

ZMO Research Programme 2025–2029

Thinking through Translocal Entanglements: Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East

Project Overview

State and Society

Head of Research Unit: Dr. Heike Liebau,
Dr. Nitin Sinha

Dr. Heike Liebau: Historical Icons and Representations of the Past

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Freitag: An Oasis Facing Globalisation: The History and Development of Hegra (Saudi Arabia) since the Late 19th Century

Dr. Deniz T. Kilincoglu: Learning to Feel Like a Nation: Nationalism and Emotions in Turkish School Books (DFG)

Kadara Swaleh: An Anthropological Study of the Impact and Repercussions of Chinese BRI Projects in Coastal Kenya

Dr. Mallika Leuzinger: Archival Imaginaries and the Politics of History in South Asia

Sari Chreiteh: Predictive Narratives and Magical Thinking as Coping Mechanisms in Lebanon's Radical Uncertainty (2019-2024)

MIDA - Modern India in German Archives, 1706–1989

Dr. Martin Christof-Füchsle: Modern Indian Literature in Translation in the GDR: Between Ideology, Censorship and Cultural Diplomacy

Jannes Thode: Changing Structures of Violence during the Territorial Expansion of the British Company-State in Bengal

CRAFFE - Crafting Entanglements: Afro-Asian Pasts of the Global Cold War (Leibniz Collaborative Excellence Project)

Dr. Anandita Bajpai: Entangled Wavelengths: International Radio Broadcasters and their Afro-Asian Listening Publics

Dr. Maria Ketzmerick-Calandrino: The Global South and the Global Cold War in Berlin: The Divided City as a Locale for Afro-Asian Solidarities

Tamlika Roy: Women's Internationalism(s) and Afro-Asian Networks: Cultural Politics and Cold War in India

JUSTIMINO - In Pursuit of 'Legality' and 'Justice': Minority Struggles in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union (ERC Consolidator Grant)

PD Dr. Stefan Kirmse (Principal Investigator): Russian Colonialism, Georgian Jews, and Blood Libel in the Late Imperial Caucasus, 1850-1914 & 'Traditional Crime' in Central Asia: Bride-kidnapping and the Payment of Kalym in Long-Term Perspective, 1860s-Present

Ketevan Sartania: From Revolutionary to Socialist Legality: Georgian Perspectives

Dr. Gevorg Avetikyan: Legal Nationalism: Strategies of Seeking Justice in Post-Stalinist Armenian SSR

Dr. Aikaterini Lykoudi: Russian-Ottoman Relations and the Karaites Question in Late Imperial Russia

Leo Hedrich: Legislating Justice and Legality? Muslim Deputies in the Russian State Duma, 1906-1916

Lucien Turczan-Lipets: From Leninist Norms to Human Rights: Stefania Shabaturova and the Ukrainian Shistdesiatnyky

Dr. Diliara Brileva: Public Theology: The Formation of New Theological Discourse in the Periodical Press of Muslim Tatars in Late Imperial Russia (AvH)

Timely Histories (ERC Consolidator Grant)

Dr. Nitin Sinha (Principal Investigator): South Asian Nights: A History

Sagnik Kar: Time and Delay: Gendered Temporalities in Bengal in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Dr. Amrita Chattopadhyay: Night and Nocturnalisation in Medieval and Early South Asia

Associated/Affiliated

Florian Coppenrath: The Economy of Hip-Hop Music Production in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (1990s–2021)

Dr. Claudia Eggart: Lived Geopolitics: Rescaling Market Infrastructures in Odesa and Bishkek from Soviet Collapse to Backlash Imperialism

Dr. David Leupold: 'Relicts of (Another) Future?' The Afterlife of the Socialist City in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus (DFG)

Robin Schmah: A Tale of Two Narratives: Deliberative Systems in Egypt during the French Military Campaign of 1798-1801 and the Inception of the Modern Middle East

Dr. Birgitte Stampe Holst: After Authoritarianism: How Political Thinking Travels With Syrians to Germany and Denmark

Jona Vantard: Practicing History in Post-1874 Assam

Dr. René Wildangel

Lives and Ecologies

Head of Research Unit: PD Dr. Katharina Lange,
Dozent Dr. Samuli Schielke

PD Dr. Katharina Lange: Revisions of Rurality: Ecology, Conflict and Violence in a Changing Middle East

Dozent Dr. Samuli Schielke: The Dream of Stability: Egyptian Migrations and Homes in the Age of Growth

Dr. Aksana Ismailbekova: Future Building in Central Asia: Intergenerational Cooperation, Infrastructure, and Translocal Mobilities

Dr. Sana Chavoshian: Dust Wind in Iran under Sanctions

Dr. Johannes Becker & Orhan Nassif: Migrant Arrival Contexts in Transregional Comparison: Local Figurations and Differing Collective Histories of Assyrians/Arameans in Germany and Jordan (DFG)

Dr. Steven Serels: A New History of Infectious Diseases in the Southern Red Sea Region (DFG)

Dr. Akmal Bazarbaev: Internal Labour Migration in Central Asia, 1870-1917: Social Drivers and Government Impediments to Movement (AvH)

Dr. Hilal Alkan Zeybek: In the Company of Plants: Multispecies Care and Migrant Home-making in Germany (DFG)

Dr. Magdalena Moorthy-Kloss: Slavery and Post-Slavery in South Yemen under British Rule (FWF Erwin Schrödinger)

Dr. Ahmad Moradi: Beyond Humanitarianism: Disability Care and Belonging of Afghan Veterans in Iran (DFG)

Dr. Ergün Özgür: Highly-Qualified Syrian Circassian Refugees in Multicultural Capitals of Amsterdam and Berlin: Challenges and Opportunities (Gerda Henkel Foundation)

Dr. Anna Safronova: Fisherfolk of the Steppe: Water, Resource Use, and Environmental Transformation in Kazakhstan, 1950s–Present

Dr. Mattin Biglari: Oil, Decolonisation and the 'Great Acceleration': A Translocal History of Oil Refining and Environmental Justice in the Western Indian Ocean

Associated/Affiliated

Mariam Aboughazi: The Aftermath of Hope: Defeat, Recovery and Dreams in Post-Counter-Revolutionary Egypt (DAAD)

Benita Kawalla: Between Family Love and Formalities: On Intrafamily Negotiations of Citizenship Constructions, Belonging and Acts of Citizenship of Mixed-status Families in Jordan

Dr. Anu Krishna: The Cardamom Chronicles: Scent, Savour, and Social Worlds in a Global Spice Chain

Dr. Jasmin Mahazi: Bahari Yetu (our Ocean/Genre): A Matrifocal Anthropological Study of Oral Archives and Embodied Knowledge Practices along the Swahili Coast

Dr. Sanherib Ninos: Migrant Arrival Contexts in Transregional Comparison: Local Figurations and Differing Collective Histories of Assyrians/Arameans in Germany and Jordan (DFG)

Kholoud Said Amer: The Two Long Years

Dr. Juliane Schumacher: Knowledge, Temporalities and Questions of Justice: Negotiating Coastal Futures in West Africa in Times of Climate Change

Dr. Magdalena Suerbaum: Syrian Parents in Berlin and Istanbul: Gendered Perspectives on Strategies of Childrearing, Educational Choices and Intergenerational Relationships

Religion and Intellectual Culture

Head of Research Unit: PD Dr. Abdoulaye Sounaye,
Prof. Dr. Kai Kresse

PD Dr. Abdoulaye Sounaye: Boko: Europe, Intellectualism and Religiosity in Hausa Context

Prof. Dr. Kai Kresse: Contested Knowledge, Sociality, and Religion: Intellectual Culture under Postcolonial Conditions on the Swahili Coast and Beyond & Anthropology (in the North) and Theory (from the South)

Dr. Sonja Hegasy: Hassan Heshmat: A Decolonial Artist, Then and Now

Dr. Leila Almazova: In Search of a 'New Orthodoxy': Islamic Education in Post-Soviet Tatarstan

Dr. Mehdi Ayashi: The 'Omani Enlightenment': Circulation of Ideas and the Cultivation of Critical Thought in the Sultanate of Oman (Fyssen Foundation)

Dr. Max Kramer: When Anonymity is No Longer Enough: 'Fictionalization' as a New Way of Writing Ethnography in the Age of Digital Surveillance

The Ghadames Heritage Project

PD Dr. Nora Lafi & Dr. Suaad Alghafal: Digitization and Heritage Protection: Ghadames as a Laboratory of Community-Based and Collaborative Strategies

Associated/Affiliated

Sohaib Ali: The Contending Political Theologies of Pakistan's Transnational Islamic Actors: A Comparison of Mainstream Deobandi Discourses and Militant Islamism

Dr. Denys Brylov: Sufi Fundamentalists: Al-Ahbash Transnational Sufi Network in Western Europe

Vincent Favier: Preaching and Teaching: Religiosity, Knowledge and Performance at the Université Abdou Moumouni de Niamey, Niger

Dr. Mohammed Hashas: Ethics in the Realist Idealism of Rabat School: Al-Fassi, Lahbabi, and Taha

Dr. Manal Jadir: Memorialization of Holy Wars: Commemorative Practices and Memorial Policies in Morocco and Spain

Dr. Frédéric Madore: Digital Humanities and Artificial Intelligence in African Studies

Dr. Fouad Gehad Marei: VR Islam? Systems of Sensory Perception in Virtual Reality and the Prospects of Virtual Devotion in Islam

Dr. Mohamed Noor: Shāfiʿī Commentaries and Translocal Scholarly Dynamics: Between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Bū Saʿīdī Swahili Coast

Dr. Benedikt Pontzen: Rethinking 'African Traditional Religion': Living with Spirits in Asante, Ghana

PD Dr. Dietrich Reetz: World-Making from the 'Margins': Muslim Cultural Actors from South Asia

Dr. Arpan Roy: Call to Prayer: Evangelizing in an Arab/Islamic Lifeworld (Marie Skłodowska-Curie)

Dr. Jürgen Schaffelner: The Populism of the Precarious: Marginalization, Mobilization, and Mediatization of South Asia's Religious Minorities (VW-Foundation, Freigeist)

Muhammad Abubakar Yakasai: The Kano Mind: The Formation of a Modern Hybrid Muslim Elite, its World View, and its Social Cultural Influence on Kano Muslim Society c. 1945-2003