



University of
Zurich ^{UZH}

University Research Priority Program (URPP) Asia and Europe



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Traveling Norms and the Politics of Contention

International Conference
URPP Research Field 3 *Norms and Social Order(s)*
Zurich, October 24–26, 2013

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Conference Outline

The URPP Asia and Europe's Research Field 3 *Norms and Social Order(s)*, which is responsible for the organization of this year's annual conference, studies the frameworks of normative beliefs and ordering systems that are established on various levels supportive of the exchange of ideas, goods, persons and global interdependence. Specific subjects to be addressed include questions of economic and political interdependencies, the transnationalization of law, the interaction of individuals, local communities, national, and international organizations, as well as global discourses on statehood and development.

Within this theoretical framework, this year's conference will look into the actors, mechanisms and processes through which different norms and ideas (of citizenship, equality, human rights, etc.) are negotiated in spaces of contentious politics, and how norms and ideas travel from and to different places and contexts, what happens to them when they travel, and how they gain legitimacy and credibility in specific settings (or not). The conference will bring together scholars working on three empirical spaces of contentious politics: the Arab spring, the anti-nuclear movement and protests against special economic zones, with a particular focus on human rights and their circulation, media mechanisms for the diffusion of ideas and the power struggles in different spheres (political, legal, social) to make specific norms legitimate.

The aim of this international conference is to strengthen and expand international cooperation with scholars and global institutions working on similar subjects. Moreover, it will provide URPP Asia and Europe's doctoral candidates with the opportunity to present their research to an audience of renowned international scholars within the framework of two "young scholar's panels." The conference will be comprised of one keynote, one film screening with subsequent discussion, five panels with distinguished speakers from all over the world and two young scholar's panels (with 2 doctoral candidate's presentations per panel).

David Chiavacci, Benedikt Korf, Fabian Schäfer

Program

Thursday, October 24, 2013

Room KO2 F-152, Karl Schmid-Strasse 4, 8006 Zurich

15:00–15:30 Welcome Address

Andreas Fischer (University President, University of Zurich)
Wolfgang Behr (Academic Director URPP, University of Zurich)
David Chiavacci (Conference Organizer, University of Zurich)
Benedikt Korf (Conference Organizer, University of Zurich)

4 15:30–16:00 Coffee Break

16:00–17:30 Panel 1: Political Protest – History of Concepts: Protest, Contention, and Contestation

Chair: Ralph Weber (University of Zurich)

Concepts matter – also, but not only, if they are contested. Inquiries into empirical spaces of contentious politics must rely on one or another concept of contention. Yet how should we conceptualize contention? Is e.g. protest a specific form of contention, i.e. part of the concept of contention, or an altogether different concept? Is contention an essentially contested concept or is it universally applicable? Would claiming any one original exemplar not smack of misplaced parochialism? If viewed afresh and crossing the line from philosophy to politics, what specific conceptual histories can be told? This panel seeks to introduce important distinctions and put up for discussion past and present understandings of protest, contention, and contestation, which are helpful for researching empirical spaces of contentious politics.

Urs Marti (University of Zurich)

Government, Civil Society and Economic Power

Michael Freeden (University of Nottingham, Oxford University)

Is Contention the New Default Position of the Political?

J. Devika (Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram)

Breaking the Conceptual Freeze: Thoughts on Contestation and Protest in India

17:30 – 19:00 Buffet Reception

19:00–21:30 Film and Discussion: Iran and the Green Revolution

Katajun Amirpur (University of Hamburg)

Ali Samadi Ahadi (Filmmaker)

Green was the symbol of recognition among the supporters of presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi, who became the symbolic figure of the Green Revolution in Iran. The presidential elections on June 12, 2009 were supposed to bring about a change, but contrary to all expectations the conservative populist Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was confirmed in office. As clear as the result was, there were loud accusations of vote-rigging.

The subsequent „Where is my vote?“ protest demonstrations were worn down and broken up with attacks by government militia. Images taken from private persons with their cell phones or cameras bear witness to this excessive violence: people were beaten, stabbed, shot dead, arrested, kidnapped, and others vanished without trace.

Ali Samadi Ahadi's documentary-collage „**The Green Wave**“ (2010) illustrates the dramatic events and tells about the feelings of the people behind this revolution. Facebook reports, Twitter messages and videos posted on the Internet were included in the film composition.

Two fictional stories about two young students – animated as a motion comic – run through the film, framing the pictures of the revolution and the interviews with human rights campaigners and exiled Iranians.

Friday, October 25, 2013

Room KOL G-217, Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zurich

09:00–10:00 Keynote: Global Protest

Paul Routledge (University of Leeds)

Contentious Norms for the 21st Century: Sovereignty and the Politics of Occupations

10:00–10:30 Coffee Break

10:30–12:00 Panel 2: Anti-Nuclear Movements in International Comparison

Chair: Katharina Michaelowa (University of Zurich)

6 Since the Fukushima Dai'ichi nuclear disaster, contestations in nuclear energy policy have regained energy. Still, reactions and developments have been non-uniform. In Germany and Switzerland, the governments have made pre-emptive u-turns and decided to exit nuclear energy, but nuclear energy is still a pillar of France's energy policy. Some countries like India plan a massive expansion and the construction of new reactors. In Japan, public opinion is now opposing nuclear energy. A large protest movement refers to countries like Germany as positive examples for an abandonment of nuclear energy. The government is increasingly under public pressure, but it is still promoting the export of Japanese nuclear reactor technology to other countries like India. How can these differences in Asian and Western democracies be explained? How is the interplay between national and transnational actors in energy policy?

Daniel Aldrich (Purdue University)

The Critical Role of Political Frameworks: Differences in Post 3/11 Outcomes across Japan and the West

M.V. Ramana (Princeton University)

The Impact of Fukushima and Chernobyl on India's Anti-Nuclear Movements

Christopher Rootes (University of Kent)

Energy Policy, the Environmental Movement and Protest in the UK after Fukushima

12:00–13:45 Lunch Break

13:45–14:30 Intermezzo: Young Scholar's Panel 1

Tobias Weiss (PhD candidate URPP, University of Zurich)

Recapturing Journalistic Professionalism? Media and Anti-Nuclear Protest in Japan

Eliza Isabaeva (PhD candidate URPP, University of Zurich)

Becoming New Citizens and Making State in Kyrgyzstan

14:30–15:00 Coffee Break

15:00–17:30 Panel 3: Protesting the Land Grab in South Asia: Special Economic Zones as Spaces of Exception and Norm Production

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Chair: Benedikt Korf (University of Zurich) and Shalini Randeria (The Graduate Institute, Geneva)

This panel looks into forms of protest against land grabbing and land colonization in South Asia, particularly in the context of Special Economic Zones (SEZ). We start from the premise that the political economy of land in South Asia forms part of a specific mode of governing through a state of exception, in which different forms of property rights are contested and negotiated. The panel will look into the formation of transnational networks (forms of protest) and the transnational circulation of norms, ideas and practices (between Asia and Europe) that are being mobilized to legitimate political protest and uprising or, in reverse, to justify territorial claims and related political, even military, interventions by state and non-state actors.

Neloufer de Mel (University of Colombo)

Borders and Brokers: Garment Factories in Post-War Sri Lanka

Jamie Cross (University of Edinburgh)

International Labour Rights and the Neoliberal Exception in India's SEZs

Coffee Break

Michael Levien (University of California, Berkeley)

Regimes of Dispossession and the Politics of India's Special Economic Zones

Loraine Kennedy (CEIAS, EHESS)

The Politics of India's Special Economic Zones from a Comparative Subnational Perspective

8 19:00–21:00 Dinner Reception (by invitation)

Saturday, October 26, 2013

Room KO2 F-152, Karl Schmid-Strasse 4, 8006 Zurich

9:00–10:30 Panel 4: Re-Negotiating Citizenship in the Arab World

Chair: Bettina Dennerlein (University of Zurich)

This panel is devoted to contentious politics with respect to recent developments in the Arab world. The language used by the so called “Arab street” during the events of the Arab Spring that has questioned authoritarian power and social inequalities in the name of justice, dignity and liberty has been described as non-Islamist and, more generally, as post-ideological. At the same time, current developments in different countries of the region point not only to the force of resistance of certain groups and centers of power. They also seem to indicate the re-emergence of long established yet shifting ideological cleavages. Focusing on newly emerging forms of protest and of public expression (ranging from political and social organizations to new social media as well as image politics and artistic forms of expression), the papers discuss processes of re-negotiating citizenship at the intersection of a rights-based approach and identity politics.

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Zakia Salime (Rutgers University, New Brunswick)

Challenges and Opportunities of New Feminism in North Africa

Sherene Seikaly (American University in Cairo)

A Revolt of the Poor: the Political Meaning of the People

Roa'a Gharaibeh (University of Bordeaux)

“No Honor in Crime” and “Lebanese Laique Pride”: New Voices Claiming Citizenship in Jordan and Lebanon

10:30–11:00 Coffee Break

11:00–11:45 Intermezzo: Young Scholar’s Panel 2

Motaz Alnaouq (PhD candidate URPP, University of Zurich)

The Palestinian Basic Law and the Death Penalty

Ulrich Brandenburg (PhD candidate URPP, University of Zurich)

Japan’s Challenge to Western Supremacy in the First Half of the 20th Century

11:45–13:30 Lunch Break

13:30–15:00 Panel 5: Actors, Mechanisms, and Processes of Traveling Norms: The Case of Constitutions and Human Rights

Chair: Andrea Büchler (University of Zurich)

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This panel discusses contentious constitution writing as an activity fundamental to political transition in many countries. Special attention is devoted to processes of traveling human rights norms and their implementation, which to a large extent depend on the authority of constitutions. Translating international human rights discourse to the specifics of social contexts is known to be of paramount importance for the acceptance and implementation of human rights through local institutions. Nevertheless, different scholars and activists describe human rights to be immune from cultural appropriation or as a framework offering an inclusive perspective, in which shared values exist beyond cultural designations.

Matthias Mahlmann (URPP, University of Zurich)

Context and Universality of Human Rights

Jaivir Singh (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Generating Economies of Sentiment: Exploring Law’s Engagement

Gianluca Parolin (American University in Cairo)

Drafting Human Rights Provisions in Egypt (and Beyond)

15:00 End of Conference

URPP Asia and Europe

The University Research Priority Program (URPP) Asia and Europe at the University of Zurich explores exchanges and encounters that have taken and continue to take place between Asia and Europe in the areas of culture, law, religion and society. The URPP Asia and Europe brings together various disciplines and faculties of the University of Zurich to create an expert and comprehensive interdisciplinary research structure. It promotes research by young graduate and post-graduate scholars within a structured and interdisciplinary research environment.

Within its research structure, the URPP Asia and Europe focuses on three thematically differentiated research fields.

Research Field 1: Concepts and Taxonomies reflects on a precise terminology that is vital for conceptualizing and studying phenomena such as identity constructions, exchanges and encounters between various cultural spaces in Europe and in Asia. One of its major goals is to contribute to the understanding of basic concepts, especially their taxonomical status and position, translational equivalents and correlates, as well as their use as heuristic instruments.

Research Field 2: Entangled Histories explores how the processes of cultural exchange and the constructions of cultural boundaries between Asia and Europe are shaped by agents and embedded in particular temporal and spatial contexts. The research field highlights the dynamics of exchange and constructions of cultural differences. Entangled histories are studied primarily with regard to historical, institutional, and geographical interactions, as well as media representations (literature, film, and art), and the history of knowledge.

Research Field 3: Norms and Social Order(s) is devoted to the study of the social and political negotiations that take place when norms and ideas about social and political order circulate across and between different places and social contexts, including, but not limited to, questions of economic and political interdependencies, the transnationalization of law, the interaction of individuals, local communities, national and international organizations, as well as global discourses on statehood and development.

General Information

Locations

October 24 & 26

University of Zurich
Room KO2 F-152
Karl Schmid-Strasse 4
CH-8006 Zurich

October 25

University of Zurich
Room KOL G-217
Rämistrasse 71
CH-8006 Zurich

Organizers

URPP Asia and Europe, Research Field 3 *Norms and Social Order(s)*
Prof. Dr. David Chiavacci (Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies)
Prof. Dr. Benedikt Korf (Department of Geography)
Prof. Dr. Fabian Schäfer (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)
Prof. Dr. Andrea Büchler (Institute of Law)
Prof. Dr. Bettina Dennerlein (Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies)
Prof. Dr. Katharina Michaelowa (Department of Political Science)
Prof. Dr. Shalini Randeria (The Graduate Institute, Geneva)
Dr. Ralph Weber (URPP Asia and Europe)

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www.asienundeuropa.uzh.ch/events/conferences/travelingnorms.html

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