

EDITORIAL

Kai Kresse

The last six months have fundamentally altered our life-worlds and working habits, in ambivalent ways, worldwide. "Screening exercises" took on the new meaning of online meetings enabling the invaluable co-presence of colleagues. For us at ZMO, being able to draw on this shared presence for interaction and intellectual exchange has been crucial. In some ways, frequent online meetings have enriched our experience and opened our minds to new formats and possibilities. The meetings reconstituted us, researchers on four different con-

tinents (some stuck in fieldwork), as a discursive community during the Corona phase. For one research unit, for instance, colleagues "met" from New York, Ibadan, Niamey, Islamabad, and Berlin. And wow! ... in the public online events we tried out, like the Swahili Baraza on Corona experiences and the Eurasia lecture series, participants were not only more numerous than normal, but also joining from a wide range of cities, regions, and countries – for new, unique discussions. Continued interactivity in the same (virtual) space at the

same time has been encouraging. Yet this restricted and one-dimensional virtuality is in itself highly ambivalent. Not truly "meeting", we felt uneasy while happy about meeting – like our colleagues, linked from afar. Technology brought us to the same meeting, but we missed the fundamental joint experience of being together, in the same time and space. True, technology benefits us. But we must not confuse virtual and personal interaction, as 'online' and 'real' meetings make the real and the virtual fuse, and blur into each other...

"The Other" Costs of the Pandemic

Sonja Hegasy, Nitin Sinha

Are non-European experiences relevant for a country like Germany in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic? After all, beyond the sameness of symptoms, the spread of virus has played out differently in different world regions. Yet, social and political events of the last few months have laid bare the interconnectedness and similarities of different countries. From the struggles related to rent and mortgage in the U.S. to those of internal migrant crises and the role of justice in housing in India, multiple examples have shown that the pandemic has affected the underprivileged of different societies in a similar manner. Women's workload due to increased care work and the resulting gender imbalance hidden in "work from home" has been noticed in regions of both the Global North and the Global South. In Germany, since the early days of the onset of Covid-19, ZMO has been at the forefront of collecting and analysing responses to the unfolding crises in the Global South. Our colleagues at the centre



Mumbai (Bombay), Maharashtra, India. A resident of Dharavi, Asia's largest slum and one of India's corona virus hotspots, collects spilled rice from the street that was shed by a truck carrying essential food items. The photographed asked for the wide distribution of the image. © Atul Loke/Panos Pictures

and from its wider network have contributed to this effort. The result is what we call our "Corona dossier", which is accessible at <https://www.zmo.de/wissenstransfer/corona-experiences>.

Covid-19 motivated scholars from all disciplines all over the world to test their previous assumptions about modernity, globalization, climate change, public health, welfare systems, and so on. Societies that had managed to bracket death away were suddenly confronted with the possibility of a large number of deaths, thus casting doubt on the “preparedness” managed by science and governance. Covid-19 laid bare the tension between life and livelihood.

“If we subordinate ourselves to the rules and regulations of the North, we have to be prepared for a major catastrophe”

In the 21st century, more people die of obesity than of hunger. In fact, global hunger is a plague that scientists had hoped to overcome by 2030. Now the picture looks much bleaker: 135 million people were suffering from hunger before the pandemic. This number could have doubled by the end of the year due to the Corona pandemic, with South Asia having the steepest rise according to a report from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). Thirty million people rely on life-saving food from the WFP that needs to reach them. “This does not include the increase of starvation due to Covid-19,” the Executive Director states. Day labourers and those working for daily wages obviously have no savings, provisions for state safety net are weak, and access to public health

is greatly limited. Yet, this is rarely put into the equation when German opinion leaders discuss the pros and cons of the lockdown (see e.g. the debate between Jürgen Habermas and Klaus Günther on basic liberties versus the protection of life, DIE ZEIT, 7 May 2020).

Based on data representing 90% of global employment, the ILO estimates that 77% of the workers aged between 15 and 24 and around 60% of adult workers (aged 25 and older) have informal jobs. Therefore, we can read the writing on the wall that in all likelihood the questions of economy, health, and livelihood emerging from the Global South may result in a dramatic downside in the global shutdown as a whole. Unemployment resulting from firms closing has also been witnessed in the industrialised North, and increasing layoffs might further spread to new sectors, including academia.

“In many countries of the Global South, a new catastrophe looms as a result of the fight against the Corona pandemic: famine”

In the months of May and June, German newspapers, one after the other, discovered this global dimension of Covid-19 beyond the medical context of the spread of the virus. In early May, the authors Ilija Trojanow and Thomas Gebauer, Managing Director of Medico International, pointed to the experiences of “poor” countries potentially interrupting

global production and consumption schemes. The authors quoted their interlocutor in Sierra Leone, Abu Bri-ma, who works in a local NGO there: “If we subordinate ourselves to the rules and regulations of the North, we have to be prepared for a major catastrophe” (FAZ, 4 May 2020).

Trojanow called this weighing up of measures to combat the spread of the virus and the effects of these measurements a “global triage” in which choices will be made as to which parts of the economy the states will support and which others will be allowed to recede in importance. At the end of May, DIE ZEIT headlined an article: “Deadlier than the virus. In many countries of the Global South, a new catastrophe looms as a result of the fight against the Corona pandemic: famine”.

Experiences from India, the Gulf, Kenya, and Niger, which are discussed in ZMO’s Dossier, have made it very clear that the question of hunger became critical right from the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Caught between the choices related to life and livelihood, concerns have been raised whether this issue should not have been taken into account when decisions for global lockdowns were taken. Are these experiences operational for the Federal Republic of Germany? We would like to think so. It could have helped us had we paid attention to the concerns emerging from the Global South early on when we enter into the uncertain phase of the future of global economy, movements across regions, and interlinked systems of production chains.

PROFILES

SELECTION FROM ZMO'S CORONA DOSSIER

In the following section, we present three texts abridged from our Corona Dossier in which four colleagues report on the situation in India, Papua (Indonesia), and Kyrgyzstan. More texts and interviews can be found on the website (<https://>

www.zmo.de/wissenstransfer/corona-experiences). The contributions to the dossier range from personal diary entries and photo essays to opinion pieces and very analytical texts. Read, for example, an interview with the Kenyan poet and po-

litical activist Abdilatif Abdalla, an article by our Director Ulrike Freitag about pandemics during the Hajj in past times, or a blog post by Samuli Schielke on labour, the economy, and justice during and after the crisis.

“Beyond Every Spatial Barrier” – Corona, Capitalism and Central Asia

David Leupold



Swimming Lake Komsomolskoye in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, July 2020. Temporarily drained in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. © David Leupold

At breath-taking speed, our car floated through steep gorges, along frozen riverbanks, passing by old circus wagon like trailers painted light blue and refunctioned as dwellings, makeshift mosques made of old cargo containers, and herds of cattle. In March 2020, while Germany was already held in the grip of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, there was no sign of the virus (yet) in the mountainous landscapes of Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia. The way the virus spread from the Chinese city of Wuhan to Europe, literally skipping the countries in its immediate neighbourhood in Central Asia, confronts us again with the apparent limits of framing our world in strictly geographical terms—today Berlin, Milan, and New York are closer to Beijing and Wuhan than Naryn is to Kaxgar, in the west of China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. In times of global travel, a virus can move across 12,040 km (New York–Wuhan) faster than 191 km (Naryn–Kaxgar). In a global market economy, it is not the physical-geographical distance, but the level of economic activities that seems to determine the actual distance between two sites on this globe. Yet, only a couple of weeks later, the first cases would also appear in Kyrgyzstan.

In March 2020, road blockades were installed at all intercity highways leading to the capital of Kyrgyzstan, while daily life changed significantly for those living within it. Aside from a night curfew that authorities enforce strictly, leading to the temporary detainment of hundreds of violators every night, moving within the Bishkek during the day was possible only with *marshrutnie listi*—that is, itineraries listing one’s

name, reason for leaving home, place of residence, and destination. Only the purchase of daily goods, doctor appointments, and visits to pharmacies were permitted. Yet, judging by the behaviour of fellow residents, it is difficult to estimate how strictly the lockdown is actually enforced—while the number of pedestrians and cars has diminished significantly, you may still be able to spot here and there a guy in an orange shirt jogging down *Erkendik Prospekti* (Boulevard of Independence), a mother with children working out in open-air sport gear, a couple of men standing around a car in need of repair, or a couple of connoisseurs of good coffee populating the emptied terrace of one of the few operating coffee places—of course, only to go.

While walking down the streets of Bishkek, one inevitably notices a significant improvement in air quality—while the city had ranked as one of the most air-polluted cities in the world just a couple of months ago, now, for the first time since possibly the '90s, the air is again fragrant with the fresh, cold breeze from the Tian Shan mountains that tower on the horizon of Kyrgyzstan’s capital. Just months ago at the height of the “air crisis”, it was easier to imagine the end of the city than an end to the pollution created. As an increased number of cyclists on the sidewalk make their way among occasional pedestrians, one cannot help but wonder whether we are already living the prefigured image of a still unborn and more hope-inspiring future. Given that, aside from non-essential (yet, certainly, pleasant) forms of consumption, all vital services in the city are resuming their work, one may ask how much daily commuting traf-

fic was essential to sustain residents’ socio-economic needs. It seems the current situation provides crucial lessons to all of us that ought not be forgotten once we go back to the—in some sense no less dystopian—old normality. Yet, as of today, the “old normality” seems still far away. Since the tight curfew was lifted on 10 May, the country has witnessed an exponential rise in new cases.

Four months later, we count 28,251 cases as the virus spreads across the entire country of Kyrgyzstan—including seemingly secluded places, such as the town of Naryn, located at an altitude of over 2000m at the foot of the Tian Shan mountain range. In times as global as ours, the notion of distance has turned into a deceptive mirage. If we are to think of the world economy as a living organism, then its blood—both goods and human capital—will flow through its asphalted and chromed veins in even its most remote corners. And suddenly the world—from New York to Naryn—shrinks to one gigantic quarantine facility:

Capital by its nature drives beyond every spatial barrier. Thus the creation of the physical conditions of exchange—of the means of communication and transport—the annihilation of space by time—becomes an extraordinary necessity for it.

These words are not from the latest column, but were written 160 years ago by a critical thinker from Trier in his unfinished manuscript “Grundrisse”.

A longer version was written between March and May 2020, see <https://medium.com/@davidleupold/four-temporal-snapshots-from-central-asia-d84069213783>.

Blocking the Pandemic: Regional Boundary Controls in Indonesia's Far East

Jacob Nerenberg



Head of provincial health agency with management and staff of Abepura Public Hospital in Jayapura, Papua, 19 May 2020. © 2020 Jubi / Hengky Yeimo

In Indonesia, the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak particularly affected the most densely populated areas, such as Jakarta. Representatives of less densely populated outer regions, notably the easternmost province Papua, have anticipated the problem of inadequate health care. Papua is part of the contested territory known as West Papua to supporters of its independence movement. The conflict has left an imprint on pandemic response, and politicians in Papua have participated in Indonesia-wide debates about relations between central and regional authority.

Uneven Connections: Vulnerability and Leverage

Most of Papua's cases have been reported in the provincial capital Jayapura and in the vicinity of the Freeport gold and copper mine in Mimika regency. Far fewer cases have been reported for Papua's major centre of indigenous population, the La Pago territory of the central highlands. Home to a population of roughly one million, consisting mostly of smallholder sweet potato cultivators, La Pago has a reputation as a heartland of the independence movement. The area is weakly integrated with road links to commercial and administrative hubs that, for the most part, are accessible from the coast only by air. On 23 March, the head of Jayawijaya regency (in the central part of La Pago) announced the suspension of passenger travel at its main airport in the town of Wamena. The announcement took up popular demands for leaders to restrain the movement of people into Papua at a time when the virus was just beginning to be detected there. Other regencies made similar an-

nouncements, and the governor of Papua province, Lukas Enembe, declared a halt to all passenger travel into the province.



Agrarian landscape in Jayawijaya, Papua, Indonesia. © 2020 Jacob Nerenberg

The proliferation of regionally led travel bans has been characteristic of provinces such as Papua with low health care capacity and high rates of in-migration and travel in and out. The rationale was put in stark terms by Dr Silwanus Sumule, spokesperson of Papua's COVID-19 Task Force, who on 26 March stated:

Why did we disallow outsiders from coming here? Because if you come to Papua, you will die. I'm sorry for this overly direct language. Why? Just to handle our own population, our hospitals are not capable—and what's more, if others come here!

The centre questioned the legitimacy of Papua's travel shutdowns, as two national government ministers denied that regions have the right to unilaterally suspend travel in and out of their territories. Such denials were met with firm and controversial responses from Papua. Meanwhile, other regions implemented their own restrictions. While media controversy swirled over regional travel suspensions, the central government introduced a mechanism for regions to request authorization for quarantines.

Meanwhile, the Jayawijaya administration maintained the landing of cargo flights carrying medical and consumer goods, including food products such as rice. Recent progress in constructing the long-anticipated road linking Jayapura to Wamena (passing through mountain ranges and vast forests and swamps) has complicated travel restrictions. Responding to reports that vehicles had passed through recently cleared but unfinished road sections, officials in Yalimo regency led a team of volunteers to set up and monitor a checkpoint.



Road and bridge in Jayawijaya, Papua, Indonesia. © 2020 Jacob Nerenberg

The temporarily heightened legitimacy of regional-level control resonates with debates surrounding measures to prevent disease from spreading to outlying regions and indigenous populations elsewhere in the world. Inadequate health facilities, tensions between policies of isolation or connection, sovereignty claims and policies to suppress or anticipate them—these factors have been involved in boundary controls usually limited to national borders. Claims to authority over inbound travel by representatives in Papua signal a combination of health vulnerability and leverage over transportation due to the region's relative disconnection. The pandemic has allowed this combination to complicate relations between levels of government in Indonesia.

A longer version was written in May 2020, see <https://www.medizinethnologie.net/blocking-the-pandemic-indonesia-witnessing-corona/>.

A Social Anatomy of Covid-19 in India

Reyazul Haque, Nitin Sinha

Two trends are clear in the relationship between Covid-19 and social conditions. First, as with natural disasters, the pandemic has hit socially marginal communities harder. Second, religious minority communities have become the target of vile hatred, accused of deliberately spreading the virus. In the months between March and May in India, the target was the Muslims. These examples reveal the structural faultlines of nation-states that feed the politics crafted around religious or racial identities. The pliable mainstream media exploit this situation, and a significant section of the majoritarian community gleefully endorses it.

The anti-Muslim diatribe on some leading national and regional news channels and in social media began in the wake of almost half a dozen deaths reported near the end of March. Investigation showed that all of the deceased had attended the annual conference of an Islamic missionary group, the Tablighi Jamaat, in Delhi in mid-March. While some media outlets have restricted themselves to using the word “Jamaati”, the general insidious purport is to essentialise the whole community of Muslims. It comes as no surprise that #coronajihad was trending amongst Indian twitterati. Some channels described the supposed role of Tablighi Jamaat in spreading virus as “virus terrorism”.

In both long- and short-term contexts, the inevitability of this theme of Muslim culpability is not hard to discern. Historically, for right-wing politics, Muslims have represented a threat to

both core constituents of social and political life: family and nation. From interreligious marriages to the narrative of population explosion, they have been seen as a threat.

In the more immediate run, the enactment of the controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill, which experts say introduces the criterion of religion for citizenship for the first time in the Indian Constitution, played on and further intensified the marginalisation, insecurities, and vilification of Muslims. Predominantly Muslims attended a two-month sit-in protest in Delhi that culminated in a horrific communal riot in which at least 36 Muslims were killed. They were two-thirds of the total people killed; one-third (around fifteen) came from the Hindu community.

Political provocation has been going on for some time, with accusations that Muslim men are wooing away Hindu girls (“love jihad”); and their involvement in alleged slaughtering and eating beef led to a number of mob lynchings. A toxic mix of hate-ridden politics and fake news, amplified in the echo chamber of pliant media newsrooms, has nurtured a society willing to transform the fact-based Tablighi role into a simmering anger toward the whole of the Muslim community.

In the wake of the Tablighi meeting, a very subtle drive began to exclude Muslims from economic activities. For example, a gated neighbourhood decided to ban the entry of Muslim vendors; a Muslim fruit vendor was forced to shut his shop while Hindus were left untouched; a Muslim family was attacked with weapons because

it didn't switch off the lights on 5 April as the Prime Minister had demanded the nation to do; a mosque was ransacked and partially burnt in Delhi; and shots were fired on another near Delhi. Many such cases were reported from different parts of the country. To avoid transmission of the virus, messages are in circulation to not “receive money from Muslims”.

Urban migrants and Dalits have also faced similar discrimination, but studies suggest that the effect of economic disruption might be felt more by Muslims. 19% of all Muslim workers are engaged in casual jobs, compared with 13% of Hindus. 48% of the total workforce classified as “self-employed” are Muslims. Working without any social security network, the informal labour market of India is huge (around 90% of the total workforce). Historically, Muslims have been underrepresented in secured jobs and education, and therefore, any targeted exclusion from the informal sector will hit them very hard.

The virus will affect different social segments differently. Seemingly, for many, the operative word in “social distancing”—the measure to flatten the curve—is “distancing”. For marginals and minorities, the social might become the main thing to watch out for, not only for the structural reasons that are already making hunger and death more imminent amongst them, but also because of how politics, media, and society keep that “social” fissured and fractured.

A longer version was written in May 2020, see <https://polyphonic-reality.blogspot.com/2020/05/a-social-anatomy-of-covid-19-in-india.html>.

ACTIVITIES

ZMO COLLOQUIUM 2020/2021

Understanding Populism: State, Academia, and Civil Society

Nitin Sinha

Changing notions of culture and politics require and reflect the changes in the ways academic knowledge is produced, evaluated, and consumed. In the current global

politics marked by the rise of various shades of populism, institutions of higher education and professional academics have been at the receiving end of the state's overt and cov-

ert forms of control and repression. While antecedents to these trends can and should be traced, a series of on-going events press hard to evaluate the nature of populism afresh.

While populism needs to be looked at both historically and sociologically, from both above and below, the legitimacy of the populist governments and ruling dispensations rests on the mandate of “popular support”. The entwined question, of course, is also how such dispensations create, fabricate, and propagate a uniform and homogenised notion of the popular, tied to the idea of an authentic, singular notion of nationhood or ethnic purity. The proposed colloquium series intends to bring scholars from diverse regions to reflect both on the practices

of the state and on the modes and means of interaction that manufacture populism. One of the core aims of this lecture series will be to avoid reiterating rhetorical stances of just blaming the states—which is far easier to do—but instead to adopt a dialogical process to understand the relationship between “elected autocracies”, political populism, and civil society, which is shaped through new means of social media, fake news, visual aids such as memes, and, of course, by legal means, identification politics, and control over institutions ranging from universities

to newsrooms. Situating the role of academia in the politics of the state and the popular is our core theme of deliberation. The colloquium takes place between September 2020 and February 2021 and will be held mostly as virtual events. The beginning is made on 24 September at 5pm by Sinem Adar (SWP) with a lecture on “Transnational network of ‘opinion makers’: Turkey’s responses to Islamophobia in Europe and the US”. For the whole programme, please see: <https://www.zmo.de/en/events/lecture-series/zmo-colloquium-winter-semester-2020-21>.

ACTIVITIES

ZMO LIBRARY

Thomas Ripper

In early 2020, ZMO received files from and about the Moroccan sociologist and women’s rights activist Fatima Mernissi, who died in 2015. Thomas Hartmann, her long-time project partner, co-founder and former editor-in-chief of the *Tageszeitung* (Taz), had collected the material and handed it over to the ZMO library. It consists of several file folders with newspaper articles from the time after Mernissi’s death, manuscripts and concepts for book projects, exhibitions and reading tours, correspondence, brochures, documentation, as

well as over 600 electronic files and a cassette. All printed archival material available was immediately catalogued in the ZMO’s electronic inventory (Elektronisches Findbuch) (<https://www.zmo.de/bibliothek/bestaende/archival-resources>). With ZMO IT support, the digital documents—together with 33 GB of data from Peter Sebald on the history of Togo, the journals *al-Manhal* and *el-Dschihad*, music and sound documents from Iran of the Islamic Revolution, 36 audio cassettes with speeches of the Lebanese president Bašīr al-Ġumayīl record-

ed from 1979 to 1982, as well as Gerhard Höpp’s database of Muslim concentration camp prisoners—were activated for a password-protected online use via the web server. In addition, Hartmann also presented to the library two meters of shelves of books and journals, publications by Fatima Mernissi from various countries including translations into various languages, and gray literature from her own publishing house. The volumes were immediately catalogued, signed and incorporated into the library’s holdings.

PUBLICATIONS

ZMO-Studien



Kalter Krieg auf dem Indischen Subkontinent Die deutsch-deutsche Diplomatie im Bangladeschkrieg 1971

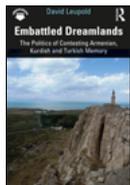
Alexander Benatar

ZMO-Studien 38, 257p., DeGruyter, 2020, ISBN 978-3-11-068085-0

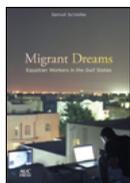
1971 was a key year for India and Pakistan as much as it was for West and East Germany. The third India-Pakistan War led to the independence of Bangladesh, while the German-German détente policy aimed to overcome the East-West conflict. The global Cold War influenced both regional conflict fields and interwove them. Where they came into contact, they also limited the influence of the superpowers.

The ZMO Studie is open access available: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110682038>

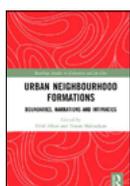
Monographs & Editorships



David Leupold: *Embattled Dreamlands. The Politics of Contesting Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish Memory*, Routledge 2020, 248p.



Samuli Schielke: *Migrant Dreams. Egyptian Workers in the Gulf States, The American University in Cairo Press 2020*, 154p.



Hilal Alkan, Nazan Maksudyan (eds.): *Urban Neighbourhood Formations. Boundaries, Narrations and Intimacies*, Routledge 2020, 260p.

ZMO Working Papers

Kübra Zeynep Sarıaslan: This is not journalism. Mapping new definitions of journalism in German exile, *ZMO Working Papers*, 25, 2020. urn:nbn:de:101:1-2020072713154300695462

Claude C. Kempen: Phobie, Fantasie und fetisch? Antimuslimischer Rassismus und Sexismus in pornografischen Filmen, *ZMO Working Papers*, 26, 2020, urn:nbn:de:101:1-2020082617200971371203

Open access

Stefan B. Kirmse: In Defense of Land and Faith: Muslim Tatars between Confrontation and Accommodation in Late Imperial Russia, *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, Tomus 40,

pp. 169–192, <http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publicn/acta/40/pp.169-192.pdf>

Samuli Schielke: Travel: A Post-Covid-19 Fantasy. In Catherine Besteman, Heath Cabot, and Barak Kalir (eds.), *Post-Covid Fantasies*, *American Ethnologist* website, 27 July 2020, <https://americanethnologist.org/features/pandemic-diaries/post-covid-fantasies/travel-a-post-covid-19-fantasy>

Ulrike Freitag: *Cosmopolitanism in a Global Perspective 2019* London: German Historical Institute, 2020, 24p. https://www.ghil.ac.uk/file-admin/redaktion/dokumente/annual_lectures/AL_2019_%20Freitag.pdf

NEWS

PEOPLE & PROJECTS

ZMO welcomed four new colleagues this summer and, instead of the well-known introductory paragraph, asked them four questions for a first impression: **1) In which subject areas are you an expert? 2) Where were you active before your time at ZMO? 3) What motivates you in your work? 4) How do you recharge in your free time?**

Maija Susarina, Project Coordinator with Hisdemab & Remoboko as of June 2020: 1) Disaster research; 2) Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Disaster Research Unit at the Freie Universität Berlin; 3) The feeling of understanding the world a little bit better every day, cohesion and solidarity among the colleagues, the ever-emerging new topics of interest and research; 4) Enjoying nature, hiking, studying plants.

Simon Ullrich, Project Assistant for the project “Normality and Crisis” as of April 2020: 1) I prefer exploration to expertise: not subjecting others to my expert judgments but following knowledge practices that produce both experts and disciplined subject areas.; 2) I studied political science in Copenhagen, worked for the German Red Cross, and monitored conflicts for the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research; 3) Stimulat-

ing reflection among stakeholders in projects, gaining and developing skills, and discovering the unexpected; 4) I run and sometimes play tennis.

Nikolaos Olma, Research Fellow since July 2020 with a project on “Precarious Half-Lives: Co-habiting with Radiation and Ignorance in Mailuu-Suu, Kyrgyzstan”: 1) I am a social anthropologist interested in cities, infrastructure, and mobility, with a regional focus on post-Soviet Central Asia; 2) I was a postdoctoral research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, where my project, in the framework of the Visegrád Anthropologists’ Network, focused on infrastructure and everyday cross-river mobility in rural southeastern Poland. Previously, I was a PhD fellow at the University of Copenhagen. 3) The people I meet and engage with during fieldwork and the chance I get to observe and learn from their life stories and everyday struggles; 4) Given my passion for socialist-era architecture and urban planning, I particularly enjoy long walks in Halle Neustadt.

Noel van den Heuvel, Assistant to the Director as of September 2020: 1) The history of Saudi Arabia, particularly in the 1970s, and Islamic preaching; 2) I worked as a student

assistant with the Department for Byzantine Studies at the FU Berlin in a project that aimed at advancing the teaching of digital humanities, as well as at the Department for the Research of Modern Religious Cultures in a project focussing on preaching as a social resource from an interreligious perspective; 3) My passion for the subjects I work on, as well as working with amiable people, which makes work so much less of a duty. Knowing how politically charged everything related to Islam is in our current society convinces me of the great relevance of the work of ZMO; 4) To unwind I like to spend time with friends, engage in sports, and if there is a chance, escape the high density of Neukölln and go somewhere quieter.

ZMO also welcomed two further colleagues in September 2020. **Deepra Dandekar** has started a three-year DFG funded project on “Indian Ocean Retrotopia on the Western Indian Littoral”. Dandekar is a scholar of religion and gender of colonial and postcolonial India, her research concentrating mostly on the archival and contemporary history of the 19th and 20th century. **Rahina Muazu** was trained in Nigeria in the field of traditional Islamic Studies particularly

Qur'an Recitation. She studied at the University of Jos, Aga Khan University London, and received a Ph.D in Islamic Studies from the Freie Universität Berlin. Her current research, funded by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung is on "Girls Trafficking from Nigeria to Europe and the Role of the African Traditional Religion".

Abdoulaye Sounaye, head of the research unit "Contested Religion", received an affiliation as Associate Professor from Abdou Moumouni University Niamey, Niger. **Samuli Schielke** joined as an advisory board member of the research project "The Materiality of Homeliness among Mobile Groups" at Moesgaard Museum and Aarhus University in Denmark from 2020-2022.

Other colleagues set off for new horizons. **Antía Mato Bouzas** finished her DFG project on "Emerging transnational Spaces: Migration and Development Networks between North-Eastern Pakistan and the Gulf" and has started a lecturing position at the London Metropolitan University as of June 2020; **Ergün Özgür**, associated research fellow between 2017 and 2020, started in August a two-year fellowship as an Einstein Guest Researcher at the Institute for Media and Communication Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. **Philipp Liegmann**, former Assistant to the Director, joined the Postgraduate Training Programme for Development Cooperation at the Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) in Bonn as of September 2020. Paolo Gaibazzi, research fellow at ZMO between 2012 and 2019, has a Heisenberg Position on "AfroEuropean Frontiers" at the Chair of Social Anthropology of the University of Bayreuth since July 2020.

And last but not least, we bid farewell to **Dietrich Reetz**, a very long-time colleague at ZMO, into retirement. Dear Dietrich, we are sure, you will continue to accompany ZMO's work. Many thanks and all the best.

Gesellschaft zur Förderung des ZMO e.V.

In 2020, the association awards the Fritz Steppat Prize for the fourth time. For her outstanding PhD thesis "Qur'an Recitation and the Nudity of the Female Voice in Nigeria" **Rahina Muazu** is awarded; **Shaul Marmari** receives the prize for his excellent MA thesis "Read Sea Horizons. Palestine and the Jewish-Yemeni Diaspora, 1881-1948".

One of the core tasks of the association is to promote work with the scientific estates of former employees of the ZMO or its predecessors. In order to systematically support the rapidly developing digitization of research data, which includes bequests that are in great demand internationally, the association financially supports a library staff member currently doing a Master's degree course in Digital Data Management. *Katrin Bromber*

Cooperative project

ZMO is pleased to announce its new cooperation with the **Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science**. This includes a valuable addition to its library through the donation of books on Omani history and culture, which will be available in a special "Oman Corner" of the reading room. Additionally, the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre has agreed to sponsor the Oman Research Grant, a three-month fellowship at ZMO for research

in Omani Studies. The cooperation is initially envisaged for five years. We hope that this will give a new impetus for research and research collaboration on Oman and its relations on the Arabian Peninsula and in the Indian Ocean world. The first visiting research fellowship is scheduled for late 2020 or 2021 at ZMO. *Ulrike Freitag*

Obituary

Dietmar Rothermund, Professor of South Asian History and longstanding Director of the South Asia Institute at the University of Heidelberg, died on 9 March 2020. The outstanding South Asian historian accompanied the development of the ZMO in a special way. After the dissolution of the Academy of Sciences of the GDR (AdW) in 1991, he was a member of the evaluation commission of the German Council of Science and Humanities and remained a committed advisor after the evaluation as a member of the advisory board of the Forschungsschwerpunkt *Moderner Orient* (1992). He was also a member of the advisory board of GWZ *Moderner Orient* from 1997 to 2003, contributing his many years of experience and diverse contacts. In 2006, when the Gesellschaft zur Förderung des ZMO e.V. was founded, he assumed the chairmanship of this association for several years.

Heike Liebau

CALENDAR

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

www.zmo.de/en/events

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