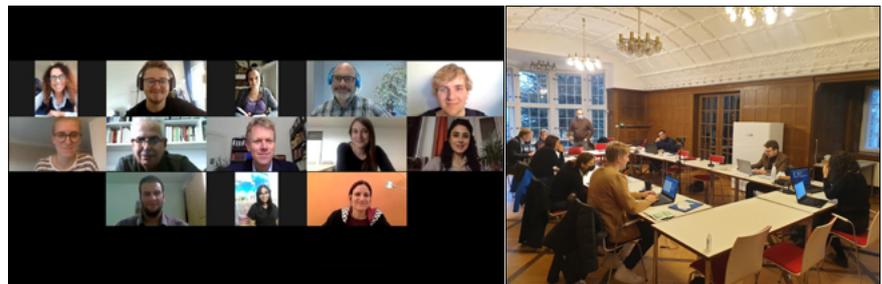
From left to right: Ahlem Hajaji, Abdel Qader Amer, Robin Schmahl, Elisabeth Kimmerle. Photos: private

references to the history of democracy in Tunisia in a post-revolutionary context; Frank Bösch (ZZF) works on transnational political networks, as well as on the notion of authoritarianism; Falestin Naili (IFPO) focuses on the Municipality of Jerusalem during the period of British colonization and specifically on questions of voting, census suffrage, and deliberation; while Nora Lafi's research (ZMO) is on local assemblies in Algeria, Syria, and Libya in Ottoman times and specifically on both the nature of local deliberative institutions and their reinterpretation in a colonial context. Maija Susarina serves as project coordinator (replaced temporarily during 2021 and 2022 by Rand El-Zein

and Sophie Wilske) and Simon Bauman as student assistant.

After one year of intense online research socialization and the first round of field researches, the first in-person meeting of the members of the network took place in Berlin in November 2021. International workshops will take place in 2022

and 2023 in Amman, Tunis, and Berlin. The HISDEMAB online bi-weekly public seminar started in November 2020. Its first academic year regularly gathered more than 200 attendees. The second series is starting 13 December 2021. For more information see also <https://hisdemab.hypotheses.org/about>.



Teamwork under varying conditions. Photos: HISDEMAB

Normality and Crisis: Memories of Everyday Life in Syria as a Chance for a New Start in Germany

Katharina Lange

Much public, but also scholarly discourse about the years since 2015 – often referred to as the “refugee crisis” – has framed recent migrants from Syria to Germany primarily as “refugees”, as subjects who become visible only once

they leave their homes and as living in, even representing, a state of crisis. Their lives beyond this myopic lens and before the widespread experience of displacement and war, however, are much less known. From 2018 to 2021, the BMBF-funded joint

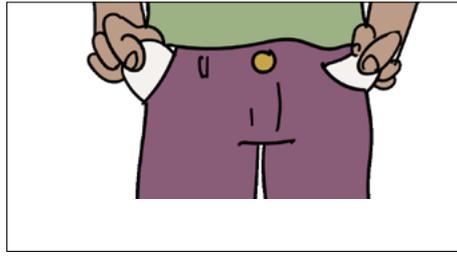
primary objective was thus to document experiences of everyday life in Syria before the uprising against the Assad regime and in the years before 2011 and to communicate the findings to a wider public.

project “Normality and Crisis: Memories of Everyday Life in Syria as a Chance for a New Start in Germany” directed by Katharina Lange responded to this gap by asking what refugees from Syria have experienced as “normality” beyond the state of crisis. The project’s

Researchers pursued this guiding perspective through two broad thematic fields: “experiences of statehood” and “living together”. Taking note of divergent political positionings and the broad range of individual experiences, the individual projects of this group reveal that everyday life in Syria was experienced as an intermingling of elements of crisis with lived normality.



* Pictures in this text are from the online exhibition “Anfänge und Erinnerungen”. 123COMICS, 2021



Thinking through these findings, the apparently simple category of “crisis” appears much less sharply defined: undercurrents of crisis may seep into mundane normality in many ways and thus unsettle sharp categorical distinctions between the two notions.

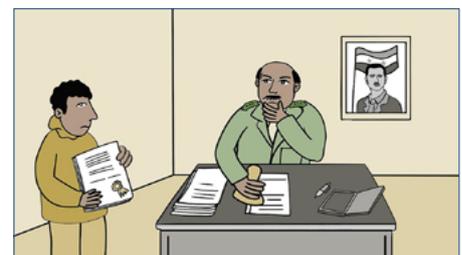
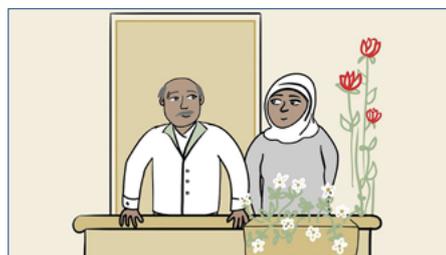
Research projects

The post-doctoral project “Paper Trails and Dislocated Bureaucracies” (conducted by Veronica Ferreri, May 2018–July 2021) addressed experiences and encounters with bureaucratic practices and paperwork between Syria and Germany. Building on her previous research with a Syrian community in Lebanon and her current fieldwork in Berlin, Ferreri argues that bureaucratic practices and paperwork in Syria are not politically neutral, but have been and still are entangled with political positionalities and demonstrations of loyalty to the Baath regime. This is evidenced, for example, in past withdrawals of Syrian nationality from political dissidents and ethnically “undesirable” individuals (notably Kurds) and in routine “security checks” carried out by the security services. As German bureaucracy demands valid Syrian papers to start a “normal” life – be it to process claims to asylum, residence permits, or marriages – the German state not only revives Syrian official documents, but also reinvigorates and perpetuates the ties of Syrian refugees to a state from which they have fled. Ferreri’s findings will be published in a ZMO working paper, a number of journal articles, and a monograph that is currently being prepared for submission with an international publisher.

The research conducted by Lisa Jöris, on the other hand, focused on memories of infra-

structure, notably water provision and waste removal, in Aleppo. As such, interlocutors reconstructed water and waste infrastructures as sites of encounter with the Syrian state, which was in charge of water pipes, water provisions, and water-saving measures, which it interrupted. The interviewees evoked them as sites of conviviality, since neighbourly cooperation was needed to mitigate state-induced water shortages through “private” provisions, but also since the quality of infrastructures – both water provisioning and waste removal – were linked to the wealth and social status of specific neighbourhoods, thus indicating dynamics of societal exclusion and privilege. Jöris’s research reveals that the reconstruction of these infrastructures from memory bridges between experiences of infrastructural provisions in Germany and in Syria, through both constant comparisons between the two and the retrospective application of logics of purity and pollution. These findings contribute to a doctoral dissertation that Jöris is currently writing at the Department of European Ethnology at the Humboldt University.

Jamshid Hussein, who joined the project team in February 2021, addressed the ways Syrian activists critically question their own familial socialization in retrospect. Hussein argues that the Syrian revolution extends to include not only opposition to the Assad regime, but also the most intimate family relations, thus prompting activists to fundamentally



question the nature of intergenerational and gender relations; his findings will be published in ZMO’s working paper series.

Besides a number of forthcoming scholarly publications,

the project produced an overview of websites and online collections of archival sources on recent Syrian history that is available as a tool for researchers through ZMO’s library website at <https://www.zmo.de/bibliothek/bestaende/datenbanken-und-onlinearchive-zur-syrischen-zeitgeschichte>.

Public communication

To communicate research findings to practitioners and beyond academia, the project cooperated with “practice partners”, such as the Berliner Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung, the Katholische Akademie Berlin, and other institutions. Core results of the research were presented in the virtual exhibition *Anfänge und Erinnerungen – Verbindungen zwischen Syrien und Deutschland* (<https://anfaenge-erinnerungen.zmo.de/>), where members of the project team and the two ZMO colleagues Hilal Alkan and Sarah Jurkiewicz presented their findings in fourteen illustrated texts on subjects as diverse as perceptions of poverty, rural-urban relations, and experiences and expectations of neighbourliness. The exhibition is supplemented by a short animated video, *Blickwechsel*, which gives an accessible and entertaining introduction to the project’s core questions. The online exhibition is open to the public throughout 2022. Since its launch in July 2021, it has been presented and discussed with practitioners and refugees at a number of venues and online.

Poverty, Violence, and Migration in the Red Sea Region, online speaker series, October – December 2021

Steven Serels

In the Fall of 2021, Dr Steven Serels convened, in coordination with RedSeaNet, an online speaker series that examined the history and current dynamics of structural poverty, political violence, and large-scale migration in the Red Sea Region. This area of intense international concern is comprised of Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. For decades, the public policy community has claimed that nearly every one of these countries are trapped in a vicious cycle of interlinked economic, political, and social crises. However, the new research showcased in through this speaker series challenges this dominant discourse.

There is no doubt that poverty, violence, and migration are significant challenges faced by the Red Sea Region. The United Nations classifies all of the region's constituent countries besides Saudi Arabia as 'least developed,' its lowest ranking. These countries have, amongst other indicators, a per capita gross national income of less than US\$ 1,018, a high prevalence of stunted growth from under- and malnutrition, high rates of maternal and infant mortality, low levels of education, and a large population vulnerable to environmental disasters. Economic conditions in the region deteriorated further in 2020 and 2021, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and, more significantly, to the ongoing multi-party war in Yemen, a fresh outbreak of internecine fighting in Ethiopia, and a coup that rolled back much of the democratic gains brought in by the 2019 revolution in Sudan.

Despite these real and immediate challenges, speakers in this series demonstrated that migration within and out of this region has never been solely motivated by a desire to flee from crisis. Dr Marina de Regt (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) showed that some Ethiopian women moved to Yemen in the second half of

the 20th century for family reasons. They were married to Yemeni men who had previously migrated to Ethiopia to pursue economic opportunities. When these men returned to their villages of origin, their wives followed them. Once in Yemen, these women and their children often encountered discrimination that limited both their economic opportunities and their ability to resettle elsewhere. Similarly, Dr Asnake Kefale (Addis Ababa University) showed that young Ethiopian women are under increasing pressure from their families to move to the Gulf Countries for work. By migrating under often extremely exploitative irregular conditions, these female laborers fall out of long established local cultural norms, which makes reintegration at home impossible. As a result, both their natal homes and their host countries become sites of exclusion.

The speakers also challenged the idea that all political instability in the region is caused by economic competition amongst impoverished parties over scarce resources. Dr Khalid Mustafa Medani (McGill University) demonstrated that the 2019 revolution in Sudan that brought about the end to over two decades of military dictatorship was not just a response to a sudden spike in the price of basic consumer goods, as some had argued. Rather, people took to the streets for ideological reasons. Through protesting, members of varying socio-economic classes collaboratively crafted a counterhegemonic discourse focused on the corruption of the still-in-power government. Dr Nisar Majdi (London School of Economics) further highlighted that the usual markers of political instability (i.e. corruption and organized violence) are actually central to the establishment and maintenance of political influence in the Red Sea Region. In Somalia, for example, international powers seeking influence routinely move money

and other forms of coercion across Red Sea borders to 'rent' followings to meet specific local, national and regional goals.

Speakers also challenge the popular perception that the Red Sea Region is inherently and intractably poor. Through a reconstruction of the early modern history of Eritrea's Dahlak Archipelago, Dr Roxani Margariti (Emory University) showed that strong states allowed for the flourishing of long-distance maritime trade and insured a level of prosperity evident in the region's archeological record. Dr Awet Weldemichael (Queens University) demonstrated that this history of prosperity in Somalia was discursively erased by the agents of European empires over the 19th and 20th century. In its place, they created a new, racist discourse that caricatured Somalia as a site of intractable violence that retards economic development.

This speaker series demonstrated that poverty, violence and migration in the Red Sea Region are not each the exclusive cause of the other. Long distance migration, for example, was historically a source of wealth and, at times, stability. Until the 19th century, the circulation of people integrated disparate communities into a cosmopolitan maritime socio-economic system that produced sufficient surplus wealth to allow for economic specialization, the development of varied material cultures and the maintenance of complex states. Though this system has in many ways broken down, its legacy continues to inform social, political, and economic strategies at the individual, household, community, and national levels. See also <https://www.zmo.de/en/events/lecture-series/vortragsreihe-im-akademischen-jahr-21-22>.

Background picture: UNHCR, flickr, CC BY-NC 2.0

Struggles for Justice, Past and Present. A Translocal Perspective, internal workshop, 16–17 September 2021, ZMO

Tim Krist

Justice is a ubiquitous topic addressed by colleagues at ZMO as scholars, experts, writers, or field workers. To grasp the diversity and vastness of the concept of justice, ZMO convened an internal workshop on 16 and 17 September 2021, titled “Struggles for Justice, Past and Present. A Translocal Perspective”, with the participation of scholars from all four research units. The workshop was organized in a hybrid setting due to the Covid-19 situation.

Following an introduction to the workshop theme by Abdoulaye Sounaye, Samuli Schielke highlighted the limits of talking about justice. He argued that justice, in the sense of right and wrong, often goes hand in hand with conflict and the escalation of conflicts. Therefore, the pursuit of justice often requires violence to be committed, which is why justice should not be equated with peace. There is a danger that the struggle for justice can lead into a spiral of violence that could end in a conflict after which only the winner is in a position to proclaim justice. Samuli Schielke further observed that justice has a deeply problematic bond with ecology. Redistribution and prosperity are linked to growth, which is possible only by means of resource extraction, the use of hydrocarbon energy, and therefore ecological destruction. Post-colonial states that strive to increase their wealth as a way to achieve justice for past marginalization thus stimulate a process of self-destruction. This, Schielke argued, complicates the concept of justice because it raises the question of what in this case is just. Thus, Samuli Schielke posited, the big question of the 21st century is not how to achieve justice, but how to survive as a species.

Through empirical contributions of case studies from the Swahili coast and Kyrgyzstan, Jasmin Mahazi and Nikolaos Olma subsequently ex-

plored different dimensions of episodic (in)justice. Their presentations demonstrated that scholars identify the issue of justice and injustice as something they feel compelled to address, not least since it affects their own work as it is entangled with the production of academic knowledge.

Further themes ranged from veterans’ struggles for justice in post-World War II East Africa (Katrin Bromber) or in contemporary Iran (Sana Chavoshian) through the role of the media in representing violence experienced by Syrian women (Rand El-Zein) to memories of injustice in Lebanon (Saadi Norman Nikro).



Aksana Ismailbekova, Jacob Nerenberg, and Juliane Schumacher focused on economic and political aspects. Ismailbekova looked at the newly elected Kyrgyz president Japarov and his promises of justice, while Nerenberg addressed struggles against injustice in Indonesia’s mining industry. Juliane Schumacher added another perspective by broadening the concept of environmental justice. Contemplating Morocco’s cork oak forest and the way it is integrated into global carbon markets, she argued for

recognizing a complex shift of actors with their own claims and notions of justice, rather than a simple dichotomy of global climate policy versus local communities suffering from the consequences of climate change.

Languages of justice and injustice were discussed in the last part of the workshop, including discourses on religious representations at the University Abdou Moumouni in Niamey (Bello Adamou Mahamadou), the role of local historiography in challenging national history writing in North India (Jona Vantard), and a case study of legal language and law speaking in late Imperial Russia (Stefan Kirmse, Leo Hedrich).

The workshop offered a comprehensive and multi-layered view of justice as a research topic in all areas of ZMO. An international follow-up conference related to the topic is currently being planned. It is scheduled to take place in late 2022.

Tim Krist studies Islamic Studies at the FU Berlin. He has a strong interest in Islamic societies, both historically and contemporarily. From September 2021 to February 2022 he is doing an internship at ZMO.

Radio's Warm Wavelengths in the Cold War

"The Sound of Friendship", film screening, 19 October 2021, Funkhaus Berlin

Anandita Bajpai and Lena Herzog



Funkhaus Berlin, where Radio Berlin International was once based

"Neither our station nor the German Democratic Republic will disappear into the folds of history too soon. The memories of the good and bad times will remain in our hearts here in Berlin. And maybe with you, our listeners."

On 2 October 1990, when the GDR's international broadcasting station Radio Berlin International (RBI) shut down with these last words, the station's voice went silent not only in Germany, but also in several places across the globe. The documentary film *The Sound of Friendship: Warm Wavelengths in a Cold, Cold War* by ZMO research fellow Anandita Bajpai traces memories of RBI from the perspective of its moderators and journalists, as well as its listeners in India. Tracing the trajectory of the station's Hindi programme (1967–1990) 31 years after the station's closure, the film takes viewers from locales in Berlin to those in Madhepura, Bihar in India and revives the memories of a Listeners' Club called the "Lenin Club". We are introduced to Arvind Srivastava, founder of the Club, and visit the attic of his homestead, which houses several material relics of both RBI and the GDR. Among these are posters, peak caps, souvenirs, magazines, pennants, flags, badges, and several postcards Srivastava received from RBI in the 1970s and '80s. Perusing these objects, he fondly recalls his memories of the show and its content, the presenters, their voices, and the "warmth" that tied two continents.

Studio 2, Funkhaus Berlin



For Indian listeners of RBI, what made the station special was the combination of East German and Indian voices that presented the programme in Hindi, a unique selling point that distinguished the station from other radio broadcasters like Deutsche Welle and BBC, where only Indians could moderate the show. The film shares the perspective of former RBI journalists like Friedemann Schlender, Sabine Imhof, and Mahesh Jha, who recall the friendships that evolved with their listeners a continent away. These personal connections are the film's focal point. It brings together listeners and presenters, who were in regular exchange but never met in person.

RBI, like all radio broadcasters of the time, had political ambitions informed by Cold War contexts, but the station became a means for establishing ties that went beyond the immediate ideological motivations of the GDR. This proximity was also achieved by paying great attention to listeners'

queries. Besides those on the GDR's stance on anti-imperialism, the world peace movement, and the Afro-Asian solidarity movement, many questions related to everyday life in the GDR.

The film was shown in a pre-screening on 19 October 2021 at the Funkhaus in Berlin, where RBI (among other radio stations in the GDR) was once based. Among the over 100 guests were a number of former RBI employees. While some of them were re-employed by Deutsche Welle (21 out of approximately 250 employees at RBI, 3 from the Hindi Division), most lost their jobs overnight after the station's closure. In the panel discussion that followed the screening, eight former RBI staff members recalled RBI days, charging the event with emotions. Besides seeing the film and experiencing the atmosphere of the space where it was aired, the audience had the opportunity to listen to one witness account after another as presenters shared their memories of the time,



Panel discussion after the screening. From left to right: Dan Gatzmaga, Mahesh, Christa Tragelehn, Marita Bhattacharya, Sabine Imhof, Arif Nqvi, Klaus Fischer, Ujjwal Bhattacharya, Peter Kleinhempel, Anandita Bajpai, Sonja Hegasy

how they came in touch with listeners in India, and how exchange was cultivated over the years. Even if virtually, Arvind Srivastava and cinematographer/co-writer Jyothidas KV joined the event online to experience the mood of the evening.

Anandita Bajpai has made the film to supplement her ongoing research on the entangled trajectories of two German (West and East) radio stations in India during the Cold War years. It places the acoustic competition between Deutsche Welle and Radio Berlin International in the larger Cold War context and particularly addresses the role of media in shaping transnational listening publics. The film explores the lesser-known chapter of the GDR's international face and transnational ties that often

crossed borders during the Cold War. More importantly, it captures the affects, sounds, silences, emotions, and loud voices that often do not fit the limitations of academic writing.

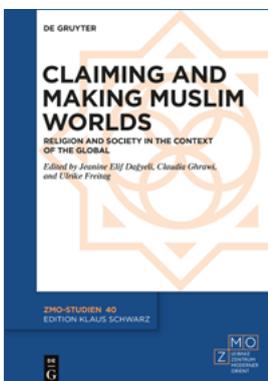
The film not only sheds light on facts and historical developments in the trajectory of the radio station's Hindi programme, but also on affective, emotional ties. One of the scenes, in which Sabine Imhof recounts her meeting with one of her ardent listeners in India, ten years after RBI's closure, sums the essence of these emotional ties: "The photo of our Hindi team, we had sent it to some [listeners], so they would also have an image of us. And others had sent their photos to us, so that we would know what they looked like. But, before anything else, they knew

our voices! And yes, we had to offer them a lot of love, because the GDR was materially not so strong. So, all we could offer was something personal. And we did!"

THE SOUND OF FRIENDSHIP: WARM WAVELENGTHS IN A COLD, COLD WAR
 A FILM BY ANANDITA BAJPAI (ZMO)
 EDITED BY DAN GATZMAGA
 CINEMATOGRAPHY AND CO-WRITING: JYOTHIDAS KV
 CINEMATOGRAPHY AND COLOUR-GRADING: DAN GATZMAGA
 MUSIC: NITIN SINHA AND REYAZUL HAQUE
 SOUND MIX: JONAS ALBANI
 PRODUCED BY: ANANDITA BAJPAI AND LEIBNIZ-ZENTRUM MODERNER ORIENT
 LANGUAGE: GERMAN AND HINDI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
 DURATION: 65 MINUTES
 TRAILER: [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=T4QLIM_JFLW](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4QLIM_JFLW)

PUBLICATIONS

ZMO-STUDIEN

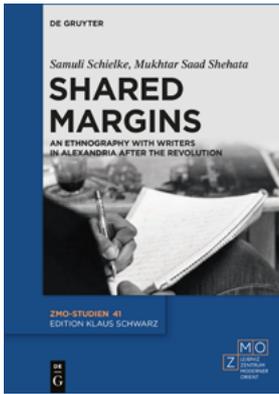


Claiming and Making Muslim Worlds Religion and Society in the Context of the Global

Jeanine Elif Dağyeli, Claudia Ghrawi, Ulrike Freitag (Eds.)

ZMO-Studien 40, 299p., DeGruyter, 2021, ISBN 978-3-11-072676-3

To what extent can Islam be localized in an increasingly interconnected world? The contributions to this volume investigate different facets of Muslim lives in the context of increasingly dense transregional connections, highlighting how the circulation of ideas about 'Muslimness' contributed to the shaping of specific ideas about what constitutes Islam and its role in society and politics. Infrastructural changes have prompted the intensification of scholarly and trade networks, prompted the circulation of new literary genres or shaped stereotypical images of Muslims. This, in turn, had consequences in widely differing fields such as self-representation and governance of Muslims. The contributions in this volume explore this issue in geographical contexts ranging from South Asia to Europe and the US. Coming from the disciplines of history, anthropology, religious studies, literary studies and political science, the authors collectively demonstrate the need to combine a translocal perspective with very specific local and historical constellations. The book complicates conventional academic divisions and invites to think in historically specific translocal contexts. The ZMO Studie is open access available: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110726534>



Shared Margins An Ethnography with Writers in Alexandria after the Revolution

Samuli Schielke, Mukhtar Saad Shehata

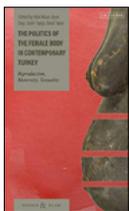
ZMO-Studien 41, 272p., DeGruyter, 2021, ISBN 978-3-11-0726770

Shared Margins tells of writers, writing, and literary milieus in Alexandria, Egypt's second city. It de-centres cosmopolitan avant-gardes and secular-revolutionary aesthetics that have been intensively documented and studied since 2011. Instead, it offers a fieldwork-based account of various milieus and styles, and their common grounds and lines of division. Structured in two parts, Shared Margins gives an account of literature as a social practice embedded in milieus that at once enable and limit literary imagination, and of a life-worldly experience of plurality in absence of pluralism that marks literary engagements with the intimate and social realities of Alexandria after 2011. Literary writing, this book argues, has marginality as an at once enabling and limiting condition. It provides shared spaces of imaginary excess that may go beyond the taken-for-granted of a societal milieu, and yet are never unlimited. Literary imagination is part and parcel of such social conflicts and transformations, its role being neither one of resistance against power nor of guidance towards norms, but rather one of open-ended complicity.

The ZMO Studie is open access available: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110726305>

PUBLICATIONS

MONOGRAPHS AND EDITORSHIPS



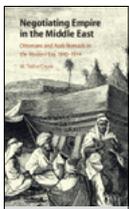
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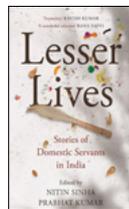
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For a complete overview see <https://www.zmo.de/publikationen/index.html>

Though still under corona conditions, ZMO has been happy to welcome several new colleagues and guests. In the recent months, Dr [Sana Chavoshian](#)



Sana Chavoshian.
Photo: private

started in April 2021. She has a PhD in Cultural Sociology from Leipzig University and has worked there as a junior researcher in the Centre for Advanced Studies.

Her broader work concerns emotionalities of rule, material religion, and critical notions of spirituality and rituals. Chavoshian has taught on the religion, affect, and atmosphere as well as sociology of Islam. Born and raised in Tehran, Iran in a post-war context, she is interested in the intersection between care, war veterans, martyrs, sanctions, and practices elsewhere.

Also in April, [Kadara Swaleh](#) started as a doctoral fellow (FU Berlin) in the BMBF funded research group [De:link/Re:link](#). Swaleh studied Sociology and Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi. His PhD project examines the impact and repercussions of China's Belt and Road projects in coastal Kenya from an anthropological perspective.

From June 2021 to October 2023, [Nico Putz](#) is a research fellow in the project "Modern India in German Archives, 1706–1989" (MIDA). He studied Area Studies Asia/Africa and Modern South and South East Asian Studies at the Humboldt University in Berlin. His research interests include (challenges to) statehood in India, the history of internationalist communism, and international solidarity, with a particular focus on the 1960s and '70s. In his position, he coordinates the Berlin-based sections of the project and assists the publication of the project's formats Archival Reflexicon and Thematic Resources.

Dr [Benedikt Pontzen](#) is an anthropologist and has been carrying out research in Ghana's Asante region since the early 2000s. He works on lived Islam, "African Traditional Religions", religious diversity, and religious encounters. He is the author of *Islam in a Zongo* (Cambridge Univer-

sity Press, 2021) and of several essays published in edited volumes and journals. As a visiting research fellow at ZMO from September to December 2021, he will be working on lived religious diversity in Ghana.

[Georg Lilie](#) stayed at ZMO between July and October 2021. He is a historian and area specialist holding an MA in South Asian Studies and Intensive Language from the SOAS University of London. At ZMO, he worked on entangled histories of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and India during the 1970s through the lens of the international relations of the Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (the GDR's trade union council). From November on, he will write a social history of women's urban popular labour in Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1900–1956) as a doctoral researcher of the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*.

As of January 2022, Dr [David Leupold](#) will start the three-year DFG-funded research project "Materialized Futurities", which explores how Soviet urbanity as a physical remainder of the ancien régime still conditions social life in post-Soviet cities today. It sheds light on how the "unfinished futures" of the socialist project can mobilize alternative historical imaginaries that can challenge both a rising ethnocentric discourse and neoliberal urbanity. For this, it turns to two exemplary laboratories of urban space in the former Soviet South: Central Asia (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan) and the Southern Caucasus (Yerevan, Armenia).

In September 2021, Dr [Çanay Sahin](#) started her two-year research fellowship at ZMO with a project titled "On the Survey of Estate Lands (Ciftliks) in the 19th Century: Regional and Global Networks in the Southern Black Sea".

[Lali Kakhidze](#) is an affiliated research fellow at ZMO from October 2021 to July 2022. She studied German Studies and Tourism Management at Ilia State University, Tbilisi,



Lali Kakhidze.
Photo: private

and finished a Master in Information Management. Presently she is working on a PhD in Digital Humanities at Ilia State University on "Prosopography of German colonists in Georgia (in Bolnisi, 1817–1941)".

AvH fellow Dr [Talha Cicek](#) visited ZMO for another three months from June to August. Prof [Pedro Monaville](#) was a guest in the research project Remoboko in June 2021. Dr [Fatimatou Wahabe](#) joined the Centre from 1 September to 15 October with her topic "Chant religieux chez les populations du Sahara". From 15 September to 15 December, Dr [Crystal A. Ennis](#) is spending time at ZMO with her project "Toward a Critical Reading of Omani Labour History", funded by the Oman Studies Centre. Dr [Izabela Orłowska](#) has been back to ZMO with a return fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (October – December 2021); Dr [Michael Baers](#) started a three-month fellowship from October to December 2021 to finalize his monograph "A Paper Desert: The Western Sahara Conflict" with Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Dr [Suaad Alghafal](#) returned from Lybia for a two-month stay during October and November 2021.

But there is no welcome without farewell. Dr [Sarah Jurkiewicz](#), coordinator of the finished research project "Liminal Spaces", left ZMO for new challenges in the area of education. Dr [Sophia Hoffmann](#) left ZMO at the end of September to take up a post as Assistant Professor (with tenure track to Full Professor) for International Politics and Conflict Studies at the University of Erfurt (Faculty for State Sciences – "Staatswissenschaften"). She will remain at ZMO as an affiliate to continue supervising her VW Foundation-funded project "Learning Intelligence", for which Noura Chalati and Ali Dogan continue to work.

With the end of the research project "Normality and Crisis", ZMO bade farewell to the colleagues Dr [Veronica Ferreri](#), [Lisa Jöris](#), [Jamshid Hussein](#), and [Simon Ullrich](#).

Awards

ZMO Associate Fellow Dr **Besnik Sinani** wins this year's DAVO award for the best doctoral dissertation ("The Ba Alawi Sufi Order in Saudi-Arabia: State, Orthodoxy, and Deviance in Contemporary Islam") in the field of Middle East Studies. The prize was awarded by the German Middle East Studies Association.

Dr **David Leupold** was awarded the 2021 Central Eurasian Studies Society Book Award for his monograph *Embattled Dreamlands: The Politics of Contesting Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish Memory*.

The Association for the Advancement of ZMO (Gesellschaft zur Förderung des ZMO) announces with great pleasure that the Fritz Steppat Prize 2022 will be awarded to **Leigh-**



Leigh-Ann McSweeney.
Photo: private

Ann McSweeney for her MA dissertation *Youth Participation in Political and Social Movements in Post-Independence Senegal. An Analysis of the Influence of Hip-Hop Culture in the Context of the Presidential Elections in 2012*, and to **Hanna Nieber** for her PhD dissertation *Drinking the Written Qur'an, Healing with Kombe in Zanzibar Town*.



Hanna Nieber.
Photo: private

PD Dr **Abdoulaye Soukay** completed successfully his habilitation on 7 October 2021 at the University of Vienna, which awarded him the *venia legendi* in African Studies.



Abdoulaye Soukay

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL

Projects

Dr **Samuli Schielke's** Thyssen-funded two-year research project "The Search for a Normal Life", started in 2020, was extended for a third year.



The joint project **De:link//Re:link**, largely based at HU Berlin (IAAW) investigates new spatial configurations and local perspectives on transregional infrastructure projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative initiated by China in 2013. In this context, **De:link//Re:link** stands for increasingly occurring processes of entanglements and disentanglements or deconcentration in Asia, Africa, and Europe, which are being researched in greater depth from different disciplinary perspectives. Analytical and conceptual approaches of New Area Studies and Southern Theory form the connecting theoretical and methodological framework. The overarching goal of transdisciplinary cooperation in the network is to strengthen a multi-directional exchange of knowledge between Area Studies research institutions and other academic actors in Germany and the regions of research in the joint project.

Miscellanea

ZMO Alumnus (2006–2010) Prof **Hassan Mwakimako** has been elected a member in the Board of MU-HURI (Muslims for Human Rights), a non-governmental organization in Kenya with the objective of contributing to the promotion, and protection of human rights. Mwakimako is an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Pwani University, Kilifi.

Dr **Deepra Dandekar** has taken over as Editor-in-Chief of the international peer-reviewed journal *Nidan: International Journal of Indian Studies* (<https://journals.co.za/journal/nidan>), published by Sabinet in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. *Nidan* focuses on Indian Studies broadly, including the Indian/South Asian diaspora. The journal is an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural one that encourages scholarship that offers readers the opportunity to grasp India, its society, culture, religion, philosophy, politics, economics, and geography, among other aspects.

In June 2021, the end of the joint research project "Liminal Spaces" was marked by the launch of the online newspaper *3al-Janib* ("on the side"), based on drafts and notes that were presented in the research projects. *3al-Janib* tells stories from the margins about moments in which the world around us can be reimagined differently. These liminal moments, when individuals or groups decide to bend formal regulations and rethink the use of resources around them, are when new social relations and knowledge are forged and alternative conceptualizations of a brighter future are introduced. See https://www.zmo.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/Publikationen/PDFs/3al_Janib_liminal_spaces.pdf

CALENDAR

Due to lack of space we invite you to get informed via our website

www.zmo.de/en/events

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