

Researching Muslim Societies

Inside and Outside ZMO



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↓ ZMO Berlin, main entrance and courtyard (© ZMO)



Preface

Ulrike Freitag

The work of a research centre dealing with Muslim-majority societies in Asia and Africa offers many exciting moments, from the actual research itself to the exchange with colleagues at the centre and beyond. While much of the results are documented in academic publications, we want to share some of this excitement through this publication. It also offers an opportunity to reflect on the first six years of our main research programme *Muslim Worlds – World of Islam?*, which is generously funded by the state of Berlin and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and to think about some of the associated research projects as well.

For those readers who do not know us: ZMO was founded in 1996 as one of six independent, non-profit research centres. It is devoted to the interdisciplinary and comparative study of the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and South and Southeast Asia from a historical perspective, focussing on connections between these different regions, as well as on their contacts with Europe. The cooperation of historians, anthropologists, economists, psychologists and experts from other areas transcends the standard disciplinary and regional fields of knowledge. Scholars at the Centre, who work in small groups, usually combine intensive archival work and field research and value intense cooperation with partners in the regions where they work. While basic research remains at the centre of our activities, ZMO intervenes in public debates where our specific areas of knowledge seem relevant. The Centre cultivates a cooperative atmosphere and prides itself on welcoming many short- and long-term visitors from different backgrounds.

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DALAM MASJID
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TARUNG
PENGURUSAN MASJID

TABUNG
MASJID
BEIJING



ZMO Research Projects

BMBF Programme 2008–2013 Aims and Results

The central research programme *Muslim Worlds – World of Islam?* (2008–2013) aimed to investigate a broad spectrum of historical and contemporary dynamics within and between the mostly Muslim societies since the eighteenth century, and their links with Europe.

The research programme examined the unity or heterogeneity of the conceptions of the world in those societies of the Global South influenced by Islam and the relationship of these conceptions to concrete spaces and orientations of action and to competing visions of the world. The research programme assumed that cognitive and normative conceptions stand in tension with concrete action; this is not to be understood as difference but – since the cultural turn in the social sciences at the latest – also as a multi-faceted mutual influence. The relationship between religion, in particular Islam, and society in the context of globalization offered an especially striking and significant field of investigation to this end. Here, as elsewhere, linear processes could not be assumed. Rather, globalizing processes had to be considered in their upheavals, crises, and (in part violent) conflicts – which in turn also fuel this globalization.

The research programme comprised three interdisciplinary project groups – *Actors in Translocal Spaces*, *Microcosms and Practices of the Local*, and *Concepts of the World and Order* – working on different historical and cultural aspects of the “Modern Orient” since the 18th century. These projects explored the translocal movements of people, goods, symbols and ideas between the areas of the non-Western world and to Europe.

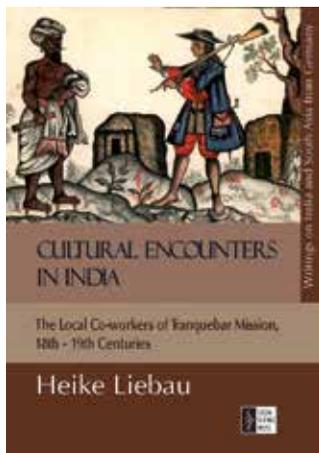
Each of these fields touches upon interactions between conceptions, practices, and crises of the global, but with different emphases and from different perspectives.

Beyond that several cooperative projects exist with other institutions and the ZMO hosts a number of researchers from different international research programmes.

Actors in Translocal Spaces

Heike Liebau

Actor-centred approaches played an important role in earlier research projects at ZMO; they were carried out within the research line *Akteure des Wandels* (actors of change) between 1996 and 2000. At that time, the focus of research was on individuals and groups in Asia and Africa that, under conditions of colonialism, acted as intermediaries between cultures and were actively or reactively involved in both global processes and local projects. Taking the intermediary character of the actors as the starting point, the main question then was whether and how the actors created a “third space”, or an “in-between space”, and whether and how something “new” was developed within that space.¹ Shifting the focus from “actors of change” to “actors in translocal spaces”, the new research group took a different stance. The mobility of social actors operating translocally lay at the forefront of the projects that made up the ZMO-research group *Actors in Translocal Spaces* (2008–2013). The actors examined here were traders, soldiers, workers, entrepreneurs, Islamic religious scholars (ulama) and intellectuals, but also “citizens of the web” (“netizens”). The geographical starting point for their activities was the global South. The actors operated in overlapping fields of tension, ranging from individual and collective strategies to translocal and global developments. Their operating spaces are affected by struggles for power related to colonial, cultural, political or economic dominance. How they define their goals and strategies in these conflictual translocal relationships, and what sort of practices of the global networks and translocal activities they use, was explored.



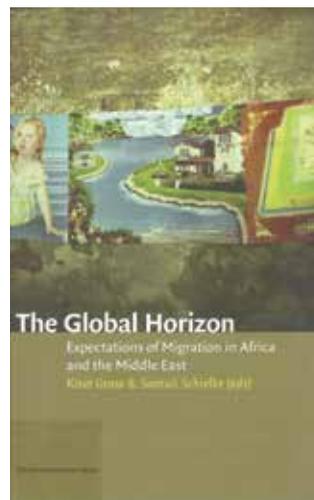
↑ Book cover Heike Liebau, *Cultural Encounters in India*, 2013 (© Social Science Press)

One of our decisive conceptual starting points was the question of mobility as practice. The social actors we considered negotiate geographical, political, linguistic and often cultural and social boundaries, creating new translocal spaces of practice, practical blueprints and strategies in the process. The geographical crossing of boundaries by these actors is habitually accompanied by social and political mobility and can either hinder social change or become symbolic of their particularly precarious situation. Such asymmetries and fissures in the marginalization of actors were examined in the various projects. Of particular interest were actors in migration, diaspora or exile. The research group took a closer look at the key concepts of mobility, agency and knowledge, trying to define their roles in conceptualizing “actors in translocal spaces”.

¹ Petra Heidrich and Heike Liebau (2001). *Akteure des Wandels: Lebensläufe und Gruppenbilder an Schnittstellen von Kulturen*. Berlin: Das Arabische Buch.

We defined “translocal spaces” as social environments shaped by processes in which people, things and ideas move, meet each other and interact with each other.² Regardless of whether one understands these spaces predominantly geographically (reordering regions as a result of geopolitical changes, as is the case in contemporary Central Asia), politically (international/translocal/global movements, organizations), socially (migration, diaspora situations) or virtually (social spaces created by new communication technologies, internet/chat rooms), these spaces mark the framework conditions for the actors who live, move and act within them and who constantly have to define and redefine their actions and their possibilities of action.

Translocally shaped social environments emerge in various kinds and phases of migration processes. External influences often already affect the places people try to leave when they receive information through the mass media or from people who have returned. These pieces of information may raise hopes and wishes and lead to a kind of “migration at home”, which many people cannot turn into physical mobility but which becomes the basis for a kind of “imaginary cosmopolitanism” that can be observed for instance among the young generation in Egypt and elsewhere.³ Translocality can gain another dimension in situations of transit, when people are stuck on the way to a destination they cannot reach and have to settle down there. These situations can sometimes last a long time and thus demand a durable institutionalization and creation of a social environment and practices of everyday life. When the actors’ physical mobility is interrupted for political or economic reasons that they cannot change, they have to rethink their life strategies and reorient themselves in consideration of the changed power relations.⁴ Translocally shaped social environments emerge also in situations of diaspora or exile. Here, people of different geographic, political and religious origin bring their worldviews, traditions, languages and actual social political interests into the formation of the new environment. Between feeling “out of place” and “belonging”, actors in these situations try to find a way to integrate themselves into the new society, while at the same time they often work for changes in the society they originate from.⁵



↑ Book cover Knut Graw/Samuli Schielke (eds.), *The Global Horizon*, 2012 (© Leuven University Press)

2 Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen (2010). Introduction: Translocality: An Approach to Connection and Transfer in Regional Studies. In: Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen (eds.). *Translocality: The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective*. pp. 1–21. Leiden, Boston: Brill.

3 Samuli Schielke and Knut Graw (2012). Introduction: Reflections on Migratory Expectations in Africa and Beyond. In: Knut Graw and Samuli Schielke (eds.). *The Global Horizon: Expectations of Migration in Africa and the Middle East*, pp. 7–22. Leuven University Press.

4 Dalila Nadi (2008). Algerien als Endziel von Migrationen: Eine vergleichende Studie zu subsaharischen und chinesischen Migranten. *Africa Spectrum* 43 (3): 371–392.

5 Chanfi Ahmed (2012). For the Saudi's Kingdom or for the Umma?: Global 'Ulamā' in the Dār al-Ḥadīth in Medina. *Journal for Islamic Studies* 32: 70–90; Benjamin Zachariah (2013). A Long, Strange Trip: The Lives in Exile of Har Dayal. *South Asian History and Culture* 4 (4): 574–592.

Mobility seemed to be one of the key concepts in approaching these kinds of translocally shaped environments created and developed in various stages and forms of migration processes. We maintained, however, that mobility is unthinkable without immobility and that, in their interplay and interdependency, the two concepts together constitute an important lens to understand the way social actors define their life strategies. Physical immobility can play an important role at several stages of migration (migration at home, transit, exile), but it is an immobility followed by or preceding a form, however defined, of (physical or imagined) mobility. Indian intellectuals and revolutionaries who happened to be in Berlin at the beginning of the First World War, for instance, often were not allowed to return to India until the 1930s. They found different ways of interacting with the local society and of establishing an Indian community in Berlin, struggling to survive on the one hand, yet extending social ties and intellectual engagements on the other. Immobility for them was not an accepted stage, but a constantly present hindrance and/or challenge to a desired mobility.⁶ We argued, therefore, that immobility should not be equated with inactivity or standstill. On the contrary, under certain conditions, it becomes a constitutive element in the development of translocal spaces. Actors have to find their respective frames and horizons of actions in phases of (physical) movement, as well as of institutionalization and accommodation (immobility?). Interchanging processes when the global and the local abrade one another are shaping their actions. In the case of migration at home,⁷ this might mean that world experiences through images, things and symbols (indirectly?) reach a particular place. So, experiencing the world becomes possible without having been (physically) mobile. The transit situation emerges out of an interrupted mobility for a certain time when the actors create for themselves new (trans-)local life worlds and worlds of experiences, which are influenced by lasting connections, networks and movements. People in diaspora and exile reach a place after an often involuntary mobility and are often restricted in their mobility. They have to consider boundaries that they are not able to cross.

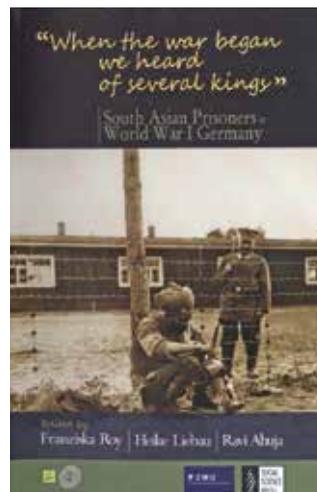
In translocally shaped social spaces, actors have to consider a complex of competing worldviews and concepts of world and order; and they face changing challenges in their everyday social life. They develop their agency in a constant field of tension between everyday life and life strategies, which affects individual and group motivations. The actual relationship between the actors' activities and their respective individual life strategies and worldviews is also determined by the requirements of the daily life and the daily practices resulting there. Individuals who travel and cross boundaries, ideologies and languages, as well as individuals between cultures and extremely mobile individuals (in a physical as well in an imaginary sense) move with their "life geographies" and also with their (imagined) families in the background, the latter sometimes remaining a corrective or a directive for their actions far away from home. When the spheres of activity cover not only one certain (or even different) social, cultural or political field, but at the same time take place in different regional contexts, i. e. societies each with their own histories and political, social structural, cultural or religious characteristics, the scholar has to develop

6 Heike Liebau (2011). The German Foreign Office, Indian Emigrants and Propaganda Efforts among the "Sepoys". In: Franziska Roy, Heike Liebau und Ravi Ahuja (eds.). *"When the War Began We Heard of Several Kings", South Asian Prisoners in World War I Germany*, pp. 96–129. New Delhi: Social Science Press; cf. note 5 op.cit.

7 Cf. note 3.

special research methods and working strategies to help him understand the individual(s) he or she is working on. Hence, understanding “translocal” biographies means to “travel” with the individual on whom research is being conducted through his life – diachronically and synchronically, including the companionship in different stages of life often involved in the anthropologist’s work, as well as the physical travel of the historian, who wants to visit the places the protagonist lived in and (at least partly) to travel vicariously through the knowledge of the protagonist under study.

People’s social agency is shaped by the knowledge they acquire throughout their life. If one wants to understand the agency of actors in translocal spaces, one not only has to study the material conditions and constraints of their lives, but also the ideas, systems of knowledge and worldviews they live with. Actors always carry knowledge and experiences from different spaces/ places with themselves and use them to shape their new social space of activity; in other words: social actors in translocal spaces live, travel and act with knowledge. Thus it is necessary to combine biographical methods and studies of everyday life, on the one hand, with methods of intellectual history and issues of knowledge production and distribution, on the other. Knowledge, understood in this way, is not a mere simplification or popularization of abstract intellectualized knowledge, when in reality intellectual knowledge is often rather an attempt to abstract and rationalize the crucial and pragmatic yet unsystematic knowledge of making, dwelling, desiring and surviving. In regard to the temporality of expectation and experience, this means that the knowledge with which one starts a translocal life journey is not identical with the knowledge one needs and gathers on the way. Social actors in translocal spaces produce, carry and distribute political, religious and scientific ideas in different cultural contexts. Through these processes of mobilizing and popularizing knowledge, this knowledge and the ideas change, but so do the actors who live and travel with them. Mobilization and popularization of knowledge and ideas are directed and shaped through questions of legitimacy, authority and power.⁸ Ideas and knowledge become meaningful through the people who need them, apply them, change them and challenge them.⁹ What does “knowledge” mean in a particular situation for a particular actor in a translocal space? In Leyla von Mende’s project, Ottoman intellectuals propagated studying in Europe and gaining “knowledge” there in order to strengthen their state. This “knowledge” was defined as a “universal commodity” and the travel to Europe to gain this knowledge was justified religiously.¹⁰



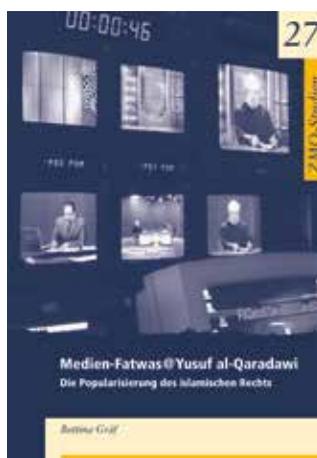
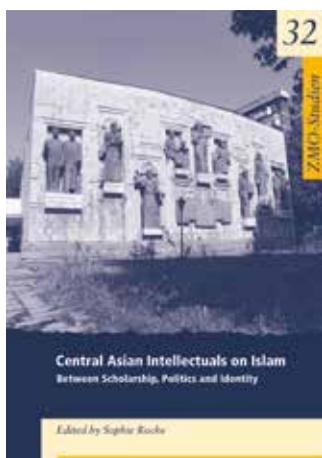
↑ Book cover Franziska Roy/Heike Liebau/Ravi Ahuja (eds.), *South Asian Prisoners in World War I Germany*, 2011 (© Social Science Press)

8 Kai Kresse (2010). Muslim Politics in Postcolonial Kenya: Negotiating Knowledge on the Double-Periphery. In: Filippo Osella and Benjamin F. Soares (eds.). *Islam, Politics, Anthropology*, pp. 72–90. Chichester, Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

9 Bettina Gräf (2010). *Medien-Fatwas@Yusuf al-Qaradawi: Die Popularisierung des islamischen Rechts*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.

10 Leyla von Mende (2011). “Mecque de la Pédagogie”: Two Ottoman Study Guides and Their Plea for Swiss Pedagogics. *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 65 (4): 919–944.

Having argued that ideas and knowledge are constitutive parts of individual life histories of actors in translocal spaces, we further asked what we gain by approaching a person's biography through the knowledge he or she lived and travelled with. Looking at the knowledge that (historical) individuals carried with them throughout their biographies makes it possible to open a window and gain a bigger picture of social history.¹¹ On the other hand, studying the knowledge system/canon of a certain period, region, social movement or institution helps to better understand a person's biography. This approach could provide an interesting level of comparison and thus can also be a useful contribution to the discussion of how to move from biography as genre to biography as a social-historical methodology. These are questions that lead to the ZMO's future research and will be taken up in the research line *Trajectories of lives and knowledge* (2014–2019).



← ← Book cover Sophie Roche, *Central Asian Intellectuals on Islam*, 2014 (© Klaus Schwarz Verlag)

← Book cover Bettina Gräf, *Medien-Fatwas@Yusuf al-Qaradawi*, 2010 (© Klaus Schwarz Verlag)

Selected publications

- Ahmed, Chanfi:** For the Saudi's Kingdom or for the Umma? Global 'Ulamā' in the Dār al-Hadith in Medina, *Journal for Islamic Studies* 32: 70–90, 2012.
- Freitag, Ulrike and Achim von Oppen:** Introduction. 'Translocality': An Approach to Connection and Transfer in Area Studies. In: Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen, eds., *Translocality. The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective*, pp. 1–21. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Gräf, Bettina:** *Medien-Fatwas@Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Die Popularisierung des islamischen Rechts*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2010.
- Graw, Knut and Samuli Schielke, eds.:** *The Global Horizon: Expectations in Africa and the Middle East*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2012.
- Kresse, Kai:** Muslim Politics in Postcolonial Kenya: Negotiating Knowledge on the Double-Periphery. In: Filippo Osella and Benjamin Soares, eds.: *Islam, Politics, Anthropology*, pp. 72–90. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Liebau, Heike:** The German Foreign Office, Indian Emigrants and Propaganda Efforts Among the "Sepoys". In: **Franziska Roy, Heike Liebau and Ravi Ahuja eds.,** "When the war began, we heard of several kings": *South Asian Prisoners in World War I Germany*, pp. 96–129. New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2011.
- Mende, Leyla von:** "Mecque de la pédagogie": Two Ottoman Study Guides and Their Plea for Swiss Pedagogics, *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 65 (4): 919–944, 2011.
- Nadi, Dalila:** Algerien als Endziel von Migration: Eine vergleichende Studie zu subsaharischen und chinesischen Migranten, *Africa Spectrum* 43 (3): 371–392, 2008.
- Zachariah, Benjamin:** A Long, Strange Trip: The Lives in Exile of Har Dayal, *South Asian History and Culture* 4(4): 574–592, 2013.

¹¹ Cf. Sophie Roche (ed.) (2014). *Central Asian Intellectuals on Islam. Between Scholarship, Politics and Identity*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2014.

Microcosms and Practices of the Local

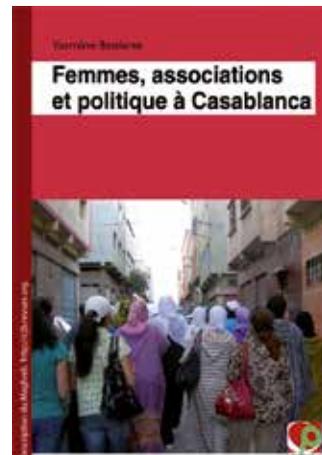
Katharina Lange

The working group *Microcosms and Practices of the Local* engaged with the questions of “Muslim Worlds” and their relation to a greater “World of Islam” from the perspective of specific, concrete localities.

Fourteen different research projects, conducted by thirteen researchers, were carried out in the framework of this group during the years 2008–2013. Like the other working groups, it had a relatively high turnover of colleagues, including long-term absences due to fieldwork or archival research, but also more permanent fluctuation due to colleagues completing their projects and taking other positions. In any given year, the group consisted of six to eight researchers, most of them historians, others anthropologists and Islamic Studies specialists. The projects covered topics as diverse as the renaissance of the Tijaniyya in Mauretania in the twentieth century (Frede)¹², the linkages between labour migration from the rural areas and urban life in late Ottoman Istanbul (Riedler) and the discursive construction of the Indian Malabar coast as a Muslim “homeland” in the 16th and 17th centuries (Prange). The group’s thematic and disciplinary heterogeneity and diversity distinctly shaped the way our discussions evolved over this six-year-period, sometimes presenting us with unexpected challenges, but also opening up new spaces of interdisciplinary discussion.¹³

At the beginning of our work in 2008, we formulated a number of questions that summed up not only our expectations about issues that the group should pursue, but also the interests of individual group members. We asked: what are the ties that bind social actors to specific places? How, in turn, do actors “make” a place, and how do the interactions between different social actors over time shape a particular locality, in social, political, or material terms? And finally, how do social actors themselves conceptualize a particular place as a meaningful space for social action? How do they imagine, perceive or represent a specific place?

Guided by these questions, group discussions over the years related to three distinct but interrelated thematic fields, which are discussed below. To give a brief overview: we first looked at processes of conflict and integration in specific locations. A central but controversial concept in these discussions was the no-



↑ Book cover Yasmine Berriane, *Femmes, associations et politique à Casablanca*, 2013 (© Centre Jacques Berque)

12 Britta Frede (2014). *Die Erneuerung der Tiġāniya in Mauretanien. Popularisierung religiöser Ideen in der Kolonialzeit*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.

13 Cf. e.g. Katharina Lange, Sebastian R. Prange and Nitin Sinha (2013). Reflecting on “Muslim Worlds – World of Islam?” from a spatial perspective. *ZMO Programmatic Texts*, vol. 7. Berlin: ZMO.

tion of “microcosm”, used mainly as a shorthand for practical ways of living together and regulating conflicts in socially, ethnically or culturally heterogeneous places such as Ottoman cities (Fuhrmann, Lafi, Riedler, Krimsti, Freitag, Baer). The second thematic field comprised locally bounded practices of control and domination (“governance”). We discussed, for instance, in which sorts of space local (state and non-state) political actors interact in specific settings and how these spaces transform their shape or function over time (Berriane). We also debated how a particular spatial configuration, for instance a riverscape, is transfigured through particular forms of use and regulation and how these transformations relate to changing economic or political hierarchies (Evren, Sinha). Thirdly, we explored different forms of representing locality or specific locales. The discussions around this axis touched on such diverse technologies as cartography, urban planning and architecture (Fuhrmann, Baer), but also travel writing and historiography (Frede, Krimsti, Prange, Sinha, Lange).

“Microcosm” and “Cosmopolitanism”

The investigation of “practices of the local” with relation to our research programme could be carried out in a variety of ways. In its original formulation, our overall research programme (2008-2013) had emphasized one perspective in particular, namely the question how everyday lives of Muslims and their non-Muslim neighbours evolved in concrete places, i.e. in cities, urban neighbourhoods or villages. It asked how these social actors – whose social identities are defined (among other things, but not exclusively) by religious belonging – shape, (re)configure or perceive specific places.

In the context of our working group, this avenue of investigation has been pursued especially by those projects engaged with Ottoman urban history (Fuhrmann, Lafi, Riedler, Krimsti, Freitag, Baer). Institutionally, this thematic closeness of a number of projects has borne manifest results in the shape of the bi-weekly Urban Studies Seminar convened by Nora Lafi and Ulrike Freitag, the initiation of, or participation in, a number of third-party-funded research programmes (most prominently *Urban Violence* in cooperation with SOAS in London)¹⁴ and a great number of conferences, individual and joint publications.

The analysis of urban history in Middle Eastern contexts shows (as suggested by Lefebvre¹⁵ and others) that urban spaces were never a “mere reflection” of particular social relations, but that they were continuously being reconfigured, redefined and reinterpreted. Their integration in larger-scale, for instance imperial, political contexts is a decisive factor in these processes. Religious belonging was only one of several factors in the (re)organization of urban spaces. For the ordering of urban space criteria like regional origin or economic or marital status could matter considerably more than religious affiliation.

14 Cf. below in this report, contribution by Claudia Schröder.

15 Henri Lefebvre (1974). *La production de l'espace*. Paris: Anthropos

The projects on urban history in our working group have investigated local negotiations of these different scales of imperial belonging by employing the notions of “microcosm” and “cosmopolitanism” as complementary conceptual tools, thus going beyond older historical understandings of the “Islamic City”, a paradigm that has repeatedly been criticized as inherently essentialist.¹⁶ The imperial regulation of internal diversity has often been associated with exclusion, discrimination and violence, an aspect that has been explored more systematically on a number of occasions and in various contexts under the heading of *Urban Violence*.¹⁷

Inspired by the projects on urban history, the working group in general discussed the usefulness and limits presented by the notion of local contexts as “microcosms” of a larger whole. We also debated how “imperiality” or imperial domination becomes effective in the different historical contexts researched in our group; can the understandings of Ottoman “imperiality” outlined above be fruitfully applied to colonial India, for instance?

Domination, Control (and Subjectivity)

Thoughts about “imperiality” formulated in the context of urban history research lead to wider questions about practices of domination and control and the shaping of political subjectivities. In the context of this working group, this touches on the nexus between local belonging and processes of political, economic, and social exclusion and inclusion.

The “citizen” of a particular city, the long-established inhabitant of a given village or the holder of a specific nationality can usually claim other rights – and has other duties – than an incoming “stranger”. Access to particular resources – pastures, fields, land, water sources, labour market etc. – is often bound to spatially circumscribed social-political categories. We discussed the relation between spatial-social ties and political-economic exclusion and inclusion at a number of workshops, among them an internal workshop on “Legal Aspects of Locality” in November 2008 that was attended not only by the group members, but also by fellows of the EUME programme and the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies (FU Berlin). Another example was the international workshop on “Big Dams: Investigating their temporal and spatial politics in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia” (June 2012) organized in cooperation with Katrin Bromber (Working group *Concepts of World and Order*). This workshop analyzed how global actors, technologies and discourses take action in spatially closely bounded contexts and how they draw in or transform local social structures, power relations and economic practices, questions that are also investigated in great detail in a project on techno-capitalist development along the Coruh River in contemporary Turkey (Evren).

16 Ulrike Freitag, Malte Fuhrmann, Nora Lafi and Florian Riedler (eds.) (2011). *The City in the Ottoman Empire: Migration and the Making of Urban Modernity*. London: Routledge

17 Ulrike Freitag, Nora Lafi, Claudia Schröder and Nelida Fuccaro (eds.) (forthcoming 2015). *Urban Violence in the Middle East: Changing Cityscapes in the Transition from Empire to Nation State*. New York: Berghahn Books

Representations

Another possible way to investigate the significance of “the local” *for Muslim Worlds – World of Islam?* is to ask how particular actors, techniques, or media represent specific places or spaces. A special case is the architectonic and aesthetic analysis of mosques, which, as “Islamic spaces” per se, may express references to different religious and social traditions and networks. An example is the New Mosque of Salonica, the last great Islamic building in this city (completed in 1904). It brings together Baroque, Ottoman, Jewish, Andalusian, Islamic and even “Habsburg-Orientalist” stylistic elements, thus expressing different references to the particular history, traditions and self-images of the Dönme community of Salonica.¹⁸

Communal identities and social relations can be reflected not only in specific buildings or monuments, but also in the physical or material structures of cities, neighbourhoods or villages. Traces from different temporal layers may overlap, as Aleida Assmann (building on Czeslaw Milosz and Reinhart Koselleck) argues in her metaphor of the city as palimpsest.¹⁹ An example is the Mauritanian village Ma’ata Moulana researched by Britta Frede in the context of her doctoral research.²⁰ Initially a settlement near a water source contested between different tribal groups, the village and the spring were allocated to one particular tribal group, the Idaw Ali, by a court of law in the late 1950s. The Idaw Ali are locally considered carriers of a specific Islamic tradition associated with the Tijaniyya Sufi brotherhood. They renamed the village Ma’ata Moulana, God’s Gift, and established it as the centre for the revitalization of the Tijaniyya in Mauritania. Ma’ata Moulana was planned as the “perfect city”, in which students of religion would be formed by Islamic scholars into “perfect human beings”, taking the Prophet as a role model. The ideal of perfection is reflected in the spatial structure of the town, since Ma’ata Moulana is the only settlement of the region where streets are straight and run at right angles.

This example demonstrates how urban and spatial planning, as techniques that are implicitly oriented towards the future, also incorporate an orientation towards the past by referring to specific images of history (here, the Idaw Ali and their local roots, on the one hand, and the reference to a “global” past, namely the age of the Prophet and its utopian significance as models for perfect human beings today, on the other). Intriguingly, this seems to contradict claims that there is a dichotomic contrast between “space” and “place”, according to which places contain names and histories, while spaces open up dimensions of planning and point to the future.²¹

18 Marc Baer (2010). *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

19 Aleida Assmann (2007). *Geschichte im Gedächtnis: Von der individuellen Erfahrung zur öffentlichen Inszenierung*. München: C. H. Beck.

20 Cf. note 12.

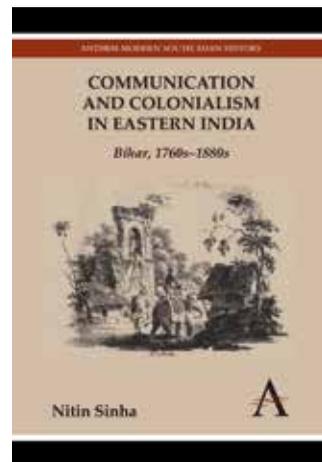
21 Aleida Assmann (2009). *Geschichte findet Stadt*. In: Christoph Leitgeb and Moritz Cszáky (eds.). *Kommunikation – Gedächtnis – Raum: Kulturwissenschaften nach dem „Spatial Turn“*, pp. 13–27. Bielefeld: Transcript, p.16.

Looking Ahead

On the whole, the discussions in this working group show that future-oriented spatial/urban planning and the re-presentation of the past – at least in the contexts we research – often go hand in hand, and that “practices of the local” can be explored only in their respective spatial and temporal dimensions.²² This is true for contexts in which religious references acquire a strong significance, as well as other cases: religious and especially Islamic frames of references shape these “practices of the local” and the imaginations of specific places as one factor among many. The interconnections among these different factors – political, economic, ethnic or linguistic, social and religious – are reconfigured in accordance with the historical and regional context.

In the recently begun research period (2014–2019), we are going to pursue the questions of this working group further by deepening some issues and questions we have already touched upon. However, we are narrowing our scope to two concrete thematic fields.

Conflicts, negotiations and ways of implementing new and often controversial ideas about the cohabitation of different groups become particularly tangible and virulent in urban contexts. These issues are centrally investigated in the new working group on Laboratories of Social Change. Processes of inclusion and exclusion, and the ways these processes are related to material conditions and normative or symbolic systems in particular local contexts, are at the centre of the new working group on *The Politics of Resources*.



↑ Book cover Nitin Sinha, *Communication and Colonialism in Eastern India. Bihar, 1760s–1880s*, 2012 (© Anthem Press)

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- Baer, Marc:** *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.
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- Frede, Britta:** *Die Erneuerung der Tiġāniya in Mauretanien. Popularisierung religiöser Ideen in der Kolonialzeit*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2014.
- Freitag, Ulrike, Malte Fuhrmann, Nora Lafi and Florian Riedler, eds.:** *The City in the Ottoman Empire: Migration and the Making of Urban Modernity*. London: Routledge, 2011.
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- Lange, Katharina, Sebastian R. Prange and Nitin Sinha:** Reflecting on “Muslim Worlds – World of Islam?” from a Spatial Perspective. *ZMO Programmatic Texts*, vol. 7. Berlin: ZMO, 2013.
- Sinha, Nitin:** *Communication and Colonialism in Eastern India, Bihar: 1760s–1880s*. London and New York: Anthem Press, 2012.

²² Cf. also Lange et al., cf. note 12.

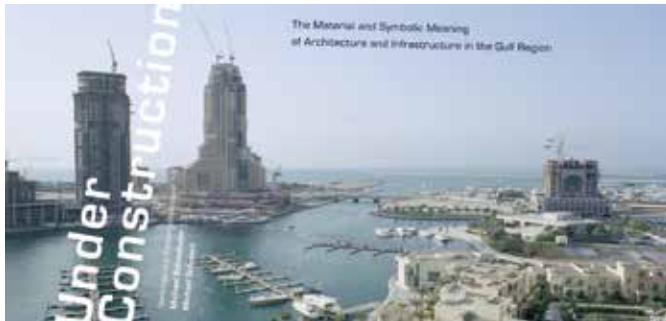
Concepts of World and Order

Katrin Bromber

The joint research endeavour to explore ways of projecting and perceiving the world started from the basic assumption that “world” is understood as a geographical, social and ideological space. These projections of the world often translate into normative tools and regulatory measures to organize and control relations that change and diversify in accordance with social and political frameworks and over time. Since the research is embedded in a programme titled *Muslim Worlds – World of Islam? Conceptions, Practices, and Crises of the Global*, it is necessary to identify the loci where religion, i.e. Islam, and the attribution of Muslimness to actors by others or by the actors themselves really matters and to what extent these prescriptions shape our understanding of these actors. ZMO research on the Arab Gulf states, for example, shows that these states have produced role models of seemingly guaranteed success and potential ways of jumping phases in societal development that are at best using oriental images, including autocratic rule and visionary thinking. In fact, they are part of a global capitalism and postmodern urbanism that has the real estate market as an important driving force. Arguably, the way of life that is expressed in and influenced by modern urban design associated with the Arab Gulf is not only exported, but also critically discussed and transformed especially, in Africa and the Middle East, where, however, it intersects with other global and regional influences. While big construction projects run and/or financed by developers from Gulf states often fail in these areas, individual housing projects built by returning migrant workers in Mauritania’s capital Nouakchott successfully enforce a new form of religious piety by adding a second floor to their homes for the female members of the household. In this case, we see how world making is directly influenced by imported lifestyle plus religiously framed expectations, i. e. a returnee especially from Saudi Arabia has to be visibly more pious than other members of the community. It goes without question that these projections might not link up to the experiences of labour migrants, who often live and toil under harsh conditions, and might not have ever had access to the house of a Gulf state citizen. Obviously, the “periphery” offers the cases in which religiously inspired investments can be explored that might, sooner or later, influence developments in the Arab Gulf as well. To discuss the Arab Gulf as a political, programmatic, brandish and utopian programme instead of as a geographical region, the research group invited academics, architects, urban planners and artists to the international conference “Under Construction. The Material and Symbolic Meaning of Architecture and Infrastructure in the Gulf Region” (ZMO, October 2010). As a major achievement, the book *Under Construction*²³ is due to come on the market in 2014.

A rewarding attempt to go beyond a descriptive understanding of religion (Islam) and diverse or even conflicting perceptions of Muslimness is offered by Marloes Janson’s anthropological study on the Tablighi Jama’at in the Gambia. By introducing the concept of moral transformation as a form of reconfiguring social order, she identifies the degree to which this concept is central to

²³ Katrin Bromber, Steffen Wippel, Birgit Krawietz and Christian Steiner (eds.) (2014). *Under Construction: The Semiotics of Architecture and Infrastructure in the Gulf Region*. Farnham: Ashgate.



↑ Opening, workshop
Under Construction, Berlin,
7 October 2010 (© Julian Tadesse)

← Poster, workshop
Under Construction, Berlin 2010
(© Bärbel Möllmann)

this group, which consists primarily of young people. Through specific practices, moral transformation by conversion matters on the individual level in terms of representation, whereas it becomes visible on the societal level in generational conflicts. On the ideological level, it serves as a form of reference to the “global umma”. Marloes Janson’s research, discussed in detail in her book *Islam, Youth, and Modernity in the Gambia: The Tablighi Jama’at*,²⁴ shows clearly the need for intermediate concepts such as moral transformation in understanding and conceptualizing processes of world making beyond the specific case at hand. Thus, it is informative for youth studies in general and for the very vibrant research on youth in Africa, their life trajectories and aspirations in particular. Taking neoliberal reforms into account in explaining the moral self-transformation that is going on among young Tablighis, Janson’s study links up to Paolo Gaibazzi’s anthropological study about the making of young entrepreneurs in Gambia’s Muslim trade diaspora. He explores the transformation of social worlds through the lens of neoliberalism and governmentality and how Islam inflects the rationalities of young jula traders, whose options to go abroad are obstructed by the restrictive immigration policies of the desired countries. His work explicitly links world making to current states of “waithood”, to use Alcinda Honwana’s²⁵ expression, both in spatial and in societal terms, which is as characteristic as it is problematic for

24 Marloes Janson (2013). *Islam, Youth, and Modernity in the Gambia: The Tablighi Jama’at*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

25 Alcinda Manuel Honwana (2012). *The Time of Youth: Work, Social Change, and Politics in Africa*. Sterling, Va: Kumarian Press.

young people in Africa. In search of ways to overcome this state, young Muslims in neighbouring Niger use specific sermon practices (wazu) to forge socio-economic ties and to put religion to work. These practices, which are studied by the anthropologist Abdoulaye Sounaye, alter the Islamic reform agenda by taking it in a direction shaped by urban social, cultural experiences and economic logics and by producing new options for young people.

The nexus between youth, new forms of religiosity and diverse aspects of global and local crises will continue to form a core within the next ZMO programme phase (2014–2019), in which concepts of world and order will be explicitly studied in connection with ideas of progress and its discontents. Hence, crises – one important category also mentioned in the subtitle of the overall programme – will remain in the focus. This is all the more important, since the majority of case studies are located in regions affected by conflict. Hence, conflict no longer be considered as mere context – as something frozen that can be dealt with in the introduction. Instead, the dynamics of the category itself should inform the ways processes of perceiving and projecting the world are analysed. Karin Mlodoch's study of survivors of the Anfal operation (a vast military campaign of the Iraqi regime against rural areas in Kurdistan in 1988)²⁶ gives detailed insights into how this military campaign framed the lives of women and children of different generations. It shows how they make sense of the past and the current world under conditions of occupation, on-going violence and conflict. Their attempts to come to terms with the violent past clearly counter global mechanisms of Truth and Reconciliation Committees. Although it shapes moral notions and conditions of life, religion, i.e. Islam, recedes into the background as one amongst other recourses. By taking agency as an analytical central category, Karin Mlodoch's research

↓ Survivors and victims of Anfal, Iraq, 2008 (© r.maro/version-foto.de)



26 Karin Mlodoch (2011). Anfal überlebende Frauen in Kurdistan-Irak: Trauma, Erinnerung und Bewältigung. *Zeitschrift für Psychotraumatologie Psychotherapiewissenschaft Psychologische Medizin* 9 (3): 33–35.

engages very critically with established concepts of trauma as individual pathological states that can be therapeutically overcome. In so doing, she gives priority to voices and concepts that call for societal changes that open up opportunities to act out on the world.

Antía Mato Bouzas' study on dynamics of interaction in South Asian borderlands, i.e. Kashmir, examines processes of world making in protracted conflict contexts. In her research she combines a conceptual and analytical approach followed in political science with research techniques of anthropological fieldwork to understand how conflict is understood and framed by the people living in four towns in the divided Kashmir territories. For that, she focuses on understandings of the local history, histories of family division due to conflict and the rebuilding of ties due to the relaxation of the border regime across the Line of Control (the line dividing Kashmir). Whereas the states of India and Pakistan try to reinforce their control over these territories as processes of state and nation building, actors in these territories are making demands for alternative forms of "ordering" that imply a reorganization of the Kashmir space. Antía Mato Bouzas' project underlines the importance of the notion of scale for scrutinizing projects of processes of world making. As the works of the anthropologist Ana Tsing²⁷ show, it not only makes a difference whether you study local communities, states or multinational enterprises, it is also analytically possible and necessary to think and study these scales together. A similar approach was used in Steffen Wipfel's edited volume *Regionalizing Oman. Political, Economic and Social Dynamics*,²⁸ which critically engages with recent ideas of the social production of space.

Anna Tsing's approach was more rewarding to ZMO's research on processes of world making than to the study of concepts of world and order through the lens of *Weltgesellschaft*, World Society, World Culture or World Polity (John W. Meyer, Berkeley School),²⁹ with the latter increasingly serving as global frame of reference. World society is structured not only by institutions or economic networks, but also by cultural and social processes of global impact. Hence, it is also given shape by world events, like 9/11. The project group also voiced scepticism towards the very ambitious system approach developed at Bielefeld. Niklas Luhmann and his followers conceptualize World Society as a closed system of communication that is structured by and compartmentalized into subsystems such as law, politics, economy and sports.³⁰ These subsystems operate on binary codes, such as lawful/unlawful for law and victory/defeat in sports. Whether one accepts the notion of binaries or not, the projects of the working group substantiated on the empirical level shifts in the systemic borders by communicative and material practice from local or national frames of reference to the world as the horizon of expectation and referential framework for individual and collective actors. However, Luhmann conceives world society as an all-encompassing global social system with interactive autopoietic subsystems. His theory completely lacks hierar-

27 Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2009). The Global Situation. *Cultural Anthropology. Journal of the Society for Cultural Anthropology* 15 (3): 327–360. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2000). Inside the Economy of Appearances. *Public Culture* 12 (1): 115–144.

28 Steffen Wipfel (ed.) (2013). *Regionalizing Oman: Political, Economic and Social Dynamics*. Dordrecht, Heidelberg: Springer.

29 John W. Meyer, John Boli, George M. Thomas and Francisco O. Ramirez (1997). World Society and the Nation-State, *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1): 144–81; John W. Meyer (2010). World Society, Institutional Theories, and the Actor. *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (1): 1–20.

30 Rudolph Stichweh (2005). Zum Gesellschaftsbegriff der Systemtheorie. Parsons und Luhmann und die Hypothese der Weltgesellschaft. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie (Sonderheft "Weltgesellschaft")*: 174–85.

chies, such as the dominance of economy or politics, but considers only lateral and circular interaction by communication within and between systems. Although this has to be debated, the approach bears the possibility to conceive processes of world making different from the globalization debates that assume the hegemony of a macro-level over the micro-level and that conceive globalization as a linear and homogenizing process; for the approach thus seeks an understanding of the reciprocal impact of macro- and micro-level on a global scale. Given that there are many voices criticizing that Luhmann's theory's non-judgemental stance undermines the emancipatory claim of sociology (Habermas-Luhmann debate), and given that the gradual incorporation of non-European case studies is well under way in Bielefeld's sociological departments, ZMO studies of processes of projecting, perceiving and shaping worlds on different scales will further engage with these theoretical approaches. It might help to show that the conceived "hyperreal" worlds in the Arab Gulf states that inform and are informed by a late-late capitalist mode of production are perceived by specific actors as "the" way of life and not as empty containers that can be translated into specific forms of pious life elsewhere.

Selected publications

Bromber, Katrin, Birgit Krawietz and Joseph Maguire, eds.: *Sport across Asia: Politics, Cultures, and Identities*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

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Mlodoch, Karin: "We Want to be Remembered as Strong Women, Not as Shepherds": Women Anfal Survivors in Kurdistan-Iraq Struggling for Agency and Acknowledgement. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 8 (1): 63–91, 2012.

Wippel, Steffen: Regionalizing Oman: A New Interest of Research on Oman and its Spatial Dimensions. In: Steffen Wippel, ed., *Regionalizing Oman*, pp. 1–18. Dordrecht and Heidelberg: Springer, 2013.

↓ Sharjah Art Museum, V. A. E., 2006 (© Bärbel Möllmann)



Associated Research Projects

Transforming Memories: Cultural Production and Personal/Public Memory in Lebanon and Morocco

Sonja Hegasy, Laura Menin, Norman Saadi Nikro,
Makram Rabah

Transforming Memories is a Zentrum Moderner Orient collaborative research project with UMAM Documentation & Research in Beirut, Lebanon. The project, funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, was conducted from January 2012 to December 2013, inaugurated with a workshop in March 2012 at UMAM in Beirut. Headed by Sonja Hegasy (Vice-Director at ZMO) and Monika Borgmann (Co-Director at UMAM), the project involved three research subprojects: Saadi Nikro, Sites of ReMemory: Civil Violence and Trauma in Lebanon; Laura Menin, Wounded Memories: An Ethnographic Approach to Contemporary Moroccan Cultural Production; and Makram Rabah, Memory and Reconciliation: Conflict on Mount Lebanon. A further workshop was held in Rabat in April 2013 to consider the comparative dimension between Lebanon and Morocco.

In theoretical terms the project sought to diverge from a Pierre Nora-inspired concentration on memory as *lieux de mémoire*, symbolically congealed in monuments and archives encompassing nationalist associations,³¹ as well as the corporeal emphasis on “habit memory” influenced by Paul Connerton’s preoccupation with rituals and commemorations.³² So that rather than concentrating on the ritual, collective or “preservative” dimensions of memory, the project focused on the “work of memory” in Lebanon and Morocco as transformative practices. Research was thus more concerned with a phenomenological approach to how people proactively engage memory as critical social practices, in respect to works of cultural production, such as film and literature, autobiography and memoir, oral history and testimony, archival collections and documentation.

In Lebanon and Morocco, cultural production incorporates sites of creative and critical practices in which personal memories of violence are articulated, thereby engaging public awareness and encouraging historical review. The project’s focus on the transformative capacities of works of cultural production intended to situate memory in the present as social practices of personal and public exchange. Our shift toward a more phenomenological focus on how people in Lebanon and Morocco employ memory to expose and question how the present is politically constrained in its capacities to render past violence potentially memorable was aimed to fill a research gap on studies concerned with remembrance and forgetting.

Collaboration with UMAM Documentation & Research was intensified after the inaugural workshop, during which the project’s visiting researchers from Berlin became acquainted with Lebanese intellectuals, artists, writers and journalists and former political prisoners. For instance, we

³¹ Pierre Nora (1989). *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire*. Translated by Marc Roudebush. *Representations* 26 (Spring, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory): 7–24.

³² Paul Connerton (1994). *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge [etc.]: University Press.



↑ Martyrs' Monument, Beirut, Lebanon,
October 2012 (© Laura Menin)

→ UMAM project, Beirut, Lebanon,
October 2012 (© Sonja Hegasy)



were able to talk with As'ad Shaftari, a prominent former Christian militia member involved in the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre, who made a public confession and apology in 2000. Particularly inspiring was the discussion with Ali Abu Dehn, a former political prisoner in Tadmour, Syria and the founder of the NGO Lebanese Political Detainees in Syria. The research group, especially Laura Menin and her work on Morocco, was inspired to address the issue of the disappeared and missing. Subsequently, Monika Borgmann and Ali Abu Dehn came to Berlin in May 2013 with a documentary theatre production on political prisoners in Syria.

Research undertaken in 2012 and 2013 in Lebanon and Morocco confirms that their respective political and public cultures involve prodigious amounts of writing and publishing autobiographies and memoirs, producing and screening feature and documentary films, and oral history projects in which a younger generation collects personal testimonies from the older generation. In this respect, the high school student projects in Lebanon, *Badna Naaref* and *War Stories*, are particularly compelling. As these activities of cultural production come to gain a public hearing, they work to expose the personal to a viewing/reading public, contributing to changes in public culture itself. Concerning ethical responsiveness, they contribute to the capacities of public culture to acknowledge and reach out to people still traumatized by their experiences.

Comparative analysis demonstrated the creative exchange between the personal and public against the backdrop of the complex historical, political and social contexts characterizing Lebanon and Morocco. One important point worth mentioning is that while in Morocco cultural production and civil society activities engaging the violent past pushed the state to initiate the Justice and Reconciliation Commission (abbreviated here as JRC) in 2004, by contrast in Lebanon no such state-sponsored commission has come about. On the contrary, in the aftermath of the civil wars (1975-1990), the Lebanese state legislated the controversial Amnesty Law in 1991, which worked to suspend any possibility of legal proceedings brought against perpetrators, militia leaders or combatants. And yet in recognizing neither perpetrators nor victims the Lebanese state's attempt to erase rather than promote, memory has brought about cultural and civil society practices challenging amnesia and forgetfulness. The Amnesty Law has worked to provide protection for perpetrators from judicial proceedings, paradoxically enabling them to give public accounts of their involvement in past violent actions without fear of legal action. In contrast, in Morocco the JRC concentrated on investigation, reparation and giving a voice to the victims, while making it a condition that no perpetrators were/are to be named or held accountable. In Morocco this allowed for three important developments: the official admission of state violence, the public recognition of the suffering of a segment of society and thus their social rehabilitation and the openness of the judicial process. We found that some victims regard the state's official admission as a sufficient (even if implicit) excuse, whereas others still demand an explicit apology from the monarch and feel that the JRC has turned suffering into a commodity (as noted in interviews with Fatna el-Bouih and Fouad Abdelmoumni).

This comparative aspect bears out our contention that memory practices cannot be studied simply in dichotomist terms (e.g. official historiography vs. oppositional narratives of the past), but rather need to be situated within the complex social, political and historical contexts in which cultural production and memory practices take shape. This has led us to pay close attention to the

→ Medical Association for the
Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture,
Hay Mohammadi Casablanca, April 2013
(© Laura Menin)



specific conditions under which exchanges between the personal and the public occur in Lebanon and Morocco.

In respect to our preoccupation with memory as transformative practices, it is significant that recent research in memory studies has more energetically emerged from and extended into post-colonial contexts. Specifically, recent publications on memory and trauma have initiated a more relational, comparative approach to considering intercultural entanglements and influences. For example, public, non-judicial truth and reconciliation commissions (such as that of South Africa) have been researched to assess similar activities in other countries; or else intercultural references to discursive articulations and social practices of memory, trauma, witnessing and testimony are shown to flow into and influence one another. Such research works to articulate a transformative political and cultural understanding of memory practices that challenges a more preservational approach — in the process articulating an understanding of memory as always flexible, caught up in political and social processes. Precisely because of its flexible and transformative qualities, memory can play a vital role in processes of change and political transition.³³ This renewed interest in agency and practice confirms that our theoretical perspective constitutes an innovative and exciting line of research, especially regarding our interest in how cultural production and social activism in Lebanon and Morocco engage a wide variety of practices of memory work that have the effect of contributing material and imaginary resources to their respective public cultures.

Additional information on research, activities and publications is available on the ZMO website: http://www.zmo.de/forschung/projekte_2008/Transforming_Memories.html.

³³ Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt (eds.) (2012). *Memory and Political Change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 3.

Urban Violence in the Middle East: From Empire to Nation State

Claudia Schröder

The idea for the three-year Anglo-German project *Urban Violence in the Middle East: Between Empire and Nation State*, funded by the DFG and AHRC, emerged from years of work that Nora Lafi and Ulrike Freitag at ZMO, Berlin, and Nelida Fuccaro at SOAS, London, devoted to the research on the urban modern history of the Middle East. Earlier engagement with urban history during the Ottoman and post-Ottoman period at ZMO included Ulrike Freitag's research on the Arabian Peninsula and especially the urban social history of Jeddah in the 19th century, an Ottoman city at the "frontier" of the Ottoman Empire, and Nora Lafi's work on the urban government in Ottoman cities, the governance of migrations, and municipal reforms of the second part of the 19th century. Their shared interest in urban history had inter alia resulted in the launching of the Urban Studies Seminar at ZMO in 2009, which since then has provided one of the forums for the research conducted in the context of *Europe in the Middle East – The Middle East in Europe* (EUME) and the integration of a number of visiting fellows on a yearly basis. The third project convenor, Nelida Fuccaro, contributed years of experience in research on the urban history of the Persian Gulf and Syria in the 19th and 20th centuries. In her work, she had concentrated especially on issues of ethnicity, communalism, nationalism and state building.

When the idea of an Anglo-German research project on urban violence was born, Fuccaro had just completed a larger history project on the port cities of the Persian Gulf before and after the discovery of oil, herself focusing on Manama in Bahrain. The inclusion of different complementary traditions of research promised to create fresh perspectives on events of violent conflict in Middle Eastern cities. In the eyes of the three convenors, the more social science-oriented historical approach of the Anglo-American tradition, which has developed a strong interdisciplinary profile by the inclusion of methodologies from social anthropology and political science, offered excellent ground for exchange with the field of Islamic Studies, which is an integral part of the writing of Middle Eastern history in German academia, on the one hand, and with the French historiographical tradition (which is Nora Lafi's background in academic training), on the other.

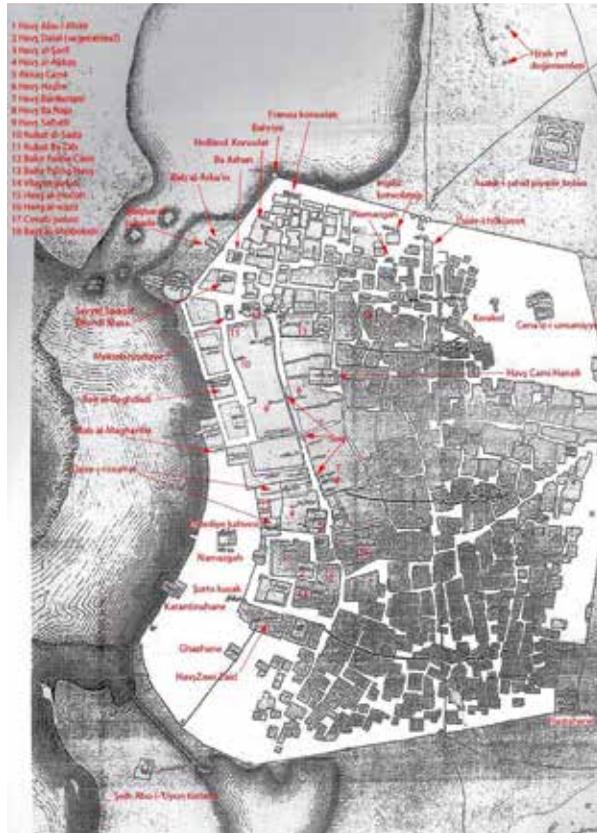
The overall aim of the project was to create a comparative study of popular and state violence in selected urban centres of the Ottoman, Arab and Iranian Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries and thus to fill a perceived gap in the research on Middle Eastern urban history. The project design reflected more recent debates in international history on the nature of violence in pre-modern cities as the expression of a plural political consciousness. While for Europe, Asia and the two Americas, cities as theatres of (violent) contention have long been attracting the attention of social scientists and historians alike, prompting important reflections on issues of democracy, civil society and the individual and collective representation of state oppression, there have been no systematic investigations for the Middle East. Furthermore, the three project convenors felt that urban violence in this region of the world was often falsely interpreted as "a sign of the violent nature of its societies or as an expression of confessional or ethnic factionalism". By contrast,

they felt that their shared research should investigate episodes of unrest not merely as “symptoms”, but rather as “tracers” and expressions of social and political behaviour and of shifting modes of interaction between states, urban administrations and societies. The “anatomy” of these episodes of unrest formed the baseline of the project in order to produce a substantive body of research based on archives and able to bring new perspectives to street and popular politics, urban governance and state building.

Three overarching themes were chosen to redress the existence of blank spaces in Middle Eastern history: a first research theme coordinated by Nora Lafi focused on street violence and on different types of popular unrest in the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran. Lafi’s own research project dealt with violence in Tunis, Aleppo and Cairo in the 18th and 19th centuries, cities where collective violence ranged from bread riots to inter-confessional strife. In August 2011, Fatemeh Masjedi, who was recruited into the project as a doctoral student, began conducting complementary research on urban violence and social disorder in Tehran and Tabriz during the constitutional period and the succeeding years of 1906–1920. Examining similar issues but shifting the focus from the centres to the margins of the Ottoman Empire, the second sub-project, under supervision by Ulrike Freitag, was concerned with public violence in the Hijaz and Saudi Arabia from the mid-19th century to the 1960s. Freitag’s own research investigated the use of public spaces during conflicts in Jeddah by both government and various social forces from the Ottoman reform period (reassertion of Ottoman rule in 1840) through Sharifian rule (1916–1924/25) to the modern Saudi state. The doctoral student in this sub-project, Claudia Schröder, investigated popular and labour protest in Saudi Arabian oil towns and the various ways space was appropriated by traditional and new socio-political actors in the newly constituted Saudi Arabian state between 1953 and 1967. The third sub-project, led by SOAS-based Nelida Fuccaro, focused on urban violence in Iraq and Iran after World War I and until the early 1960s. In her own project, Fuccaro investigated the consolidation of new ideologies and practices of street violence in Baghdad, Mosul and Kirkuk against the backdrop of British mandatory rule, fast urbanization after the 1930s, expanding shanty towns and the development of the oil industry. Her sub-project was joined by Rasmus Elling as a post-doctoral researcher for one year. Elling contributed a piece of research of his own on urban violence, nationalism and ethnic minorities in the oil city Abadan during the 1940s.

During two conferences held in December 2011 at the ZMO and in February 2013 at SOAS, around 30 international researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds, such as history, social sciences and urban planning, contributed new research and methodological approaches to the overall theme of urban violence in the Middle East and, for a comparative outlook, South and South East Asia. In spring 2012, the project group began compiling the first of two forthcoming edited volumes on *Urban Violence in the Middle East: Changing Cityscapes in the Transition from Empire to Nation State*.³⁴ Besides a comprehensive theoretical and conceptual introduction to the thematic of urban violence in the Middle East, the volume contains twelve chapters covering occurrences of everyday violence and particularly violent events in Middle Eastern cities from

³⁴ Cf. note 16.



→ Map of Jeddah, 1880/81

1800 to the 1950s. In four thematic sections, these contributions shed light on, first, the Management and Employment of Violence, and particularly the normative role of the modernizing state or foreign rulers in the definition of violence and its prevention or sanctioning, which themselves often deploy violent means; second, Communal Violence and its Discontents, and particularly the de-construction of what on first glance appears as violent sectarian conflict in the Ottoman and national context; third, the ways in which seemingly irrational and extreme violence or violent rituals operated in the intentional preservation or reinforcement of (traditional) law and order, in the Symbolic Politics of Violence; and, fourth, the Spatiality of Violence, exemplified by “ethnic segregation and social control in the light of economic growth and parallel underdevelopment” in 20th-century oil cities. The volume also offers a reflection of the early protests and uprisings of the so-called Arab Spring, emphasizing many continuities as well as ruptures in the deployment of violence in the urban contentious politics. In rethinking violent events of the past against the background of 2011, the volume suggests a normalization in the interpretations of violence in Middle Eastern urban history, which differs from other regions merely in “specific processes of urban modernization, often under the impact of foreign actors and spanning both the imperial age and the establishment of the modern Middle Eastern states” that determined “particular forms of violent contention as well as specific practices of conflict resolution within Middle East-

ern cities". The manuscript for the second edited volume is currently being compiled by Nelida Fuccaro. Among other things, the volume will problematize the nature of textual sources and their use for historical analysis in a section by Rasmus Elling that specifically deals with semantic reflections on violence, space and event. The contributions in the volume also discuss in detail the norms and practices applied in civic conflict, as well as the various political, social and economic frontlines that characterized the cities in question on the local, national and regional scale that were contested and embattled by violent means.



↑ Arabs searched at Jaffa Gate during the 1929 riots in Palestine. Unknown photographer, American Colony, Jerusalem, 1929 (© Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.)

Habitats and Habitus: Politics and Aesthetics of Religious World-Making³⁵

Murtala Ibrahim, Birgit Meyer, Hanna Nieber

In many contemporary African settings, as elsewhere, different religious worlds rub against and interfere with each other in arenas of diversity and pluralism. It is high time to challenge the division of the study of religion into separate anthropologies of Islam and Christianity. Developing research that places Christian and Islamic movements in one framework so as to explore the similarities, differences and conflicts between them, the central concern of this project is to help create new synergies by linking the study of Islam with that of Christianity. This project takes a “material” approach that places centre stage the politico-aesthetic religious practices of forming the world in a concrete sense, whether in buildings and architecture or design, the use of audio-visual and material culture, or the shaping of (gendered) bodies, senses and sensibilities. The approach is grounded in an understanding of religion as a medium that operates via particular “sensational forms” that mould religious subjects, shape strong, desired personal and collective identities and social relationships, and produce a shared environment. Two subprojects focusing on Nigeria and Zanzibar respectively will explore the links between Christian and Muslim techniques of the self – the *habitus* – and the politico-aesthetic practices that shape the material environment (home, city, religious spaces, architecture, circulation of images, scriptures and soundscapes) – the *habitats*.

Birgit Meyer (Ph.D. Cultural Anthropology, University of Amsterdam, 1995) is professor of religious studies at Utrecht University. She has worked on colonial missions and local appropriations of Christianity, modernity and conversion, the rise of Pentecostalism in the context of neo-liberal capitalism, popular culture and video-films in Ghana, the relation between religion, media and identity, as well as on material religion and the place and role of religion in the twenty-first century. She is vice-chair of the International African Institute (London), a member of the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences, and one of the editors of *Material Religion*. From 2010–2011 she was a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study (Wissenschaftskolleg), Berlin. In 2011 she was awarded the Anneliese Maier Research Award, enabling her to conduct the *Habitus and Habitats* project in conjunction with ZMO (2012–2017).

Murtala Ibrahim: subproject “Sensation, Sight and Sound of Nigerian Religious Movements: A Comparative Study of Christ Embassy and Nasrullahi-Fathi Faith Society (NASFAT)”

The research project is a comparative study of Christ Embassy and NASFAT and their respective material expressions. Christ Embassy is one of the most active and influential movements in the rapidly growing neo-Pentecostal spectrum in Nigeria. The Church was initiated and led by the highly celebrated Pastor Chris Oyakhilome and his wife Pastor Anita Oyakhilome. According to its website, Christ Embassy nurtures a vibrant TV Ministry, Internet Ministry, Healing School and

³⁵ First published in: *ZMO Orient Bulletin. History and Cultures in Asia, the Middle East and Africa*, 23 (December 2012): 2–3.

inner-city mission. The church is represented throughout the Nigerian Federation and has countless branches in all five continents. NASFAT is one of the most important Islamic groups in Nigeria distinct from mainstream Islamic movements. One feature that makes NASFAT stand out from other Islamic groups is the apparent influence of Pentecostal churches on some of its activities and modes of expression.

Although the rise of NASFAT should not be reduced to the challenges posed by the heavy public presence of Pentecostals in Lagos alone, there is no doubt that NASFAT is highly influenced by Pentecostal movements. This influence has yielded remarkable similarities between NASFAT and Christ Embassy, for instance with regard to the emphasis placed on economic empowerment, building businesses, prosperity, success, prayers against dark spirits and enemies, testimonies during worship services, efficiency, the adoption of modern marketing strategies such as the use of branding in the Nigerian religious market, and on establishing diaspora branches abroad.

Both Christ Embassy and NASFAT practice a world-engaging mode of religiosity that produces different kinds of material expression, such as spectacular places of worship, audio-visuals (films and websites), publications, music and images.

The aim of this research, which will take place over the next three years, is to undertake a thorough study of Christ Embassy and NASFAT in a comparative framework. The central focus is on their salient and outspoken material expressive forms: music (DVDs, CDs and mobile phones.), texts (most frequently verses from the Bible and the Qur'an, Christ Embassy's Rhapsody of Reality and the NASFAT Prayer Book), images (art works, pictures, posters, calendars, web pages, phones, publications), and buildings (mosques, churches, office buildings, schools).

In the context of the *Habitus and Habitats* project, this subproject asks the following questions: how do the material forms and, more broadly, the religious aesthetics of Christ Embassy and NASFAT operate as media to link members with a spiritual realm? How do the members of the two movements interact with these material forms (e.g., music, texts, images and buildings)? What type of experience or lifestyle results from this interaction? What spatial practices arise from the four material forms? The research methodology will be anthropological and involve interviews and participant observation.

Murtala Ibrahim was born in the central Nigerian city of Jos, Plateau State. He attended the University of Jos where he received a BA in Religious Studies in 2008 and recently completed the Master's Programme in the Sociology of Religion. He also worked for two and a half years at the Institute of Governance and Social Research (IGSR) Jos.

Hanna Nieber: subproject "Scripture Practices in Zanzibar: Comparing Muslim and Christian Contexts"

Writing a surah above the door, taking notes on biblical verses used in sermons, drinking the washed-off saffron ink with which Qur'anic verses are written, or driving a mini-bus with the words "God is great" in the rear window – these are just some of the practices involving scripture

on Zanzibar. As part of the Swahili Coast, Zanzibar can be characterized as belonging to both the African and the Indian Ocean region, since these are formed discursively and practically. Caught within this dichotomy, the habitat of Zanzibar Town displays the materialization of customs through materially bound inscriptions that reflect the two regions and different religious affinities.

The dominance of the vast Muslim majority shapes daily routines and practices. Zanzibar's economic and political ties to the mainland (with a Christian majority) nevertheless pose a challenge to some of these practices. Although Arabic script is seen frequently, the Latin alphabet is more commonly used. In Zanzibar, Arabic script is strongly connoted to reading and writing practices in an Islamic pious context. Those who read and write Arabic script are therefore perceived as well-versed in Islam and respected as religious authorities. Using religious texts written in Arabic, it is commonly understood, provides access to the transcendent and empowers to heal and protect. Though not attached to a specific script, practices such as raising the Bible into the air while preaching are held to be similarly empowering. The holiness of scripture as a divinely empowering attribute is affirmed through specific, authorized scriptural practices. Consequently, holiness appears to be incarnated in scripture.

Text is not material in itself. If it is to be conveyed and gain endurance, text requires permanent re-materialization via a vast array of scriptural practices such as writing, reading, reciting or singing. The material endurance of scripture reverberates with its constant re-enactment as holy text. Ways of rendering the text holy include practices of reading aloud from the scripture, thereby invoking spirits, or writing God's name on a vehicle so as to communicate customer protection. Through the repeated enactments of scripture as holy text and the practices of gaining access to the transcendent, "scripture" can be analyzed as a "sensational form." Taking the concept of sensational form as a starting point allows us to relate the various practices to each other and to compare Muslim and Christian contexts. Scriptural practices in their multiplicity (reading, reciting, drinking, writing, wearing, holding) form bundles of practices that, although anchored within their specific religious settings, nevertheless shape a common habitat where religiously contested spaces are negotiated. Zanzibar Town, of which Stone Town is the old centre with fifty mosques and two churches, is the urban centre of Zanzibar. Apart from increasing tourist presence and the town's infrastructural adaptations, the urban space of Zanzibar Town is predominantly shaped by its inhabitants. Its sensual perception interrelates with the simultaneous presence of different scriptures and practices.

In the context of the larger *Habitus and Habitats* project, this project aims to investigate the prevalent scripture practices and how these shape the habitat of Zanzibar Town. Where does script appear, how is it used and for what purpose? How do scripture practices shape the political aesthetics of urban space in Zanzibar Town?

Hanna Nieber took African Studies at Leipzig University (MA 2012). She spent a year on the Tanzanian mainland (2008/2009) and recently (2011/2012) conducted research for her Master's thesis: Zanzibari Medicine. The Islamic Practice of Negotiating with a Jinni. She is interested in the patterns of Zanzibari practices and how they relate to their material manifestations.



Essays by ZMO Fellows

Kashmir: Perceptions of Conflict from the Border³⁵

Antia Mato Bouzas

As a political scientist specialized in South Asia, I am interested in the Kashmir conflict over a divided and disputed territory between India and Pakistan but also as a case of “Muslim” nationalism against the Indian state. What Kashmir means and to whom is still much debated. State narratives – the views mainly emerging from the political, media and academic realms in India and Pakistan – often provide a rather partial view of the story, implying that a certain commonly agreed identity (Muslim or secular) is in danger. For India, Kashmiri nationalists are anti-state elements and against India’s secular tradition, while for Pakistan, the fight for Kashmir is part of an incomplete project of a state for Muslims. Contrary to these views are the scholars who consider the Kashmir region the main starting point for their analyses, which aim to improve understanding of the players involved in the conflict and their demands. These studies, mostly focusing on the Indian part of Kashmir, shift attention from the state’s perspective to the study of the socio-political context in this peripheral region and, in so doing, decentralize the issue. Although Kashmir is well known and in urgent need of attention, nobody agrees on what issues need to be resolved in order to end regional tensions.

My two-year project at ZMO has explored this internal or “peripheral” dimension of the Kashmir dispute through the study of four border towns, although here I will refer to only two of them, located on either side of the Line of Control (hereafter LoC). The LoC functions as a border although it is not demarcated or recognized by either India or Pakistan. My interest has been to examine how people in these border towns perceive the other side and their views of the Kashmir problem, with the idea of comparing these “local” accounts with the state’s general understanding of the dispute.

While carrying out this project, I have understood that the Kashmir conflict is very much about borders and about how these borders have been interpreted by the postcolonial states of India and Pakistan in their respective nation-building processes. Through these interpretations, these states have ignored the people’s sense of belonging on both sides of the new dividing line between the two countries and how they have been caught and dragged into a never-ending conflict. A better understanding of these “local” geographies and sense of affiliation may put into perspective some of the states’ official arguments about the dispute. Thus, whereas Pakistan

← Essad Bey. Book cover Tom Reiss, *Der Orientalist*, 2008 (© Collection Tom Reiss, Osburg Verlag)

35 First published in: Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin e. V. (ed.). *Bericht über das Forschungsjahr 2010. Jahrbuch der Geisteswissenschaftlichen Zentren Berlin*, pp. 83–96. Berlin: Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin, 2011.

maintains that the Gilgit-Baltistan region under its control is part of the Kashmir dispute, people in this area express themselves in very different terms, mostly arguing that in 1947 they fought a liberation struggle against the Kashmiri ruler and opted for integration in Pakistan. In the case of India, the governments of New Delhi tend to see the problem of Kashmiri nationalism in terms of a conspiracy orchestrated by Pakistan, thereby ignoring the fact that in the Kashmir Valley, the role of Pakistan is very severely criticized.

To some extent, it is possible to agree with the view indirectly expressed by the Indian scholar Navnita Chadha Behera that the Kashmir dispute works very much like a myth. It is a struggle for an ideal state (the entity created in the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846 and that lasted till 1947) that never functioned as such. However, the Kashmiri nationalists of the valley (on the Indian side) think otherwise. Their predecessors led a freedom struggle against the authoritarian and oppressive regimes of the maharajas, which was later replaced by a similar interventionist and corrupt rule under the Indian state. Their current struggle is not shared by others, such as the Buddhists of Ladakh and the Hindus of Jammu (the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir is a melting pot of religious and language groups), and even among the Muslim communities there are important differences.

During my fieldwork conducted on both sides of the LoC, I found that Kashmir means different things to different people, but the main problem is that an open and sincere dialogue remains difficult under the current circumstances. Even when India and Pakistan established a process of dialogue in 2004 (also referred to as a “peace process”) that has permitted cross-border communication links in Kashmir, the situation that dominates on the ground is that of apathy. The main obstacle to negotiations seems to be the tight control that the Indian and Pakistani states exercise in this region, through militarization and intelligence activities, without fundamental political changes on the ground.

The India-Pakistan Dialogue Process and Kashmir

As a result of improvement in relations between India and Pakistan, the two countries initiated a dialogue in 2004 to address their pending disputes, including Kashmir, and adopted a comprehensive common stand on security issues pertaining to the region, in particular the nuclear question. On the one hand, both governments have perhaps realized that they can no longer address their differences by resorting to war – India and Pakistan have fought four wars since 1947, including also the short conflict of Kargil in 1999, without any significant gains for either side – and, on the other hand, because of the unstable security in the region, there has been significant international pressure that has somehow compelled both states to address their differences. Other aspects, such as the emergence of India as a global power and the internal security of Pakistan (and its democratization) also have to be taken into account.

The India-Pakistan dialogue process lasted till 2008, when India called off negotiations in December after the Mumbai attacks, alleging that the Pakistan intelligence services, the ISI, were behind the massacre and had fuelled terrorists on Indian soil. In 2010 bilateral official negotiations started again, although the full dialogue has not been resumed due to domestic political issues

and some group pressure on both sides. The main bone of contention between the two countries is Kashmir, but the dispute also envisages an important internal dimension that has to be addressed. To date, the proposal that has received some attention from most of the parties dealing with the dispute is the one presented by the former Pakistani president and ex-general Musharraf.

The so-called Musharraf proposal was to create a demilitarized area with a high degree of self-governance or maximum autonomy but without making changes to the sovereign status of these territories. The idea was to change the meaning of the LoC in its function as an international dividing line by connecting people and creating prosperity in these now marginalized areas of two large states. To some degree, the idea vaguely resembles other experiences of transformation of disputed borderlands into areas of cooperation, although the specificity of the historical and political trajectory of South Asia poses other questions. One in particular that emerged while carrying out this project was how India and Pakistan can work to change the meaning of boundaries and decentralize authority in border areas while at the same time both states' understanding of sovereignty (and national identity) is highly centralized.

A view of the border towns and their inhabitants located on both sides of the LoC can be a good example of what happens and what is understood on the ground about these political processes. Border areas are the fortresses of the state's territorial integrity and their inhabitants are generally considered dubious nationals, given their usual plural sense of belonging and their cross-border ties. When borders are disputed between states, as in the case of Kashmir, those living in these territories are subjected to different rules that impose a sort of precarious life, a sort of regime distinct from that found in the central parts of the state. The peace processes can alleviate this situation and eventually transform this unstable context, but this cannot happen without revising how the state deals with its peripheries.

Views Emerging from the Border Areas

As noted above, the former Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir was divided between India and Pakistan as a result of the 1947–48 war. Since then, Pakistan has been in control of one-third of the territory (now differentiated between Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Gilgit-Baltistan region) and the remaining two-thirds became part of federal India as the State of Jammu and Kashmir (which comprises the Kashmir Valley, the region of Jammu and the area of Ladakh). The two states have adopted different policies in dealing with their respective territories: Pakistan has opted not to incorporate these parts as provinces of the Republic by keeping them under an ambiguous status, while India has pursued an integration policy toward the area in line with the rest of the Indian states, although with some differences.

In the aftermath of the 1987 elections in the Indian part of Kashmir, in which massive rigging was alleged, a widespread popular discontent arose that was severely repressed by the security forces. This was followed by the eruption of an insurgence movement (supported by Pakistan) that developed into a conflict between Kashmiri separatists and the Indian state. Further Pakistani interventions, such as supporting the infiltration of violent Islamist groups (more clearly pro-

Pakistan than the pro-independence leanings of the first batch of fighters) have led to a deteriorating security and human environment in a society that was once quite plural. India has exacerbated the problem by displaying a large number of soldiers with the intention of curbing the violence. For more than twenty years now, militarization in Indian Kashmir has become a normal aspect of everyday life of the citizens of the valley.

With this general context in mind, I would like to mention that my research concentrated on, but was not restricted to, the towns of Skardu and Muzaffarabad on the Pakistani side and Kargil and Srinagar on the Indian side. Muzaffarabad and Srinagar are the capitals of the divided Kashmir areas and they represent the main political centres of the conflict, while Skardu and Kargil can be considered peripheries in terms of the impact of the dispute on them. Muzaffarabad is inhabited by a significant number of displaced people from the Indian side of Kashmir, as a result of the open warfare between the two countries in different periods. Many people from Srinagar and the neighbouring town of Baramulla fled to the Pakistani Kashmir, but after the crisis of 1990 many families from villages in the mountains, known as paharis, also fled to Muzaffarabad out of fear of repression by Indian forces and because of their proximity to the LoC and exposure to the fighting. There are differences in the status and living conditions of those who came to town before 1990 and after. Paharis from the Indian side now mostly lead a precarious life in camps and their conditions have often been ignored by the Kashmiri nationalist leadership based in Srinagar. The Pakistani government has also exploited their cause so as to embarrass its neighbour by opening these places to guided visits for foreign diplomats and occasionally the press.

Muzaffarabad is a dusty and noisy border town badly rebuilt after the devastating earthquake of 2005. It is located sixty kilometres from the LoC and at a four-hour bus distance from Pakistan's capital of Islamabad. It is the headquarters of the government as well as one of the main bases for the Pakistani army. In this sense, it can be said that the town is a very secure area, compared with the rest of Pakistan. However, in the last two years some minor violent incidents have taken place, mainly against the Shia minority, posing a threat to the relative harmony among religious Muslim sects. Azad Jammu and Kashmir represents one of the few places that has escaped the sectarian violence (mainly between Sunni and Shiite groups) that affects Pakistan, and this is particularly relevant because the militancy that operates in India, based in this area, is composed mainly of radical Sunni groups.

To understand how the Kashmir dispute is perceived from Muzaffarabad, I interviewed and talked to people from different linguistic and religious groups, initially as a way to contrast my own impressions of being in the area. I have noticed that "Kashmir" appears as a sort of propaganda, as a slogan promoted by certain elites who are essentially pro-Pakistani. These views are not necessarily shared by those directly affected by the conflict (such as the displaced people) but they are also questioned by other groups who show little interest in "the Kashmir issue" (such as hazara or hindko, local pahari and gujjar communities). Muzaffarabad is a multilingual and multi-religious town, heavily influenced by its proximity to the Northwest Frontier Province rather than to the Kashmir Valley. In this sense, for those who have left their homes on the other side of the LoC, Kashmir represents a "lost paradise", but for many who have lived here for several generations (and also others coming from neighbouring Pakistani provinces), this might not be the

case. In other words, the views that emerge from this area tend to recognize the existence of a problem, but there is a lack of clarity about what the main issue is. In fact, most people here are unable to say whether “solving Kashmir” means accepting the formal current status, the idea of Kashmir belonging to Pakistan, or the region becoming an independent state.

Moving over to the other side, to the city of Srinagar, things are seen in a different manner. The conflict is manifest there, but is considered a dispute that concerns Kashmiris vis-à-vis the Indian state, rather than an Indo-Pakistan issue. The Kashmiri nationalists who do not participate in the elections have differing positions ranging from embracing the possibility of obtaining maximum autonomy from the Indian state to achieving independence. In fact, one of the most significant aspects of seeing things from Srinagar, also mentioned in the insider’s account provided by the Kashmiri author Basharat Peer in *Curfewed Night*, is the complex relation that Kashmiris have with Pakistan. Their neighbour has supported their cause, but it has also caused them great harm. Pakistan’s assistance to Islamist groups operating in Kashmir, against the mostly secular (and probably not pro-Pakistan) leanings of people in the valley, has helped to give this conflict an Islamist emphasis. Not forgetting the negative role of the Kashmiri leadership – with division amongst its members, without any plan or direction to address the problem, and unlikely to include communities other than the Muslims of the valley – I maintain that the religious aspect of the problem has been greatly exploited for various political purposes.

The Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the Kashmir province and the surrounding areas, remains a highly militarized territory and the army and paramilitary forces are deployed almost everywhere. Heavy militarization is one of the most striking aspects of the city of Srinagar. The paramilitary forces, besides the local police, are displayed on the streets, sometimes in strategic positions with their guns pointing at passers-by. This has had an additional impact on the population, apart from the conflict itself, for this has been the “normal” situation for the last two decades. An entire generation of young Kashmiris has grown up in this abnormal social context, which has a strong impact upon their psyche, as is particularly evident when they fearlessly confront the soldiers by throwing stones at them on Fridays in the streets of Srinagar.

Certainly, the people of the valley cannot avoid perceiving the conflict as a central issue in their own lives. And it seems that a significant number of the population do sympathize with the idea of having substantial autonomy or independence. However, this affirmation has to be further contextualized and, given the lack of statistics, it seems difficult to examine the matter. Last year Chatham House in London published a small survey exploring the role of the conflict in people’s lives, but it also pointed out other relevant and immediate issues such as unemployment, corruption etc. While conducting interviews in Srinagar, it was clear to me that the majority of my interlocutors (from various religious communities) were not happy with India’s policy in the region, but for different reasons. Although some of them were clearly pro-independence, they were basically demanding that the Indian government negotiate, and make proposals in order to gain the respect of a highly alienated population. They argued that the main representatives of the pro-separatist platform (now also divided) of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference had already abandoned the armed struggle and even the more mainstream ruling party, the National Conference, some years ago had also proposed an autonomy scheme (albeit a rather controversial one).



↑ Bus linking the towns of Muzaffarabad and Srinagar (the capitals of both sides of Kashmir). The line was established as a result of the dialogue process between India and Pakistan. Muzaffarabad, September 2009 (© Antía Mato Bouzas)

The idea behind these sentiments, I suggest, is that the population of the valley is demanding that the government in New Delhi respond and end the current impasse, because in their eyes although India is in control of the area it has not gained the support of people or, perhaps, it has not yet won the “war”.

However, it is also worth pointing out that there are other political views that regard relations with India in less problematic terms, mainly for economic reasons (trade and tourism are heavily dependent on India) and because of a different interpretation of what happened during the conflict in the early nineties, namely that militants also committed atrocities upon their own population. One remarkable case is of the tiny native pandit community (Kashmiri speakers of Hindu religion) still living in Srinagar. Before the conflict started, there were several hundred thousand pandits in the valley, but today there are only a few thousand remaining, since most of them left for safer areas. Although I mentioned before that the religious role of the Kashmir problem has been exaggerated, I do not deny that there were inter-community tensions or unsolved issues. However, while describing what he regarded as a particularly difficult episode in the past when militants killed members of his family, my pandit interlocutor told me, “If they had [the militants and the nationalist forces] asked us, we would have gone with them,” i.e. they would have supported the political demands of the nationalists.

In Srinagar, the other side (the Pakistani Kashmir) is mainly referred to as a place of exile, a home for the Kashmiris who left the valley to escape the conflict. It is also cited as a territory to recover in an ideal independent Kashmir, so that Srinagar, and the Kashmir Valley, would eventually become the centre of political power. In this sense, my research raised many doubts about the solidarity among the different communities that seem to fight for Kashmir, but here I will only make reference to the connections between the areas of Muzaffarabad and Srinagar. Apart from family relations, there are also links between the Kashmiri leadership (Parliamentary and extra-Parliamentary) of Srinagar and that of Muzaffarabad; but in general terms, when people from the val-

ley refer to the other side of the LoC, they make significant distinctions. They refer, without great enthusiasm, to Azad Jammu and Kashmir as a “mountainous area” (in contrast to the valley’s beauty and fertility); some even dare to admit that the neighbouring territory is less developed, controlled by Pakistan, and that people there are different. In fact, the perception of difference or identity remains one of the most crucial aspects of understanding the Kashmir conundrum.

Views on the Kashmir conflict and the future of the region differ substantially between Muzafarabad and Srinagar, but a shared sense of agreement prevails that the people and the divided families should have the right to visit their relatives and that those who left should be allowed to safely return to their homes. The LoC, in this sense, is perceived as an artificial wall that was never there before; as a historical and political chronology of hatred between two states having nothing to do with the “internal” situation among different peoples of the area. This does not mean that there is not a problem about what Kashmir means and to whom, but that this depends very much on internal political developments in the divided parts and their “disputed” status in the new independent states of India and Pakistan.

Changing the Meaning of Borders in Kashmir

Since April 2005, when two bus service lines started to operate on a weekly basis between Muzafarabad and Srinagar and between Rawalakot and Poonch, Kashmiris from both sides have had the opportunity to reunite with their relatives. For various reasons there have been some interruptions, but the service has always been resumed. By February 2010 the busses had transported around 13,000 passengers. Additionally, in October 2008 a truck service also started, with the idea of fostering trade between the two sides.

These initiatives agreed between the Governments of India and Pakistan are known as “confidence-building measures” (CBMs) and the aim is to alleviate the conditions of conflict, especially for the victims, as well as to create an atmosphere of trust among parties. Because crucial disagreements prevent the solution of the conflict, the alternative is to generate confidence so as to improve conditions for further dialogue. This type of approach is very much influenced by the perspectives on conflict of studies that gained primacy after the end of the Cold War. It also reflects a new understanding in dealing with conflicts or crises, though it is not always exempt from problems. Should conflicts be managed or resolved?

I used to think that by opening the LoC, the governments of India and Pakistan had torn down a great mental barrier that greatly prevented a fresh view of the Kashmir problem, and a move away from seeing sovereignty in a restrictive sense, as solely a state attribute. In a sense, I still maintain this view, but I also see that Islamabad and New Delhi are centres distant from the core area of the problem; this greatly affects its understanding and, therefore, also the search for adequate and imaginative solutions to deal with it. Human rights groups have, to some extent, raised crucial questions, but the dominant views are those ignoring the socio-political conditions in which the people of these border areas live. There are very few exceptions because Kashmir (on both sides) is part of the military domain and it is largely seen as a question of national unity (in India and in Pakistan) which few openly challenge.

The bus and truck services have linked the towns of Muzaffarabad and Srinagar for several years now, but nobody visiting these areas would have noticed any great changes. They depart from central places in these towns, although protected and highly escorted by security forces. Groups opposing the process have already attacked these buses, but almost all political forces in both sides of Kashmir, even the more critical Jama'at-i-Islami, are in favour of allowing cross-border mobility because in their minds this is not a border crossing, but just an internal trip. However, security considerations make travelling from Muzaffarabad to Srinagar or vice versa a complicated task restricted to a few. An application must be sent to the travel authorities to obtain clearance. The authorities send the documents to the intelligence agencies and to their counterparts on the other side in order to assure the veracity of data (family relations, non-involvement in anti-state activities, etc.). This makes the process long and complex for many, although the waiting period did significantly shorten to a few months after the initial two years.

I have had the opportunity to interview both people who have travelled on these buses and the business community involved in cross-border trade. The personal stories of those who reunited with their relatives after decades of separation were highly emotional and difficult to express in words. It is hard to say whether there is anger at this stage, once they have met their loved ones, but - not being able to openly address political issues that could endanger their security because of the sensitivity of the topic - in most of our talks a sense of impotence dominated their narratives. Their accounts are real expressions of how borders have been historically constructed as fortresses of states' sovereignty (often with hostility) by ignoring the role and perceptions of the local communities in a process of connection or contiguity. The borders of the state exist and they are concrete realities, but the main problem rests with their political interpretation.

Nonetheless, the process of dialogue and the cross-border initiatives has been accompanied by great public fanfare; however things on the ground look different. First of all, the bus services are very restricted and exclude many. The most symptomatic case is of the pahari community – about 30,000 people - who left the Indian side in the nineties and now reside mainly in camps in different areas on the Pakistani side. The Indian government does not allow them to travel because it thinks they might be involved in militant activities; however, this situation has not attracted any great concern among the Kashmiri leadership in the valley (as I noted, the definition of a community or a Kashmiri identity is highly problematic). If there is no chance of opening and expanding the bus services to the majority of the population, even with police checks, there is a risk that these cross-border initiatives may die. The situation is similar with cross-border trade, which is basically a barter trade conducted among relatives and people who know each other on the opposite sides. Lack of communication facilities and banking services, among other issues, makes it difficult for this economic activity to progress, although the prospects are good.

A second point to underline is that people do not necessarily relate the cross-border initiatives with the possibility of resolving the Kashmir conflict. In most cases they see these as two different things. But some groups oppose the cross-border trade in Muzaffarabad because they think it might undermine the need to solve the dispute. Cross-border initiatives are seen as an internal matter related to an exceptional situation, while the Kashmir issue is a political problem that deserves the political involvement of different parties, including Kashmiri forces. These views are

predominant in Srinagar and among some Kashmiri exile communities in Muzaffarabad. The idea that the cross-border initiatives will improve trust between parties is not particularly shared in Srinagar because the main problem there seems to be with the Indian state itself and not about India's negotiations with Pakistan.

Ultimately, it is worth mentioning that the cross-border initiatives are limited in scope and offer no alternative common vision of the region. The “old thinking” still prevails on other highly sensitive aspects, such as sharing water resources from rivers flowing in Kashmir. On both sides of the LoC, the building of dams and various hydroelectric projects are visible activities, duplicating the economic and environmental impact of these great infrastructures. Up to now, there has been no initiative to develop joint projects that could alleviate the problems. Water resources have the potential of becoming a great source of tension in the area. In other words, although India and Pakistan might agree in the direction of “making the borders irrelevant”, as former president Musharraf said, a vision of the region has yet to emerge.

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→ Store in Muzaffarabad, March 2010
(© Antía Mato Bouzas)



↓ Talaat Harb Street, Cairo, 1 February 2011 (© Samuli Schielke)



The Arab Autumn?³⁶

Samuli Schielke

I never liked the expression “the Arab Spring” because I know too well what happened to the Prague Spring in 1968. A short time of hope in a “socialism with a human face” was crushed by Soviet tanks, and it took more than twenty years before a new revolution could gather momentum. 2011, the year of revolutions and uprisings around the Arab world, has been marked not only by an amazing spirit of change, but also by fierce resistance by the ruling elites, and a fear of instability and chaos among large parts of the ordinary people. Some uprisings, most notably that in Bahrain, were crushed with brute force at an early stage. Others, in Yemen and Syria, continue with an uncertain future. Along with Tunisia, Egypt appeared to be one of the lucky Arab nations that were able to realize a relatively peaceful and quick revolution, a turning point towards a better future of justice, freedom, and democracy. This autumn, however, the situation in Egypt raises doubts about that better future.

Returning to a Different Country

I returned to Egypt on October 2nd, this time not with the aim to follow the events of the revolution but to begin a new ethnographic fieldwork on writing and creativity, pursuing questions about the relationship of fantasy and social change. I found Egypt in a very different state from what it had been when I left it behind in March. Returning here, I encountered an air of freedom, a sense of relaxation and ease, and a strong presence of creativity, discussion, and interest in politics. But I also encountered a fear of economic collapse and a continued sense of turmoil, with strikes (mostly successful) continuing all over the country, a political struggle among political parties to share the cake of elections beforehand through alliances and deals, confrontation between competing sections within the Islamist spectrum (which has much more presence and popular support than the liberal and leftist camp), an increased visibility and activity of what in post-revolutionary jargon are called the *fulul*, or “leftovers” (literally, the dispersed units of a defeated army) of Mubarak’s National Democratic Party that was dissolved last spring, renewed confessional tensions, and last but not least a military rule tightening its grip over the country.

My revolutionary friends are without exception extremely frustrated about the situation. Some see the revolution in grave danger, others say that it has already failed, that it in fact failed on 11 February when the military took over from the Mubarak family. In different variations, they argue that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) has proven itself as a faithful follower of Mubarak, intent on taking over power through the manipulation of the upcoming elections, if necessary by the way of spreading chaos and terror. Also the Islamists in their different colourings, who until the summer were very supportive of the military rule (hoping to strike a good power share deal), have turned critical of the SCAF, beginning to realize that the army is deceiv-

³⁶ First published in: Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin e. V. (ed.). *Bericht über das Forschungsjahr 2011. Jahrbuch der Geisteswissenschaftlichen Zentren Berlin*, pp. 114–123. Berlin: Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin, 2012.

ing them just like Gamal Abdel Nasser did back in 1954 when after a period of cooptation, the Muslim Brotherhood was prohibited and brutally suppressed. But a lot of people (probably the majority) are still trustful in the army, believing what state television says and what public sector newspapers write. And most Egyptians are first of all busy with the economic situation, which is very difficult.

It was in this mixed atmosphere of an air of freedom and a sense of frustration and anxiety about the way things are evolving that I arrived in Alexandria three days ago, after spending a week in Cairo. Alexandria is one of the power bases of Salafis and the Muslim Brotherhood, and their posters and banners are visible all over the city, but not to the exclusion of others: posters of liberal or leftist parties, banners of new parties by the fulul, graffitis by the radical opposition and politicized football ultras.

The Massacre at Maspiro

On Sunday 9 October, large-scale Christian demonstrations were organized in several cities around the country in protest against the burning of a church and Christian apartments in Idfu (in the south of Egypt) more than a week earlier, and the very inappropriate reaction of the authorities. The governor of Aswan, rather than trying to solve the crisis, had declared that the church had been built without a licence anyway. A sit-in of Christian protesters in front of the state television headquarters at Maspiro (overlooking the Nile in Central Cairo) had been forcibly dispersed and many people had been injured. On 9 October, a large number of Christians, feeling to be under increasing pressure since quite a while, went out to streets in large numbers, and rather than just occupying one place, they took out in protest marches through the cities.

On the afternoon of that day, I was returning from downtown Alexandria to Mandara in the east of the city on a minibus when we entered a big traffic jam on the seafront Corniche road. The minibus driver diverted to the side streets, and after a while we saw that on the Corniche there was a large (a few thousands) march of Christians with lots of crosses visible from afar. Turning left and right on the narrow side streets, the driver managed to get us just ahead of the march, and stopped shortly to pick up passengers, calling them to hurry: "Get in, get in, let's move before we get beaten up!" He didn't specify who he expected to get beaten by – in any case, he sensed danger. In Alexandria, the march headed for the Northern Regional Military Headquarters, the standard destination of demonstration marches in Alexandria ever since the army seized power on 11 February (unlike in Cairo where demonstrations are usually stationary at Tahrir Square, in Alexandria they usually march through the city).

At the same time, a similar march was heading to Maspiro in Cairo. The events that followed and the terrible death toll are known, and there is nothing I can add to the many eyewitness reports from Cairo that tell about stones being thrown at the march on its way, the army attacking the protesters at Maspiro with live ammunition, armoured troop carriers crushing people, cars being set on fire, and riots evolving. The bits of pieces from eyewitness reports I get from Cairo tell of a chaotic situation evolving around the centre of the city, with various groups of Muslim citizens, some of them groups of (apparently hired) thugs, others people incited by the state media, going

out to the streets, trying to break into Christian shops and institutions, threatening people, stealing things. Things were not everywhere simply a matter of Muslims and Christians, however. In Faggala, one witness reports on Facebook, the standoff was between poor youths and thugs on the one side, intent on looting Christian property, and Muslim inhabitants of the area who were not at all happy about the idea of stealing in the name of Islam. In Alexandria, the night was tense, fights were reported in some parts of the city, and the protesters at the Northern Regional Headquarters were attacked by civilians, described as inhabitants of the district by news media. But to my knowledge no shots were fired in Alexandria, and nobody got killed.

More terrible than the veritable massacre committed by the army at Maspuro was its coverage by Egyptian state media that – this has become very clear in the past two days – openly called “the noble people of Egypt” to come to help the Army against Christians, reported that the protesters killed three Egyptian soldiers (to date it remains unclear whether any soldiers were killed at all), showed clearly dubbed interviews with injured soldiers. We don’t know what they really said, but the dubbed voices told of Christians seizing the weapons of the army, attacking people, stealing their money, beating soldiers to death. Also in the following days, after footage and eyewitness accounts have proven that the official version was not only skewed, but completely false, the state media and a big part of the independent media have continued to spread the version of 23 dead “from both sides,” giving the impression of an equal confrontation. Today, state-owned newspapers have begun to distribute new versions of the story, one according to which the protesters stole the armed troop carriers, and another according to which protesters set a troop carrier on fire and killed a large number of soldiers inside it. At the same time, there is no official confirmation of any deaths from the ranks of the army and the police. After the direct incitement by state television in the first hours, the official tone has shifted to expressing compassion with “our Christian brothers” and commemorating “the martyrs from among the army and police.” There is a huge cover-up going on.

A lot of people continue to trust the state media, and especially when the issue becomes mixed with confessional sentiments, it becomes very compelling to believe that version of the story. D., a man from the countryside and very critical of the system for years, told me, that he heard the news about the massacre at Maspuro in a cafe in Birimbal. In village cafes, people usually watch Egyptian Channel One which they still trust over other news media. He told that based on the coverage of Channel One, he really believed its account of the events, and thought that if protesters got armed and attacked the army, then nobody else than the military could control the situation and that they needed to be given the power to do so. Only when he got home an hour later and opened the Internet did he find out that it was the army that shot at the protesters and drove over them with armoured vehicles. No wonder then that others, who are less determined supporters of the revolution and less critical of the army and the military rule, believed – and still believe – what state television said.

Many – if not most – Muslims in Egypt do not have a sense that Christians would be in any way disadvantaged. They claim that there is national unity in Egypt, that Muslims and Christians are united and equal – a powerful fiction that makes it easy to overlook the really existing forms of discrimination. This is the ground from which the claims by state media about armed Christian

protesters attacking the Egyptian army could gain their credibility: a sense that the Christians were demanding more than was their fair share anyway, now turned into a terrible union of patriotic militarism with sectarian distrust of the religious other. In the social media, this sensibility is expressed without the veil of national unity and sorrow in the official state media, with comments that range from anger to open aggression towards Christians. For those who never liked Christians anyway but had no good reason for this sentiment, the official story of Christian protesters arming themselves and attacking the Egyptian army offers a legitimate reason to hate.

Sectarian tension has a decades-long history in Egypt, and while it is evident that the army and state television did their best to incite confessional tensions, they were only able to do so because they really were widely shared by Egyptians. While Christians are at the losing end of these tensions due to their smaller number and their lack of presence in key nodes of the military-media complex, it does not mean that they would be innocent of sectarian intolerance. There has been a strong turn to religion as the basis of identity and good life among Muslims and Christians alike, and part of this has been an increasing degree of closure towards the religious other. If Egypt were a 90 % Christian country, we might have seen Muslim protesters massacred at Maspiro on Sunday.

The success of the media cover-up is far from total, however. It may have been aimed at tightening the army's control over the country, but rather than creating a unified public opinion, it has deepened existing political splits. A lot of people don't buy the army's version of the story, and even many who are sympathetic of the army say that they don't know what to believe.

One of the paradoxes of the Massacre at Maspiro is that it targeted people who otherwise would have been very likely to be supportive of a military rule that guarantees continuity and stability. Under Mubarak, many Christians would see in the ruling system a protector of Christians against the Islamists, even if they suffered from it as much if not more than everybody else. Last Sunday turned a big part of Christian Egyptians from hesitant supporters of the system into angry opponents of military rule.

Also among Egyptians of Muslim faith, many are putting the blame on the army, the more so after huge numbers of eyewitness accounts and horrible photographs and videos on the Internet and on some television stations have shown the extent of the violence by the army and the outright lying of the state media. The euphoric sense that "the army and the people are one hand" has been shifting more and more towards a distrust in the army's ability (and good will) to run the country properly. Add the fact that there is not only a lot of sectarian tension in Egypt, but also quite some opposition to it by people who resist the momentum of sectarian closure. Who wants to be informed in Egypt, can be. Those who don't trust the military anyway, see in the events at Maspiro is a terrible proof of how much the SCAF, aided by the fulul, is intent to resorting to the tactics of chaos and terror that the Mubarak regime tried in the first days of the revolution last January. D. sees that there is a plan that is being executed step by step. Not a clever one, and not well implemented, but a plan. The attack at the Israeli embassy in Cairo was one step, a way to exploit nationalist sentiment while inciting fear of unrest. The massacre at Maspiro was another step. The elections will be the next one, and D. expects that they will turn very vio-



← Pepsi Cola can used by protesters for protection against tear gas (washing the face with cola, lemon or vinegar alleviates the effects of CS gas) on 6th of October Bridge in Cairo on 28 February 2011, the decisive day of the Egyptian revolution. It was given to me by my friend who was on the bridge that day and saw a man shot in the head from a police vehicle that drove on the bridge and fired into the crowd, killing several people. According to the judge of the court verdict against Hosni Mubarak on 2 June 2012, there is no proof that the police shot at protesters. Cairo, 6 February 2011 (© Samuli Schielke)



← A graffiti showing the word "Egypt" with a cross and a crescent symbolising the unity of Muslims and Christians. Afterwards, somebody tried to scratch away the cross. Alexandria, 23 November 2011 (© Samuli Schielke)

lent and will be cancelled after the first round. The army intentionally lets the situation deteriorate, to let chaos prevail, the economy collapse, and the worse things get, the more people are willing to accept military rule as a guarantee of stability and security. In 2013 or 2014, D. predicts, an army candidate, most likely chief of staff Samy 'Annan, will run for presidency, and even if the elections were fully free and fair (which they will not be), he will win.

My friend S. from Alexandria, for a long time frustrated about the current state of affairs has strangely enough found new optimism in this moment. He thinks that what the country is going through now may be the birth labours of a better future. He (a Muslim by the way) is teacher at a school that has a large portion of Christian pupils and teachers, and confessional tensions have been very tangible there for a long time. Today, he gave the daily school opening speech. He started with telling that he saw Hosni Mubarak in a dream, the former president telling him that from his point of view, everything was going exactly as he wanted. Calling the teachers and pupils to fight the Mubarak that continued to live inside them, S. concluded with an appeal to humanity and the need of people to recognize each other as humans. The speech moved people to tears, Muslims and Christians, and S. said that it made him feel a lot more optimistic.

A., calling me on the phone from the Emirates where he is working as a migrant labourer, tries to take it with humour: “The solution is that the Muslims burn the churches and Christians burn the mosques and everybody prays at home”.

Revolution as Continuity

In Egypt this autumn, what in the way of a bad omen was called the Arab Spring is being crushed under the wheels of a military-media complex intent on employing sectarianism and the fear of chaos to consolidate their hold of the country. There are plenty of reasons for pessimism. Is there reason for optimism?

A few people whom I have met these days express a sense of optimism that they cannot quite explain. There is a sense that something has changed, that there is no return to the past, a sense that the events that we see these days, no matter how terrible they are, may actually be signs of the revolution’s success. Even if it may be a mistaken optimism – revolutions are very unpredictable and dangerous events, and they can go awfully wrong (think of the Russian revolution of 1917) – it is something to be taken seriously.

↓ “Leave, you coward, and give a chance to the poor”,
Tahrir Square, Cairo, 1 February 2011 (© Samuli Schielke)



Part of this optimism is related to the sense of freedom, the wave of creativity, discussion and communication that goes on in the society. It is related to social dynamics released by the revolutionary momentum that are likely to influence the formation of the coming generation even if the political aims of the revolution may fail. This is what I would like to call the progress theory of the Egyptian revolution, a vision of the revolution creating something new, something that wasn't there before. It has a grain of truth, but I think that by emphasizing the novelty of the January 25 Revolution, it overlooks the history of revolutions in Egypt. To conclude this essay, I try to think about 2011 from the point of view of what I call the continuity theory of the Egyptian revolution. Rather than something completely unprecedented, the January 25 Revolution can also be seen as a return to a historical normality – and it's a hard landing.

Until this year, Egypt as I knew it was that of the late Mubarak era, one of the most depoliticized times in Egypt's contemporary history. I first arrived in Egypt in the late 1990's, a time when the de facto civil war between the regime and the Gama'at al-Islamiya in southern Egypt was ending with a bloody defeat of the Islamist militants. From the 1990's until 2010 was a time when everybody in Egypt, including the Islamists, were compelled to yikabbar, to mind their own business and not get involved. In retrospect, however, the Mubarak era that was Egypt as I knew it, appears as an exceptional one, an interruption in a long history of revolutions and uprisings in Egypt since the 19th century.

The Egyptian book market has been flooded by a wave of books about the revolution, most of them of mediocre value at best. But there are pearls among them, and one of them is Muhammad Hafiz Diyab's *Uprisings or Revolutions in the History of Modern Egypt*.³⁷ Diyab presents a history of popular uprisings, student and strike movements, riots, and full-fledged revolutions that begins in the 19th century and continues throughout the 20th century, with the 1919 revolution against British colonial rule, student protests in 1935, student and labour protests in 1946, the military coup of 1952 and the following revolutionary rearrangement of political and economic power, demonstrations in the late 1960's and early 1970's, and the so-called "bread riots" of January 1977, a wide-scale protest movement involving workers, students, and political activists of different colourings against Anwar al-Sadat's policies of economic liberalization. These different uprisings share a number of important features: a key role played by young people (especially students, and since the 1940's industrial workers), significant participation across political and party lines, large-scale demonstrations often focused on Tahrir Square (formerly Isma'iliya Square) in Cairo, a visible role played by women, and an at best moderate degree of success of the protesters in realizing their demands.

The fantastic moment of standing in Tahrir square in January and February 2011 was a moment that went beyond the wildest dreams of those who participated, a moment of utopia turned into material reality. For those who were there it has gained a quality that comes close to that of a religious belief. That fantastic quality has created two blind spots about the relationship of the

37 Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ Diyāb (2011). Intifādāt am thawrāt fi tārikh Miṣr al-ḥadīth. Sīlsilat al-tārikh, al-jānīb al-ākhar, i'ādat qirā'ah lil-tārikh al-Miṣri. Madinat Naṣr, al-Qāhira: Dār al-Shurūq.

revolution with the ordinary world. The first blind spot is a practical one. The reality of social and political change is a lot more difficult, a lot less pure and grand, and comparing it with the fantastic moment of revolution can create a sense of powerlessness that makes it difficult to make a realistic assessment of what is to be done next. The second blind spot is a temporal one. The fantastic moment of revolution carries an experienced singularity of a once-in-a-lifetime moment that because of its singularity exceeds the imaginable. The January 25 Revolution was not a singular event, however. It stands in a tradition, and without repeating history, it builds on its predecessors and paves the ground for struggles to come, struggles that are now becoming evident.

This, I think, is the source of the inexplicable optimism in these difficult days of what, in Egypt at least, looks like the beginning of an Arab autumn, a period of authoritarian restoration and violent confrontations. January 25th 2011 was not the opening of a new era in Egypt. It was the return to the historical normality of a nation in revolt, the continuation of a state of uprising that began in 1919, or perhaps already in 1881, and that is bound to continue.

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↓ Cairo, 6 February 2011 (© Samuli Schielke)



Hybrid Mosques: Mixing Islam and “Chineseness” in Malaysia and Indonesia ³⁸

Wai Weng Hew

In the last few decades, rising modernist and puritan Islam, as well as the funding from the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia, has led to the flourish of “pan-Islamic model” mosques in both Malaysia and Indonesia. Instead of traditional “Nusantara-type” with tiered roofs, many of the recent mosques are inspired by the architectural design of Middle Eastern mosques, always equipped with domes and minarets.³⁹ However, while Middle-Eastern mosque architecture is prevalent, other competing mosque designs are not absent. One of the contrasting forms is Chinese-style mosques. Since 2000, at least ten Chinese-style mosques have been built in both Malaysia and Indonesia.

Most of these newly-completed mosques adopted the architecture of old mosques in mainland China, yet they are reconfigured within local contexts. By discussing the Surabaya Cheng Hoo Mosque in Indonesia, as well as the Kelantan Beijing Mosque and the Seremban Al-Saadah Mosque Complex in Malaysia, this article examines how and under what conditions, such mosques play a crucial role in manifesting Chinese Muslim cultural identity, upholding the universality of Islamic principles, as well as promoting religious tourism. The architectural designs of these mosques are forms of intentional hybridity⁴⁰ where elements of Islam and “Chineseness” are strategically combined to declare that “there can be a Chinese way of being Muslim”, as well as to uphold inclusive Islam.

The Surabaya Cheng Hoo Mosque is the first Chinese-style mosque built in post-Suharto Indonesia. Completed in 2002, this mosque was established by East Java’s Indonesian Chinese Muslim Association (Persatuan Islam Tionghoa Indonesia, PITI). The mosque architecture was inspired by the Niu Jie (Ox Street) Mosque in Beijing, which has more than a thousand years of history. It is named after the famous Chinese admiral during the Ming Dynasty, Zheng He (best known as Cheng Hoo in Indonesia), who many Chinese Muslims believe played an important role in spreading Islam in Indonesia.

Different from Chinese temples, the roof of this pagoda-like mosque is carved with the word “Allah”. Decorations, such as animal-like ornaments, were omitted because they might be seen as “un-Islamic” by many Muslims. The main hall of the mosque is 11×9 metres and has an eight-sided roof (pat-kwa). The length of 11 metres symbolizes the measurement of kabah (cubicle shrine within the Al-Haram Mosque Complex in Mecca), demonstrating the commitment to Islamic faith.

38 Reprint: Wai Weng Hew (2013). Hybrid Mosques: Mixing Islam and “Chineseness” in Malaysia and Indonesia. *TAASA Review: The Journal of the Asian Arts Society of Australia* 22 (2): 17–19.

39 Dijk, C. van. 2009. “National Pride and Foreign Influences: The Shape of Mosques in Southeast Asia”, *Off the Edge*, August 2009: 24–27.

40 Pnina Werbner (1997). Introduction: The Dialectics of Cultural Hybridity. In: Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (eds.). *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*. pp. 1–28. In: London, Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Zed Books.

The width of 9 metres represents the number of wali songo (the nine Muslim saints that, according to local belief, Islamized Java), showing an appreciation of local Javanese traditions. Meanwhile, the design of eight-sided roof (pat-kwa) characterizes the philosophy of luck and prosperity shared by the ethnic Chinese. By installing a bedug (a drum for summoning to prayer) and a minbar (a pulpit used by an imam or preacher to deliver a sermon) in the mosque, Chinese Muslim leaders appropriate both the elements of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah (the two largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia) to show that the mosque is a prayer hall for all Muslims regardless of their religious affiliations.

Indeed, the Cheng Hoo mosque, a mixing of Chinese, Islamic and Javanese cultures, is a clear statement showing that these identities are compatible. Yet the strategic design of this mosque does not represent an existing ethno-religious reality, but rather seeks to bring a new reality into being. Chinese Muslim identities in Indonesia are fluid and different individuals have different attitudes towards their religious practice and cultural orientation.⁴¹ Therefore, the materiality and tangibility of the mosque is important to make Chinese Muslim cultural identity unequivocally “real” and to act as unifying force for Chinese Muslims from different backgrounds.

As a Chinese Muslim leader said: “The population of Chinese Muslims is small, diverse and scattered. As happened in the past, our identity will easily disappear or be assimilated into the Mus-

↓ A Idul Fitri prayer at the Surabaya mosque, October 2008 (© Wai Weng Hew)



41 Wai Weng Hew (2011). *Negotiating Ethnicity and Religiosity: Chinese Muslim Identities in Post-New Order Indonesia*. PhD thesis. University of Canberra.

lim majority. Thus, we need a physical space – a mosque that can manifest our identity. The structure of mosque could stand for long time, and sustain our uniqueness over a few generations. Converting to Islam does not mean giving up our Chinese cultural identity. There can be a Chinese way of being Muslim." (Interview, Bambang Sujanto, 27 November 2008)

The intentional mixing of religious and cultural elements expressed by the architectural design, are also reflected in the activities of the mosque. The Cheng Hoo mosque is an inclusive place where Chinese and non-Chinese, Muslims and non-Muslims get together; as well as, a space where religious and social activities co-exist. For example, during a Ramadan night in 2008, while Muslims (both Chinese and non-Chinese) were performing their evening teraweh prayers (non-obligatory evening prayers which take place during the fasting month) inside the mosque, non-Muslims (mostly Chinese) were practising qigong (Chinese breathing exercise) at the corridor of PITI's office in the mosque compound. Various activities such as performances of traditional Chinese music, conversion ceremonies, wedding functions and charity events have also been held in the mosque. Also parts of the mosque compound are a few multipurpose rooms, a kindergarten, a canteen, an acupuncture clinic and badminton courts.

This mosque would not be a success without support from both Indonesian Muslims and non-Muslim Chinese Indonesians. Many Indonesian Muslim leaders lend their support towards the Cheng Hoo mosque and see it as a form of dakwah (Islamic preaching). Meanwhile, most of its donors are non-Muslim Chinese businessmen, as they think the mosque could help to improve the relationship between ethnic Chinese and Muslims in Surabaya. Since its establishment, this mosque is welcomed by many Indonesians as a symbolic marker of the acceptance of Chinese culture, as well as a clear statement of the inclusivity of Indonesian Islam. Along with recently built pan-Islamic-design Al-Akbar Great Mosque and historical Nusantara-style Sunan Ampel Mosque, the Cheng Hoo Mosque has been promoted as one of the religious tourist destinations (wisata religi) by the Surabaya Tourism Board.⁴²

Following the success of the Surabaya Cheng Hoo Mosque, Chinese Muslims have built similar mosques in other Indonesian cities, such as Palembang (South Sumatra), Purbalingga (Central Java) and Makassar (South Sulawesi). Remarkably, not only Chinese Muslims, but also non-Chinese Muslims have contributed to the building of Chinese mosques. In Pandaan, the local government has built a Chinese-style mosque to promote social harmony and religious tourism. In Malang, the latest mosque inside the campus of the Muhammadiyah University, a university run by a Muslim organization, also adopted Chinese architectural design, in order to build a better business relationship with mainland China.

In Malaysia, the combination of a state-controlled Islamic bureaucracy and an ethnicized Islam that equates being Malay with being Muslim has discouraged the establishment of Chinese-style mosques, and even rejected it in some cases. However, recently, there are positive developments,

42 Surabaya Tourism Board (2010). *Cheng Hoo Mosque: Islam, Java and Chinese Architecture*. www.eastjava.com/tourism/surabaya/chenghoo-mosque.html. Accessed 24 February 2014.

witnessed by the establishment of the Beijing Mosque in Kelantan and the Al-Saadah Complex in Seremban. Interestingly, these two recently-built mosques were not initiated by Chinese Muslims, but proposed and sponsored by the PAS (Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party)-led Kelantan State Government and the state-controlled Islamic Council of Negeri Sembilan (Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Sembilan, MAINS) respectively. Meanwhile, two other Chinese-style mosques are under construction with the support of the Malaysian Chinese Muslim Association (MACMA), respectively in Malacca and Ipoh. In addition, working together with the Islamic Office of Federal Territories (Jabatan Agama Wilayah Persekutuan, JAWI), MACMA is planning to build a grand mosque, as part of the newly-developed Islamic business district in Kuala Lumpur.

The Jubli Perak Sultan Ismail Petra Mosque, or best known by the locals as the Beijing Mosque, completed in 2009, is arguably the first Chinese-style mosque in post-independent Malaysia. Like the Surabaya Cheng Hoo Mosque, the architectural design of this mosque is inspired by the Niu Jie (Ox Street) Mosque in Beijing. Its prayer hall is decorated with Uzbekistan-influenced Islamic geometries. The former Chief Minister of Kelantan and the spiritual leader of PAS, Tok Guru Nik Abdul Aziz is the key figure behind the establishment of this Mosque. He told me: “Conversion to Islam does not mean we have to abandon our culture. The Chinese Mosque shows that Islam is a religion for all ethnic groups and is not believed by the Malays only”. (Interview, Nik Aziz, 18 September 2011). This mosque is also a vivid manifestation of the Islamist party to uphold its cultural inclusivity, preach the universality of Islam and promote religious tourism.

Certainly, the Beijing Mosque is a significant and clear statement showing that Islam is not only the religion for Malay Muslims, thus it helps to “deracialize” Islam in the context of Malaysia. It is worthwhile to note that many Malay Muslims in Kelantan have contributed, both financially and physically, to the construction of this mosque. During my visit in the mosque, a young male Malay Muslim told me: “There is nothing wrong to build a Chinese mosque. Instead, we should build more similar mosques in Malaysia, to show that Islam is a religion for all”. (Fieldnote, 17 September 2011). The recognition and support towards Chinese-style mosques, to a certain extent, shows that many Malay Muslims are beginning to accept that being a Muslim is not exclusive to being Malay in Malaysia.

Operated since 2011, the Seremban Al-Saadah Complex is another newly-completed Chinese-style mosque in Malaysia. This mosque complex was initiated, funded and run by the Islamic Council of Negeri Sembilan (Majlis Agama Islam Negeri Sembilan, MAINS), as a means to preach Islam to non-Muslim Chinese and to show that Islam is a universal religion. The architectural design of this mosque was inspired by another ancient mosque, the Great Mosque of Xi’an in mainland China. Various Chinese features dominate both the exterior and interior design of the mosque complex, such as the Chinese-designed entrance gate, the Chinese courtyard and pavilion, the red pagoda-shaped minaret, red lanterns and Chinese calligraphy. The mosque complex is divided into three areas – public, semi-public and private. The public spaces comprise courtyards and multi-purpose rooms, including offices of Negeri Sembilan’s MACMA and Darul Saadah Association (a convert organization). The semi-public space is a prayer hall which can accommodate 300 people, while the private spaces consist of accommodation for Imams, staff, converts and travellers.

This mosque complex has hosted various activities, such as religious talks, Mandarin classes, conversion ceremonies and Chinese New Year dinners. Remarkably, during the Idul Adha celebrations in 2011 and 2012, Chinese Muslim religious teachers presented their sermons in Mandarin (with translation in Malay on LCD screen) inside the prayer hall. The mosque committee has recently invited a Hui Muslim from mainland China to act as an Imam. It also proposes to hold regular Friday sermons in Mandarin, beginning from the mid of 2013. If this plan comes true, the Al-Saadah Complex will be the first mosque in contemporary Malaysia that conducts Friday sermons in Mandarin.

As Moors⁴³ suggested, in the analysis of the tangible forms in which Islam appears in public, we should take into account the cultural politics of nation-states and Islamic movements, as well as the growing force of consumer capitalism. Indeed, the emerging trend of building Chinese-style mosques is an outcome of several interrelated processes, such as China's growing economic power; the recognition of Chinese culture after the fall of the Indonesian New Order regime, the rise of urban Muslim middle class, the diversification of Muslim consumer markets - as well as the quest of Muslim activists to preach Islam to non-Muslim Chinese.

Various actors – state agencies and civil society, religious and secular publics – have engaged with the construction of Chinese-style mosques in contemporary Malaysia and Indonesia, for different reasons, be it religious, political and/or economic. Indeed, Chinese-style mosques are sites of interaction, where translocal flows and local dynamics, as well as Chinese ethnicity and Islamic religiosity, are converged and negotiated. They are also inclusive places where both Chinese and non-Chinese, Muslims and non-Muslims intermingle, where both religious and social activities concur. Whilst it is important to note that such cosmopolitan practices are not new, and can be traced back to the interactions between Islam, Chinese traditions and local cultures in Southeast Asia centuries ago, the construction of these new Chinese-style mosques marks a new development in the articulation of Chinese identity within transnational and inter-ethnic Muslim communities.

43 Anneliese Moors (2012). Popularizing Islam: Muslims and Materiality. Introduction. *Material Religion* 8 (3): 272–279.

Grogneurs: New Media Actors in Benin (West Africa)

Tilo Grätz

This research investigates the changing contours of public communication in the Republic of Benin in West Africa. The medial landscape of this country is linked to the overall increasing plurality of media formats that are shaped, inter alia, by processes of interactivity. These changes engender new roles for media producers and consumers as well as a decentralization of information centres and are promoted by the parallel availability of new media technologies and by media liberalization policies. These processes of interactivity are revealed by the study of communication processes involved in radio call-in shows on social problems in the Republic of Benin. The main protagonists are the frequent callers to these complaint shows known as grogneurs (derived from a well-known morning show: Grogne Matinal). These grogneurs occupy a pivotal role in communication processes, yet often find themselves in an awkward societal position due to their penchant for public display and, to some extent, self-declaration as arbiters of the people. My research examines their personal motives, capacities and strategies regarding information procurement, networking and juridical assurance. This essay also addresses their ambiguous relationships with journalists, local politicians, taxi drivers and the wider audience. I argue that despite overlap between the functions and duties of journalists and grogneurs, all of these actors are eager to maintain clearly delineated role boundaries. From an analytical perspective, the various actors involved have large differences in disposition. Furthermore, anthropologists must investigate the outlines of pre-existing but also contemporarily enhancing communication practices in Benin with their particular norms and potentials, but also conflicts, to better understand newer formats such as the grogne shows and the position of their protagonists. Finally, any normative and limited accounts, e.g. in terms of democratic media participation, should be replaced by a reflective analysis that takes into account the ambiguities of grogneurs' activities and the changing modes and practices of public communication in West Africa.

Many scholars have proposed a much more controversial argument based on the assumption that future media technologies, social media and processes of media convergence will allow an overlap of the roles of media producers and consumers. The widespread emergence of innovative, new medial techniques like smartphones, YouTube posting, Internet blogging, and game modding indicate, the argument runs, not only a growing plurality and diversity of media genres, but also the increasing direct participation of various amateur actors in news and media production. This burgeoning lay participation has been labelled "instant media"; "citizen", "guerrilla" or "street" journalism; and/or independent, participatory or collective media. Bruns⁴⁴ has subsequently coined the term *produsage* as a descriptor of this phenomenon. His concept relates to a nearly complete indistinctiveness between producers and users, e.g. in game modding, Internet blogging etc. In accordance with this line of argumentation, many of its relevant aspects can also be observed in the context of contemporary radio production in sub-Saharan Africa: the growing

44 Axel Bruns (2007). *Produsage: Towards a Broader Framework for User-Led Content Creation*. In: *Creativity and Cognition: Proceedings of the 6th ACM SIGCHI conference on Creativity & Cognition*. Washington, D.C.: ACM; Axel Bruns (2008). *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Produsage*. New York, NY: Lang.

relevance of call-in shows, the integration of listeners into the development of media programmes (e.g. as co-hosts of shows), and the parallel appearance of radio stations on social media and Skype enable a constant link between all actors involved.

Grogne – almost all radio listeners in Benin associate this term, which means “expressing anger”, with a call-in radio show that enables listeners to freely and directly discuss almost any current life issue. Consequently, frequent callers to these shows are called grogneurs – or by journalists and politicians, as “faiseurs d’opinion”. This genre is successful across Africa, as reports from Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and other countries attest. Grogne shows link professional and non-professional media actors, but meet only some of the criteria developed by Bruns: open participation and joint evaluation (Bruns 2008). Grogneurs in Benin contribute greatly to daily media production, yet their activities can be labelled *produsage* only to a very limited extent, above all because asymmetries in power are hardly dissolved. Furthermore, many grogneurs would personally deny such a categorization of their role and labels such as “citizen journalists”. Despite strong interrelationships between journalists, active radio users and other parties involved in media production, all relevant actors, including politicians, are eager to (discursively) preserve their particular positions and roles and to maintain the boundaries of their roles. This is because of the necessary maintenance of their room to manoeuvre within the field of media and the larger public sphere, as well as with regard to their private life and prevalent power differentials. My argument is that that concepts such as *produsage* therefore hinder us from analytically understanding the different positions and hence strategies of the actors involved.

Furthermore, based on the preconditions and the profound effects of their activities in the context of the media in Benin, I argue that we have to go beyond a simplistic discussion of the usefulness and applicability of the term “*produsage*” in this specific case. The analysis of this case was thus chosen as a first step to gain insight into the changing modes of circulation of information in the country, constituting novel communicative spaces across different networks of actors and social spheres. Such interventions are the central element of a very successful programme various radio stations in the country often air in the morning. They received their designation from the very first such show, introduced by Golfe FM, called Grogne Matinal (“morning anger”), which the station still broadcasts on weekdays. Callers may complain about any current problems in public and political life or bad experiences with institutions and authorities, but may also voice critical statements about the radio programme. Usually, every caller has about 90 seconds at his or her disposal. The show has great prestige and is listened to by both citizens and politicians. This broadcasting format is quite widespread and has been adopted by several radio stations in Cotonou (Océan FM, Planète) and across the country. Mostly between 6.00 and 6.30 or 6.30 and 7.00, or sometimes in the afternoon, callers who manage to get through may address many topics and voice critical statements on daily problems but also on societal scandals. Each caller is obliged to give his or her full name and residence and has a limited amount of time, although some of them use this time to address several different issues. In most cases, the hosts of the show will not intervene or comment upon these statements, but have to emphasize the necessity to avoid any kind of defamation or false accusations and the explicit naming of persons. This successful programme format or genre is primarily based on the contingent interests of radio producers and frequent listeners, and it corresponds to current changes in the public sphere,

where these shows find their particular, unparalleled place and to a lesser degree due to the facts and issues themselves. The success of such call-in shows is based not only on the circulation of novel media content, but also on the local, situated appropriation of globally available media technologies, thus giving rise to a unique instance of mediatization and societal discourse.

Radio in Benin, as in many other African countries today, represents the primary electronic mass medium in terms of the number of listeners and radio stations. After political changes in the 1990s, new media laws in 1997 also enabled the establishment of state-independent radio and TV stations. Since then, there have been three waves of licensing radio stations by the supreme Media Board. Currently, the country boasts a great variety of radio stations, among them private, religious and community stations, especially in major urban centres such as Cotonou or Parakou, offering a multifaceted programme schedule including information, entertainment, advice and messages. Interactive programmes, facilitated by the mobile phone boom, are especially successful among listeners, as are press reviews, quiz shows and call-in request shows and political debates. The range of media productions on offer is continually growing, including the vibrant industry of film and video, and the increasing number of smaller and larger commercial media production companies. As previously mentioned, the private radio station Golfe FM, established in 1998, introduced the *grogne* shows in 1999 in a format similar to what has in the interim become commonly known in its variations throughout the country. Inspired by shows in France and the U.S, they created *Grogne Matinal* to attract listeners just before the morning news, which are followed by advertisements and announcements. From the very beginning, these programmes became a mirror of urban life in metropolitan Cotonou and related to problems of each and every one of its citizens, including delicate issues such as corruption, bad governance and all forms of the abuse of power. Callers' statements refer to such diverse issues as defective roads, arrogant public servants, brutal lorry drivers, rubbish corners in the market and rising prices for daily commodities.

A central concern for many in the field of media – and especially for media authorities such as the HAAC – has become the issue of the veracity of individual statements. Furthermore, debates have arisen around methods to avoid abuse, to address potential slander and to simultaneously guarantee the callers' freedom of expression of the callers and the right of others to refute these statements. These shows have often been suspended by the HAAC, but later resumed because of listeners' and media professionals' protests. Currently, debates continue to rage on the potential political abuse of such shows. The HAAC, together with representatives of journalists and media owners, decided in 2005 to interrupt these potentially politically charged radio programmes during election campaigns (starting with the presidential elections in early 2006), in order to avoid abuse by individual politicians. As a result of similar derogatory statements, most hosts of *grogne* programmes now introduce each broadcast with a reminder of the etiquette and structure and urge listeners not make personal aspersions. Most stations protocol the broadcast and note each and every caller on a list. Many *grogneurs'* statements focus on local issues, especially problems with infrastructures in their neighbourhood, where local authorities are called upon to better monitor and finalize projects.

Let us now turn our attention to the central actors in these radio programmes – active listeners and frequent callers known as “grogneurs”. My research indicates that most of them share an attitude of outspokenness, disclosure and public education, combined with a strong ego and a wish for recognition. They differ, however, in the topics that are the dearest to them and in their habits and interaction with particular radio stations.

One example: Paul Dakouda lives in Parakou, the biggest town in northern Benin, and is a passionate radio listener. He listens to almost all local FM stations throughout the day, even at work. Currently he works at a chemistry shop, while pursuing his studies at the Parakou University. Paul calls at least one of the Parakou stations in the morning almost every workday to express his opinions. To fully take advantage of his time on air, he usually reads out his statement from a booklet in which he prepares most of his gripes in advance. Paul mentions that this booklet also resembles a diary, because he writes down many problems and events in his neighbourhood, even if he won't always be able to mention this information on air. Paul is very well-known to the journalists of most Parakou radio stations, as well. His main concern is the development of his quarter, especially its infrastructures. Furthermore, he often accuses the city's authorities of not actively trying to improve the living conditions of most people in town. Paul said that municipal

→ Paul Dakouda, grogneur, Parakou, March 2011 (© Tilo Grätz)



office representatives sometimes try to intimidate him, but that he was not scared, because his uncle was a state prosecutor at the local tribunal in Parakou, a fact known to many. Paul is a member of a grogneurs association. He gets up early every morning, prepares several mobile phones and uses them concurrently to increase his chances of getting on air. His wife is not always very enthusiastic about his hobby, as he mentioned, because it occupies a lot of his attention. However, Paul is not only vocal about local issues; he often invokes the necessity of good governance in the dealings of Parakou's mayor and the current Yayi government. Sometimes Radio Arzèkè FM has also been invited him to be a studio guest on programmes as a representative of the concerns of grogneurs (Interview Parakou, October 2010, March 2011, March 2012, 2013).

Dedicated grogneurs share a set of features. These comprise a strong interest in public affairs and current information, a certain liking for public interventions and the wish for recognition, an eagerness and even passion for calling (and listening to) radio stations, as well as a dedication to maintaining a certain status amongst their personal networks of informants, friends and relatives, networks from which they may be profiting very much. They cannot, however, be put into a simplified category; some of them purposely use their capacities, for either noble or specious reasons, to exert pressure on authorities or individual persons. Others just like to disseminate information on their personal field of knowledge to many people, while yet others see themselves as helpers to journalists. Some of them could in fact be labelled "professionals" (Otchoun 2005) with regard to the refinement of their strategies (to a lesser extent income-minded). Some grogneurs are rather performers or short-story tellers. Generally, they do not have a secured and stable position, and their activities should be discussed from multiple perspectives to avoid an overly straightforward, normative evaluation.

Some grogneurs are also personally well-known to other listeners because of their engagement in public matters and/or their visibility. Most active grogneurs know each other – at least virtually, but also personally – through meeting each other from time to time. They exchange information, especially on matters of self-protection against unjustified allegations. Some dedicated grogneurs have founded associations in Parakou and Cotonou. Many similarities and differences exist in the career trajectories and political opinions of the various grogneurs interviewed for this study. Some grogneurs see themselves as mediators and purveyors of information to a large audience. Many frequent callers derive hedonistic pleasure from being heard by others and gaining attention. Other grogneurs share a vocation to "enlighten others" or to "reveal the truth" that sometimes turns into a mania.

In Benin, grogneurs have a mixed reputation. Grogneurs are lauded by some, but criticized by others. On the one hand, both normal listeners and authorities praise them for their contribution to a certain openness of media and the articulation of societal problems. Yet, at the same time, they are criticized for circulating false information that people sometimes use to settle private conflicts and to strive for financial benefits. The criticism cites their tendency to abuse their public power to manipulate opinion or spread false information. Some grogneurs may in fact use their abilities and positions to pressure individuals, including politicians, occasionally on behalf of others – a fact they themselves admit to, but add that these cases are still rare. Some few grogneurs may in fact work temporarily for extortionists by contributing information in return

for financial compensation. But of course none of the grogneurs I interviewed ever directly acknowledged this rumour. Other grogneurs are frequently well-known locally, although they may keep a much lower profile to avoid quarrels with journalists or authorities. To avoid unjustified accusations, many grogneurs try not only to record their call-ins, but also to procure various documents as proof of their information.

Where do grogneurs obtain their information? First of all, most grogneurs are particularly open-minded, vigilant people who critically examine public life. Most of them capitalize on special knowledge provided by either their education (e.g. law studies), their professional background (secret service), their position in a particular NGO, association or office or their personal relationship to people with such positions. Relationships to a wide range of potential “informants” are, nevertheless, a general necessity for all concerned, and most grogneurs use sensitive facts that do not stem from official media, but rather from unpublished sources, like interviews and rumours. Grogneurs receive information either by phone, as phone numbers are not private in Benin, by letter or through personal contact at home or at their workplace. These direct contacts are the most important source of information. Yet their veracity is difficult to evaluate, considering that issues of trust, anonymity and hidden transactions may interfere. Therefore, many grogneurs prefer not to meet their key informants in public, but to preserve the privacy of an encounter. Others, however, make use of more or less public sites to meet informants, such as their workplace (Adam Bachirou), a market stall etc. because precisely this gives them an enormous advantage if they do not have access to many other modes of attaining information. Some grogneurs purposely visit the meeting points of taxi drivers, where all kinds of information, including rumours, are exchanged, also because taxi drivers would not seek out grogneurs on their own volition.

There are, however, many more avenues of circulating and exchanging information, as well as a multiplicity of sites and methods through which information may be passed and exchanged in urban contexts. A grogneur may receive a visit from a proxy of a second party who received information from a friend’s SMS; or he may receive a tip while buying fuel in his or her neighbourhood, during a funeral and/or from a relative who just attended a local association’s meeting the day before. Conversely, most grogneurs, both the more “serious” and the more “scandalizing” types, try to verify the information by various means; i.e. by asking other people, phoning around, looking for documents or trying to confront accused individuals.

Authorities will listen to grogne shows in hopes of gleaning sensitive information. Some authorities, however, try to proactively strategize against specific grogneurs by passing competing information to other grogneurs, visiting them directly to manipulate their behaviour or using legal or illegal pressure. Often, grogneurs are much closer to local events and issues than journalists are, primarily due to the fact that the latter are limited in number, time and the resources to investigate current facts and figures. Journalists may profit from a network of informants, friends and co-workers, but strive to obtain information before grogneurs reveal it during a call-in show. They would like to be prepared, to judge whether these are inappropriate issues beforehand. Ideally, they would themselves start to investigate such issues, covering an issue in one of the regular newspapers or news programmes. Conversely, they have to maintain a certain degree of

reciprocity in exchanging relevant information. Many grogneur call-ins subsequently become topics for further reports in radio news or press coverage. In other cases, journalists prefer to keep their information at a semi-official or informal level in order to hold the potential to publish these at an appropriate moment.

What does this example tell us about the ways current communication spaces change in urban areas in Benin, especially with regard to the impact of media and ICT? First of all, it is difficult to separate stages of “change” as a “before” and an “after”; the introduction of new media technologies, ICT, freedoms of speech, and public modes of expression are on-going, gradual processes. Certainly, the introduction of the first grogne shows was an important moment, yet the impact of these shows was not immediately recognizable. They really started to boom in 2000, when mobile phones became less and less expensive in Benin. Grogne shows alone, however, do not constitute new communication circuits. Their dynamics are fluidly based on the increasing number and diversification of actors and networks of information. These webs of communication flow are also shaped by the generally growing proliferation of institutionalized media such as private radio, TV, newspapers and journals, PR agencies, blogs and mailing lists and evolving semi-public spaces like radio trottoir (“pavement radio”).⁴⁵ Finally, informal urban semi-public rumour mills play a significant role, due to public information dissemination at snack shops, buses, markets, meeting points and taxi driver debates. These information nodes feed their topics back into journalist information channels, which continues the cycle and amplifies the value of information as a commodity. Ultimately, we are witnessing the growing rapidity of information flow, enabled, once again, by mobile phones and moving urban actors, a fact that greatly challenges politicians and media producers alike. The growth and interconnectivity of locations, sources and circles of information is further shaped by external factors and is linked to the intricate contemporary public and hidden discursive field in contemporary Benin.

These fields increasingly include more topics than ever in conjunction with a changing society marked by growing urbanization, demographic growth and mediatization. Finally, the growing number of NGOs that position themselves as intermediaries between various parts of the population, governmental and international agencies have contributed to the rising awareness of the importance of crucial information, an awareness that grogneurs may capitalize on when engaging with the public. There are, however, many topics that seldom pass from informal grogneur discussions and rumours to greater public circulation. Among them are direct accusations against the president, particularly former president Kérékou, but also issues of the private lives of prominent people.

To conclude, these shows and their protagonists, grogneurs as well as journalists, contribute, as I would argue, to the creation of new media related communication spaces in Benin. For example, their activities led to the growing articulation and interrelation of various kinds of public spheres, both with regard to different levels, local, national and global and with respect to the respective communicative styles dominating each particular domain of public communication.

45 Cf. Stephen Ellis (1989). Tuning in to Pavement Radio. *African Affairs* 88 (352): 321–330.

Generally, this brings about a more profound interrelation of orality, literacy and written technology. Conversely, new media proficiencies are necessary for both the producers and the consumers. Journalists are compelled to make use of a variety of modes of communication and sources of information (including semi-official sources) to be innovative and creative and to sustain their success. On the other hand, listeners are compelled to employ new competencies to decode messages, with regard to both entertainment and information. Furthermore, interactive media increase the hybridity of elements and actors involved in radio production. As mentioned in the introduction, Grogne shows in the Republic of Benin bear witness to the fact that, all around the world, the production and circulation of information has increasingly become a decentralized process through the participation of a multiplicity of actors: professional and non-professionals. Our case study hints at the growing co-production of media contents, involving journalists, media users, politicians, technicians and active callers, as well as technologies, infrastructures and institutions. Beyond a necessary methodological shift towards the analysis of media as assemblages in which all such actors are involved in the process of translation and mutual inscription, we have to look at the self-understanding of the main actors involved. Most often, they are eager to maintain strict boundaries to delimit their roles; almost none of the grogneurs would define himself or herself as an up-and-coming journalist, and no journalist would consider a grogneur an equal partners or peer. Journalists and grogneurs, as well as politicians and informants, aim to preserve the respective strategic advantages linked to their position, e. g., grogneurs point to shared responsibilities instead of being exposed completely alone, maintaining a degree of incomplete information, and journalists eager to preserve a professional stance and corporate identity. The relevance of the grogne format, I argue, resides in the particular interplay of formal and informal avenues of communication. Their success is not only a product of the growing flexibility of expression, but also a co-production, cross-referencing and amplification of informal and formal networks and circles of communication in changing economies of attention. Without the role of grogneurs, which over the last 10 years has expanded significantly, an important element in these networks would, nevertheless, be missing. In the past, much has been attributed to the circulation of urban informal information or radio trottoir. Today, unofficial information may circulate much faster and across even more spaces and media and only partially enters as fact into mass-media circulation. A radio format such as the grogne show adds not only a further dimension, but can also itself only be understood in its connection to various sites, actors and sources of information, shaped by new media technologies and enhancing spaces of communication.

شموع وشهداء...



عصبة اسلامي



الشهيد عبداللطيف زروال



الشهيد المهندي بيريدي



الصغير المهندي



لقاسم وراة



عبد العزيز الراجحي



عبد الحق الراجحي



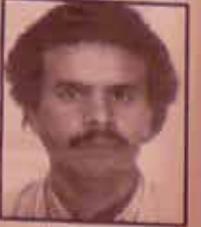
الزيد ابيعمار



عبد الوهاب



عصبة اناج



عبد اللطيف مالم



ريوية تاليد



من مجرهمولين المصيدي



Conferences and Workshops

In Search of the Kingdom – Emerging Scholarship on Saudi Arabia. From the First Saudi State to the Present⁴⁶

Nora Derbal

Research on Saudi Arabia, though previously very limited and on the fringes of disciplines such as history, anthropology and Islamic studies, has been expanding fast in recent years. Increasing publications on Saudi Arabia partially reflect a political opening of and easier access to the kingdom. It is also an expression, however, of an increasing Western public awareness and media interest. In the midst of globalization, post-Orientalism and the Arab Spring, Saudi Arabia still holds out as the exotic “other” per se, evoking images of the desert and the Bedouin, a land of plenty of petroleum and the breeding ground of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Against this background, this workshop approached new research trends on Saudi Arabia from two perspectives: it aimed at fostering a substantial academic, interdisciplinary discussion within the emerging scholarship on Saudi Arabia, as well as addressing practical and methodological questions on researching the kingdom.

The closed workshop was jointly organized by doctoral students and post-docs at the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies (BGSMS) and Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO). The presentations were arranged in eight overarching panels: Foundations, (Political) Representations, (Directed) Dialogues, Constructions and Constrictions, Religion Contested, Intellectual Fictions, Transnational Connections, Global vs. Local (?). Every panel was chaired by a junior scholar and an experienced senior scholar, who commented on the presentations.

← Conference on state violence and enforced disappearance during Medical Caravan in the south of Morocco, May 2013 (© Laura Menin)

⁴⁶ First published in: *ZMO Orient Bulletin. History and Cultures in Asia, the Middle East and Africa*, 25 (December 2013): 3–4. The workshop took place from 12–14 June 2013 at ZMO.

Traditionally, academic work on Saudi Arabia has focused on the royal family, the modernization and political economy of the rentier state, the relation between religious leaders and the regime and questions of gender segregation. The history of migration, social movements and the role of new media in recent discourses on state and society are vastly underrepresented. The wide range of themes presented and discussed at the workshop exemplified that a new generation of academics is turning towards untouched research themes. It questioned how current scholarship relates to previous studies and how it challenges old narratives.

The workshop also questioned the process of doing research on Saudi Arabia in formal and informal activities around the research panels, such as in a public podium discussion at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and in a session on research agendas run by senior scholars with longstanding practical research experience. The workshop participants discussed the specificities of doing research in Saudi Arabia and the challenges of limited access to archives, the influence of specific local customs and traditions on the empirical evidence collected and the impact of research methodology.

The wealth of presentations and the diversity of topics and approaches treated during the three days of the workshop received very positive feedback from participants and visitors. Further workshops might nevertheless limit the scope of topics, providing more time for each section and research field, thereby giving participants more space for self-exploration and discussion. The strong resonance showed that research on Saudi Arabia is evolving fast. Particularly in disciplines such as history, Islamic studies and anthropology, which traditionally excluded the kingdom, there appears to be strong interest in research from the region. The topical, methodological and scholarly interdisciplinarity of emerging scholarship on Saudi Arabia presented at the workshop stood out remarkably.

One of the aims of the workshop was to foster critical self-reflexivity, particular among non-Saudi researchers working on the kingdom. As mentioned in the closing session, we should ask ourselves more intensely why we are doing research on Saudi Arabia (and why none of the presentations at the workshop dealt with the large presence of non-Saudis in the country).

The organizers' intention to work with each other, rather than speaking about Saudi Arabia, was met by intense debates about representation, representativeness and authority. 35 years after the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*⁴⁷ debates about othering, degrees of exceptionalism, implicit and explicit culturalism and the need for self-defence still seem to be shaping processes of doing research to a remarkable extent. Are we, then, as a new generation of researchers, as 'enlightened' as we like to think, and what would that mean for doing research on a country like Saudi Arabia? The workshop showed that both sides have a lot of catching up to do. The best way to do this would be to continue working together.

47 Edward W. Said (1979). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Big Dams: Investigating their Temporal and Spatial Politics in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia⁴⁸

Jeanne Féaux de la Croix

Although the construction of large hydro-electric dams is often associated with the high modernism of the post-war era, such projects have never ceased to proliferate, particularly in the global South. Costs and benefits of these enormous projects are hotly contested: they have long stood as symbols of human ingenuity, signs of progress and “temples” of the modern nation state – as Nehru put it for India. But displaced populations, environmental activists, tax payers and creditors cast serious doubts on the justification for and means of building large dams.⁴⁹

Investigating the spatial and temporal politics of big dams at our workshop meant exploring the tension between dams as global phenomena and dams as the result of local politics and contexts. Big dams share similarities globally in their narratives of modernity and masculinity, development and progress, and in the same firms that provide technical know-how around the world. Our twelve case studies from Asia, Africa and the Middle East also presented numerous parallels in the all-too familiar violence against displaced populations and issues of rupture, loss and marginalization.

Investigating big dams proved an excellent prism to illuminate the interaction of different spatial scales: global and local, regional and transnational processes. Indeed, such dams are often flash-points of social and political critique around these relations and processes, as in Erdem Evren's description of current conflicts over dams planned in Turkey. The building of large dams provokes and promises transformation on an enormous scale: transforming water into electricity, deserts into fields, “backward” peoples into “modern citizens”. Changes of this kind are generally envisaged as irreversible, while investors hope to generate returns over a very long period. The workshop addressed the politics and heterogeneity of such temporalities in panels on notions of progress, modernization and development in contrast with the loss of “traditional” ways of life, ancient environmental balances and traces of the past. Although dams are often meant to celebrate a radical break with the past, Katiana Le Mentec describes Chinese policies around the Three Gorges Project as asserting continuity: moving cities back to “ancient capital” sites and claiming a long-standing “culture of migration” in the region. Meanwhile Jason Verber's paper on the Cahora Bassa project in Portuguese colonial Mozambique showed that a dam can also be planned to guard *against* change: in this case, Mozambican independence.

These examples demonstrate that dam studies can interrogate our scholarly “politics of temporality” and conventional periodizations, highlighting unexpected connections and discrepancies

⁴⁸ First published in: *ZMO Orient Bulletin. History and Cultures in Asia, the Middle East and Africa*, 23 (December 2012):

4. The workshop took place from 1–2 June 2012 at ZMO.

⁴⁹ Arundhati Roy (1999). The Greater Common Good. *Frontline. India's National Magazine* 16 (11); Kaushik Ghosh (2006). Between Global Flows and Local Dams: Indigenoussness, Locality, and the Transnational Sphere in Jharkhand, India. *Cultural Anthropology* 21 (4): 501–534; Thayer Scudder (2006). *The Future of Large Dams: Dealing with Social, Environmental, Institutional and Political Costs*. London, Sterling, VA: Earthscan.

between periods frequently presented as relatively homogeneous, such as moments of decolonization. The particularity of a historical moment, as well as the changing nature and influence of translocal movements was demonstrated in Valerie Hänsch's case study of Manasir resistance to resettlement resulting from construction of the Sudanese Merowe dam. In 2011, the Manasir and their supporters adopted the methods and momentum of the "Arab spring" to make themselves heard: staging demonstrations, sit-ins and speeches at a site they renamed "Tahrir Square", for example.

As highly loaded symbols of state power and as sites that incorporate specific practices of "governmentality", dam-building projects bring together actors, materialities and discourses from very different spatial scales. How do and did local activists and populations interact with national and regional governments, international organizations or globally operating companies? Who exactly are dams built for? And what of the balance between the dam-building process and the promised product?

The combination of a "politics of promise" (Cyrus Schayegh) and technocratic expertise, and the enormous temporal and spatial impact of large dams tends to occlude concrete political interests, including the huge potential for corruption in funding dams. In order to reflect critically on our relations as scholars to dam politics and activism, we invited Dorothea Härlin of the Berlin Water Table and Commons in Citizens Hands (GiB) to report on water and privatization struggles in Berlin itself. Our two-day conversation amply demonstrated the potential of historical and social dam studies to shed new light on the parallels and disjunctures of colonial and post-colonial settings, and how different spatial scales can be linked. The question of what distinguishes dam building from other modernizing infrastructure projects was pursued in a second ZMO workshop entitled "Roads as Routes to Modernity".

Beirut and Rabat: Reflections at the Margins of Two Workshops

Laura Menin

During the past two years (2012–2013), the research team of the ZMO project *Transforming Memories: Cultural Production and Personal/Public Memory in Lebanon and Morocco* organized two international workshops in Beirut and Rabat, two cities connected with the project's research sites. The aim of the workshops was to create an arena where the project participants could meet and discuss the transformative compass of memory in connection to the vibrant cultural production that has characterized Lebanon and Morocco in the past few decades. Moreover, the involvement of academic scholars from different disciplines, as well as former political prisoners, human rights activists and filmmakers provided important insights into the debates about creative production and the past in Lebanon and Morocco and into the ways the past shapes visions of the present and the future. Focusing on the main issues that we addressed during the two workshops,⁵⁰ this brief report seeks to trace the encounters and intellectual exchanges that shaped our days in Beirut and Rabat, inspiring individual research projects and raising broader theoretical questions.

The first workshop was held on March 10-17, 2012 at the headquarters of our project partner UMAM Documentation & Research in Beirut. It aimed primarily to inaugurate the project and enable the research team to meet and present their sub-projects. Once we arrived in Beirut, we went to the city's southern suburbs, where UMAM's offices are located. At "the Hangar", UMAM's exhibition space, the launching of the website for the project *Badna Naaref (We Want to Know)*, see <http://www.badnanaaref.org/index.php/home/2> was underway. *Badna Naaref* is one of the numerous projects in which UMAM is engaged and involves high school youth collecting memories of the civil war from the older generations. As Marie-Claude Souaid, one of the *Badna Naaref*'s organizers, told us the following evening in the living room of her home, in Lebanon memory is not only about the past, but continues to live in a present in which war is not over and may explode at any time. For young people who took part in this project, she said, talking about the past with their family made them feel closer to their parents and deeply aware of the need for a different future. According to Souaid, there is an urgent need to undertake projects on remembrance, but Lebanese society is not ready to "dig into its flesh". It needs also to set aside the past and look toward the future. The tensions between remembrance and forgetting, so powerfully infusing Souaid's words, recurred in the conversations with intellectuals, journalists and activists whom we met during our stay in Beirut.

The workshop formally began on Monday, 12 March, at "the Hangar". Monika Borgmann opened the discussion with a presentation on UMAM – its beginnings, its various activities and its projects. As Borgmann told us, she and her partner and co-director Lokman Slim decided to create

⁵⁰ For a detailed summary of the presentations, please refer to the two workshop reports available at ZMO's website http://www.zmo.de/forschung/projekte_2008_2013/Transforming_Memories.html.

UMAM during the filming of *Massaker* (2003), a documentary feature realized together with Hermann Theissen that collects the testimonies of six perpetrators involved in the massacre of the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps (1982), when they realized that Lebanon lacked systematic and accessible archives. Developing their mutual interest in civil violence and memory related to the civil war (1975–1990), they set up UMAM in 2005. As Borgmann said, “Every society has to deal with its past.” If the state neglects the memory of the war, the role of NGOs is to use culture and art as a tool to open up debates on the past and present. The activities of UMAM developed in rapidly shifting political contexts. In the summer of 2006, when their offices in Haret Hreik were heavily damaged by the Israeli bombardments, they concentrated on creating an archive through an impressive work of digitalizing, storing and cataloguing literature, periodicals, newspapers, audio and video materials and propaganda flyers.

Borgmann, Slim and the Hangar’s curator Amanda Abi Khalil told us about the manifold activities in which UMAM is involved, such as *Memory at Work: A Guide for Lebanese on Peace and War*, an on-going effort to document the events of the Lebanese Civil War (www.memoryatwork.org); an exhibition on the missing that travels the country to raise awareness about the thousands of people whose fate remains unknown; and *What is to be Done: Lebanon’s War-Loaded Memory* (2008), a project aimed to arouse a debate about Lebanon’s memory of the war through art, film screening and cultural production.

One session was dedicated to the presentation of the sub-projects by the three researchers involved in the project. In her introductory presentation, Sonja Hegasy, head of the research project, emphasized the increasing attention that memory studies have gained in the last twenty years, but also how the manifold definitions and approaches elaborated in different fields have made it difficult to cross disciplinary boundaries. While memory studies in/on the Arab World have recently increased, for Hegasy it remains an open question whether conflicts can be better overcome through the imperative of “forgive and forget” or through remembering and judicial prosecution. Following Hegasy’s introduction, Saadi Nikro presented his subproject, “Sites of Re-Memory: Situating Cultural Production and Civil Violence in Lebanon”. He canvassed a critical application of “post-memory”, particularly in respect to a younger generation of Lebanese who bear the burden of their parents’ silence over the civil war and its restless aftermath. Then, Laura Menin presented her subproject, “Wounded Memories: An Ethnographic Approach to Contemporary Moroccan Cultural Production”. The project investigates political violence and cultural production emerging from the “years of lead” (1961–1999) against the backdrop of the processes of reconciliation initiated with the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (ERC) in 2004. Finally, Makram Rabah presented his subproject, “Memory and Reconciliation: Conflict on Mount Lebanon”, which deals with the Lebanese reconciliation process with a particular focus on the “War of the Mountain” that erupted between the Druze and the Christians in the summer of 1983 and the fall of 1984. The three sub-projects engage memory as a transformative practice and as a site of exchange between personal and public from different disciplines: cultural studies (Nikro), social anthropology (Menin) and history (Rabah).

The research team discussed the theme of “transitional justice” with Sari Hanafi, Professor at the American University of Beirut, who provided a comparative analysis of various experiences

worldwide. Particularly touching was the meeting with Ali Abu Dehn, a former political prisoner in Syria for 13 years. During the civil war, in 1987, the Syrians imprisoned Abu Dehn on charges of spying for Israel. He spoke about the deprivations he suffered, trying to describe unutterable moral violence and physical abuses. Like many other political prisoners, Abu Dehn was deprived of his identity to become “Number 13”. His testimony also focused on the continuity of the violence after his release, when he returned to his wife and two children, without any form of support and care from the Lebanese government. When he first stepped into his home, he told us, his family embraced him, but he could not let go the bag with his personal belongings that he was clutching – as if he was desperately trying to hold together the fragments of his violated selfhood. Since he started recovering, Abu Dehn has begun to speak out about the plight of Lebanese political prisoners in Syrian jails and developed a website, called “Former Lebanese Political Detainees in Syria” (<http://www.flpdinsyria.com/?q=node/>). The encounter with Abu Dehn inspired Nikro and Menin to address the sensitive issue of enforced disappearance in Lebanon and in Morocco.

Discussions about memory continued during the evenings, when we met the journalists Omar Harkous and Hazem Saghieh, as well as the former fighter and confessed activist Asaad Chaftari, along with the visual artist Chaza Charaffedine. In our interlocutors’ words, there was a sense that the civil war was never over and that the tensions between different constituencies could lead to conflicts. The tense political situation in Lebanon, which differs significantly from the monarchical Morocco, led us to reflect upon how the broader politico-historical context contributes to shaping the social contexts where people engage in a “work of memory”.

After three decades of political repression in Morocco under the reign of Hassan II (1961–1999), the king initiated a timid process of political liberalization in the 1990s. In 2004, his son and successor Mohammed VI set up the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (ERC) to investigate past state repression and compensate its victims. Since then, the memory and the history of the “years of lead” (1961–1991) have become one focus of the institutional process that aims to promote the reconciliation of Moroccans with their violent past. This includes the creation of national archives, the “preservation of memory” and the renewal of Moroccan historiography.

The second workshop, “Trauma, Memory and History: A Comparative Reflection between Morocco and Lebanon”, was organized in cooperation with Jillali El Adnani, Professor of History at the Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, University of Mohamed V-Agdal, from April 18 to 20, 2013. It intended to continue the reflection initiated during the previous workshop by addressing a set of theoretical and empirical questions on the relations between trauma and recovery, memory and history, alongside and beyond the institutional processes promoted by the ERC.

Jillali El Adnani opened the workshop with an overview of the research on history and memory in Morocco. In the last decade, the faculty has been increasingly concerned with research on the history of postcolonial Morocco, with the creation a Master’s Programme on Contemporary History and a research group working on the question of trauma, memory and history in the “years of lead”.

As Ahmed Mroueh, UMAM's Senior Programme Manager, stressed, in Lebanon a few NGOs work to open a discussion on the civil war and former perpetrators have started to speak out. The situation is different in Morocco, where "truth telling" has gained momentum in the post-Hassan II Morocco. As Sonja Hegasy pointed out in her presentation on "The ambiguities of speaking out. Trauma and truth telling in the Middle East", the idea of "telling one's own story" in order to defuse political conflicts and reconcile societies – an idea strongly influenced by Sigmund Freud and concepts of the early twentieth century – should be subjected to critical scrutiny.

Engaging with these questions, Saadi Nikro, Laura Menin and Makram Rabah presented the developments of their sub-projects. Specifically, Nikro presented a critical discussion of the Lebanese documentary film *Chou Sar? (What Happened?)* and two youth projects in Lebanon, *War Stories* and *Badna Naaref* (see above), in which young people interview the older generation about their experience of the civil war in Lebanon. Drawing on her ethnographic research (2012–2013), Menin's paper, "Enforced disappearance in Morocco: dealing with suffering and lack of truth", looked at the on-going institutional process of reconciliation through the eyes of families whose relatives were disappeared. Menin focused on the case of Omar el-Ouassouli (1955–?), a left-wing political activist whose traces have been lost since 1984, and on his family's struggle to learn the fate of their beloved one. Finally, Rabah presented a paper on the "War of the Mountains in Lebanon between the Druze and the Maronites in 1982–1984". Based on strophic poetry of the Druze as well as a series of Maronite cartoons, Rabah tried to capture the process of collective memory formation carried out by competing centres of influence (clerics, political parties, family and so forth). While sharing an approach to memory as a social dynamic, the three researchers thus developed specific trajectories: Nikro's focus on inter-generational dynamics, Menin's interest in how on-going experiences of trauma are re-socialized by the families of the disappeared and Rabah's attention to the role of cultural production in shaping the memories of the Druze and the Maronites.

The researchers discussed their projects with Ahmad Bouhasane, Professor of Arabic literature at the FLSHR, with an interest in Moroccan prison literature, Professor El Adnani, and the ZMO colleagues Yasmine Berriane and Nils Riecken, who contributed to the debate with a presentation entitled "Experiences of violence, *tajāwuz/dépassement* and universalism, Abdallah Laroui and the dialectic of memory and critique".

Beyond scholarly presentation, the research team met former political prisoners and human rights activists like Abdelkrim El Manouzi, director of the NGO Association médicale de réhabilitation des victimes de la torture (AMVT). AMVT was founded in 2001 as a response to the urgent need to attend to the physical and psychological suffering of the victims of the "years of lead" and their relatives. AMVT carefully documents and archives information about the victims of torture, including the Tindouf prisoners, Guantanamo detainees and the victims of current state repression, like the activists of the 20th February movement and the Salafist prisoners, and organizes "Medical Caravans" in detention centres and marginalized regions of Morocco. El Manouzi shared with the audience the difficulties the association tries to navigate, such as lack of proximity to rural areas and limited means.

With Abdelhak Andalibe, a leftist former political prisoner and active member of the Forum Marocain pour la Vérité et la Justice (FMVJ), we discussed issues of memory and recovery. In his presentation, “Pour la préservation de la mémoire des victimes de violations flagrantes des droits de l’Homme au Maroc”, Andalibe underlined the shortcomings of the ERC and argued that there is an urgent need to create sites of memory and archives, excavate mass graves, commemorate martyrs and establish an independent centre for the memory of the victims of state repression in order to preserve the memory of the “years of lead”. The discussion continued with Nour-Eddine Saoudi, a former political prisoner, journalist, professor and translator, who addressed the intricate relationships between trauma, memory and history. In his presentation, “L’écriture, une sorte de survie”, Saoudi interwove a theoretical reflection on these topics with personal memories published in his prison memoir *Voyage au-delà des nuits de plombs* (2007). Quoting from his prison memoir, Saoudi shared his traumatic experience of being kidnapped, arbitrarily detained and tortured for several months in the Derb Moulay Cherif secret detention site in Casablanca. For Saoudi, prison memoirs have opened up a space for other memories of the “years of lead”, which have long been manipulated and silenced by the Moroccan regime, and he called on historians to critically engage prison memoirs as an essential source for writing the history of Morocco.

While prison literature has worked to transform personal experiences of state violence into a multi-vocal memory, filmic production has contributed to “visualizing” the memory of the past. With Yasmine Hadhoumi and Chadwane Bensalmia, we screened and discussed their documentary film *Ana l’Hay: Memoire du Hay Mohammadi*, a project proposed by the Moroccan association Casamemoire as part of the ERC’s community reparations programme. With close collaboration with Fatna El Bouih, a former political detainee and a human rights activist, the documentary narrates the history of Hay (Quarter) Mohammadi, one neighbourhood in Casablanca that was targeted by state repression, through the oral testimonies of its inhabitants. The screening triggered a reflection on how visual art can preserve memory and, in turn, on how memory can be visualized and in this very process become part of a project of reconciliation.

From the architect and writer Ahmed Ghazali, we learnt about the project of the Rif Museum as part of the ERC’s recommendations for the Rif region, which was deeply affected by human rights violations and marginalization. According to Ghazali, only a comprehensive approach to the memories and history of the Rif region can promote projects and actions towards community reparation. His presentation stimulated a discussion on the challenges and complexities of writing a museographical narrative that tackles multiple discourses while meeting the exigencies of narrative coherence and efficacy.

The new politics of memory in Morocco and its focus on the traumatic events that have characterized postcolonial history have stirred Moroccans’ interest in history, according to Maâti Monjib, Professor of Political History at the University of Rabat, and contributor to the francophone magazine *Zamane*. As Monjib explained, *Zamane* is an intellectual project that aspires to render the history of Morocco comprehensible and accessible to the Moroccan public. Notwithstanding the low level of literacy and limited press circulation in Morocco, in a few years *Zamane* was able to build up a robust francophone readership.

→ Sit-in in Tazmamart organized by
Medical Caravan, Morocco, May 2013
(© Laura Menin)

↓ Medical Caravan to Tazmamart,
Morocco, May 2013 (© Laura Menin)



During our days in Morocco, the research team met Moroccan students of the new Masters programme in Contemporary History (University Mohammed V, Rabat) and learnt about their research as well as the difficulties they face due to lack of systematic archives on contemporary history. The research group also visited the notorious secret detention centre Derb Moulay Cherif with Fatna El Bouih, who is currently involved in a project aiming to turn it into a community centre as part of the ERC community reparation projects. El Bouih showed us the headquarters of Relais: Prison-Société, an association devoted to former prisoners' rehabilitation and their re-insertion into society that El Bouih co-founded in 2005.



→ Visit to La Fabrique Culturelle des Anciens Abattoirs of Casablanca, Morocco, April 2013 (© Sonja Hegasy)

Over the last twenty years, both Lebanon and Morocco have been characterized by vibrant cultural production addressing their respective violent pasts, though they are also characterized by different trajectories of political culture and state policies. Taking into account both similarities and specificities compelled a reflection on the relation between personal and public memories, remembering and forgetting, people and state. In what ways do amnesty, as a formal policy (Lebanon), and institutional processes of reconciliation and community reparation (Morocco) work to recover memory, rework it into history, and contribute to transformative practices? Unlike Lebanon, Moroccan former political prisoners and human rights activists seem to have no doubts that in Morocco there is an urgent need to remember, and not to forget, as an essential condition to ensure that past state violations will not be repeated and to make it possible to envision a different future.

Rethinking Memory Studies⁵¹

Yasser Mehanna

Since its emergence in disciplines such as psychology, history, sociology and literary studies, memory studies has been an interdisciplinary field of research, spanning the humanities and cognitive sciences. Organized by Saadi Nikro, the ZMO's thematic workshop focused on a comparative assessment of "how particular approaches to researching memory frame their terms of reference, initiate concepts and generate specific research paradigms", as he points out in the workshop's outline. In this connection, both textual/discursive and social/contextual examples were used to better grasp the practical significance of concepts and methods for research.

In the first panel, Michael Rothberg (University of Illinois) explained the outcome, possibilities and opportunities of multidirectional memory. As an example, Rothberg presented the emergence of Holocaust memory during the process of decolonization in the 1960s, which is also the topic of his book *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*.⁵² Discussing key moments of the complex relation between Holocaust memory, on the one hand, and the dynamics of decolonization, on the other, Rothberg argued that from a historiographical point of view the two phenomena have to be put into dialogue. Rothberg also emphasized that the dynamics of memory have to be rethought. He rejects the proposition in memory studies that the congregation of different historical memories creates competition among them. Instead Rothberg argued that historical memories do not follow a historically compartmentalized model and could even produce new forms of "multidirectional memory". To underline this argument, Rothberg pointed to examples of interaction between Holocaust memory and other historical memories, like William Edward Burghardt Du Bois' essay "The negro and the Warsaw Ghetto" and Edgar Morin's documentary "Chronique d'un été" (Chronicle of a Summer), in which Holocaust memory and the memory of racist colonialism intersect. Rothberg concluded that this multidirectionality contains the potential for new solidarities between the "preservers" of different historical memories.

In the following discussion, the workshop attendees dealt with questions of whether historical memory is "possessive" toward the past and whether it is possible to avoid a competitive scenario between different historical memories. The participants spoke of their own research experiences and pointed to how different actors use historical memory hegemonically to lobby for their particular cause. In reaction to this, Michael Rothberg named the predominant stance of the Holocaust as the starting point of his research. Discussing the competition among different historical memories, Rothberg argued that competition is not an obligatory product of the comparison of different historical memories, but rather that the positions move and even overlap between competition, uniqueness, differentiation, equation and solidarity.

⁵¹ The thematic workshop with Susan Slyomovics and Michael Rothberg took place 3 June 2013 at ZMO.

⁵² Michael Rothberg (2009). *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford, Ca. Stanford University Press.

In the second session, Katharina Lange (ZMO) presented the concept of opposition between “dead” history and “lived” memory that Maurice Halbwachs formulated for the first time and that Pierre Nora⁵³ later took up and popularized. Lange summarized Nora’s definition of memory as a pre-modern phenomenon and a spontaneous act of reconstruction and representation of the past that can be found in archaic societies. In the second part of her presentation, Lange mooted Nora’s notion by relating it to her own research field of tribal history in northern Syria. She depicted her research data on the tribal groups of the Shawaya, which she collected during her fieldwork in northern Syria, and argued that the Shawaya groups represented the past in an oral form of long genealogies and stories, anecdotes and narratives about ancestors displaying heroic deeds, courage and generosity. This oral history is mostly narrated by elderly men, who are regarded as experts of history. Lange pointed out that there is also a printed form of tribal history, as many contemporary Syrian authors address the topic in a wide variety of popular books. According to Lange, oral history refers to these books, but almost always in a very critical way. Focusing on this relation between oral and written history, Lange explained that the younger generations relied more on written notes and documents and that in their concept of history Arab nationalism played a more dominant role than in its oral counterpart. Lange also stressed that tribal history in Syria is a male-dominated sphere. Nevertheless, Lange highlighted that the female members of the Shawaya, too, contribute to the oral history of their tribe, but more by talking about everyday life. In relation to Nora’s notion of memory, Lange concluded that the concept of memory is not present in the Shawaya’s efforts to represent the past and that history, and even more historic truth, are the actual focal points of their thinking.

In the discussion that followed, the attendees pointed out that Pierre Nora was working on France when he formulated his notion of memory and that, for that reason, Nora’s concept should not be read as a model to be rigidly applied to other areas, but as a reference. In addition, the discussion raised the question of the uses of the different historical narratives of the “history experts”, namely the elderly men on the one hand and the women on the other. Katharina Lange answered that the “official history” of the elderly men produces a kind of public sphere, even if this public sphere is very limited, as women cannot attend the gatherings in which the history experts present their narration. Regarding the narratives of women, Lange highlighted that the content of their narrative could be recognized as a kind of social history, which fills a gap in the effort of the Shawaya to narrate the past, as the “official history” concentrates more on the political sphere.

In her presentation, Sonja Hegasy (ZMO) dealt with the transformative dynamics within the notion of memory. Hegasy referred to the boom of memory studies and of “memory projects” implemented by governmental or non-governmental institutions or even individuals to document atrocities and human rights violations in, for example, civil war-torn societies and states with a dictatorial past. Referring to Aleida Assmann’s most recent publication,⁵⁴ Hegasy pointed to the close relationship between these memory projects and political change. In this notion of memory,

53 Cf. note 30.

54 Cf. note 32.

the governmental or non-governmental agent understands the representation of history as containing an ethical aspect for the purpose of conflict solutions and the projection of a “well-functioning” society in the future. This notion follows the idea of “remembering in order not to repeat”. As a next step, Hegasy presented examples of memory projects in Lebanon and Morocco. Here Hegasy referred to the digital collection project *Memory at Work: A Guide to Lebanese to Peace and War*, which the NGO UMAM Documentation & Research launched in 2012. The archive can be accessed through its webpage in Arabic and since March 2013 also in English. According to Hegasy, by collecting archival material from the war period the project tries to counter the “historical amnesia” regarding the civil war (1975–1990) in Lebanon’s political sphere. As another example, Hegasy presented the work of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (French: Instance Équité et Réconciliation – IER), created in 2004 by King Mohamed VI to reconcile victims of human rights abuses committed during the “years of lead” (1961–1991) in Morocco. Although the commission opened former detention sites as memorials for the public and launched communal reparation projects, Hegasy highlighted that few of these projects are working in the field of “preserving memory”, while the overwhelming majority of the partly EU-funded projects are realized in the traditional development sector (agriculture, infrastructure, etc.). Starting from this discrepancy, Hegasy raised the question of the relation between “forgetting” and “memorizing” and concluded her panel by referring to Aleida Assmann and Christian Meier’s theses, in which the two authors describe the act of forgetting also as a pacifying force and in which they argue for a balance between the two “actions”.

The ensuing discussion turned on the questions about the role of archives and the relation between “forgetting” and “memorizing”. Referring to the special situation in Lebanon, Makram Rabah (UMAM D&R) emphasized that the amnesty law of 1991 created a situation in which the archives cannot be used for legal persecution. However, Rabah argued against the idea of an “amnesia culture” in post-war Lebanon by stressing that many figures in the Lebanese political sphere run their own memory projects. According to Rabah, these figures understood that forgetting does not necessarily serve as a pacifying force that can prevent violent clashes between different factions. The attendees suggested that the two forces of memorizing and forgetting are always co-present and situated in a relation of interdependency. In reaction to this, Sonja Hegasy pointed to the concept of *Erinnerungskultur* (culture of remembrance/memory culture), which in the German context is almost a synonym for remembering the Holocaust and the victims of National Socialism. Here, Hegasy said that the desire in German society to forget Germany’s Nazi past produced in the end the basis for Germany’s self-identity of a society and nation with a high degree of memory culture.

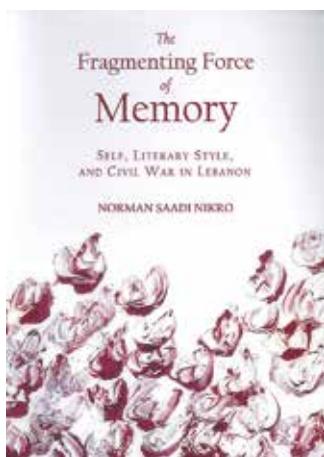
In the following lecture Karin Mlodoč (ZMO) spoke about the connections between memory and traumatic experiences in the contexts of excessive violence and war. Mlodoč named World War I, the Holocaust and the Vietnam War as the first triggers for research on traumata. The Vietnam War in particular was of utmost importance, as it produced for the first time a clinical concept of trauma, namely posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Working in her own research project on traumatic memories of Kurdish women who survived the Anfal Campaign (1988–89), Mlodoč depicted the concept of trauma as a memory phenomenon. From a psychological point of view, the traumatized person fluctuates between avoiding the traumatic memory and searching for it.

One outcome of this searching process is trauma narratives, which are characterized by very detailed statements but also by erratic references to place and time. In the special situation of the survivors of the Anfal Campaign, Mlodoch highlighted that women linked their own individual traumatic experiences in their narratives with the traumatic experiences of relatives, neighbours and friends and thereby produced a collective memory. In opposition to the “Western” approach to trauma treatment of confronting the patient with his or hers traumatic memories individually as a first step for healing, the Anfal women refuse to step out of the collective memory to stress their individual experience. In contrast to the collective memory of the Anfal women, Mlodoch criticized the notion of “collective trauma”. In her opinion the use of the term is incorrect, as a trauma cannot be transferred to a collective group, society or nation. Mlodoch argued that there is no evidence for a transfer of individual experiences to whole societies and emphasized the deep difference between directly experiencing violence and war and just knowing about it second-hand.

In the discussion, the question of designating the experience of the Anfal women as collective trauma was raised once more. Mlodoch noted that the individual experiences of the women are linked by narratives. These narratives do not produce a phenomenon that, from a psychological viewpoint, could be termed “collective trauma”, but rather “collective experienced memory”. The attendees also discussed the role of the creators of narratives for the emergence of traumata. Mlodoch stressed here that it was collective memory that made it possible for the Anfal women to recognize their suffering, rather than the narrative of a third person. Nevertheless, Mlodoch said that the Anfal women do not define themselves as “traumatized” but as victims who suffered in the past. For that reason, they resist the idea of needing help in “healing”. Mlodoch closed by saying that the Anfal women produced a collective memory independently, which somehow stabilized their psychological situation. This stands in remarkable contrast to the male survivors of the Anfal campaign, who – without the experience of collective memory – are in a much poorer psychological state.

Susan Slyomovics (UCLA) opened the next session of the workshop with her lecture on “Memory and Visual Anthropology”. Slyomovics’ contribution dealt with the complex and intertwined pasts of visual anthropology and photography in the context of 19th-century, colonized Algeria and focused on how photographs were used to reconstruct the past and how they could function as memory devices. Highlighting the historical overlap between the discovery of photography, the development of visual biometric technologies in the 1820s and the French colonization of Algeria in 1830, Slyomovics started by portraying the prevalent practice of the new technique of photography in late 19th-century Britain and France. According to Slyomovics, photography was understood here as an exact replica of reality. This notion had a great impact on colonial photography and especially on contemporary visual anthropology. The aforementioned historical coincidence made Algeria a “scientific” laboratory for French anthropologists, who produced photographs in the context of anthropometric classification systems and racial sciences to categorize Algerians into different types, sorted in order of hierarchy. Asking about the complex legacies of colonial French photography, whose products still continue to circulate in museums, such as the Getty Museum in Los Angeles and publications like Marc Garangers *Femmes algériennes 1960*, Slyomovics presented colonial tourist postcards of Algeria and compared them with

the French-imposed ID photos of Algerians and the aforementioned photographs taken by French anthropologists. Examining the portraits in particular, Slyomovics pointed to the link between the development of criminalization and colonial photography and referred to the work of Alphonse Bertillon, who, in his ambition to produce a complete portrait of criminals, resorted to Carl Damann's technique of profile photography of colonized persons. In the last part of her lecture, Slyomovics drew attention to the Algerian ID photos and argued that these ID photos, which she said were born out of colonial or post-independence repressive violence, were transformed into memory devices. As an example, Slyomovics pointed to Algerians who use the ID photos of killed or disappeared relatives during the Civil War of 1990 as the "sole evidence" of their existence. Slyomovics argued that this "practice" of using ID photos and ID cards as memory devices has a transnational quality, as it can be found in different societies.



↑ Book cover Norman Saadi Nikro, *The Fragmenting Force of Memory*, 2012 (© Cambridge Scholars Publishing)

Discussing the connection between visual anthropology and memory studies, the attendees raised the question of the role of pictures of political prisoners in the demonstrations staged mostly by women in Algeria and Morocco. In reaction, Slyomovics described the use of ID photos in demonstrations as a kind of willingness to engage with the "perpetrator", as the ID photos and especially the ID cards are artefacts that came out of the bureaucratic apparatus of the state. According to Slyomovics, the particular form of the ID photos is seen as the material objects closest to and most intimate with the disappeared person. Slyomovics further argued that the use of the ID photos in demonstrations is also a reference to time, as the persons in the photos are shown in the past. This, Slyomovics said, gives the ID photos an iconic quality. Recognizing the significance of colonial photography archives for memory studies, the attendees asked Slyomovics about the rereading possibilities of these archives. Here Slyomovics emphasized that the questions of who took the photo, where it was taken and whom it showed can often be easily answered, but that these photographs are not related to the violent context in which they were produced. Slyomovics closed by saying this relation was the most fruitful way to reread colonial photography archives.

Bettina Dennerlein (University of Zurich) gave the last lecture of the workshop, on "Memory and Gender", in which she gave the attendees an insight into her research. Working on the Moroccan Equity and Reconciliation Commission and its connected discourse, Dennerlein observed that the memory work of the commission is channelled almost completely through the language of human and women's rights. Concentrating on this issue, Dennerlein dealt with the limiting and at the same time enabling aspects of the categories "women" and "gender". According to Dennerlein, both categories have a strong generalizing dimension. The category of "gender" in particular is almost always used as a synonym for women or men and women. Dennerlein offered two approaches to answer the question about how the category of "gender" works within the discourse of memory politics. On the one hand, there is the analytical approach, in which the

researcher can look at the discourse and its context to detect the norms and organizing effects of the category “gender” on the discourse itself and, on the other hand, there is the possibility to approach the question from a more theoretical perspective, through which the notion of “gender” can be reread. Here, Dennerlein pointed to Joan Wallach Scott’s article “Gender: Still a useful category of analysis” from 2010. In the last part of her presentation, Dennerlein summarized Scott’s position that the category of “gender” took on an ideological connotation in the last decades and thereby lost its function as a critical category. Nevertheless, Dennerlein observed, that a critical rereading of the notion of the construction of sexual differences can reconstitute “gender” as a useful and critical category for legal and political discourses.

In the following discussion, the attendees raised the question of how to connect the gender perspective to memory studies. Dennerlein highlighted here the organizing effects of categories like “women” or “gender”, especially in the field of memory politics and named the reflection on these organizing effects as the entry point to her research. According to Dennerlein, the constructed category of “women” is an organizing force in connection with politics and social phenomena. For that reason, the category as such cannot be neglected for any historical research, despite its constructed character.

Lecture Series

Once a month each winter term, ZMO invites the wider Berlin public to a series of lectures by German and international scholars that explores a particular thematic field. ZMO has also co-organized a Central Asian lecture series with Humboldt University Berlin and an urban studies seminar with EUME. Here are some highlights of the past years.

Speaking, Listening, Reading, Seeing: Ways of Shaping the World through Media ZMO Colloquium 2008/2009⁵⁵

Kai Kresse

This lecture series sought to investigate the ways in which social “worlds”, as domains or constituencies of religion, are constructed, framed and negotiated through different forms of media in everyday life, looking at case studies from Africa, South Asia and the Near East. With a view to ZMO’s main research programme *Muslim Worlds – World of Islam?*, there was a particular but not exclusive focus on Islam and Muslim contexts. Researchers were invited to present their analysis and discussion of such processes with a view to current debates on society, religion and the media, and with attention to the empirical details that constitute and shape social interaction in each case. In particular, we were interested in the critical exploration of genres and technologies used in the mediation and reception of the relevant discourses and performances. The lectures, which were given by a range of international scholars, in turn investigated the following topics: the recovered bin Laden archive of cassette recordings (Flagg Miller, University of California Davis); “Rasta Sufis” as popular media stars in West Africa (Benjamin Soares, African Studies Centre, Leiden); political dissent in Egypt as expressed on Internet sites (Charles Hirschkind, University of



↑ Lecture by Sheikh Abdilahi Nassir at ZMO, July 2008
(© ZMO)

California, Berkeley); the role of visual representations of mythology and religion in the early South Asian gramophone market (Stephen Hughes, SOAS); reflections on the complex inter-relationships between visual images and spirits among Christian sects in Ghana (Birgit Meyer, Free University Amsterdam); notably a talk on the Internet fatwas of the renowned Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi by ZMO-based scholar Bettina Gräf, whose co-edited volume on Qaradawi as a “global mufti” has come out with Hurst.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ First published in: *ZMO Orient Bulletin. History and Cultures in Asia, the Middle East and Africa*, 16 (June 2007): 7.

⁵⁶ Bettina Gräf and Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen (eds.). *The Global Mufti. The Phenomenon of Yusuf al-Qaradawi*. London: Hurst.

**The Impossible Aesthetic: Situating Research in
Arts and Social Sciences/Humanities
ZMO Colloquium 2012/2013⁵⁷**

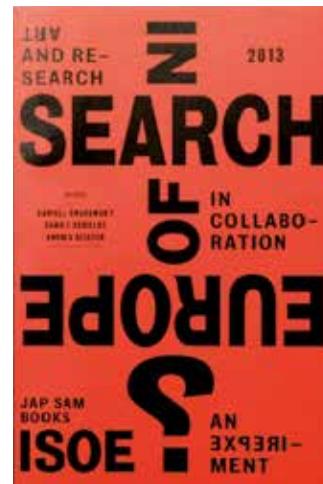
Regina Sarreiter

Collaboration between academic researchers and artists has become a common phenomenon in recent years. Increased research on art and artistic practices is complemented by a growing emphasis on research practices among artists. The BMBF-funded project ISOE at ZMO exemplifies such developments, since the group project combines research in the social sciences with an exhibition resulting from the collaboration between artists and scholars. The structural shift in art education, i. e. PhD programmes for artists, facilitates this trend. Hence, differences between artistic and scientific practices are becoming more and more blurred.

Reducing the interrelation between scientific and artistic research and knowledge production to structural changes in the academies and funding bodies, however, would be much too simplistic and also conceal their theoretical promise. Artists are integrating research methods into their artistic practice that match those of disciplines such as anthropology, history and the natural sciences. At the same time, scholars are approaching the question of how artistic practice engages with social phenomena and what potential this holds for social scientific inquiry.

Last but not least, there is a growing awareness among scholars that scientific practice itself is deeply embedded in aesthetic considerations – bearing in mind Jacques Rancière's understanding of aesthetics as a mode of thinking rather than a philosophical discipline. Our aim in this lecture series was rather to explore the differences between both fields of knowledge production and to discuss where they could meet and engage with each other. To open up the discussion we invited scholars and artists to present their work and share their thoughts with us.

The Colloquium was organized in cooperation with Arsenal – Institut für Film und Videokunst e.V., and Arts of Africa at the Art History Department of Freie Universität Berlin.



↑ Poster, Exhibition ISOE, Berlin, November 2013 (© Eps51)⁵⁷

⁵⁷ First published in: *ZMO Orient Bulletin. History and Cultures in Asia, the Middle East and Africa*, 23 (December 2012): 6.

⁵⁸ Andrea Heister, Samuli Schielke and Daniela Swarowsky (eds.) (2013). *In Search of Europe? Art and Research in Collaboration. An Experiment*. Heijningen: Jap Sam Books.

Islam and Society in Central Asia, Lecture Series 2011⁵⁹

Sophie Roche, Dina Wilkowsky

Central Asia has attracted many specialists interested in the relationship between Islam and the post-Soviet states. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian republics became part of the re-Islamization process observed in many other countries and communities worldwide. Engaging in this debate, the Central Asian Research Group of the ZMO organized a lecture series on Islam and Society in Central Asia and invited well-known orientalists, historians, anthropologists, and political figures. Three examples examine the wide range of topics and aspects of political and religious dynamics in Central Asia (Cf. note 11).

Dr Alikhan Baimenov, Chairman of the Democratic Party Ak Zhol and an advisor at the Institute of National Studies in Kazakhstan, gave a lecture on the relationship between the state and Islam in

↓ Unmarried girl during the harvest. The straw is laid out on the streets so that cars drive over it to “thresh” the grain. Qarategin, Tajikistan, 2011 (© Sophie Roche)



⁵⁹ First published in: *ZMO Orient Bulletin. History and Cultures in Asia, the Middle East and Africa*, 20 (June 2011): 5.

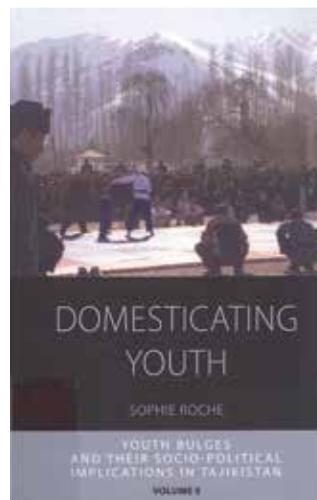
post-Soviet Kazakhstan. He noted that the growth of religiosity among the population should be considered an objective and natural process of increasing national consciousness. The elite of Kazakhstan should recognize this fact in the interest of modernizing post-Soviet society on the basis of a close cooperation with clergy, scientists, philosophers and intellectuals, developing common approaches to creating new values and restoring old ones.

Dr Muhiddin Kabiri from the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan talked about “The Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan: On the Specifics of Post-Soviet Islamic Dynamics”. The IRP is the only officially recognized party in Central Asia that explicitly includes Islamic values, and Dr Kabiri is a central figure within political Islam in Central Asia. He reflected on the socio-political conditions in Tajikistan. The genealogy of the IRP is a mirror of the political post-Soviet engagement with Islam. Pushed underground during the Soviet period, it became an important focal point for millions of people after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

A contribution to the debate on the struggle over the religious arena in Central Asia was provided by Prof Vitaly Naumkin, director of the Russian Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow, and one of the most prominent Russian scholars on Islam. He focused in his lecture on the stages of Islamization in Central Asia throughout the centuries. He noted that Islam has never been dead, not even during Soviet atheistic rule. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, the region has experienced a dynamic revival of Islam. Naumkin paid special attention to the rise of Islamic radicalism in the region as well as to the role of local patronage networks which are used by the Islamist movements and parties in their political struggle against the ruling regimes.

The lively discussions and informal talks of various specialists before and after the presentation showed that there is a need for a regular forum to discuss such issues in an open academic setting. The lectures provide diverse insights into local discourses as well as European and Russian approaches and thus go beyond the usual Western perspectives on the question of Islam in Central Asia. For further information, cf. http://www.klaus-schwarz-verlag.com/index.php?title=Sophie+Roche+%3A+Central+Asian+Intellectuals+on+Islam&art_no=STUDIEN32

We mourn the loss of our dear friend and esteemed colleague Dr Dina Wilkowsky who has significantly helped to advance research on Central Asia at ZMO.



↑ Book cover Sophie Roche, Domesticating Youth, 2014 (© Berghahn Books)



Featured (Guest) Scholars

“I am still Transitioning!”

Interview with Abdoulaye Sounaye⁶⁰

Abdoulaye Sounaye is a research fellow at ZMO since June 2013. As part of working group Concepts of World and Order, he works on “Islam, youth religiosities and sermon practices in contemporary Niamey, Niger”. His research focus links up with the joint research project *Habitats and Habitus. Politics and Aesthetics of Religious World Making*, directed by Birgit Meyer, University of Utrecht. Tilo Grätz asked Abdoulaye Sounaye about his research plans, his experiences at ZMO and about the first impressions of his life in Berlin.

Could you please tell us about your academic career before joining the ZMO?

I studied Philosophy, Sociology and Anthropology in Niger. Later I continued my studies in Dakar, and then won a Fulbright scholarship to study in the US. I decided to go to Arizona State University, where I got a MA in Religious Studies. And then, when I wanted to get a PhD, I transferred to Northwestern University, because of their interest and resources in African Studies. I was affiliated with Anthropology and Religious Studies. I completed my PhD in June 2012 and my dissertation is an ethnography of sermon practices within the context of the Izala Islamic reform in Niger.

← Wrestling fight “gushtin”, Persian New Year Celebration
Nowruz, Varzob, Tajikistan, 2007 (© Sophie Roche)

⁶⁰ First published in: *ZMO Orient Bulletin. History and Cultures in Asia, the Middle East and Africa*, 25 (December 2013): 2–3.

Could you please give us an idea of your current research project?

Basically, my current research project is building on what I have already accomplished in my dissertation. I am going back to this field of sermon practices, focusing on how young people are using these sermons, what they call wazu, and the communities they are building. I use, for example, the concept of preaching communities and look at how these communities are socially organized. Of course, there is a full social structure around the preachers, so I am looking at that from a socio-anthropological perspective. But I am also looking at how these communities are mediating their discourses; as they call for the popularization of the Sunna, they want people to practice daily, to keep up with the practice of the Sunna. I am looking at how these discourses are articulated. I am trying also to see how these discourses and practices relate to other Islamic or religious practices in Niger. For example, the young people I am working on claim to be Izala, but actually when you look at what they are doing, they are greatly transforming the Izala by disconnecting themselves and introducing other social logics of organization and new modes of construction of authority. Many of these younger people are not officially recognized as learned, who would then be authorized to preach. And the claims they make are powerfully challenging the official Izala discourse and institutional organization. So there is a transformation of the reform discourse and the social spaces that the reform discourses have created. I have to say that what I am doing now is really quite focused on Niamey. At some point, I would like to extend my research beyond Niamey, and not only within Niger, but also to look at the regional context, e.g. Ghana, Burkina, Benin, Nigeria, because these preaching communities are always moving around in the region.

Why did you choose these subjects?

Religion has always intrigued me as an individual, as a person. I have some philosophical questions when it comes to religion, and more precisely to religiosity. What makes people keep up with the type or form of religiosity I see in Niger, for example? That is one aspect. The second aspect is that from the 1990s onwards, religion has become very visible in the public arena. It is worth asking what are the social processes, what is happening to the society, why all of a sudden religion has become one of the major social forces. When you look at, for example, what has happened in terms of social transformation in Niger, when it comes to culture, politics, even the economy, Islam or what Muslims are doing when they claim to popularize the Sunna has greatly affected these spheres of public life. To sum up: I am pursuing two questions, one is philosophical and concerns why religion is so important to people, why religiosity is so prevalent in people's life, and for the second, I am analysing the forces that make religion so important in Niger.

Your interests are much broader, as you also wrote something on traditional healing.

It is a very important topic, but I don't really have the time to work more on those things. But I see a lot of things that really relate to those interests even in my current research. Actually, I am very interested in the domain that in French is called endogène (which can't be translated by indigenous, but rather local knowledge in the broader sense). Islam is just a piece of that broader interest.

What do think about work and life at the ZMO?

I appreciate the way the ZMO is structured, the idea of having working groups. That is important for any researcher. And I think that it is really important, for whatever kind of research you are doing, especially in social sciences; we cannot live in an ivory tower, we have to communicate, we have to interact, because through the flow of interactions and the exchange we build the pertinence of our research. I am just starting, I know that groups sometimes have changing dynamics, but I like the structure at ZMO, because it creates a convivial atmosphere conducive to work.

What are your impressions of Berlin, how did you accommodate here?

I am still transitioning! What I experience is that Berlin has a great transportation system. When you compare this for example to Chicago or Arizona, Berlin is by far the easiest city for me to get around in. So I don't need a car or a bike, the trains are very well organized. The other element is the language. I don't know German, so I am learning it. I think that when I get to the B or C level, communication will be much easier. For socializing, knowing German would be very important.

Knowing German will also help me with administrative bureaucracy... I had some challenging experiences, but I'd like to stress the positive dimensions: this is telling me that it is important to learn German not only for social life. For research purpose, I am not planning to write any article in German, but maybe there is some research for which I'll need to speak the language a bit. Who knows?

Difficult Heritage: Transforming Moroccan Secret Prisons⁶¹

Susan Slyomovics

Among the social and political opportunities to achieve repair and redress are national and grass-roots movements to erect grave markers, plaques, memorials, monuments and museums to an eradicated past that document a difficult heritage of shame and pain. These activities participate in a body of research emerging around notions of transitional justice in which state-instigated communal reparations in the form of human rights-based site memorializations trace an alternate, sometimes parallel path. Unlike conventional courtroom-centred criminal justice solutions, remedies that include memorializations and museum making assume that acts of recognizing and acknowledging victims are themselves a form of justice.

Demarcating the architectural imprint of the autocratic past is the latest transitional justice phase in Morocco. King Hassan II's death in 1999 ended a thirty-eight-year reign characterized by repression, numerous uprisings, human rights abuses, a network of secret prisons and a vast population of known political prisoners alongside a dark category of those forcibly disappeared. The 2004–05 Moroccan Equity and Reconciliation Commission (also known by the French initials IER for Instance Équité et Reconciliation as well as the Arabic, Lajnat al-Insaf wa-al-Musalaha) developed financial indemnification protocols for one-time, lump-sum payments to individuals. A final report included recommendations to address collective losses and communal reparations to neighbourhoods and regions targeted for punitive underdevelopment wherever a secret prison was sited. Morocco has made it a priority to restore former secret detention centres, citing for example Casablanca's preeminent torture facility Derb Moulay Cherif and, in southeastern Morocco, possible additional sites including Agdez, Kalaat M'Gouna, Skoura, Tagounit and Tazmamart. The intention is to create places that preserve historical memory through architectural restoration and to renovate detention centres as multipurpose spaces – some as museums, others as cultural centres, social complexes and documentation and citizenship centres.

My research project engages with activists from southeastern Morocco, who as early as 2004 requested collective reparations for their districts of Ouarzazate and Zagora, an area long subjected to environmental abuse and dotted with secret prisons. Numerous village associations joined them to contest, for example, the presence of golf courses in an arid, drought-ridden region, the large numbers of wealthy tourists engaged in rapacious hunting of local fauna in their fragile oasis ecosystem and the practice of uprooting date palm trees from douars to decorate the main boulevards of Marrakesh and Tangier or for national expositions and fairs. For many activists, regional advancement for districts associated with clandestine incarceration and mass graves is to be paired with communal reparations by transforming prisons into social centres, gardens and museums that must accompany, and some insist must precede, proposed road building, infrastructure development and health and social services projects.

61 First published in: *ZMO Orient Bulletin. History and Cultures in Asia, the Middle East and Africa*, 25 (December 2013): 5–6.

During my two-month stay at ZMO I benefited from the varied presentations, conferences and movie series, as well as the collegiality of the Memory Study Group (Sonja Hegasy, Saadi Nikro, Laura Menin and Makram Rabah) and their projects in Morocco and Lebanon. In addition, my visits to Berlin's numerous museums, memorials and study centres (e.g. the Stasi Museum, Sachsenhausen concentration camp, Topography of Terror) provided additional comparative context.

Susan Slyomovics is Professor of Anthropology and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles. For the academic year 2013–14 she has been a EURIAS Senior Fellow at the Collegium de Lyon, France. During May and June 2013, she stayed at ZMO as a guest scholar.



← Susan Slyomovics (© Department of Anthropology, UCLA, Social Sciences Division)

↓ Derb Moulay Cherif secret detention centre in Hay Mohammadi, Casablanca, today. Families of the police force are living in the building, Morocco, 2013 (© Laura Menin)



A Visiting Research Fellow at ZMO⁶²

Sami Hermez

I came to the ZMO to write my dissertation in anthropology on the way society in Lebanon functions in an environment of constant anticipation of political violence. My time at the centre was an inspirational experience! Much of this had to do with its location tucked away in a forest outside the city, and, of course, with the people and the kinds of research they brought to the table; my new-found fascination with Berlin was an added advantage.

I had the good fortune to attend various cultural events during my stay and my colleagues were kind enough to take me to the Berlinale during my first week, when my lack of German would have made it an utterly hopeless venture on my own. On a more academic note, some highlights of my stay were learning about research from different world regions and meeting guest lecturers such as the Kenyan poet and political activist Abdilatif Abdalla and Lebanese public intellectual Gilbert Achcar. The comfortable and informal environment of the ZMO allows for intimate conversations with such people, and with other resident researchers should one be interested and take the initiative. Researchers at the Centre are also connected to the wider community and were able to put me in touch with scholars in Berlin, such as Norman Nikro and other academics and programmes at Humboldt University.



→ Thematic workshop on biographies,
ZMO, May 2014 (© ZMO)

But I must say, it is the model of the ZMO that I loved most of all. I found it to be a research institute that does not pretend to be another think tank. Rather, it strives to take its research seriously and contribute to academic and intellectual debates around pressing world issues, and is less concerned with reception in government circles. In this way, it combines all the academic integrity and freedom of an institute within a university, while situated at a distance.

Sami Hermez is a political anthropologist at Princeton University concerned with questions of political violence, social movements, memory, and the state. He stayed at the ZMO as a visiting research fellow from February until May 2010, where he worked on his doctoral thesis entitled “In the Meanwhile: Living Everyday Life in Anticipation of War in Lebanon”

⁶² First published in: *ZMO Orient Bulletin. History and Cultures in Asia, the Middle East and Africa*, 18 (June 2010): 7.

Between Gathering and Scattering: Interdisciplinary Exchange at ZMO

Norman Saadi Nikro

There are quite a few fellows at the ZMO, most of whom are attached to research groups and clusters, others holding visiting fellowships for two or three months, and still others hosted as either EUME or Humboldt fellows. And while the research groups share common frames of reference, there is quite a variation in interests and empirical focus, if not such a variation in disciplinary fields of application. Researchers tend to be either historians or anthropologists, although with any number of inflections that not only render the boundaries of these disciplines porous, but also differentiate them internally. In fact, sometimes I feel that some of the historians, with their spatial, urban and material preoccupations, sound more like social anthropologists – although this observation, to be sure, probably says more about the parameters of my own research preoccupations.

I make these somewhat overly hasty remarks from the perhaps more marginal realms of my own work traversing cultural and literary studies. And yet, hardly on the sidelines, these realms have been drawn into proximate and contiguous vicinities, in intellectually challenging ways. This is to say that at the ZMO particular disciplinary inventories and applications not only intersect, but also involve constructive overlaps where, I think it is fair to observe, one comes to appreciate how different approaches produce a more complex view of subject matter. This rebounds on and inflects a sense of how subject matter comes to be subjected to the critical purchase of conceptual application.

↓ ZMO New Year's reception, 2011 (© ZMO)



Our fortnightly PVs, *Projektversammlungen*, are where constructive and stimulating intellectual skirmishes take place. The PVs are really the only regular occasions on which all researchers are gathered (gesammelt) together. There are of course the ZMO colloquiums organized in accordance with university semester durations. And while their topics are informed by the interests of different research groups, they are more public events, inviting mostly external speakers to address the particular colloquium theme and drawing a public audience.

The PVs, then, are more intimate and in-house and usually begin with announcements, administrative and otherwise, though also involving organizational discussions. After these preliminary considerations, one of the researchers will give a presentation of his or her current work, sometimes having already circulated an article or suggested reading, a film clip, a media report or some other points of reference. This goes on for about thirty minutes, after which the floor is opened for questions, comments and suggestions. These are mostly constructive, at times contentious, rarely negative. Of course the questions very often reflect the preoccupations of those making an observation, critical comment or prickly remark. I guess this is only a characteristic of how one's thoughts are embedded within particular research preoccupations.

And yet it also suggests that a gathering presupposes and embodies a scattering (Streuung), or else a dispersal, a distribution, encompassed by a common time and place in which intellectual exchange is fashioned, articulated, given and received – scattered and gathered. This sense of scattering has some added significance, considering that most of the PV presentations are about work in progress, tentatively gathered and conceptualized research that, while guided by a particular set of research questions, also grapples with how collected empirical material comes itself to interpose on and complicate the way such questions are conceptually applied.

I sometimes feel that the arduous, though also pleasurable act of writing is basically about a gathering of subject matter and self that works only as a scattering of thoughts in the very process of their composition. In other words, writing (I won't now digress to consider interesting variables between different writing technologies and their practical application, such as pencil or pen, typewriter or the keyboard and screen of a word processor, with which I have developed an intimate relationship) does not work as a transcription of preformed thoughts, but takes place as a material, physical exercise of gathering thought, always trying to catch up with the many digressive, scattering trails branching off from what one imagines and strives to maintain as the main course. It is largely these precious digressions and detours cast up by subject matter and conceptual application that save researchers from what sometimes turns out to be a Holzweg, an aporia or dead-end, whereby the productive exchange of scattering and gathering is abruptly curtailed.

Indeed, in many, especially upper-class English language practices one can say "I gather" to suggest a grasping of something by thought, implicating a scattering or dissonant current by which thought as an application of gathering is at all possible. Which makes me think that perhaps one could also say "I scatter", although considering the negative implications of the term "scatter-brained" (a person disorganized and lacking in concentration, the online dictionary tells me), this would not be grammatically, semantically, conventionally admissible to many language prac-



↑ ZMO staff excursion, 2008, Spreewald
(© ZMO)

→ ZMO staff excursion, 2013, Olympic
Village 1936, Dallgow-Döberitz
(© Ulrike Freitag)



tices that tend to equate stability with safety, balance with reason, thought itself a disembodied production and reception of logic.

Is it, then, appropriate to call our fortnightly gatherings “scatterings”, in the productive and constructive sense I have been alluding to? In suggesting this, I’m probably being a bit too cheeky, but want to point out a further significance, which concerns how the ZMO is a site for a gathering of researchers coming from other parts of the world, as well as other parts of Germany – variable scatterings of geographies and histories, personal trajectories and social livelihoods and practices of intellectual exchange.

The varied existential and intellectual strands, then, that come to inform the viability of the PVs as gatherings, have quite a few registers, entanglements and planes of resonance that often make our scatterings interesting and lively.



Internet

Recycle Bin

Shortcut

My Computer

Shortcut to
&Search

Nero
MediaHome

Recycle Bin

Windows Movie
Maker

Shortcut to My
Network Places

Nero Burning
ROM

Adobe
Photoshop 7.0

Set Program
Access a...

CyberLink
PowerDVD

Windows Media
Player

Scanner and
Camera Wizard

FreeHand 10

ZMO Outreach

Cultural Events

Sonja Hegasy

One aim of ZMO outreach is to deconstruct the image of “the other”. The Centre rejects academic and journalistic culturalization of global conflicts, and makes a point of contributing to a more discerning view of the “Islamic world” by offering advice to the media, for example, or providing expert interview partners. The results of basic research on non-Western history and culture provide the necessary depth to understand current affairs, and it is our aim to present them for discussion to a wider public. Since 2004 ZMO’s outreach programme increasingly used art as well as cultural events to disseminate research results as for example with the photo exhibition *Made in Teheran – Six Women’s Views* (2007, in collaboration with the Cicero Gallery und Artefakt). In 2008, ZMO took part in the exhibition *Cairoscope*, which was shown in the Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien. In 2010, the organizers of the conference *Under Construction – The Material and Symbolic Meaning of Architecture and Infrastructure in the Gulf Region* and Regina Sarreiter organized an accompanying exhibition at ZMO. In addition, Regina Sarreiter supervised the 2011 exhibition *What We See. Images, Voices, Representation* at the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna (cf. her contribution on page 104). Arsenal – Institut für Film und Videokunst e.V. and ZMO in September 2011 jointly organized the Moroccan Film Days *Change and Diversity*, which opened up perspectives on filmmaking in Morocco over the last ten years. In September 2013 Arsenal and ZMO showed a series of Lebanese films under the title *Sights of Memory*. From November 2013 to January 2014, the cooperation between six researchers from ZMO and six international artists was shown in the exhibition *In Search of Europe?* curated by Daniela Swarowsky.

← Exhibition *Made in Teheran – 6 Frauen-Blicke*,
ZMO and Cicero-Gallery, Berlin, 2007
(© Shadi Ghadirian)

Upheaval and Diversity – Moroccan Film Days⁶³

Sonja Hegasy, Regina Sarreiter

German production companies are increasingly using Morocco as a film location. For example, in Sönke Wortmann's *The Mystery of a Pope*, scenes playing in Rome were shot in the film city Ouarzazate, South of Marrakech. Ouarzazate developed from a French garrison city on the edge of the Sahara into a modern film city in which international productions often treat Moroccan background actors like day laborers, as Ali Essafi's film *Ouarzazate Movie* takes up with humor. Desert landscape, mudbrick buildings, and casbahs offer an ideal backdrop for Bible, sandal, and adventure films. But Morocco's film landscape offers more than just backdrops for monumental European and American films. It is true that thoughts of films like *Casablanca* (1942), *Gladiator* (2000), and *Babel* (2006) suggest themselves, but the country's own cinema displays a wide variety of local productions. Contemporary film production benefits from a greater, though not unlimited freedom of expression and testifies to the increasing emancipation from societal conventions in private life.

Well before the upheavals in North Africa in 2011, the Zentrum Moderner Orient and the Arsenal – Institut für Film und Videokunst e.V. with Birgit Kohler from the Arsenal's executive board planned a small Moroccan film festival on young cinema with the theme *Upheaval and Diversity*. Presenting unknown cinematographers in Germany, along with discussion and exchange, is central to the self-understanding of the Arsenal, which is not only a contact point for filmmakers from all over the world, but also maintains a wide network of contacts with the national and international film industry. Despite a growing interest in the region, public perceptions of the Arab world are still powerfully shaped by attributions and the confirmation of conventional images.

From August 31 to September 7, 2011, the ZMO and the Arsenal organized a broad-based visiting programme in Berlin and Potsdam for the producers and directors Noufissa Sbaï, Talal Selhami, Yasmine Kassari, and Swel Noury.

The ZMO pursued three central goals with the Film Days: first, it provided information on a North African country that receives little public attention in Germany. The Film Days showed that harbingers of the uprisings had long been visible in the society. Second, topics controversial around the Mediterranean, like migration, globalization, undivided human rights were discussed with the Berlin public. And third, an exchange between Moroccan and German filmmakers was organized. With a total of 780 viewers, the film programme was very well attended.

The films selected by Arsenal and ZMO reflect societal change on the individual, everyday level. The organizers viewed 26 films from between 2001 and 2010 and chose nine feature and docu-

⁶³ For a German version of the text cf. Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin e.V. (ed.). *Bericht über das Forschungsjahr 2011*. Jahrbuch der Geisteswissenschaftlichen Zentren Berlin, pp. 110–113. Berlin: Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin. The event was organized in cooperation with the Arsenal – Institut für Film und Videokunst e.V.



↑ Cooperation between ZMO and Arsenal – Institut für Film und Videokunst e.V. in Berlin 2011 (© Michael Pfister)

mentary films. The films address a broad spectrum of themes: how the history of political prisoners is dealt with, women's rights, the dissolution of patriarchal structures, migration, corruption, the relationship with Berber culture, and interaction in the family. They are concerned with everyday life and taboos, dealing with the past and dreams for the future.

Contemporary Moroccan cinema asks questions about the country's own roots and recent history. It tries to find ways for men and women, rich and poor to live together and for people to continue living after the "years of lead" and the exodus of the Moroccan Jews. For example, in her film *Marock* (2005), Laïla Marrakchi has a love story between a Muslim high school girl and a Jewish teenager set as part of the country's youth culture. *Marock* was the most frequently seen film in the country in 2006.

Many of the films were first shown in Berlin. *One minute of sun less* by Nabil Ayouch exceeded the limits of Moroccan censorship and has not yet been publicly shown there. The filmmakers refused to adopt the censorship suggestions made by the Moroccan film authority CCM and so received no license to screen it. The bone of contention for the censors was primarily the depiction and treatment of sexuality and homoeroticism in the crime story, which took open corruption, the drug trade, and child abuse in the coastal city Tangier as themes.

The documentary film *Our forbidden places* (2008) by Leila Kilani accompanies four families on their search for vanished kin and their conflict with the Equity and Reconciliation Commission. The opening film, *Cry no more* by Narjiss Nejjar, tells the story of a village inhabited solely by young prostitutes; they provide for their older mothers, who live in the mountains. In *In Pieces*, a

filmmaker who emigrated to the United States tells about the close relationships in his family in snippets of film collected over two decades. His family lovingly regards him as a never-do-well. Hakim Belabbes casts a penetrating gaze at the people and the culture of the land of his birth. He manages to show the very fervent relationships among four generations, ties of the kind that rarely exist in Western Europe anymore: birth, initiation, and death still take place at home.

Various developments have contributed to the positive trend in Moroccan cinema: First, the general political opening since 1996 and the associated rescinding of censorship have had an effect. In addition, special measures to promote film have given Moroccan cinema wings, for example the creation by the Centre Cinématographique Marocain (CCM) of a film fund and the founding of the film school and the film festival in Marrakesh in 2001 and of the Cinémathèque in Tangier in 2006. In recent years, Morocco has also developed into an important postproduction site, along with France, for directors from sub-Saharan Africa.

↓ Taken from the film *Mirages* by Talal Selhami, Morocco 2010 (©Ali'n Productions)





↑ Yasmine Kassari and Sonja Hegasy
at Moroccan Filmdays in Berlin, 2011
(© Michael Pfister)

← Talal Selhami (© Michael Pfister)

↓ Yasmine Kassari, Talal Selhami
and Swel Noury (© Michael Pfister)



What We See. Images, Voices, Representation

Regina Sarreiter

From May to July 2012, ZMO presented the exhibition *What We See: Images, Voices, Representation* (*Was Wir Sehen: Bilder, Stimmen, Rauschen. Zur Kritik anthropometrischen Sammelns*) at the Humboldt University in Berlin. The exhibition dealt with the disturbing history of historical audio and visual documents recorded in southern Africa in the early 20th century. It is a critical examination of an archive that was set up by the German Hans Lichtenecker, who lived before and during the First World War in the colony German Southwest Africa, today's Namibia. He returned there in 1931 with a commission from the German racial scientist Eugen Fischer and the Berlin Phonogramm Archive to collect voices, facial casts and anthropometrical photographs of Africans.

In 2007 the Cultural Studies scholar Anette Hoffmann traced the voice recordings of people in Namibia in the Berlin Phonogramm Archive. Once the voices became heard with the help of transcription and translations, they turned into testimonies of the experiences of the men and women during the recording sessions, the cast making and the photo shootings. Many of the speakers protested fiercely against and complained about the practices and the violence they experienced. When we listen to the speakers, they become social actors and their testimonies bear witness to the violent and inhumane practices of the anthropometrical research methods and at the same time of this specific historical moment.

Five of the men and women who witnessed Lichtenecker's collecting practice are portrayed with photographs, recordings and texts. In video interviews, relatives and contemporary witnesses remember the individuals and the historical event. At the same time, local artists produced portraits of the anthropometrical photographs in a dialogue with the voices and the videos and thereby created another layer of representation.

The exhibition thus became a fragile space of images and voices, stories and portraits, historical documents and contemporary artefacts. The facial casts are not shown; rather, the audiovisual practices of representation are examined critically by using various audio and visual media. After been shown in Cape Town, Basel, Vienna, Osnabrück, and Berlin, the show was finally exhibited in Windhoek in Namibia in August 2013.

In Berlin the exhibition was accompanied by the workshop "Listening to Colonial Archives", at the Humboldt University in Berlin, organized by Britta Lange, Regina Sarreiter and Anette Hoffmann (along with several film screenings, and a panel discussion), and a respective publication.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Anette Hoffmann, Britta Lange and Regina Sarreiter (eds.) (2012). *Was wir sehen: Bilder, Stimmen, Rauschen. Zur Kritik anthropometrischen Sammelns* (Ausstellung im Pergamon-Palais der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 15. Mai–6. Juli 2012). Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien.



↑ Exhibition What We See, ZMO and Humboldt University, Berlin 2012 (© Matei Bellu)

Leg over Leg

A sound installation with quotations from Lebanese linguist and translator Faris al-Shidyaq on the person of Fariyaq. Submission for the competition Art&Science by the Berliner Wirtschaftsgespräche e. V., Berlin, 2010

Sonja Hegasy, Bärbel Möllmann

“Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (1805 or 1806–1887) was a foundational figure in modern Arabic literature. Born to a prominent Maronite family in Lebanon, al-Shidyaq was a pioneering publisher, poet, essayist, lexicographer and translator. Known as ‘the father of Arabic journalism,’ al-Shidyaq played a major role in reviving and modernizing the Arabic language.

Leg over Leg recounts the life, from birth to middle age, of ‘the Fariyaq,’ alter ego of Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, a pivotal figure in the intellectual and literary history of the modern Arab world. The always edifying and often hilarious adventures of the Fariyaq, as he moves from his native Lebanon to Egypt, Malta, Tunis, England and France, provide the author with grist for wide-ranging discussions of the intellectual and social issues of his time, including the ignorance and corruption of the Lebanese religious and secular establishments, freedom of conscience, women’s rights, sexual relationships between men and women, the manners and customs of Europeans and Middle Easterners, and the differences between contemporary European and Arabic literatures. Al-Shidyaq also celebrates the genius and beauty of the classical Arabic language.

Akin to Sterne and Rabelais in his satirical outlook and technical inventiveness, al-Shidyaq produced in *Leg Over Leg* a work that is unique and unclassifiable. It was initially widely condemned for its attacks on authority, its religious skepticism, and its “obscenity,” and later editions were often abridged. This is the first English translation of the work and reproduces the original Arabic text, published under the author’s supervision in 1855.”⁶⁵

The library of ZMO owns the oldest Arabic copy in Germany printed in 1919 in Kairo.

⁶⁵ Taken from: Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (2013). Edited and translated by Humphrey Davies. *Leg Over Leg*. New York: New York University Press.

Ein Bein über das Andere

[erschieden 1855 in Paris]

Soundinstallation mit Zitaten
des libanesischen Linguisten und Übersetzers
Faris al-Schidyaq
über die Person des Faryaq

Von Dr. Sonja Hegasy und Bärbel Möllmann
Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), Berlin

↓ Sound installation Leg over Leg (2010)
(© Bärbel Möllmann)



→ Prof Dr Ulrike Freitag at the opening of the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 21 June 2014, BBAW, Berlin (© Judith Affolter)

↓ ZMO Berlin, courtyard (© ZMO)



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Imprint

Editor: Prof Dr Ulrike Freitag

Idea and coordination: PD Dr Tilo Grätz

Editorial staff: Svenja Becherer, Prof Dr Ulrike Freitag,
PD Dr Tilo Grätz, Dr Sonja Hegasy

Design: doppelpunkt, Kommunikationsdesign

Print: Humburg Media Group

ZMO is a member of the Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin e. V.

GWZ ZAS zfl ZMO

funded by



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung



Senatsverwaltung
für Bildung, Jugend
und Wissenschaft





Zentrum Moderner Orient