

Traveling Academy

De-Colonizing Knowledge

– Views from India and Tunisia

New-Delhi/India, November 19-26 2022, in Presence

Colonial structures, institutional as well as epistemological, still persist in academies across the world. One central goal of the Merian Centres is to face up to this challenge and work towards a decolonization of academic practices, based on equality and mutual respect between partner institutions coming from diverse geopolitical contexts. The Merian Centers MECAM (Tunisia) and ICAS:MP (India), along with the Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies (India), are jointly organizing a conference on “Decolonizing knowledge - Perspectives from India and Tunisia”. The two central animating questions of this conference are as follows:

- *How to understand and theorize the persistence of (neo-)colonial histories at the heart of our present?*
- *How to engage the root causes of the Euro-American epistemological hegemony, in terms of existing institutional arrangements, funding structures, direction of circulation of ideas and concepts, and curricular and bibliographic inequities?*

Coming from a Latin American tradition, decolonial studies have had a certain intellectual trajectory. The question that will be discussed here relate to how other postcolonial contexts, such as of South Asia and Maghreb, relate to this form of decolonial theory and/or generate alternative forms of post/de-colonial critique, given the different histories of colonialism, British and French, settler and non-settler, in these different parts of the world. The conference will encourage an intense exchange of ideas between academics from Tunisia and India, as they reflect on their respective experiences of systems of knowledge production, evolution of university structures, debates on research methodologies etc.

The Traveling Academy's two-day academic conference will be complemented by a social program aligned with the keynote theme, including visits, talks, excursions, and conversations between Researchers and Fellows of MWF, ICAS:MP and MECAM.

DAY 1: 20.11.2022

- Arrivals; Hotel: **The Claridges**, 12, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Rd, Tees January Road Area, Motilal Nehru Marg Area, New Delhi, Delhi 110011, India; Telefon: +91 11 3955 5000

18:30 pm Dinner at Jamun Restaurant, Lodhi Colony

DAY 2: 21.11.2022 (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS 29), Rajpur Rd, Ludlow Castle, Civil Lines, New Delhi, Delhi, India)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89681352528?pwd=MUFVVjErYlZOWXdQaWNER0Yya2EvUT09>

Meeting ID: 896 8135 2528

Passcode: 934527

10:45 am Pick-up at Claridges plus Walking Tour Delhi University North Campus

1:00 pm Lunch at CSDS

2:00-2:15 pm **WELCOME & Opening Words by Organizers**

- Khaled Kchir (MECAM)
- Ravi Sundaram (ICAS:MP)
- Sebastian Schwecke (MWF SAS)

2:15-2:50 pm – Chair: **Awadhendra Sharan** (ICAS:MP)

Panel 1: The Maria Sibylla Merian Centres as Institutes for Advanced Studies and their role in global knowledge production (10-15 min inputs)

- Speaker I: **Julius Dihstelhoff** (MECAM): MECAM's contribution to the production of knowledge in the context of international scientific cooperation.
- Speaker II: **Martin Fuchs** (ICAS:MP): Entanglements of knowledge traditions: ICAS:MP's hidden agenda of decolonization.

2:50-3:00 pm Tea & Coffee

3:00-4:15 pm – Chair: **Ravi Sundaram** (ICAS:MP)

Panel 2: Inequal Knowledge Production in a Globalized World: "Colonizing Knowledges" & Imperialism

- Speaker I: **Mohamed Ali Benzina** (Sociologist, University of Tunis): "Le savoir démographique au service de la colonisation en Tunisie, retour sur les débuts de la collecte des données démographique durant la période coloniale"
- Speaker II: **Prathama Banerjee** (CSDS, ICAS:MO) Disciplines and Decolonization: a view from the Indian academy (ICAS:MP)
- Speaker III: **Nejiba Chkir Ben Jmaa** (University of Sfax): Dualité entre décolonisation et transfert du savoir : Le cas du Maghreb

4:15-4:30 pm Tea & Coffee

4:30- 5:30 pm – Chair: **Rachid Ouaisa** (MECAM)

Panel 3: Lessons Learned from India and Tunisia I: Decolonising research methodologies

- Speaker I: **Khaled Kchir** (MECAM): Decolonising history, a 'required' and politically accepted prerequisite
- Speaker II: **Baidik Bhattacharya** (ICAS:MP): Decolonization as Method: Four Theses
- Speaker III: **Imed Melliti** (Sociologist, University of Tunis El-Manar): La décolonisation des sciences sociales au prisme des questions de langue.

5:30-6:30 pm – Chair: **Julius Dohstehoff** (MECAM)

Panel 4: Challenging Inequal Knowledge Production in a globalized world: Appropriation strategies, Hybridizations and Domestications of knowledge in Tunisia & India

- Speaker I: **Ahmed Khouaja** (Sociologist, University of Tunis): L'indigénisation des sciences sociales au Maghreb : est-elle possible?
- Speaker II: **Mounir Mrad** (MECAM): Decolonising the issue of democracy in Tunisia: the case of the Jemna Oasis
- Speaker III: **Saurabh Dube** (El Colegio de México): Decolonizing Desires

Reception and Dinner at CSDS

DAY 2: 22.11.2022

7 am pickup at Claridges: Visit of Taj Mahal and Agra Fort on self-contribution of the participants: plan about 50 Euro for whole day (transport)

Dinner at Khan Market

DAY 3: 23.11.2022

8 am pickup at Claridges: Postcolonial/Heritage city tour of New Delhi on self-contribution: Old Delhi, Chandni Chowk, Jama Masjid, Jain Temple, Red Fort and Bangla Sahib from outside.

DAY 4: 24.11.2022

10:30 am Laila Abu-Er-Rub will walk with the delegation from Claridges Hotel to the ICAS:MP office through Lodhi Garden

11:00 am-12:45 pm: Visit and presentation of the Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies and the ICAS:MP incl. Meeting with Fellows and **Walk in Lodhi Garden**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81657888777?pwd=OVRNcURQMkZpMHZRaic5WUJ3eDh3UT09>

Meeting ID: 816 5788 8777

Passcode: 613784

12:45 pm Lunch at ICAS:MP office

1:30 pm- 2:45 pm Chair: **Khaled Kchir** (MECAM)

Panel 5: Lessons Learned from India and Tunisia II: Inclusion & Horizontality in academic research

- Speaker I: **Emna Beltaief** (French languages and literature, University of Tunis): " L'enseignement des écrivains de littérature contemporaine française et la question de la décolonisation: célébrer deux prix Nobel, Modiano puis Ernaux comme gardiens/passeurs de la mémoire collective mais continuer à taire les événements d'Algérie ".
- Speaker II: **Urmila Goel** (ICAS:MP Fellow): Challenges of Decentering the German perspective in German Studies. Doing research on the nurse migration from India to Germany
- Speaker III: **Mohamed Ben Hammouda** (University of Sfax): La culturalisation de la modernité et l'enjeu de promouvoir une université territoriale

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2:45-3:00 pm – Coffee Break

3:00-4:00 pm Panel 6: Lessons Learned on Science Communication from India and Tunisia

Chair & Input on Challenges in Science Communication in India: Laila Abu-Er-Rub (ICAS:MP)

- Speaker I: **Rachid Ouassa** (MECAM): How to foster the diversity of knowledge producers in international scientific cooperation with the Global South?
- Speaker II:
- **Yasmina Ghodhbane** (Philosophy, University of Tunis): Décoloniser le savoir par le savoir.

Pick-up at ICAS:MP: a Heritage Talk/Walk with [Shail Mayaram](#) on 'Decolonizing Neighbourhoods: The Challenges for Islamic Languages and Hindu-Muslim Lifeworlds'

Incl. visit of Humayun's tomb, Sundar Nursery, Nizamuddin Basti and the Hazrat Nizamuddin Shrine

Dinner at Sundar Nagar

DAY 5: 25.11.2022

Either at ICAS:MP or CSDS

5:30-6:15 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82427326471?pwd=MUtwZUxyK0lGTUJMbURFaWxhcGVtZz09>

Meeting ID: 824 2732 6471

Passcode: 249712

Round Table discussion on Future Collaborations (tbc)

- joint publication in the framework of ICAS:MP's publication series "Politics and Society in India and the Global South"
- joint participation MECAM's closing conference 17-19 March 2023 (Tunis)
- joint participation at ICAS:MP's spring school

Closing Words by Organizers

- Prathama Banerjee (ICAS:MP)
- Khaled Kchir (MECAM)

6:30-8:30 pm

Working Group Session on "Decolonial Thinking in a Comparative Perspective, an event by Zentrum Moderner Orient Berlin (ZMO) and University of Western Cape, Cape Town with Kai Kresse, Suren Pillay, and inputs from Prathama Banerjee (CSDS) and Baidik Bhattacharya (CSDS; ICAS:MP Fellow)

Zoom Link

<https://hu-berlin.zoom.us/j/65585547872?pwd=S1FFeWg5Mzc3MWhqZnlnZSk1yeVA2Zz09>

Meeting-ID: 655 8554 7872

Password: 018531

Dinner at Trés, Lodhi Colony

DAY 6: 26.11.2022

- Departures