



Invitation

Round Table Discussion

Monday, 09 June 2008, 5 pm

Venue

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33

14129 Berlin

Cosmopolitanism Off the Beaten Track.

A Round Table Discussion Presenting Recent Publications at ZMO with Lars Amenda, Malte Fuhrmann, Elisabeth Boesen, Laurence Marfaing and Kai Kresse

'Cosmopolitanism' has emerged as one of the currently fashionable keywords in the humanities and social sciences. In a broad variety of research projects, it is employed to reflect upon and explore contemporary and historical dynamics of globalization, migration, and processes of social interaction more generally. Often, this is done with reference to a global scenario (in the past or present) that, we are told, needs to be investigated with a focus on interconnectivity and exchange between social worlds at the forefront of our minds.

There are, of course, good analytical and ethical reasons to push the cause of 'cosmopolitanism' as a conceptual tool. Sometimes, however, it is also used in a lazy manner, making the term fill in for previous ones that have dropped out of favour – as it happens with many fashionable terms linking academic and popular discourse. In this round-table discussion, authors and editors of recent ZMO-based publications (in German, French, and English) using the term will discuss their rationale for this with the audience and each other. In a comparative inter-regional and inter-disciplinary perspective, spanning a broad historical scope and dealing with networks and social scenarios from trans-Saharan Africa, the Western Indian Ocean, the wider Ottoman Empire and beyond, the respective uses of 'cosmopolitanism' will be critically sounded out, by historians, anthropologists, and scholars from other disciplines.

The following publications will be discussed:

- Amenda, Lars und Malte Fuhrmann (Hg.) 2007. ‚Hafenstädte in globaler Perspektive‘ Sondernummer von *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung*; 17(2).
- Boesen, Elisabeth et Laurence Marfaing (eds) 2007. *Les nouveaux urbains dans l'espace Sahara-Sahel: un cosmopolitisme par le bas*. Paris: Karthala et Berlin: ZMO.
- Simpson, Edward and Kai Kresse (eds) 2007. *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean*. London: Hurst and New York: Columbia University Press.

This discussion, to be conducted in German and English, will take place as an additional session of the current ZMO Ottoman History Seminar Series (organized by Dr. Nora Lafi and Prof. Ulrike Freitag) that has been focusing on aspects of cosmopolitanism. It seeks to benefit from, and also contribute to, the wider debates that have influenced and shaped the seminar series over the course of the last semester.

The discussion will take place in German and English.
All are welcome!

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