ميكام
مركز ميريان
للدراسات المتقدمة
في المنطقة المغاربية

MECAM
Merian Centre
For Advanced Studies
In The Maghreb

Dear Colleagues, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

MECAM looks back on exciting months (April to August 2024) that have been filled with events, meetings and exchange opportunities. With this newsletter, we would like to give you insights into our work from this period.

MECAM Governance

The visit of the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Tunisia to MECAM

17 July 2024

Tunisia's current Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Mr. Moncef Boukthir, has visited MECAM. The visit was guided by MECAM's Coordination Office and attended by Mr. Habib Sidhom, President of the Université de Tunis, and Ms. Amel Guizani, MECAM's Director on the Tunisian side. During his visit, Mr. Moncef Boukthir was given a comprehensive overview of MECAM's facilities, working formats, publications, and most notably, its fellowship programme. He also learned about the opportunities that MECAM provides to advanced researchers as part of their doctoral, postdoctoral or professional development. Furthermore, our centre offers a unique opportunity for local and international researchers to conduct their scientific research in Tunisia for both short-term (up to 8 months) and long-term (up to 3 years) periods.

Rencontres Ibn Khaldun

Extractivism Talks #07 / MECAM Rencontre Ibn Khaldun

16 - 18 July 2024

From the 16th to the 18th of June 2024, Ramón Pichs-Madruga (Director at the Centre for World Economy Studies (CIEM) in Cuba and Vice-Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)), Constanze Veeh (European Commission's Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs) and Rachid Ouaissa (Philipps Universität Marburg, Director of MECAM) held a roundtable discussion, entitled "Natural Resources in the Global Path of Sustainability". The discussion was part of the Annual Conference "Comparing Extractivist Regimes: Natural Resources in the Global Paths Towards Sustainability" organized by Extractivism.de, and co-hosted by MECAM as part of the Rencontre Ibn Khaldun series.

Bilateral Cooperation

Erasmus+ staff mobility to Philipps Universität Marburg

23 - 28 June 2024

As part of the bilateral cooperation programme of Erasmus+ staff mobility, co-organised by MECAM and the Philipps-Universität Marburg from 23 to 28 June 2024. The Erasmus staff mobility programme enabled Mr. Mohamed Alyani, Office Manager of MECAM, to work with members of the MECAM team in Marburg at the CNMS, the Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies. The International Office discussed how the two universities could extend their cooperation beyond the Erasmus exchange and the Philipps-Universität Marburg liaison office at the Université de Tunis. The staff mobility programme has enabled members of the MECAM team to enrich their collaborative work in Germany and Tunisia. It has enabled them to exchange expertise.

Workshops & Conferences

Study Day on "Narratives of Resistance, Resistance of Narratives" in Gabès, Tunisia

12 June 2024

On the 12th of June 2024, the Study Day on "Narratives of Resistance, Resistance of Narratives" took place in Gabes, Tunisia. The event was co-organised by the Higher Institute of Language of Gabès and MECAM represented by Dr. Julius Dihstelhoff, MECAM's Academic Coordinator, as well as Dr. Cyrine Kortas, MECAM Long-term Fellow. Furthermore, Dr. Loaay Watad from MECAM's consortial partner, Forum Transregionale Studien from Berlin as well as Dr. Imene Khefacha, MECAM's Fellow Coordinator, participated. The conference focused on the relationship between media and narratives of resistance. Especially in the context of academic media research and study, the narrative of resistance serves as a crucial framework for understanding how individuals and groups actively oppose or challenge oppressive systems and structures, from political protests and social movements to everyday acts of defiance and subversion. The seminar focused on how different media forms such as film, news, magazines, advertising and blogs portray and fuel narratives of resistance, as well as on how acts of resistance manifest and develop within social media. Through the various studies harboured by the event, it sought to explore how resistance and resisting narratives impact social behaviour and foster interdisciplinary interaction.

Academic Event in Algiers in Honour of Prof. Dr. Hartmut Elsenhans

3 June 2024

On the 3rd of June 2024, an academic conference in Honour of the renowned scholar Prof. Dr. Hartmut Elsenhans, took place at the École Nationale d'Administration in Algiers, Algeria. The event was organized by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, in collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Algeria and MECAM. At the conference, Prof. Dr. Hartmut Elsenhans' life's work which significantly influenced economic and historical research, was recognized by various experts and companions. The opening speeches were held by high-ranking representatives of the academic and scientific community, including Abdelmalik Mezhouda, Director of ENA, and Ahmed Zakane, Director of CREAD. Afterwards, Mohamed Kadi, Director of Research at CREAD, moderated the thematic panel on "The Economic Issues of Hartmut Elsenhans", with contributions from renowned scholars such as Dr. Hannes Warnecke-Berger and Matthias Schaefer. Then Mohamed Benguerna, Director of Research at CREAD, moderated the panel on "Historical Perspectives on the Works of Hartmut Elsenhans", with presentations by Prof. Daho Djerbal and Prof. Rachid Ouaissa, Director of MECAM.

Falling Walls Lab Tunisia 2024

29 May 2024

On the 29th of May 2024, the "Falling Walls Lab Tunisia 2024" was organized by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), in collaboration with the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM) and ISEAHT (Institut supérieur tunisien d'études appliquées en sciences humaines). The Falling Walls Lab is a world-class pitch competition, networking forum and springboard that brings together a diverse and interdisciplinary group of students and early-career professionals, providing a stage for ground-breaking ideas at both global and local levels. "Falling Walls Lab Tunisia 2024" invited talented researchers, entrepreneurs and professionals to present their most innovative ideas that will have a positive impact on science and society. MECAM's academic coordinator, Dr. Julius Dihstelhoff, was a member of the jury.

Attending MIASA's 7th African Female Academic Empowerment Workshop

28 – 30 May 2024

From the 28th to the 30th May 2024, the MIASA's 7th African Female Academic Empowerment Workshop organised by MIASA: Merian centre for advanced studies in Africa took place in Ghana with the participation of Dr. Cyrine Kortas, Long-term Fellow of the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM). The event brought together female professors, researchers, early and mid-academics from many African countries to discuss the unique challenges they face in male-dominated fields and the different strategies for overcoming them as well as to provide an opportunity for exchange and networking with other African women academics. During the workshop, personal journeys were shared through discussions around the issues of gender discrimination, life balance and sisterhood support, sharing, and caring. At a roundtable, plenary speakers asserted the need for self-belief and esteem and the importance of building a strong and effective network. Dr. Cyrine Kortas participated in panel discussions and a session on shared spaces and diversity as well as another session focused on negotiating skills and personality styles to manage stress and advocate emotional intelligence and self recognition.

MECAM Publications

Annual Meeting of the Editorial Board of the *Maghribis Manuscripts* publication series

21 May 2024

On the 21th of May 2024, the annual meeting of the editorial board of the *Maghribis Manuscripts* publication series at Eisenbrauns Edition took place. The session was opened and moderated by Professor Jonathan Eugene Brockopp and the alumni-Fellow, Professor Asma Hilali. Participants: Prof. Jonathan Eugene Brockopp, Prof. Nejmeddine Hentati (Zitouna University), Prof. Nina Safran (Penn State University), Prof. Dr. Walid Saleh (University of Toronto), Prof. Mouez Khalfaoui (University of Tübingen), and Dr. Afef Hannachi (BNT). Online participants included: Prof. Dr. Asma Helali (University of Lille), Prof. Dr. Khaled Kchir (BNT), Dr. Maribel Fierro (CSIC, Madrid), Dr. Jocelyn Hendrickson (University of Alberta), Dr Nourane Ben Azzouna (University of Strasbourg), Dr. Moez Dridi (QNL), Dr. Sumayya Ahmed (University of Chicago), and Dr. Maria Metzler (Penn State Press)

Workshops & Conferences

Cities in the Arab Imagination: Fiction, Reality, and Futurescapes

15 – 16 May 2024

On the 15th and the 16th of May 2024, the workshop "Cities in the Arab Imagination: Fiction, Reality, and Futurescapes" took place within the framework of MECAM's transregional workshop. The event was organized by the Forum Transregionale Studien/Berlin, in a collaboration of Europe in the Middle East – The Middle East in Europe (EUME), and the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages at the University of Oslo. The workshop was convened by Teresa Pepe, and organized by Diana Abbani The workshop aimed to explore how Arab cities have been conceived, envisioned, planned in the Arab imagination. As Fredric Jameson theorizes in his seminal essay "The Future of the City", this requires "an interdisciplinary approach that mobilizes, alongside the obvious (and anticipated) areas of architecture and urbanism, such heterogeneous disciplines as psychoanalysis and geography, history and business, economics and engineering, biography, ecology, feminism, area studies, ideological analysis, classical studies, legal decisions, crisis theory, et cetera" (2003). With: Rasha Abbas (Independent, Berlin), Sanabel Abdelrahman (EUME Fellow 2023/24), Ammar Azzouz (University of Oxford), Rasha Chatta (Freie Universität Berlin/MECAM Fellow 2021/EUME Fellow 2017-2021), Muhammad Jabali (Independent, Berlin), Hanan Natour (Freie Universität Berlin), Katarzyna Puzon (Humboldt University), Yahia Shawkat (10 Tooba, Cairo/Berlin), and Loaay Wattad (EUME Fellow 2023/24).

Workshops & Conferences

Conference on «Harmful Entanglements» by the Max Weber Foundation in Istanbul

14 – 15 May 2024

On the 14th and the 15th of May 2024, MECAM Director Prof. Dr. Rachid Ouaissa and MECAM Academic Coordinator Dr. Julius Dihstelhoff attended the Max Weber Foundation for German Humanities Institute's conference on "Harmful Entanglements" at the Orient Institute in Istanbul. Their contribution "(Harmful) Entanglements? Images of the Maghreb in German Academic Research" examined how the Maghreb is often marginalized in German academic discourse, leading largely to harmful perceptions. They proposed an analysis of entanglements between Germany and the Maghreb, considering interdisciplinary perspectives and multilingual sources. The panel proposal had been jointly submitted by MECAM and its network partner OIB on the topic: "(Harmful) Entanglements & the MENA-Region: Perspectives on Academic Research, Solidarity and the Art World", which illuminates various contexts where harmful entanglements may occur within the MENA region, particularly in academic research, conceptualizations of solidarity, and the art world.

MECAM Governance

Executive Council and International Advisory Board Meeting

9 – 10 May 2024

On the 9th and the 10th of May 2024, MECAM's Executive Council and International Advisory Board gathered in Tunis to review the centre's advancements and delve into planning its future activities. Discussions centred on MECAM's present status, interactions with fellows, and the formulation of plans for its 2024 activities, aligned with established working formats. The meeting concluded with a guided tour of 'Ennejma Ezzahra (Palace of Baron d'Erlanger), offering all participants an enriching experience.

MECAM Spectrum

MECAM's event week No. 2 on «Imagining Future»

15- 18 April 2024

MECAM organised an Event Week ("MECAM Spectrum"), entitled "Imagining Future", which has been jointly organised by its Fellows in Tunis from the 15th to the 18th of April 2024. MECAM-Spectrum serves as a platform to promote the research exchange and knowledge production about how to imagine the future. This vein of thinking makes it possible to anticipate the challenges that the Maghreb region could face but also to identify emerging opportunities and development levels for the region. Imagining the future encourages innovation by proposing alternative visions to regional challenges particularly, in areas such as education, health, energy, and even governance. This Event Week thus aims to provide researchers with a space to analyse theoretical and practical approaches for the development of prospective scenarios and plans likely to strengthen the resilience of the Maghreb region in the face of shocks and unforeseen changes. By exploring these dimensions, researchers can look into future policy perspectives that are more inclusive of different stakeholders.

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Publications

MECAM Papers:

Sabry, M. I. (2024). State-society relations and sustainable growth in Tunisia post-2011. MECAM papers 6. https://doi.org/10.25673/116445

Dihstelhoff, J., Ouaissa, R., & Richter, T. (2024). Reimagining the Maghreb: Navigating an autonomous region in motion. MECAM papers 7. https://doi.org/10.25673/116447 .

MECAM Book Series:

The MECAM book series "Perspectives on the Maghreb" has launched with Amsterdam University Press. It aims to be a premier platform for interdisciplinary research related to MECAM, publishing manuscripts in English with most available in open access. MECAM covers editing, translation, and open access costs. Initial submissions are underway.

MECAM Blog Series:

Abbani, D., Abbas, R., & Jabali, M. (2024, July 16). That Was Tomorrow: A Conversation About Arab Imaginaries in Berlin. TRAFO – Blog for Transregional Research. https://trafo.hypotheses.org/51924.

Kortas, C. (2024, June 27). Hysteria: Unveiling Tunisian women's journey in writing chick-lit. TRAFO – Blog for Transregional Research. https://trafo.hypotheses.org/51850.

Virgili, T. (2024, May 30). Freedom of conscience and LGBT rights in Tunisia and Morocco: The spring is yet to come – 5in10 with Tommaso Virgili. TRAFO – Blog for Transregional Research. https://trafo.hypotheses.org/51602.

Guirat, H. (2024, May 28). Les oubliés du prétoire: Les interprètes judiciaires en Tunisie à l'époque coloniale (1883-1955) – 5in10 with Hend Guirat. TRAFO – Blog for Transregional Research. https://trafo.hypotheses.org/51579.

Weißenfels, A. (2024, May 9). Development at work: Postcolonial imaginaries, global capitalism, and everyday life at a factory in Tunisia – A conversation with André Weißenfels. TRAFO – Blog for Transregional Research. https://trafo.hypotheses.org/51385.

Abbani, D., & Bishop, E. (2024, April 16). Elizabeth Bishop, Arab engagement at the World Festival of Youth and Students in the USSR in 1957 – A conversation with Elizabeth Bishop. TRAFO – Blog for Transregional Research. https://trafo.hypotheses.org/51069.

Ouchichi, M. (2024, April 4). Analyse des caractéristiques du régime d'accumulation rentier et les voies de son dépassement – 5in10 with Mourad Ouchichi. TRAFO – Blog for Transregional Research. https://trafo.hypotheses.org/51020.

MECAM Further Publications

Lafi, N. (2024). Africa and the nature of the Ottoman Empire: Challenging the inertia of Eurocentrism. Eurasian Studies, 21(2), 276-302. https://doi.org/10.1163/24685623-20230156

Lafi, N. (2024). Book review: Tripoli coloniale. Histoire sociale et économique d'une ville sous domination italienne [Colonial Tripoli: Social and economic history of a city under Italian rule]. Planning Perspectives. https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2024.2343248

Cherbi, M. (2024). The 2020 revision of the Algerian Constitution and the ̄irāk: Returning to constitutional order after the institutional disorders of 2019. Arab Law Quarterly. https://doi.org/10.1163/15730255-bja10152

Amara, M., Khallouli, W., & Zidi, F. (2024). Public–private wage differentials in Tunisia: Consistency and decomposition. LABOUR, 1–36.

Nasri, K., Amara, M., & Helmi, I. (2024). Alternative targeting methods for social assistance programs: Evidence from Tunisia. Social Policy & Administration, 1–24.