



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

ZMO examines interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives on societies with significant Muslim populations in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East from the 16th century onward, and especially since the 18th century. Its research focuses on historical and current developments in and between these regions. By contributing a perspective which combines elements of comparison and entanglement, it contributes significantly to the understanding of our present world. ZMO's mission entails combining the generation of new knowledge with the transfer of this knowledge into society, beyond academic publications and teaching. At the focal point of ZMO's research and knowledge transfer are not only social actors and institutions, but also conditions of globalizing processes.

The research conducted in the period from 2008 to 2019 under the umbrella of the research programme 'Muslim Worlds - World of Islam? Conceptions, practices and crises of the global' investigated the tensions between normative notions of being Muslim and other normative orders, on the one hand, and the actual life experiences of people in different societies of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, on the other. This was done using four radically different thematic fields – 'Progress: Ideas, Agents, Symbols' 'Politics of Resources', 'Trajectories of Lives and Knowledge', and 'Cities As Laboratories of Change' – in order to explore different aspects of this wide field.

The new research programme is entitled 'Thinking through Translocal Entanglements: Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East'. It is initially envisaged to last from 2020-2024 (with a probable second phase). It examines the history and present of

dynamic socio-economic and cultural trends, and resultant local and translocal practices against the backdrop of globalising networks from the perspective of Muslim regions and societies from the 16th to the 21st centuries. This builds on core findings from the current research programme which point to

- a. the multicentric development of competing and often conflicting religious and non-religious normativities and everyday realities;
- b. the constant reconfiguration and expansion of translocal communicative spaces through new waves of migration and improved communication channels;
- c. the complicated relationship between globalising processes and local quests for identity, often coupled with an explicit desire/demand for more just social and political relations.

The last point in particular links the research programme to current public debates and concerns in Western societies. The programme takes seriously anxieties linked to globalising processes which find their expression in populist tendencies which might (or might not) strengthen religious or nationalist trends both of which often invoke historical precedents and ideal moral orders. At the same time, awareness of increasing social inequality both within and between societies, as well as a growing threat to long-term ecological sustainability dominate public sentiments. How are these themes debated in Asian and African societies, and by whom and how, and what kind of action do they prompt, if any? Are these new themes or are there specific historic junctures at which they appear and disappear?

The new ZMO research programme asks how social actors, in states and societies that are predominantly Muslim, are involved in processes of transfer and connectivity, and how these influence their engagement with a number of pertinent problems. To what extent can actors still shape the world around them, and in how far are they constrained by entanglements? How do current mobilities and migrations alter notions of what 'Muslim worlds' are? The reconfiguration of established connections (perhaps as a result of decolonization or the collapse of political blocks) alters self-images and images of the other. Persistent migration patterns have the same effect. This raises not only the question of the mobility and flexibility of 'Muslim worlds' under conditions of changing global connectivity and global migration, but also the question of their diversity.

While following approaches that understand globalizing processes as changing, uneven, and multi-centric processes, this programme chooses the lens of 'translocality', rather than that of 'globalization' or 'transnationalism' (Freitag and von Oppen 2010; Schröder and Stephan-Emmrich, 2018). Although current perspectives on globalization

emphasize that its earlier implication of a unidirectional process involving ever greater, all-encompassing connections must be nuanced by considering it as a more open process which emphasises concrete intersections rather than a generalised integration, we argue that translocality opens the perspective onto different scales of entanglement (for recent overviews of 'globalization': James 2012, Hurrell, 2018; and Conrad 2016, esp. 6-16). 'Transnationalism' in turn not only presupposes the existence of nation-states, thereby excluding many historical processes and privileging national borders over other types of boundaries (Schröder and Stephan-Emmrich, 2016). The constitution of such scales – from inner-regional to transregional, transcontinental and truly global connections – in itself needs to be reflected as a social process which cannot be taken for granted. The heuristic instrument of scales can be used in different ways, and they add an important nuance to the more general concept of the 'global' (Porst and Sakdapolrak, 2017). A second advantage of a translocal perspective is the consideration of blockages hindering connections, movement and transfer which, as we have argued, are a regular accompaniment to processes of closer integration.

While 'globalisation' is often tied to a meta-narrative with a more or less openly economic bias, both 'translocality' and 'transnationalism' have been widely used to discuss both debates and discourses as well as actors, practices and impacts of circulation and translocal spaces created by mobility. In a debate that is mostly shaped by disciplines with a focus on contemporary developments, such as human geography, anthropology, migration studies, political science etc., 'translocality' is frequently linked to place-making and to connecting mobility-related developments to local actors and practices (for example: Weissköppel 2013). In this sense, 'translocality' will be employed by most research projects within the programme as a perspective or lens through which certain themes can be explored and which opens insights which possibly remain opaque were the translocal dimension not considered.

While the translocal lens will probably dominate most research projects, some might investigate concrete processes of translocal movements of people, goods and ideas. Finally, a combination of actual mobility and (trans)local place-making invites a reconsideration of the very categories which we employ to describe regions (or 'areas'), be they historical, geographical, cultural, or economic.

As an interdisciplinary research centre, ZMO engages a broad spectrum of academic disciplines in the debate. While approaching the topic of multiple entanglements from a southern perspective, the research programme distances itself from the presumption that these entanglements are necessarily 'transregional' or even 'global'. We do not take it for granted that all places and people have significant entanglements although

the case studies chosen will privilege cases where such connections exist. While people, goods and ideas may have spatially and temporally complex relationships with one another, the form and extent of connectedness can only be documented and interpreted in the empirical analysis which questions the scales we use. The 'global' cannot be paradigmatically presupposed; rather, we assume that relationships and connections expand, while new obstacles and barriers emerge, with their own specific consequences and impacts. In this respect, the new programme draws on the concept of 'translocality' and develops it further with four thematic emphases.

Research-based knowledge transfer has a central significance at ZMO, especially with regard to the modern history of the Muslim world and its interconnectedness with Europe. The need for evidence and the necessity to provide society with well-grounded information on Muslim lifeworlds is ever increasing. In line with the Leibniz Association's most recent Knowledge Transfer Strategy (2018), ZMO seeks to introduce and promote its research results via classical media work, cultural events and forms of personal interaction with different target groups. The ZMO knowledge transfer strategy is underpinned by the fundamental idea that there is no ZMO topic too complex for transfer to the broader public; and that no topic is a niche topic. ZMO sees itself as an institute with an important socio-political translation function. To this end, its employees and associates take part in a dialogue that continuously questions previously attained knowledge.

Research Themes and Research Structure

The new research units concentrate specifically on the following themes: 1. 'age and generation', 2. 'environment and justice', 3. 'representations of the past as a mobilising force' and 4. 'contested religion'. Despite their difference, a number of cross-cutting themes arise already. These will be elaborated in different formats by researchers from different research units (see below). Furthermore, joint methodological and theoretical challenges will be raised and engaged from a comparative perspective. The empirical work needs to be accompanied by conceptual reflections concerning overarching themes.

All four units deal, firstly, with the translocal circulation of debates, images and models of various origins: while some of these debates take place primarily across Asia and Africa, others are developing in relation to Europe, North America, and East Asia. The impacts of yet others unfold in (post-)colonial or (post-)socialist spaces. These debates are taken on by states, or by social/religious movements, and also by individual actors,

for example in questions of welfare policy or the politics of history. Thus, the four research units focus on discourses and especially (OR: including) their potential to mobilise. Mobilisation can have a variety of foundations here, from religiosity to nationalism or the erosion of one's own economic or ecological livelihood.

Secondly, the upcoming research programme will focus on social practices. They can create dependency and exclusion, but also open up new room for manoeuvre. The translocal interconnectedness of goods and people leads to economic, ecological and demographic dependence at various levels and thereby brings about various forms of social and spatial marginalization. These phenomena in turn feed migration, which on the one hand can mean flight and expulsion, or, on the other hand, the hope for a better life. Relations of economic, cultural and historical (inter)dependence (on/of former colonial powers or new trading partners, or others) as well as migration play a major role in almost all the research units.

Thirdly, the programme investigates the production and importance of knowledge, which is always contested. The research units focus on diverse places and networks of knowledge production, from religious movements to historical commissions, agricultural schools and civil society groups that all demand and promote alternative knowledge. Who gets to decide which knowledge matters, and who is involved in the knowledge networks? How is ignorance produced, and what happens to the ignorant? How are different systems of knowledge defined? And how do different forms and systems of knowledge compete with, intersect, and inform each other? In many projects, phases of crisis and political and social upheaval play a key role. In the projects of the new research units, war and post-war periods, struggles for independence, environmental crises, the downfall of political systems and the transition from colonial to post-colonial rule are backgrounds or triggers for debates, new social practices and new forms of knowledge and ignorance.

The programme allows for a synchronic comparison of developments in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, as well as a diachronic comparison that raises the question of how historical processes and experiences are related to one another, delineate themselves from each other or build upon each other. The comparative perspective is further strengthened by ongoing externally funded projects. The overall programme also allows for an analysis of competing globalizations and globalities (propagated by different political, economic, and religious ideologies, for example): projects of growing Islamic, socialist, or free-market affiliations, for example, were and are in some ways closely related, but also exhibit notable differences. Their different positions regarding the themes at hand, as well as the underlying notions of justice and good government

will be teased out in debates bringing together researchers from different research units.

The research programme retains sensitivity for violence, marginalization and power asymmetries. Its focus on actors and their practices and experiences underlines the importance of religion, ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, and of the socio-economic background as factors that shape the inclusion of people in translocal processes (as well as their exclusion from them). Research will also deal with state power. Some states, such as India, have become key players in a liberalised global exchange which was coupled with a roll-back of welfare provisions. This has led to wide-spread mobilisation, based on a far-reaching critique of globalisation (Sahoo 2013). By contrast, the internal conflict and collapse of a central government after 2011 in Libya, a major oil exporter, has caused a dramatic reduction in (formal) economic ties with the outside world. Such developments tend to strengthen informal/illegal networks, such as those of trade in the Sahara which are based on long-standing networks of kinship and exchange (Scheele 2016).

Approach and Methodology

Research pertaining to the socially and historically significant interconnections between ZMO's main research regions, their relationship to the West, and their (mutually entangled) effects in past and present, underpins and feeds into ZMO-based research, including the four research units. This focus on mutual entanglements and interconnectivity builds upon and expands earlier ZMO-based research into 'translocality', on the Indian Ocean region and its networks in the Red Sea, but also the Trans-Saharan region or the 'Silk Road' complex, as 'crossroad regions' (Deutsch and Reinwald 2002; Freitag 2003; Bromber 2009; Boesen and Marfaing 2007; Simpson and Kresse 2008; Freitag and von Oppen 2010; Green 2014).¹ Drawing on previous and ongoing research on nodal trade cities, religious, economic and other networks, a wide scope of material, discursive and practical aspects of social encounters (in architecture, folk art, language, and rituals) calls for exploration and analysis, from historical and contemporary perspectives. In terms of method, flexible and innovative forms of mobile, multilingual and interdisciplinary research are used and developed further in the research process, in response to the respective demands and needs of specific research projects.

¹ In addition, see the project 'Crossroads Asia' (<https://www.zef.de/crossroads.html>), in which ZMO was a partner.

Collaborative research in variable forms is encouraged, for its potential of 'thinking through' the dynamics of entanglements from diverse perspectives (complementary, competing, or contradictory), and thus providing a richer scope of understanding. Researchers with relevant complementary sets of expertise are encouraged to work together, where appropriate, and also to cultivate rapport with relevant interlocutors (scholars, experts and others) in/from the research regions, within and beyond academia. Research on translocal (or transregional) connections will also benefit from collaboration among researchers with mutually complementary knowledge of languages that connect their regions of research with others as lingua franca (for example, Arabic, Urdu, Swahili, Hausa). In parallel, these are often used 'on the ground' in multilingual social life-worlds at the same time, and these multilingual worlds can also be fruitfully explored in collaboration. Working on connectivities and entanglements and thinking them through with complementary research takes, tools and angles in mind, as a general guideline underpinning research, enables the development of multi-faceted and well-grounded perspectives on the historical and contemporary interactions between translocally connected places, groups and actors within and across regions. Collaborative approaches may provide useful responses to the challenges of working in dynamic contexts and conditions that ask for a flexible research design. In this way, translocal entanglements and the multifarious dimensions that are constitutive of social worlds and lived experiences may be addressed more adequately.

A further general aspect underpinning the theoretical and methodological dimensions of the research programme is the engagement with thinkers, theories, and concepts from Asia and Africa (and particularly the ZMO regions), also with a view to recent calls for decolonization (Kresse 2007, Comaroff & Comaroff 2012, Banerjee et al. 2016, Fleisch & Stephens 2016).² Taking into consideration the epistemologies and conceptual frameworks within which thinkers, theories, and concepts are embedded, produced and located, we seek to adapt and make fruitful the perspectives of 'thinking from the South' that emerge and are suggested from here. Research at ZMO cultivates familiarity with relevant concepts, theories, and thinkers from the research regions, and with current relevant debates, so that adequate use of these potentials can be made for critical and conceptually sensitive research (Basso 1996, Kane 2012). This basic engagement strengthens research in all units, by employing perspectives from the regions, and sharpening a conceptual focus from there: e.g. how is 'morality'

² Also note the emphasis on funding South-South projects by bodies like the VW Foundation and Andrew Mellon; e.g. 'African Futures Past': <http://www.aub.edu.lb/aafp/Pages/default.aspx>; or the critical academic platform 'Africa is a Country': <https://africasacountry.com>.

conceptualized; how is 'generation' understood; what does 'environment' and 'justice' mean within the respective life-worlds; and how does the mobilization of 'history' work, in terms of conceptualization and discursive negotiation? Research in general benefits from a richer basic understanding of these issues, and for particular projects such engagement may lead to the development of more adequate conceptual approaches, or feed into meaningful collaborations with thinkers and institution from the regions of research.

Thus, knowledge of regional epistemologies works to take more adequately into account the socially and historically relevant dimensions of 'knowledge' and 'understanding' of the projects pursued. It also presents a means of thinking through general statements and the universally oriented claims of theories from the regions themselves, to consider what they may have to contribute to current theoretical debates, or how research may have to adjust its analytic language (on a region and its people). This feeds in to necessary revisions of Eurocentric paradigms that still dominate theory formation.

These themes have had significant impact on research debates over the last two decades, e.g. pointing to the need for 'conceptual decolonization' (Wiredu 1996) or the 'provincialization of Europe' (Chakrabarty 2000), aspects taken seriously at ZMO (see also Mbembe 2011, Thiong'o 1986; and 'Tongue and Pen' 2013). ZMO's considerable existing expertise on languages, knowledge, and the life-worlds of the research regions organically feeds into such fundamental processes of conceptual sensitization with regard to alternative theoretical concepts and approaches to think with – and ongoing engagement with thinkers, intellectual traditions and debates from the regions enforces this point. Such expertise is sought to be cultivated further in order to continue to strengthen aspects of conceptual critique and theory-building in existing (and newly developing) research. The interlinkages of (inter-)disciplinary and (inter-)regional expertise at ZMO and its long-standing tradition of collaborative research with partners from the regions make the ZMO a particularly suitable location for this task.

Research Synthesis, Cross-Cutting Topics, and Complementary Research

The programme's four research units, discussed below in more detail, are embedded in an overarching structure that relates to the main programme in three ways: 1) it aims to synthesize the emerging results in the four research units; 2) it focuses on cross-cutting issues that affect several research units; and 3) it examines both broader and

more specific questions related to the overall programme and thus complements the four thematic units conceptually and methodologically.

Conversations across the research units serve to systematically discuss concepts or research questions of mutual interest with regard to the overall ZMO research programme. From their respective foci, all the research units address, for example, questions related to (in)equality and justice; they scrutinize different aspects of the production of knowledge and they revisit and discuss the concept of translocality. Conversations across research units thus realize and sharpen debates within the overall ZMO programme.

New research questions, cutting across the boundaries of specific research units may, moreover, emerge from these exchanges. Thus, the units 'Environment and Justice' and 'Age and Generation' share an interest in the connection between environmental knowledge, concepts of justice and generation-related change. A dialogue between their perspectives may fruitfully revolve around the question when and why ecologically caused displacement and exclusion lead to intergenerational ruptures. Another point of interest would be under what circumstances, and in which ways, future-oriented ecological projections regarding climate change, resource scarcity etc. imaginatively link present and future generations.

'Environment and Justice' shares with 'Contested Religion' an interest in shifting religious normativities and cosmologies, especially in moments of social and technological change. What moral economies and ethical orders emerge in those contexts and how, is an important issue for both units.

The role of religiosity in informing, challenging or channelling representations of the past will be explored, in complementary ways, by 'Contested Religion' and 'Representations of the Past'. In that regard, the politics of authenticity as part of so-called retrotopia (Baumann 2017) and the manifestation of eschatological concerns, offer the opportunity to examine both representations of the past and forms (and processes) of 'presencing' the past.

'Representations of the Past' and 'Age and Generation' are, from their respective vantage points, both interested in the mutual relationships between age/generation, the role of memory, and the concept of the contemporary witness.

As far as the research unit 'Environment and Justice' addresses eco-political movements that invoke supposedly purer or more authentic ancestral ways to relate to non-human nature as counter-images to the present, it approaches a thematic field that is closely

related to issues raised by the research unit 'Representations of the Past a Mobilising Force'.

Questions about 'correct' ageing and the morally acceptable ageing body, as well as body-related norms of social work, are a potential field of co-operation between 'Age and Generation' and 'Contested Religion'. Furthermore, thinking about 'expectations' in relation to processes of 'social becoming', especially with a view to perspectives held by the younger generation, is an additional avenue for collaboration between these two units.

Cross-cutting issues of the new programme will be clarified and sharpened in the course of the research process. The biweekly project meetings, the monthly centre colloquium and the annual retreats by the academic staff help to develop and review such cross-cutting issues. At joint meetings and thematic days of the various research units as well as at the annual retreat, first thoughts are to be exchanged on how to possibly bring together the expected research results. The format of freely accessible ZMO 'programmatic texts' and 'working papers' (now in its tenth year) is also suitable for identifying and discussing commonalities and the potential for linking the results of the individual groups.

Translocal exchanges will be investigated also beyond the thematically tailored research units and beyond traditionally defined areas, with reference to the former Soviet republics of Muslim Eurasia or the different continents bordering on the Indian Ocean. This complementary research will comprise, for example, an investigation of urban settings and their links with the outside world along the southern Soviet border, and a study of book production and trade between Arabia and South Asia.

A junior research group that works historically and politically on cooperation between the German and Arab secret services will cast further light on Cold War rivalries, as played out in the evolving relationships between the two Germanies and several Arab countries. In addition to once again highlighting the plurality of 'Muslim worlds', in which Islam did not necessarily play a central role, it will consolidate ZMO's research on the relationship between socialist states and the Arab world.

Finally, the center's research tradition on entangled imperial histories and imperial diversity will continue under the new programme and include further emphasis on comparison: not least, a research project and major international conference will seek to compare the situation of different minorities – understood as ethnic and religious communities distinct from the dominant groups in society – in a variety of modern empires.

Age and Generation

This research unit addresses debates and practices that relate to a world in which life expectancy is rapidly increasing and relations between the generations are reshaped. It is based on the assumption that these practices and debates are the result and basis of longer-term, very different ongoing processes of transformation that produce specific demographic structures; also in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In addition to the comparative potential generated, the research unit works conceptually with age and generation as relational concepts. It prefers a cross-generational approach, rather than examining age cohorts separately. While existing studies on age and generation in Africa, Asia and the Middle East relate mostly to the present and focus on youth and children, the research unit will strengthen the historical perspective as well as the ongoing research on middle aged and the elderly.

Recent academic scholarship engaged with Karl Mannheim's (1928) understanding of generations as 'social generation', which is shaped by the same set of experiences – mostly during the formative years of their youth - and, thus, firmly located in the socio-political context (e.g. Parnes et al. 2008, Pilcher 1994, Weisbrod 2005, Jureit 2017, Alber 2009, 2010). It highlighted the potential of 'generation' as a medium-range interdisciplinary category to understand ways of self-positioning (*retrograde Selbstvergewisserung*) that 'occupies middle ground between social group and society, nation and global community' (Jureit 2017: 13). This research unit uses 'generation' as analytical tool to understand who discursively constructs the category, how and what for. Which spatial and bodily practices are involved? Thus, it will study 'generationality' as an embedded social practice by which generations are constructed in two interrelated ways. First, generating 'characteristics resulting from shared experiences that either individuals or larger "generational units" (in the sense of Karl Mannheim 1952 [1928]) claim for themselves' and, second, characteristics that others ascribe to them from the outside, also based on experience (Ruelecke 2008: 119). The research unit will further ask how age as bio-political category serves to segment society, to legitimize actions along conceived generational hierarchies or to make sense of individual biographies. By specifically looking at case studies from Africa, Asia and the Middle East and discourses in languages that are not Western, the research unit studies emic perspectives and, thus, contributes to conceptual discussions on 'generation' beyond the Eurocentric frame. The research unit will give special attention to conflict as an important element of 'generationality' (Krais 2017).

Following Reinhard Koselleck (2004: 59-63), the research unit will couple 'experience' with 'expectation' in order to understand the 'making of generation' as a practice to

'futurize history' (Parnes et al. 2008: 13). The 'making of generation' informs and is informed by debates and policies about generational transfer and intergenerational justice. It is simultaneously producing notions of intergenerational 'concern' and related 'expectations'. Responses to upcoming global economic and ecological crises such as the scarcity of natural resources and ecological catastrophes as well as a perceived demographic crisis (especially the growing number of old people worldwide) are largely framed in two terms: First, concern and resulting responsibilities of the current generation and, second, expectations that future generations will take up the legacy and fulfil it (Parnes et al. 2008: 16). From the perspective of individual case studies, the research unit asks how generational transition is projected and enacted. This approach links up to previous discussions at ZMO on *progress*, defined as transformative actions to open up future potentialities, and on the contingent nature of human existence (Bromber et al. 2015: 3-5).

The theoretical-conceptual framework of bio-power/bio-politics (Foucault 2008) explores historical developments from the eighteenth century, thus providing a suitable basis for interdisciplinary research. The research unit analyses age via an interdisciplinary, conceptual approach as a permanent negotiation process. Arguably, this process was and is significantly shaped by translations of globally circulating bio-political measures and institutional forms. In this respect, the research unit focuses on social spaces constituted by movement (translocality), for example, Muslim care networks in the larger Indian Ocean region (Mukherjee 2014) and rural areas with a pronounced exodus of young people (Sunseri 2002). The resulting expansion, stabilisation or restriction of actors' flexibility to act changes views on life stages that may take on a normative character and include issues of justice and the ethical. Thus, the research unit explores context-related conceptions of age and generation as well as the resulting expectations and practices of the actors involved.

As regards the overall programme, the research unit examines the global dimensions and interconnections in relation to age, generation and justice. In a long-durée perspective and close (in part comparative) analysis, it measures in the context of Muslim majority societies the possibilities for influence, limits and consequences of relevant, globally circulating ideas and practices. In terms of content, the work of the research unit is devoted to the axis of inquiry of *bio-political institutions, socio-spatial practice and normative action*.

Axes of inquiry

Bio-political institutions: The transformation of contextual conceptions of age and generation as well as practices resulting from it is significantly influenced by institutions. These may be locally limited initiatives such as orphanages or poorhouses, the history of which precedes the introduction of state measures which gained momentum in the 19th century. Ottoman studies research on the development of philanthropic projects under Abdulhamid II (Nadir 1999, 2005, 2008:43-48; Maksudyan 2009, 2014: chapter 2), constitutes but one case that describes institutions of age-based care and welfare as loci of bio-power and paternalism. On the one hand, these and other cases show the growing influence of globally circulating welfare models (Midgley 1997; Lewis 2000). On the other hand, they were also informed by the *Nahda* of the late 19th/early 20th with regard to principles such as the general welfare (*maslaha*). Furthermore, concepts such as the nuclear family, which began to shape urban life in the course of industrialization, and birth control were promoted worldwide in the context of urban modernity from the 1940s, at the latest (Settles, Steinmetz: 1999); later idealized through religious actors such as Pentecostal churches in Africa (Frahm-Arp 2010: 209-243).

At the same time new institutions came into place which were particularly concerned with certain age groups. Late colonial or postcolonial governments started to promote and establish the institutionalization of volunteer organizations such as the Scouts or the YMCA/YWCA. The strong research focus on moulding of youth into citizens completely left out any exploration of intergenerational relations and social engagement – often facilitated through the link between volunteer and the veteran associations – as well as questions about volunteering as locus of 'generationality'. Building on ZMOs studies on volunteer movements in South Asia and Ethiopia (Roy 2014, Bromber 2013, 2017) the research unit attempts to fill this gap. Incorporating studies on humanitarian volunteer organizations such as the Red Cross or the Red Crescent will provide new perspectives as well as comparative potential. The research unit further explores the interplay of (colonial) state actors, volunteer organisations and religious charity foundations in the design and enforcement of bio-political measures especially with regard to its long-term impacts (Derbal 2014, Weiss 2002). With regard to old people it investigates how far institutionally designed help for the elderly has led to the fact that care for the old aged is also regarded as an institutional or state matter, rather than just a family concern (Coe 2018). This aspect links up to the question if institutionalized care implies a further institutionalization of life courses (Kohli 2009). Findings from the current research unit *Progress: Ideas, Agents, Symbols* on the formation of new conceptions of the human being (*Menschenbilder*) are incorporated into the development of this content-related goal (Bromber, Kraus 2019).

Socio-spatial practice: The reorganization of intergenerational relationships and changes in the understanding of what constitutes a particular age transform socio-spatial practices. They can be analyzed as generation-specific 'place making'. Urbanization, infrastructure development and migration transform corresponding concrete socio-spatial patterns. Translocality as a research perspective as well as an object of study is especially relevant if migration is shaping intergenerational socio-spatial practices. Buying land and building a house back home are powerful symbols for successful migration and ideas of a 'good life'. Labour Migration to the Gulf States, for example, did not only influence housing patterns at home. It also became an aesthetic/material element of 'generationality'. Existing ZMO research on Gulf Migration from North and West Africa and South Asia (Ahmed 2015, Schielke 2016, 2017, Mato Bouzas 2019, Wippel 2013) as well as on the diffusion of the Dubai model to Africa, Asia and the Middle East provides fertile ground to enlarge on this issue (Wippel et al. 2014). Changes in migrant life paths may also lead to the abandonment of construction and return projects, leaving architectural ruins and vacancies in urban landscapes, especially in small towns (Peil 1995). In many cases, older relatives have to move into these places in order to save remittance money and to take care of the property; often at the cost of leaving behind their own social contacts (Coe 2018). The socio-spatial approach also deals with intergenerational justice in connection with real estate as objects of investment and speculation with serious consequences for future generations. 'Intergenerational Housing Inequalities' (Hoolachan, McKee 2019) are of special importance in this respect. Thus, the research unit uses socio-spatial shifts to investigate the extent to which processes of creating and destroying of the material foundations of life and development possibilities in ever-faster sequences influence the intertwining of generations. This includes the study of 'generationality' in relation to age-specific poverty and spatial marginalization is an important topic here (Pype 2016). This refers especially, but not exclusively, to retirement homes as symbols of neglect as well as imagined institutional care (Lamb 2016, Coe 2018). In this context, the research unit draws from the insights on urban marginalisation developed in the current research unit *Cities as Laboratories of Change* (Chapatte et al. 2018, Chapatte 2015).

Normative action: Intergenerational relationships transformed by bio-political measures and translocal processes bring about time and context-dependent concepts of 'correct' coming of age. Moral or religious ideas – especially about the human body – with deep historical roots (Hees 2009) and the potential to restrict or expand leeway. The research unit is specifically concerned with the historical anchoring of ideas about 'correct' ageing and the morally acceptable ageing body (Lamb 2009, Otfried 2016) as well as body-related norms of social work (Crabtree et al. 2017). Current research about 'age-

inscriptions' – social practices at the interface between acceptability and normativity – stress the high sensitivity of age as a social organisational principle to social change (Alber and Coe 2018: 1-17). Heterodox and 'alterodox' positions, i.e. emerging positions which are not 'in direct opposition to other, more dominant norms' (Alber and Coe 2018: 4), are of special interest. The research unit assumes that the intertwining of extended working life, leisure and physical fitness is not necessarily a phenomenon of the present and quite different in rural and urban settings. Here, the research unit includes discussions on progress-related body and life models from the last programme phase (e.g. Bromber et al. 2013). The current obsession about 'successful' aging on a global scale (Lamb et al. 2017) opens at least three gateways to understand a perceived or conceived 'extension of success'. First, the extension of a success by running an institutional care such including old age clubs providing sociality after retirement, especially in cases/societies with a diminishing role of grandparents in child-care as in South-East Asia (Oppermann 2017). Second, the (economic) success of the middle-aged that 'liberates' them to directly care for their parents and which gradually changes normative conceptions of intergenerational care on the local level. Third, the link of political success models and contemporary conceptions of 'successful' aging as, for example, embodied by India's current Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi (Samanta 2018). We ask about the way in which these the aspects relate to globally circulating or locally produced symbolisms about age and relations between generations. How do they influence and are influenced by mechanisms that produce marked and consume intergenerational relationships within the context of global capitalism?

Environment and Justice: Debates, Practices, and Knowledge Production

This research unit investigates debates, practices and knowledge production around inequalities and hierarchies in human-environment relations. Considering historical as well as contemporary perspectives, it aims to revisit the question of (social and economic) justice by focusing on the nexus between environmental transformations and social (often ethnic, spatial or class-based) inequality and marginalisation. Research in this unit investigates specific social and economic historical processes and conflicts as well as the contested production of knowledge around them, asking in which ways social-ecological transformations are legitimised, challenged or questioned based on certain (e.g. religious, ideological or political) normative orders.

Questioning the impacts of environmental change on political and social hierarchies opens up a new perspective on historical and contemporary negotiations and relations within the Global South ('South-South') as well as between regions in Africa, the Middle East and Asia and Europe ('South-North'). 'Connectedness' between these regions may become manifest in the environmental realm through concrete, material relations, for instance through flows of goods, ranging from commodified natural substances (as diverse as drinking water, fossil fuels, and agricultural produce) to waste being shipped and traded across regions. This connectedness, however, also includes immaterial dimensions such as ideologies, practices and discourses of environmentalism, of modern ways to appropriate, domesticate and commodify nature, images of 'greenness' and ecological authenticity and sustainability that are used to market particular regions in the Global South as tourist destinations, etc. Intellectual discourses and political movements debating the just and 'correct' way to interact with the natural environment in Africa, Asia and the Middle East may draw on global technologies, ideologies and legal frameworks; they may invoke Islamic jurisprudence and local cosmologies; or claim modern forms of knowledge and traditional practices. The research conducted within this unit investigates material and immaterial aspects in a range of geographical and historical contexts and thus contributes a unique perspective to ZMO's new research programme, investigating specific aspects and issues of global connectivity.

While debates around the fair distribution of natural resources, or on what constitutes a morally and spiritually appropriate way to engage with, and use, certain natural substances and matters have attracted scholarly attention for decades (e.g., Johansen 1988, Peluso 1994, Peet/Watts 1997, Joseph 2012, etc.), issues of 'environmental justice' on a global scale have come to the fore in activist, policy-oriented or legal literature since the end of the 20th century (e.g., Gellers 2018; Duyck/Jodoin/Johl 2018; Oksanen/Dodsworth/O'Doherty 2018; Meyer/Pranay 2017; Pichler 2017; Emunds/Merkle 2016; Schlosberg 2009; Bryant 1995), with recent contributions focussing especially on the intersection of environmental injustices and other forms of discrimination such as racism, gender-based inequalities, etc. (e.g. Carter 2016). Current debates on environmental justice address the spatially as well as socially unevenly distributed impact of the effects of pollution and climate change or raise the issue of unequal access to natural resources such as water, clean air, mineral wealth etc. However, as Müller/Ittner/Becker (2011: 4) point out, while the meaning of concepts such as environmental justice and injustice seem self-evident in the context of activist discourse (from which they derive), the question remains how these unevenly distributed risks, hazards, or privileges of access are experienced in different local and historical contexts (see also Martínez-Alier et al. 2016). In the growing literature on environmental justice,

not only historical but also local perspectives from our regions of research are often underrepresented. This research unit will address this gap by asking if and how local actors in different historical contexts ranging from the 19th century to the present have represented, and represent, issues of environmental transformation – do they frame environmentally grounded social and economic inequalities in terms of ‘justice’ or injustice at all? If so, in which way are environmental injustices and, perhaps, political struggles against them, entangled with other registers of inequality and hierarchy that may be experienced as unjust? Which notions of justice underpin these understandings – and how do different concepts of justice, rooted in specific spatial or historical scales, interact with each other?

While the conceptual questions outlined above underly the overarching debates in this research unit, the researchers of this unit explore the overarching topic of environment and justice via three axes of inquiry that can each be examined from the perspective of societal debates, conflicts, and knowledge production.

Axes of inquiry

Contested use. What are unjust and just, right or wrong ways of using natural resources (and what standards are used as yardsticks to measure this (cf. Baviskar 2008)? This question relates to discussions that were at the centre of the research unit ‘Politics of Resources’ from the last programme phase (2014-2019; cf. Lange et al., 2015). Projects that focus on this aspect use contemporary and historical perspectives to grapple with conceptualisations of justice in distributing and using land, water, and mineral resources that can be religiously, politically/ideologically, or epistemologically legitimised. These include, for example, conflicts about the nature of landed property, privatization and land reform (e.g., Akinola/Wissink 2019; Peluso/Lund 2013; Hinnebusch 2011, Serels 2007), normative guidelines on access to water for drinking as well as irrigation, cleaning, energy generation etc. (e.g., Bakker 2004, Baviskar 2007, Bromber/Féaux de la Croix/Lange 2014), but also conflicts and contestations around the respective ‘traditional’, ‘scientific’, or technocratic justifications for *how* specific, natural resources are to be used. Thus, changing modes of knowledge production about environmental issues play an important role in these conflicts and contestations, and are consequently of interest to this field of research. Individual studies might address the dissemination of distinctly modern forms of agricultural knowledge and techniques through institutions of formal learning since the 19th century (the introduction of agricultural schools and colleges, ‘model farms’, or institutionalized forms of veterinary medicine; e.g. Waller 2004, Serels 2007, Gupta 2000) as well as their

contestation (e.g., Münster 2016, 2017; Khadse et al. 2017). Another, more recent field of investigation would be the local impact of global projection models about the consequences of climate change, water scarcity or drought (cf. Barnes 2014, Paladino/Fiske 2017). In each case, the introduction of such changing technologies and modes of knowledge production leads to shifts in political regimes, material infrastructures, and rights of access.

Purity and pollution. A second axis of investigation explicitly addresses social consequences of environmental pollution, practices of waste disposal and the associated processes of differentiation and marginalisation from both historical and contemporary points of view. Since Douglas's seminal treatise on *Purity and Danger* (1966), scholars in the humanities have scrutinized issues of pollution (as well as its opposite, purity) as material as well as spiritual, social and political phenomena. Notions of purity and pollution have been investigated as ordering social hierarchies and as legitimizing ideologies for marginalisation and disenfranchisement of particular social groups (e.g., Brownell 2014, Chari 2013, Dürr 2010, Ghertner 2010, McKee 2015). More recently, research on pollution, toxicity and in the expanding field of 'waste studies' (Moore 2012, see also Reno 2016) questions the political hierarchies, cultural models and economic-social relations which inform how pollution and waste are treated. Often, the problematic or toxic consequences of a consumption-intensive lifestyle that many aspire to are distributed in such a way that poorer populations suffer most. Practices of waste disposal thus reflect political and social relations and can be regarded as a prism on questions of social justice, both when considered in contemporary contexts and historical perspective (cf. Lora-Wainwright 2016; also Lora-Wainwright 2010, Hecht 2018, Roberts 2017, Lerner 2010, Pellow 2007). On the other hand, such practices may also accelerate the development of new technologies and infrastructures, open fresh sources of value and income (Alexander/Reno 2012), set new political processes and movements in motion, reconfigure social relations, and give rise to ecological debates and activism that may be both locally grounded and globally connected (cf. Martinez-Alier 2002, Nixon 2011; Baviskar, Sinha and Philip 2006; Sowers 2018). Moreover, in societies and contexts that are often marked by violent histories and conflicts, research in this field may enable question into the long-term physical and social consequences of war by addressing manifestations of poisoning caused by destroyed sewers, wells and cisterns, but also by uranium munitions and chemical weapons (cf. Dewachi 2013, 2017).

In this subfield of investigation, as in the previous one, modes of generating and circulating knowledge (or its opposite, ignorance) are of relevance. How is knowledge and how is ignorance about long-term, invisible dangers and problems caused by

pollution, waste and toxicity produced, shared and disseminated? What technologies, which sources of knowledge are deployed to legitimize practices of purification and waste disposal, from which cognitive frames do they derive credibility and who has access to which knowledge? Going back to Douglas's observation that senses of purity and order connect the material and the immaterial, the physical and the spiritual sphere, it is evident that modern measuring techniques and other technoscientific practices may interact with longer-standing political inequalities, with cosmologies claimed as traditional or as rooted in divine revelation (Hecht 2018, Mitman/Murphy/Sellers 2004). On the other hand, the availability of new technologies may generate new religiously inflected debates on purity and pollution, as for example debates around the permissive and, thus, 'just' handling and uses of recycled wastewater in Islamic contexts demonstrate (e.g., <https://www.ecomena.org/iwrm-islamic-perspective/>).

Exclusion, displacement and migration. Under this heading, the research unit addresses the demographic consequences of environmental transformations. Historically, projects might investigate exclusion and displacement caused by enclosure and privatisation, but also by nationalisation, expropriation or collectivisation of land, by the construction of dams, the establishment of nature reserves, etc.; cf. Fairhead/Leach/Scoones 2013, Nixon 2010, Nilsen 2013, Feldman/Geisler 2012, Li 2017, and others). Another relevant aspect are the consequences of global climate change which is currently emerging as a central area of interest in policy as well as scholarly debate (cf. Barnes et al. 2013; Hastrup 2013; Crate/Nuttall 2009, 2016; Chakrabarty ; Carey et al. 2014).

The increasing political attention to the notion of 'climate refugees' contrasts with a noticeable dearth of empirical, academic research on the nexus climate change / migration, particularly in the regions and disciplines represented at ZMO. While policy think tanks and security advisers have since the late 1980s warned of supposedly uncontrollable refugee flows from the global South to the global North due to climate change and environmental degradation, calling for preventive political and security measures (e.g. Brauch et al. 2003; Brauch 2007; Schubert 2007; 2007; Liotta 2010; Werz/Hoffman 2018; Busby Pentagon Report 2019), scholars in the humanities and social sciences have voiced criticism of such generalising and often one-dimensional views, and instead point out the historical complexity and multi-faceted nature of migratory movements (see, for instance, White 2011; Herbeck / Flitner 2010; Oels 2012; Brzoska et al. 2011; also Black et al. 2011; Hastrup / Fog Olwig 2012; Klepp 2017). Their interventions underline the necessity of critical, empirical research in this field focussing on perspectives, practices and interpretations of the actors concerned.

The uneven distribution of environmental risks, profits, and benefits can be mapped not only spatially, but also over time: on a temporal axis, projects generating wealth through extraction of natural resources, or projects of technological 'progress' leading to pollution and degradation of eco-systems, for instance through the intensification and industrialization of agriculture, accelerated urbanisation, and consumption of fossil fuels, may be rooted in the past or the present; but their detrimental consequences invariably extend into the future. Thus, risks and threats of environmental change may be deferred across generations.

Environmental changes, therefore, not only produce migratory movements across regions, but also lead to population shifts, impoverishment and urbanisation within specific regions or countries, as well as to inequalities and injustices over time. Here, the research unit builds on the years of urban research firmly established at ZMO, as well as on the research unit 'Age and Generation', which addresses topics including the social effects of such migration movements.

An important contribution is made by a project on the history of poverty in the Red Sea, which takes into account climatic and geographical, but also economic and political factors (cf. Serels 2013, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c).

Representations of the Past as a Mobilising Force

This research unit engages with the circumstances and political goals that inform representations of the past as a mobilising social force. This also relates to overarching questions of justice and the right to speak about, for and on behalf of 'the past'. It examines structures, practices, actors and ideas in historical and contemporary contexts in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Traces and effects of past times constantly inform and shape societies, whereas processes of 'relating the present to absent times' ('Relationierung von anwesenden auf abwesende Zeiten'), (Landwehr 2016: 142) are always historically determined. These processes can result in contested terrains especially in the case of social conflicts or political transformations, when images, projections and representations of the past are used by actors to claim its 'authenticity' or the 'truthful' interpretation of a historical event. Representations of the past also include practices of historicising myths or mythologizing history (Udayakumar 2005: chapter 2; Malkki 1995: chapter 2); they can be anchored in religious claims which promise salvation or satiate the nostalgic longing for an imagined shared experience (wire 2018; Al-Azmeh 2007; Pandey 1994). In contemporary contexts, as Zygmunt Baumann argues, projections of a glorious past in many parts of the world feed

'Retrotopia', visions for a future which are strongly informed by images of absent past times (Baumann 2017).

The empirical research concentrates on (post-)colonial and (post-)socialist societies in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Present day struggles over representations, claims and projections of the past in these societies have been and are often, but not exclusively, embedded in discourses and conflicts over (re)-interpretations of colonial as well as postcolonial developments which are informed by current global, regional and/or national problems (for example: Christophe 2017; Thapar 2000; Ende 1977). The research conducted in this unit is not solely limited to current contexts, but it also emphasizes the circumstances, pre-conditions and effects/affects of such struggles in various historical constellations. Similarly, the regions in focus are not regarded as isolated, nor are their experiences exclusive. The interest is to identify translocal connectivities and continuities among these discourses and their material afterlives, as well as to compare struggles over representations of the past in different periods of time. The individual projects address substantive themes using complementary regional and disciplinary perspectives (for example, history, social and cultural anthropology, political science, geography, cultural studies, Islamic studies).

The research unit explores who controls and steers the development, distribution, reinterpretation or fading and disappearance of *Geschichtsbilder* (here understood both as historical images and images of history, but also their *material* manifestations) and their underlying means, motivations and goals. Projects in the unit analyse how debates on historical interpretations mobilise social actors, how inclusion and exclusion surface, and therein, the role played by questions of justice in shaping depictions of the past. Whose history is included into a larger narrative and whose not, whose heroes are made popular and visible and whose are made to be forgotten is a question of power (Jacquesson 2016). In numerous countries in the regions studied here, language politics acquire prime importance as they determine access to archives or websites and, thus, to knowledge (Hegasy 2019). In India it would make a difference whether a debate is held in English or in Hindi, Bengali or Tamil (Panday, 1994). Who mobilises whom with which intentionalities, through which means and which economic and financial forces are behind the dissemination of knowledge and projections of the past, thus become questions of high relevance.

With its focus on the (textual and non-textual) production, management and dissemination of (historical) knowledge, the research unit 'Representations of the Past as a Mobilizing Force' ties in with previous research carried out at ZMO, especially within the previous research unit 'Trajectories of Lives and Knowledge'. While the former unit

dealt with connections and correlations between life worlds and knowledge practices from biographical perspectives, social debates and struggles on (or through) historical representations (both discursive and material) will be investigated within the new research unit. As part of the overall research programme, this research unit focuses on convergences, divergences and interdependencies in dealing with perceptions, interpretations and re-presentations (with re- as in repetition) of pasts. Based on this, the causes and characteristics of regionally or globally circulating patterns are to be examined. The conceptual approach of this research unit is informed by earlier studies on entangled, connected, shared or divided histories (for example: Subrahmanyam 1997; Randeria 1999; Werner/Zimmermann 2006; Manjapra 2014). The research carried out in the unit relates such frameworks to the processes of representing particular pasts at particular historical moments. It asks how discourses and practices of projecting and re-producing certain specific pasts affect each other across political, religious or linguistic boundaries. For example, the current debates on colonialism that are taking place in European countries, with Germany among them, under the rubric of 'Shared History'.

The major question which informs this research unit, namely when, why and how re-presentations of the past are contested and inform processes of social and political mobilization, will be addressed from different perspectives which emphasize the politics of time and temporality (enacted through multiple regimes of historicity) (Hartog 2015), the qualitative and quantitative transformations in re-presentations of the past due to contemporary contexts of over-mediatization and the materiality of such practices. They are possible entries into the research field and form platforms for deeper conceptual and methodological debates and exchange within the research unit. The following three axes mark fields of contestations and negotiations where debates about how particular image(s) and projections of the past relate to present-day processes and inform the shaping of social developments or political mobilization. They refer to sites where such negotiations are enacted and become vocal and visible in society. They constitute social spaces where presents are linked to pasts and where politically, religiously, and culturally informed projections of the past (academic and non-academic) craft knowledge encounters or dialogue with each other.

Axes of inquiry

One approach in order to understand entanglements and dependencies between pasts and presents is to explore *relationships between historically operating sciences and politics*. This axis examines conflicts and entanglements between academic and

political discourses on historical interpretations in periods of social crisis and upheaval, such as wars and post-war periods, independence struggles, processes of decolonization or times of (re-)mobilisation of religious ideologies or the collapse or rebuilding of states. Research projects explore the use of historical narratives as a legitimizing force in debates on political and social orders. They also study state structures of control over educational and academic contexts (such as censorship, publication control, interventions in higher education policy, control of archives, checkup school book content) and the reactions to that. By investigating 'wars over interpretation (and control) of history' (Gilmartin 2015: 23; Siddiqi 1980; Freitag 1991; Hager 2018), the role of critical actors, who develop counter-narratives and/or correctives is emphasized here.

Disciplines within the Humanities and Social Sciences which are sensitive to historical contextualization can become contested political fields, especially when new historical interpretations are needed and questions of academic freedom and the political orientation of researchers, the language in which they write, become issues of public debates (Chakrabarty 2000, 2008, Thapar 2015). The postcolonial narrative, which was long used to legitimize politics in many Asian and African states, has lost its strengths and exclusivity (Hegasy 2018). Conflicts over the interpretation of 'history' can also assume religious dimensions. Communal representations of history have been developed in India as part of a Hindutva strategy to create a common ('Hindu') history (Panday 1994; Udayakumar 2005; Chakrabarty 2008). Muslims in coastal Kenya experience the self in relation to a past that was shaped in precarious opposition to upcountry Christian others, and this constitutes a volatile and tense field of (shared and contested) postcolonial experience (Kresse 2018). Myths are integrated into historical narratives, as Tavakoli-Targhi shows for Iran, where images from pre-Islamic mythology were connected with Islamic historiography and form a 'Persian mythistory' (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001: 88) or where Persian texts under Azar Khan (16. /17. Century) were used to strengthen the nationalist narrative in the 19th century.

A second approach investigates the significance of *memory politics and practices of remembrance* for the genesis, reproduction and mobilizing impact of *Geschichtsbilder*. Especially historical anniversaries like the centenaries of the First World War or the Russian October Revolution raise questions of how events are commemorated and how the politics of commemoration and historiography mutually inform each other (Bromber et al. 2018; Revolutionary Russia 2018). Memory politics and practices of remembrance include, for example, questions of memory and historical justice (Marx 2007), rehabilitation or compensation, the erection or destruction of monuments, the valorisation and authorisation of historical narratives in museums, exhibitions and the

wider public sphere. This also refers to how the 'aesthetics of persuasion and the cultural production of the real' (Meyer 2018) are played out in the everyday life of public history. The research unit 'Representations of the past' explores how both state and civil society-driven remembrance and commemoration practices on international, national or local levels relate to each other and to historiography, how they influence and sometimes mutually constitute each other, and why and when ruptures and conflicts arise. At the same time, the unit considers social and political frameworks, conditions and structures within which historical re-presentations are created as state imperatives and implemented as a state-controlled remembrance policy, or under which civil society actors (who challenge these depictions) they are mobilised. Indirect measures such as a change in language policy (for example, in early Soviet republics and again later in post-Soviet states) can also have a decisive impact on the politics of remembrance or forgetting.

This approach involves engaging with the entanglement(s) and interrelation(s) of various actors. Memories constructed about the past based on historical research can become an issue of everyday life (Thapar 2015). Here, the question of who has access to (information about) and an authority over the past, how it will be presented, told and re-told, in order to create and shape memories is of high relevance. Access to sources, especially to archives, in order to find information and interpret the past has become an issue for human rights activists, not just in Arab and North African countries (Hegasy 2018: 24; Hegasy 2019). Memories regarding a certain period of time, a crucial event, or cases of injustice are preserved through narratives collected by activists such as testimonies of Iranian women (Hashemi 2010) or documents and stories collected in 'The 1947 Partition Archive' (<https://www.1947partitionarchive.org/>). Another element of memory politics is the symbolism of monuments (Sengupta 2018). The so called 'Statue of Unity' commemorating the Indian politician Sardar Patel in Gujarat is another step in the direction of 'reconfiguring the Indian nation'. The political party BJP inserts Patel as a counter model to the first Prime Minister and Congress party politician Nehru and challenges the symbolic role of M.K. Gandhi. With this monument being the world's highest statue, Modi joins the worldwide 'statue wars' (Jain 2018).

In addition, and in a way crossing and challenging the other two axes, the third approach within the research unit investigates *practices of engaging with representations of the past (Geschichtsbilder) in everyday life*. An important question here is the ambivalent relationship between state-defined and controlled historical images and material manifestations, and research-based or feeling-based interpretations. For example, the roles of literature, film and social media with their specific social, political and emotional implications. Research on disputes about the

mediation of historical images in textbooks or educational projects is also conceivable. Historical images can be disseminated within social spaces not only through symbolically loaded material representations such as monuments, names of places or streets, but also through literature, art and practices of 'public history' (Lücke/Zündorf 2018; Ashton/Trapeznik 2018). The focus here will be on ambivalent processes of the production, transfer and reception of presentations of past times and conflicts which arise out of them. These practices range from traditional forms of story-telling, painting, poetry, folk songs, local festivals to educational and cultural practices, based on modern forms of organisation and social and new-social media, such as re-enactments of historical events, or escape rooms. The aim is to enter the everyday life of people, to play history, to perform the past; to experience it virtually and individually, addressing feelings and emotions.

Myths, legends and images can inform poetry, fiction or musical genres as the 'Chronotope' of Al-Andalus, for instance, which in Arab fiction functions as a source of nostalgia and an imaginary space for collective memory (Wien 2017: 48-79). Images of the past can occur in classical and popular art. In parts of India painter story tellers (Pātya Chitrakār) until today go from village to village, uncoil their paintings and talk about past events, thus presenting their own history but also 'world history' (Chowdhury/Mandal 2018). History series and television shows based on subjects of history often propagate heroes and suggest a historical reality. In doing so they claim 'to represent a historical national identity' (Gray, Bell 2013: 100). The use of myths, or even the replacement of historical narratives through myths, is a way of reaching out to the population (Chakrabarty 2008, Pandey 1994). Besides consuming (through reading, listening or viewing), this approach also looks at the actors and recipients, as well as on the various performative practices of doing or staging history (Willner et al. 2016; Schlehe et al. 2014). The appeal for 'doing history' or to become 'citizen historians' to investigate local histories has been raised in relation to anniversaries, like the centenary of the First World War. People are mobilized and motivated by referring to an egalitarian possibility to do 'authentic' history.

Contested Religion: Between Religiosity, Morality, and Intellectual Culture

This research unit investigates the interplay between religion, morality and intellectual culture. It is particularly interested in the ways in which 'religiosity', as dedicated commitment to religion as source and motivation of people's thinking and doing,

informs moral and intellectual life. Cognizant of the significance that religiosity carries in the world today, research here engages the various ways in which religiosity is mobilised and invested into both individual and collective life projects. From that perspective, the research unit examines the forms of 'knowledge' and 'morality' that are claimed and invoked as accepted and right, and political ideologies and the dynamics that make people push for certain kinds of agendas for social, religious, and political reform (e.g. Loimeier 2016; Bruinessen 2013; Osella and Osella 2013).

These processes are filled with contestations, controversies and even conflicts, which are to be explored with particular attention to the epistemological relations (shifts and turns) involved and the respective forms of rhetoric and reasoning employed (e.g. Kresse 2003; 2008). In such regionally distinct, and yet translocal, processes that constitute 'intellectual culture', endogenous genres of speech and verbal artistry interrelate with (or even infuse) the religious norms, discourses and practices taken on by Muslim, Christian and other social actors (Kane 2016; Meyer 2015; Cook 2014; Armour 2002).

While focusing primarily on Muslim contexts, the projects in this research unit will pay particular attention to *the interactions between* Muslims and their non-Muslim neighbours, especially Christians. The forms and modalities of these interactions are important to examine as they relate to the ways in which groups, collectives and communities coexist or enter into conflict, but also how boundaries are formed, contested, negotiated and navigated. A critical examination of the religious politics at work today will also make a case for a cultural imperialism (Farquhar 2016) that often shapes struggles within groups and communities, and between these actors and their others.

Consequently, exclusionary politics, sectarianism, rapprochement, affiliation, collaboration and strategic borrowing within and between groups and communities are important relational modalities to analyse. Along these lines the unit will build on the Leibniz-sponsored junior research group *Religion, Morality and Boko in West Africa: Students Training for a Good Life* (Remoboko) which has been operating at ZMO since June 2018. The group examines the interactions between Salafis and Pentecostals (as comparable reform-oriented religious groups) on university campuses, as their pursuit of knowledge in academic settings becomes entangled in religiosity, shaping their visions and models of good life. The unit will expand on the themes and the problematic of Remoboko so as to include other world regions and issues that relate to the politics of intellectual culture and training, and conceptualisations of what constitutes a good life (Jackson 2012; Lambek 2010; Lambek et al. 2015; Laidlaw 2014; Mathews 1996; Mathews and Izquierdo 2008). In a context characterised by increased

global flows of ideas and human mobility, how secular and religion-based epistemologies interact, become entangled (South-South, North-South, for example) and shape individual and collective projects are central to this research unit. Faith based initiatives, missionary projects, transnational circuits and networks provide further avenues to examine these articulations.

Globally speaking, the last two centuries have seen major transformations involving Islam. Muslim politics, for example, sought to decolonize and emancipate by building on the appeal of Islam (Lovejoy 2016; Hasan 2015; Maussen 2011; Laffan 2003; Freitag 2003; Alavi 2015; Roff 1994); market driven logics have given religiosity new roles and impacts (Rudnycky and Osella 2017; Loimeier 2009; Feillard 2004). By creating new networks, expanding established ones, Muslim actors and social formations have restructured not only how they relate to others, but also how they interrelate, giving new expressions to diversity and multiplicity (Eickelman and Piscatori 2004). Being one and many at the same time has taken new meanings in many contexts. While they manifest organizational acumen and intellectual dynamism, these processes are also evidence of the expanding and sophisticated political imagination of local and translocal actors in a context where established social and moral orders are challenged, contested, redrawn and rebuilt (Kresse 2018; Cavatorta and Merone 2016; Maher 2016; Hallaq 2014; Luizard 2006). From South-East Asia to West Africa, and the Middle East, cases abound to illustrate such dynamics and the violent historical trajectories they have taken. This certainly underscores the impact of Islam not only on the ways contemporary social and political visions are framed and produced, but also on the actual formation of moral communities. As recent events in Europe have shown, these processes do not affect only the so called Muslim World; their effects have global impacts and reverberations (Masquelier and Soares 2016; Meijer 2009).

How do the ideas, concepts and debates that drive these processes come to being and acquire relevance in the first place? What visions of a polity and citizenry prevail in a specific context is a political question; but it is also a moral one, as actors push for specific norms, search for new orders (social, moral, political) and take inspiration from particular historical moments and figures (Salomon 2016; Iqtidar 2011; Asad 2003; Weismann 2001; Tayob 1999; Commins 1990). Historically, the appropriation of the pious ancestors has regularly driven political movements and social formations within the Muslim world, but also beyond. The current trend of Salafi-Jihadism is only one illustration of this process.

Paying attention to these articulations involves examining the ways in which different discourses and practices emerge and develop (in the *longue duree*); it also implies

making sense of the significance they take in local, translocal and global contexts. The multifaceted and complicated relationship between the religious to the secular, for example, is a case that warrants an examination beyond one single case and temporality (Asad 2003; Veer 2001). These are important premises because the historical context of the secular has often proved multireligious.

Axes of inquiry

Certainties in contention: appropriations of religion that seek to transform existing socio-political, moral and epistemic orders often take contentious, polemical and controversial forms, to say the least. This is so in part because of their claims of absolute certainty in face of other normative views, philosophies and claims of certainty. Arguments within a particular religious tradition (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, for example), but also between a specific tradition and its neighbours (Muslims and Christians, for example) are essential in establishing ideas, norms, and social orders (Kersten 2016; Nirenberg 2014; Zaman 2012; Eickelman and Piscatori 2004; Cook 2000; Sirriyeh 1999). But once taken to a certain level, these arguments can turn into destructive controversies and conflicts. These dynamics are particularly perceptible in Muslim-Christian relations, but also in various other religion-based othering processes and controversies. The goal here is to understand not only how realms of certainty (religion and science, for example) enter into contention, but also to theorise the resulting order of the encounter. It is critical to examine which ideas, norms and values are given priority today, and mobilised, especially in the Global South (Kersten 2015). In the end, analysing how ideas are historically determined and culturally approved will serve to problematise religion and its shifting relationship to other sources of values including the state, socio-political orders and epistemological regimes in local, transregional and global contexts (Ansari 2003; Nelson 2010).

An important point to keep in mind is that in many contexts, these dynamics originate in the past (16th, 17th or 18th centuries) although their manifestations and impacts seem to be more acute today. In those instances, reform, recurrence, resurgence, reverberation as well as entanglement, are useful categories that help make sense of the connectedness of these contexts and their defining dynamics. They will also contribute as analytic building blocks for theorising the processes examined.

Intellectual culture, forms and sites: one striking feature of Muslim reform discourses in the 20th and 21st centuries has been their emphasis on knowledge cultivation and intellectual culture. In many contexts, these discourses have inextricably linked degrees of piety, social status, religious authority and even political influence to the degree of

learning. Whether in Africa, Asia or the Middle East, these reiterations of the significance of knowledge have inspired both groups and individual actors to set up or reinvent Muslim networks and institutions of learning (Hoechner 2018; Farquhar 2016; Thurston 2016; Moosa 2015; Maussen 2011; Loimeier 2009, 2006; Zaman 2012). This line of inquiry examines the actors, but also the forms and the sites of intellectual culture, which often transcend local contexts and expand into transnational and global networks (Hoechner 2018; Kane 2016; Launay 2016; Hefner and Zaman 2007; Dudoignon, Hisao, and Yasushi 2006; Gade 2004). Analysing how intellectual culture may be based on religiosity, or infused and guided by it, while its forms and sites are reconciled with secular values, models and norms is worth investigating here (Ahmed 2016). Examining the impact of global dynamics on local and regional ones, and vice versa, will shed light on the tensions, but also the different and even contradictory logics that drive global flows and connections. How global issues resonate locally, and how local ones are transported into the diaspora, for example, is a critical issue.

Morality informed by religiosity: this line of inquiry is particularly interested in the production of moral norms and how these norms inform concepts and conceptualisations of a good life. Engaging critically the ways in which morality is grounded in religious values serves as a window to investigate how Muslims interact among themselves and with their non-Muslim neighbours. Reflecting on how religiosity informs morality in this context is an opportunity to problematise the ways in which socio-political orders cohabite and share life-worlds. What is appropriate, right or good is a recurring issue which prompts and leads to specific learning practices and institutions within those orders. Religious traditions, in particular Islam and Christianity, view their prophets as the embodiment of virtue and the exemplification of ways to lead a good life. In various contexts, these perceptions drive learning and schooling practices, illustrating the significance, but also the politics of transmission, and more broadly the connection between epistemic and ethical regimes (Lambek et al. 2015; Schulz 2011; Lambek 2010; Starrett 1998; Lambek 1993). In the last three centuries, these connections are further illustrated by the struggles of intellectuals and socio-political movements against what they viewed as both an intellectual and a moral decline of the Muslim world (Burgat 1988; Maussen 2011).

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