



An Obsession with Africa's Futures

 Leibniz
Association

Currently, Africa's futures seem to be at the very heart of academics, artists, and politicians. Although the actors in Africa whom we study often use *progress* or *development* in the teleological sense – i.e. as a path to a better state of living – researchers speak of futures or *future-making* in order to emphasise Africans' *agency*. Why future? Is it because of an apparent openness as a conceptual category that indicates a move away from grand nar-

investigate concepts, representations, and concrete practices related to Africa's futures. Interdisciplinary research teams have been looking into local African dynamics that often produce innovative or unexpected answers to pressing problems. Making use of studies on risk-taking, potentiality, preparedness, and ways to »work with the forces«, researchers are investigating diverse practices of carving out possibilities. It goes without saying that

Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in 2017, explicitly responds to the fact that Europe's future is fundamentally entangled with that of Africa. Apart from taking a critical look, this document offers an excellent opportunity to investigate the history of its underlying ideas. Take for example the strengthening of the private sector through investment in entrepreneurship and capacity-building. ZMO research on ideas, agents, and symbols of progress has shown that the shift of responsibility to individuals began in a systematic way in Africa well before the 1930s. Globally operating organizations, including the YMCA and the Boy Scouts, disseminated specific ideas about leadership and entrepreneurial skills. These skills have remained very much in demand despite political changes and social transformations. It does not therefore come by surprise that current entrepreneurship training programmes targeting Ethiopian uni-



Entrepreneurship training in Ethiopia, 2016 (© Julian Tadesse)

ratives, especially socialism, and a clearing of ideology from research? Is the interest in »futures«, »visions« and »imaginings«, which now constitute basic categories of the systematic discipline of Future Studies, an answer to the absence of grand schemes of how a just society with a global reach could look like? The use of future as a conceptual as well as a political category with regard to Africa therefore has to be taken very seriously.

There is, clearly, a heightened feeling that the world is about to change, but we do not exactly know in which direction. We accept that things are never fully in control, that life is open-ended and contingent. After the end of Afro-pessimism within and beyond African Studies with its narratives on failed states and doomed futures, the »Africa rising« type of language – reminiscent of the 1950s and 1960s – has gained substantial ground. This trend resulted, towards the end of the first decade of the 2000's, in academic institutions in Germany beginning to systematically

colleagues from Africa have to be systematically involved in the development of relevant research questions. The establishment of the *Merian International Centre for Advanced Studies* in Accra, Ghana – a 12 year long-term collaborative project financed by the German Federal Ministry of Higher Education and Research – is one of the hopeful signals in this respect. However, research on Africa's futures needs students who are trained in collaborative work right from the first day of their university studies or even before. We are therefore very much looking forward to the opening of the *Futurium* – located just across from the German Chancellor's Office in Berlin and having an explicit outreach to schoolchildren – which will make Africa the first geographical focus of its rotating exhibition.

Academic research is by far not the only sector in which Germany's systematic engagement with Africa's futures comes to the fore. The »Marshall Plan with Africa«, which was drafted by the Federal Ministry of Economic

versity graduates, for example, are strikingly similar to entrepreneurship courses during the 1960s that were part of »modern« leadership training in the Ethiopian Empire. Not very unlike the present, the courses were facilitated by international organisations at that time, especially the North American YMCA. What still remains is the question of whether the talk of entangled futures is intentional or is perhaps even concealing something? Is it, on the political level, an attempt to hide a new interest into speculative investments in areas such as resource extraction or infrastructure, which require stable political environments? After the rollback of the state through structural adjustment programmes, this obsession with entangled futures promotes the return of the state; i.e. stable governments and good governance. A great deal of money has been therefore channelled into capacity building in the armed forces or administrations. One

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Circulation and Containment: Region Formation in the Sahara // Judith Scheele

In November 2017, under the captivating title of »People for sale«, CNN published »an exclusive report on how migrants are being sold by smugglers« in Libya. The video went viral; its author was feted as a heroine; demonstrators took to the streets in various European and sub-Saharan African capitals; related matters were debated at the UN security council. Few inquiries were made, however, into the »slavery« that had been por-



Trans-Saharan Truck in Northern Mali, 2008 (© Judith Scheele)

trayed in the video (and clearly was something else: migrants working to pay off their debt), or indeed into the ways in which harshly exploitative labour relations in the contemporary Sahara are not only perpetuated, but in fact created by EU migration policies. Five years earlier, in a similar elision, the UK *Sunday Telegraph* (26/01/2013) had informed the British reading public that »cocaine snorted in the pubs and clubs of Britain is helping finance the al-Qaeda factions behind the Algerian hostage siege and the Islamist takeover of northern Mali«. Even less evidence was given then, and this article – like the CNN video – reveals a muddle of slippages between longstanding European phantasies of Saharan »desert wastes«, and the more recent but equally pervasive spectre of »global Islamic terror« and all kinds of »trafficking« lodged in the allegedly »empty wastes« of the Sahara. Two years earlier, French troops had been stationed in northern Mali, in what the then French president François Hollande promised to be a short mission: they are still there today, alongside their less visible American counterparts training local army personnel (many of whom have a dubious track record at best). Here as elsewhere, as research on the area becomes more and more difficult, myths and rumours seem to grow in proportion, weaving into one seemingly coherent narra-

tive almost all of today's most popular public enemies.

Most researchers with first-hand experience of the area have reacted to this by focusing resolutely on local events and local realities; showing, for instance, how »Islamist« groupings derive their local legitimacy and political appeal from longstanding tensions and struggles over access to resources and status distinctions, or how migrants are part and parcel of regional economies. This is indeed a necessary corrective to much scaremongering and the fallacies of the »global war on terror« that tend to produce enemies where there were none before. Yet current events clearly also call for a regional approach, if only to counter prevailing media images of unbounded, anarchic or even »frictionless« Saharan spaces. Contemporary sub-Saharan migrants stuck

in the Sahara, for instance, are neither »new nomads« nor do they simply slip into longstanding regimes of slavery, but their role and status still needs to be understood within the context of structural labour scarcity, the association of work with vulnerability, and the strong connection, in the region as a whole, between mobility – and forced immobility – and political subjectivation. Smugglers are traders to most and define the moral worth of their actions not with regards to state-imposed legal categories, but rather through Islamic-inflected categories of civilisation and its opposite; regimes of »structural warfare« feed on and continue older notions of non-reciprocal exchange while profoundly

transforming them; Saharan towns are fast-growing, indeed among the fastest-growing on the African continent, but they remain labile in their intrinsic dependence on movement and outside connections. Confronted with this entanglement of the local and the regional, the autonomous and the dependent, the old and the new, our conceptual and methodological tools have to be far-reaching and flexible.

Having carried out long-term ethnographic fieldwork in a number of different Saharan field-sites – in Algeria, Mali and Chad – since 2007, my research project at the ZMO aims to pull my prior findings together, to enrich them with a careful study of local archival materials and secondary sources produced on other areas in the Sahara, and, ultimately,



Faya palm-grove, Northern Chad, 2012 ((© Judith Scheele)

to propose a conceptual framework to analyse Saharan connectivity from the bottom up. The aim is to find a way to describe the region in its own terms, beyond Western (and local) overdetermination and fantasies.

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might even wonder if the focus on sustainable governance of the aforementioned *Merian International Centre for Advanced Studies* in Africa means that academia and policy-making are acting in conjunction. This is even more

visible when we look at conceptual terms, which have gained currency in the study of (African) futures, and which originally derive from investment banking. We might even ask if »future« is becoming the key category to

naturalise free-market ideology. By openly addressing these issues in our individual and collective work on Africa, ZMO is able to contribute to a very timely conceptual as well as political debate.

Katrin Bromber

activities

■ Conferences & Workshops

Shadows of a Revolution: The October Revolution and the Global South, 24 November 2017, ZMO

The workshop, organised by Ali Raza, Franziska Roy, and Heike Liebau, was one in a series of academic events on »Networks of non-European actors during the First World War and Interwar Europe« which began at ZMO in 2014. The aim of these discussions was to reveal and better understand entanglements and networks of political and intellectual actors from the Global South, mainly from South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The workshop focused on the 1917 October Revolution as a formative event and a major catalyst for the emergence and upsurge of anti-colonial and anti-imperial movements and worldviews.

During the morning of the one-day workshop, three long papers sketched out a framework of perspectives: Ali Raza (ZMO) spoke about the revolutionary subject and raised the question as to how ideas get implemented through individual actions. Focusing on a group of South Asian activists, he looked at their perception of history and future and how they

saw themselves as makers and drivers in historical processes. The events around the Oppressed Peoples' Congress in Stockholm in November 1917 were at the centre of Fredrik Petersson's (Åbo Akademi University) paper. He concentrated on the role that encounters with Bolshevism played in the formation of anti-colonial actors. Laure Guirguis (then a Visiting Research Fellow at ZMO) brought the Arab perspective into the discussion. She explored how the New Left in 1960s Lebanon used the ideas of Marx and Lenin to analyse historical processes in Russia and the Soviet Union and to draw lessons for the present.

During the afternoon session, five speakers outlined problems, approaches, and questions from the perspectives of current research projects in their short talks. Jan Brauburger (ZMO) discussed the role of the October Revolution in German foreign policy propaganda during the First World War based on the newspaper *El Dschihad*, produced in Arabic to reach Muslim prisoners of war. The October

Revolution and short-lived existence of the Iranian Socialist Soviet Republic in the province of Gilan in 1920 was the topic of Jennifer Jenkins' (University of Toronto, ZMO affiliate) contribution. Florian Coppenrath (Robert Bosch Foundation Fellow at ZMO) brought the Central Asian perspective into the discussion based on the novel *Night and Day*, written in the 1920s by the Uzbek author Abdulhamid Chulpan (1897–1938). Franziska Roy discussed the ideas of the October Revolution in the context of youth movements in South Asia and with regard to debates about the »new man«. Heike Liebau chose a historiographical approach and introduced perspectives on the October Revolution that were portrayed in studies on modern Indian history at the Academy of Sciences of the GDR.

The final discussion opened up a variety of overlapping questions of common interest that could be raised in the future.

Heike Liebau

Productions, Representations, Appropriations: Engaging ›Nature‹ in the MENA Region since the 19th Century, 25–26 January, 2018, ZMO

In recent years, the ways in which social and economic activity, new technologies, and forms of commodification are changing human relations to ›nature‹ have received considerable scholarly attention. In the MENA region, as elsewhere, successive waves of neoliberal reform have profoundly restructured rural and urban environments since the 1980s. Moreover, fundamental socio-environmental transformations have already taken place in the face of capitalism and increasing economic entanglements in the region since the 19th century. Human appropriations of ›nature‹ in the region date back centuries if not millennia, a longstanding engagement that calls notions of ›pristine nature‹ into question and informs perceptions of the MENA as deeply ›cultural‹ region. Nevertheless, research on environmental transformations and their repercussions in the MENA region has been scarce compared to other regions of the Global South. General discus-

sions on the conceptualisation of ›nature‹ and ›culture‹ only rarely give due attention to the MENA.

This lacuna was addressed by a two-day international conference at ZMO, co-sponsored by the Leibniz Association and the German Research Council (DFG) in Berlin. Participants from ten countries, including the US, France, Canada, Israel, Morocco, and Oman, and a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, including geography, Islamic studies, literature, history, and anthropology, discussed how shifts in legal, political, and economic regimes, technological innovations, but also new conceptual frameworks such as environmentalism, have affected the ways in which ›nature‹ has been produced, represented, appropriated, and used. The presentations documented a rich variety of the ways in which the entangled relations between the supposedly distinct realms of ›nature‹, ›culture‹, and ›humans‹ have informed conceptualizations and prac-

tices by local and translocal actors in the MENA region, both from secular and religious perspectives, during the 19th, 20th, and incipient 21st centuries. They offered a critical perspective on tendencies toward increasing enclosure, control, and commodification by viewing them in concert with antidromic tendencies and resistant practices, thus showing how ›nature‹ has been conceptualised simultaneously as a commodifiable, potential source of prosperity and wealth and as a realm redolent with powerful, resistant, and threatening more-than-human properties. By scrutinising the tensions arising from this field-of-force, the conference demonstrated how understandings of ›nature‹ in the MENA region emerged from situated, connected historical encounters, and how these have been shaped through references to economic, cosmological, and normative orders.

Katharina Lange

Liminal Spaces as Sites of Socio-cultural Transformation and Knowledge Production in the Arab World // Kick-off Workshop, 30-31 January 2018, ZMO



The participants in front of the ZMO entrance

After the success of the project *Spaces of Participation: Topographies of Political and Social Change in Morocco, Egypt and Palestine*, the Volkswagen Foundation agreed to fund a subsequent collaborative 3-year research project. *Liminal Spaces* has brought together senior and junior researchers from Mohammad V University-Agdal in Rabat, Morocco; A M Qattan Foundation in Ramallah, Palestine; Cairo University Egypt, ZMO, as well as a number of associate researchers. It will run until December 2020 and is coordinated at ZMO by Jan Brauburger (until October 2018) and Dr. Sarah Jurkiewicz, with Prof. Ulrike Freitag as the project leader.

In the course of the workshop, the researchers discussed their individual projects and elaborated on their different methodological and theoretical approaches. Discussions were held in particular on the underlying concept of *liminality* and the liminal nature of spaces, as well as the intersections and connectors between the projects. The case studies investigate different in-

stances of transitory spaces at the threshold of political, social, and cultural transformation and analyse how knowledge is produced in response to these changes. Urban centres, the right to urban space(s), citizenship, and participation are themes central to the project. Space(es) can be both material spaces, such as parks and urban areas, or digital media spaces.

The Egyptian team, coordinated by Prof. Randa Aboubakr, focuses on independent cultural production by individual and collective agents in times that the state withdraws from supporting the cultural scene. The researchers focus on citizen media in the broadest sense: online caricatures and their dissemination on the Internet; activist subtitling of Jihadi propaganda films; and messages on the backs of microbuses, mostly attached by the drivers. The Moroccan project team investigates the situation of »in-transit« migrants in the border zones of Morocco and other North African countries. Under the coordi-

nation of Prof. Mokhtar el-Harras and Assistant Prof. Hicham Ait Mansour, they conceptualise the migrants' situation as the creation of new spaces in which departure spaces and arrival spaces intertwine. The project seeks to understand the complexities of inclusion/exclusion processes among migrant communities through the lens of liminality.

The Palestinian team, coordinated by Assistant Prof. Yazid Anani, looks at refugee camps in the West Bank. They are said to form unique spaces of alternative knowledge production, distant from formal structures. These spaces subvert, contest, and imagine alternative social and political utopias. They create a liminal discursive space that antagonises the common norms of cultural production.

A steady exchange is planned to be supported by lectures and workshops, as the project aims to encourage the establishment of a network of young researchers from different Arab countries and Germany.

Jan Brauburger

Populist Discourse and Claims to Authenticity in Brazil, India, and Ukraine, International Workshop, 1-3 February 2018, ZMO

This workshop was organised by Barbara Christophe, Christoph Kohl (both Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI), Braunschweig); Achim Saupe (Centre for Contemporary History (ZZF), Potsdam), and Heike Liebau (ZMO). It was part of the project »Authenticity Populism: Versions of the Authentic in Populist Discourses in Brazil, India, and Ukraine«, which had been developed within the *Leibniz Forschungsverbund Historische Authentizität* (»Research Association on Historical Authenticity«). The project is being funded by the German Volkswagen Foundation from August 2017 until January 2019: <http://portal.volkswagensemstiftung.de/search/projectDetails.do?siteLanguage=en&ref=93183>.

The aim of the workshop was to discuss the intersection of claims of authenticity in populist movements and practices in Brazil, India, and Ukraine. It deviated from conventional formats and was or-

ganised in the format of a »world café«. Discussions were held in three thematic rounds each with three geographically mixed groups. The results of the discussions were then presented and discussed in the plenum. In lively and contentious debates, participants from Germany, Austria, Sweden, India, Brazil, Chile, and Ukraine discussed the following questions: What is and what has been discursively considered to be populist in the respective countries and how has this term been defined? What are the mobilising topics behind populist discourses in Brazil, India, and Ukraine? Who are the people and organizations prominently involved in these debates? How and to what extent are counter-hegemonic memories, historical narratives and debates, and claims of historical authenticity mobilised, used, and embedded in populist discourses, and by whom? How and to what degree do different kinds of media

– including school textbooks – transmit and represent populist discourses of authenticity, and how does this differ from established, hegemonic discourses?

The workshop brought together the concept of populism with the notion of authenticity in a comparative perspective. However, as all participants underlined, there can be no universal working definition for this. In order to make the empirical findings from the three countries comparable, it was important to contextualise them with regard to both time and space and to discuss both concepts in conjunction with political developments and power relations. Discussions will continue at a smaller follow-up workshop to be held in November 2018. The aim is to come up with a joint conceptual publication and thus to contribute to the international debates on populism and authenticity.

Heike Liebau

■ Lecture Series

ZMO Colloquium 2018/19: Performing Gender and Sexuality in Muslim Societies

As developed by Judith Butler, Eve Sedgwick and others in the early 1990s, queer theory suggests that gender performance – expressions of gender and sexuality – are far more diverse, fluid, and unpredictable than dominant categories would suggest. The construction, reification, and subversion of such categories within Muslim societies has been the subject of numerous studies in the fields of literary and visual culture along with cultures of performance. In *Desiring Arabs*, the question of how norms are discursively produced has been linked with »Orientalist« impositions by Joseph Massad. Others have focused on the materiality of performance, exploring the ways in which corporeal practice tends to destabilise rigid, binary classifications. In a colloquium that presents exciting samples of this work from around the globe, ZMO addresses the performative intersections of gender and sexuality with other determinants of identity (ethnicity, class, age, religion, etc.) in Muslim societies. Bringing together a range of perspectives on diverse modes of performance across a variety of media forms, the series seeks to shed light upon the historical and contemporary performance of gender and sexuality on and off stage and screen, and its implications for the performance of gender and sexual identities in everyday life.

The colloquium, initiated by Ali Nobil Ahmad and Nazan Maksudyan, will take place between late September 2018 and late February 2019.

Interviewing Youth – Constructing Knowledge. Insights from the 2016/2017 FES MENA Youth Study, 25 January 2018, ZMO

To mark the publication of the FES MENA Youth Study in German, Jörg Gertel, Professor for Economic Geography and Global Studies at the University of Leipzig, and ZMO's Vice Director Sonja Hegasy (both members of the Scientific Advisory Board of the FES MENA Youth Study) held a lecture at ZMO to introduce the study and to discuss its methodology and how the authors made sense of the data. The talk especially focused on the construction of knowledge through a quantitative study in a difficult regional setting.

In summer 2016, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, in cooperation with Kantar Public and the University of Leipzig, conducted research unprecedented in the field of youth studies in

the MENA region, interviewing 9,000 young adults between the ages of 16 and 30 in eight different countries: Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and Lebanon, as well as Syrian refugees living in Lebanon. The institute conducted approximately 1,000 quantitative and 10 qualitative interviews per country. The recently published book entitled »Zwischen Ungewissheit und Zuversicht – Jugend im Nahen Osten und in Nordafrika« (J.H.W. Dietz, Bonn; translations in English and Arabic to be published in summer 2018 by Saqi Books) aims at answering two main questions: How have the lives of young people taken shape five years after the »Arab Spring«, and how do these young people deal with uncertainty and insecurity in their daily lives?

Sonja Hegasy introduced the study and presented its underlying research design, beginning by placing the study in the context of global youth studies since the end of the Second World War. In 2004, ZMO was the first institution to discuss transferring the methods of the German Shell Youth Study to the Arab World. The Middle East and North Africa have so far been latecomers to this research field. Hegasy spoke about the concept of youth, the self-awareness of those who belonged to that group (or not) and their characteristics. One needs to say, that the FES study has a bias towards pupils and students. The study reproduced a number of questions from the German Shell Study 2015. Hegasy pointed out that the ensuing comparison of the results led to interesting insights about commonalities among »modern youth«, e.g. with respect to political interests or means of political engagement.

Further matters of discussion included the dynamics of the evaluation and an analysis of the collected data, along with the ques-

tion of their interpretation. Jörg Gertel described the process by means of examples from the survey. He explained that the frequent answer »very good/rather good« regarding one's own economic situation could be understood in various ways: 1) the researcher's assumptions need to be rethought and the results are in fact correct; 2) the interviewees describe a problematic situation as unproblematic; 3) mistakes have been caused by the interview design and data collection. Jörg Gertel focused on the last two options and found one possible explanation in the financial support of half of the respondents. It was also found that the older generation had a more stable financial situation. This explains why those supported by the older generation felt a certain security, while those who were not supported felt a lot more insecure. He agreed with Hegasy's point that interpreting these numbers is a very subjective and open process.

One can critically ask why Gertel only pursued the second and third options. Why did he not question his assumption of the participant's financial situation? Should one assume that young people in »Arab« countries are affected by poverty per se, and therefore look for other explanations for this self-perception? It is indeed important to critically reflect on the study's influence on knowledge construction, especially as it can help shape politicians' opinions and policies, as it delves into questions such as »Who wants to emigrate?«, »Who doesn't?«, and »How political is youth?«, while also reflecting a broad geographical framework.

Céline Kempen

■ Other Activities

The Past in the Present – New Films from Algeria, 3-6 May 2018, Arsenal – institut für film und videokunst e.V., Berlin

Young, Rebellious and Full of Beans // by Christopher Resch



Djamal Kerkar, Karim Moussaoui, Narimane Mari, Birgit Kohler

Algeria's young filmmakers are turning their attention to making films that engage with the country's violent past. Christopher Resch met up with three of them.

The actors in Narimane Mari's film »Bloody Beans« are revolting! Sick and tired of their drab, monotonous diet of red beans, the everyday staple of the poor in Algiers, they decide to stage a

major, if small-scale, revolt. Since the diet of the country's French occupation forces includes meat – why not steal it from them? What is special about these actors is that all of them are children. »There are fewer rules in Algeria; the children are much freer and wilder. So my film is also about what we have lost and how we used to have the power to change things,« says director Mari. Though such a description may sound a shade depressing, the film, like its stars, is anything but. It is dynamic, full of energy and packed full with humour and allusion. Qualities that allow it to confront the experiences of Algeria's history: colonialism, the casualties of the war of independence, the black decade of the 1990s.

Algerian cinema on the rise

Recent years have witnessed signs of revitalisation in Algerian cinema. A young generation of filmmakers is turning its attention to the country's past and the consequences of that past for Algeria's present. »Numerous social taboos have meant that artistic engagement with Algeria's history is hardly a matter of course«, is how these films are appropriately summed up in »The Past in the Present – New Films from Algeria«. At the beginning of May, the Arsenal cinema in Berlin along with the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient and the Goethe Institute Algeria screened seven films from the North African country. It was a commendable initiative aimed at making Algerian film better known in Germany, with a selection of films all of which were made within the last five years.

»Bloody Beans«, in particular, which is arguably the most unusual film in the Arsenal selection, sustains an intriguing dialogue between form and content. In one scene for instance, where the children have to cross an old Christian-Jewish-Muslim cemetery in Algiers on their way to the French soldiers' barracks, one of the girls cries out in amazement: »Look at that grave, it is bigger than my house.«

Domination and injustice, it seems, carry on beyond the grave. One of the youngsters declares that he is not afraid of the dark graveyard, ghosts being preferable to real soldiers.

»Reality was worse than any imaginary terror«, explains Narimane Mari.

What happened in the »black decade«?

Initially the film struggled in Algeria due to some of its funnier and more absurd scenes. It was mainly the intellectuals who didn't know what to make of it – the ordinary people immediately understood the allusions to the war of independence, she says. They may have had more vivid memories of the Algerian cinema in its heyday: »In the 60s and 70s going to the cinema was very popular. Maybe the current resurgence is about exploring the past«, says director Karim Moussaoui, whose film »Until the Birds Return« also screened in Berlin. One part of Moussaoui's film deals with the civil war of the 1990s, which claimed the lives of more than 200,000 people. Precise figures, however, are hard to come by and vary widely; any prospect of coming to terms with the atrocities of the Islamists and the military is still a long way off. »We have to tell the stories of what happened in the 90s«, says Moussaoui, who was born in 1976. »And to do that, we must create our own images, because we have no visual records of that time.«

The cine-clubs are important in this process. Recent years have seen a number of old cinemas brought back to life by young film enthusiasts, giving Algerian films a platform and creating a space for freer, more open debates. During the long years of civil war there was neither leisure nor time – and certainly no state money – available for culture. »The cine-clubs were our meeting places,« says Moussaoui, spaces to network and exchange ideas. »It was really important to us, it gave us an education and we learned a lot about how to make films.«

Suffering of the younger generation

Like Karim Moussaoui, Djamel Kerkar was also directly involved in setting up the clubs. His film »Atlal« is a quietly contemplative, beautifully photographed and intimate portrait of the people of Ouled Atlal, south of Algiers. Although they come from different generations, each of them experienced suf-

fering and war as a 20-year-old. The film's closing scene shows a slowly dying camp fire before a grey concrete wall.

»An entire generation was destroyed by the war in the 90s. The ending is a tribute to that generation and to the sacrifices they were forced to make,« says Kerkar. And Moussaoui adds, »Of course, that past is very present to us. That is something that may be very difficult for a young European to understand, after all there has been no war in Western Europe since 1945. But we Algerians don't live in the past any more than other people.«

»Reality was worse than any imaginary terror«, said Narimane Mari of a scene in her film. Is it still so today? All of the films avoid being judgemental or openly critical. It's not her job as a filmmaker to change things, Mari explains. Moussaoui and Kerkar also emphasise that they see themselves as creators of images and tellers of stories; though, of course, everything is political in the end.

Beans can be political. So can farting. The children in »Bloody Beans« are afflicted by the inevitable, windy consequences of their repetitive diet and moved to revolt. For the audience, the connection with the present is immediately apparent: bread and justice were two key demands of the Arab revolutions. Narimane Mari was keen not to force such things onto her young actors, however – pointing out that she was not their history teacher after all. In any case, the children had been more concerned with practical matters. In a scene at the cemetery, for instance, their shadows are cast against a wall. A balloon turns into a weapon, a skinny boy into a strong man. If children learn that they have such transformational power within themselves and their bodies, then a film has achieved something worthwhile.

Translated from the German by Ron Walker. © Qantara.de 2018 (<https://en.qantara.de/content/algerian-cinema-young-rebellious-and-full-of-beans>)

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■ ZMO Library

The Research Collection of Dr. Peter Sebald and Prof. Trutz von Trotha at ZMO

The modern German historiography on Togo is linked to the names of Peter Sebald and Trutz von Trotha. Their research collections, stored in the ZMO archives, provide very detailed information regarding German colonial rule in Togo, 1884-1918. Numerous monographies, source material, archival documents, newspaper articles, and records of lectures offer researchers rich and valuable data for their academic work.

The friendship between the East German Africanist Sebald and the West German sociologist von Trotha started after the unification of the two German states, and has been marked by an intensive exchange that developed into close cooperation over the years: The two researchers promised to look after the scientific legacy of the other and make sure that the common body of work is placed in the hands of a public institution. In 2015, 61 large boxes of material on the African continent



The research collection of Dr. Sebald kept in archival boxes and files at ZMO

ing on the basis of the ZMO estate of Petra and Joachim Heidrich. A similar cooperation project is currently being prepared with the Institute for Asian and African Studies for the winter semester 2018/2019.

So far only the Sebald material has been sorted and stored in archival boxes. It is divided into three parts: material arranged and catalogued by Sebald himself, documents sorted and classified by the author between November 2017 and May 2018, and books already in stock, which can be found via the library catalogue.

The most valuable information can be found in the material organised by Sebald himself. It is arranged according to chronological, geographical, regional, and thematic criteria. The material illuminates the German colonial period in Togo from 1884-1918 with great detail and precision. Sebald transcribed most of the archival documents from old German handwriting into the Latin alphabet. This will facilitate research work for those who cannot read the old writing. An example of very detailed information is contained in the diaries of

Germans who were deployed in Togo. This refers, in particular, to the history of railway construction there. The folder contains a variety of documents including engineers' correspondence, minutes of work meetings, construction plans, and employment contracts with local workers, in addition to annual and other reports on the state of the colony. There is a further batch of unordered material concerning a wide range of topics. This includes flyers, archival papers, personal manuscripts, copies of books and essays, invitations, and photographs ranging from the colonial period to the present.

The many lectures Sebald gave during his stays abroad provide another source of information and can be found among the archival material now stored in the respective boxes. Next steps will include the digitization of the Sebald papers and adding Trutz von Trotha's documents, which are still waiting to be unpacked, arranged, and made available to future research.

Alisher Karabaev

publications

■ ZMO Publication Series

Bettina Dennerlein

Religion und Reform: Islāh und Ge-

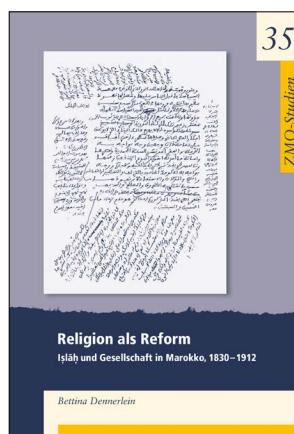
sellschaft in Marokko, 1830-1912,

ZMO Studien 35, Klaus Schwarz Ver-

lag Berlin, 2018, 276 p.,

ISBN 978-3-87997-725-3

Using the example of legal debates on reform (*islāh*), the study provides a contribution to the research on Islamic reform traditions in Morocco. The investigation follows a text-oriented, historicising approach, which views religious and legal scholarship as part of social and political conditions. The spectrum of known expressions of *islāh* ranges from instruction in dogmatic and ritual matters to the enactment of quiet and order even through the use of force. They all connect, in a variety of manners, the desire to return to the origins with the ongoing renewal of the moral social order and individual discipline. The breakdown of the individual understandings of *islāh* also provides new insights into processes involving the creation and negotiation of overarching societal allegiances and political legitimacy in the transition period from pre-colonial to colonial forms of statehood in Morocco.



■ ZMO Working Papers

- Heike Liebau: A voice recording, a portrait photo and three drawings: tracing the life of a colonial soldier, ZMO Working Papers 20, 2018, 14 p.



- Sarah Jurkiewicz: Blogging in Beirut. An Ethnography of a Digital Media Practice, transcript, 2018, 374 p.

Al Manhal Islamic Studies E-Book Collection

ZMO obtained access to 2,035 Arabic e-books from the digital collection of the Al Manhal Islamic Studies E-Book Collection. It was provided by the Special Information Service Middle East, North African, and Islamic Studies. The books are about Islamic law, Islamic studies, and Islamic theology and are mainly written in Arabic. A large part of the collection was published in print between 2004 and 2016. However, it is not readily available in Germany. The collection reflects the current discourse of Islamic and theological questions in the Arabic world.

<https://www.menalib.de/en/al-manhal-islamic-studies-e-book-collection/>.

■ New Open Access Publications

- Stefan B. Kirmse: Alle Macht nach Moskau? Der russische Föderalismus und das Beispiel Tatarstan, *Zeitgeschichte-online* März 2018.
- Nitin Sinha: The Idea of Home in a World of Circulation: Steam, Women and Migration through Bhojpuri Folksongs, *International Review of Social History*, 1-35, July 2018.
- Abdoulaye Sounaye: Salafi Youth on Campus in Niamey, Niger: Moral Motives, Political Ends, in: Oinas, Elina; Onodera, Henri; Suurpää, Leena (eds.), *What Politics: Youth and Political Engagement in Africa*, 209-229.

For more see <https://www.zmo.de/publikationen/index.html>

People

We have bid farewell to our estimated colleague Nushin Atmaca, who left ZMO at the end of March 2018. She has since started coordinating the model project »Gemeinsame Vergangenheit – gemeinsame Zukunft« (»Common Past, Common Future«), based at the Museum for Islamic Art. The new assistant to the director is Philipp Liegmann. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Politics, International Relations, and French from the University of Kent (UK) and a Master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Edinburgh. In his graduate thesis, he analysed the use of language in the empowerment of Arab LGBT* groups.

Within the project funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, »Normality and Crisis: Memories of Everyday Life in Syria as a Chance for a New Start in Germany«, ZMO has welcomed four new colleagues since March 2018. Benjamin Vrucak joined ZMO as a research coordinator. He studied Politics and Near and Middle Eastern Studies at Philipps Universität Marburg and Arabic at the University of Damascus. From 2016 to 2018, he coordinated a project on micro-projects with refugees at the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU). PhD fellows Lisa Jöris and Inana Othman also began at ZMO in March. Lisa Jöris holds degrees in Political Science as well as Arabic Language Studies and studied at the Freie Universität Berlin, the University of Montreal, and the University of Leipzig. In her project, she will be focusing on memories of life in the city of Aleppo. Inana Othman holds a Master's degree in Middle Eastern Politics and Economics and studied at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies in Marburg. She will be focusing on conviviality in the city of Homs. Post-doc fellow Veronica Ferreri completed the group in mid-April. She finished her PhD at SOAS, University of London, on continuities and ruptures characterising a Syrian community's exile in Lebanon after its forced expulsion from Syria. Her research interests include migration, the work of memory, and war-time government practices.

While Alexander von Humboldt fellow Prof. Daniel Mains will be returning to the University of Oklahoma by the end of July, ZMO has now welcomed two new AvH fellows: Dr. Fuat Dündar from TOBB-ETU University, Ankara (May – July) and Dr. Hilal Alkan Zeybek, EUME fellow 2016-17, who will be staying at ZMO from July 2018 to June 2019. Within the Leibniz Research Alliance for Historical Authenticity there are currently two fellows at ZMO: Dr. Dauda Abubakar from the University of Jos, Nigeria (April – July) and Dr. Izabela Orlowska, who was already an Alexander von Humboldt fellow at ZMO until the end of May (June – August).

In 2018, there are four visiting research fellows at ZMO: Dr. Mohammed Benidir, Mohamed V University at Agdal in Rabat, Morocco (January/November); Dr. Humayun Ansari, Royal Holloway, University of London (February); Dr. Issouf Binaté, Alassane Ouattara University in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire (May-June); Prof. Nandini Sundar, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi (June-July).

Anna Novikova, University of the Basque Country, Bilbao stayed as a guest at the ZMO from March to May.

Awards

In 2018 the Gesellschaft zur Förderung des ZMO e.V. (Association for the Advancement of ZMO) awarded the Fritz Steppat Prize for the third time. This year there are two awardees: Claudia Ghrawi, research colleague at ZMO for her PhD thesis »Saudi Arabia's Urban Revolution. Oil Urbanization and Popular Politics in al-chnitt (the Eastern Province), 1938-1970«, submitted at FU Berlin and Rhea Regina Schmitt for her Master thesis »Motivations and aspirations of filmmakers and their impact on film projects in Sudan« submitted at HU Berlin. Congratulations!

Leibniz in Africa

The Leibniz Association launched the Leibniz in Africa website in November 2017. The platform provides an overview of the variety

of Africa-related research pursued by Leibniz Institutes and is meant to facilitate new opportunities and enhance collaborative research. ZMO researchers on Africa have contributed to the platform and have put together a brochure introducing the various projects. See <https://www.leibniz-in-africa.de/index.php?id=2481>.

Visiting Research Fellowships 2019 - Call for Applications

The Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin, Germany, is accepting applications for visiting research fellowships for the calendar year 2019. The centre would like to attract outstanding post-doctoral scholars engaged in projects relevant to ZMO's research profile. Information on the centre's current research programme »Muslim Worlds – World of Islam?« can be found at https://www.zmo.de/forschung/index_e.html. The application deadline is 17 August 2018.

calendar

LECTURE SERIES

ZMO-COLLOQUIUM WINTER TERM
2018/2019: PERFORMING GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES, ZMO

- Charlotte Bank: »Divine Comedy«. A Critique of Contemporary Gender Politics in the Middle East, 27 September 2018, 5 pm
- Mustafa Avcı: Köçeks in the »Culture of Beloveds«: Gender, Love, and Dance Performance in the Late Ottoman Empire, 25 October 2018, 5 pm

CONFERENCE

»ISLAM« AS EPISTEMIC FIELD. IMPERIAL ENTANGLEMENTS AND ORIENTALISM IN THE GERMAN-SPEAKING WORLD SINCE 1870, organised by Nils Riecken (ZMO) and Larissa Schmid (FU Berlin), 11-12 October 2018, ZMO

For more see www.zmo.de/veranstaltungen/