

## **Spaces of Participation: Topographies of Political and Social Change in Morocco, Egypt and Palestine**

Initiative: Transformationsprozesse in der arabischen Welt

Ausschreibung: Staat, Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft im Wandel – Multilateral-kooperative

Forschungsvorhaben im arabischen Raum

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Projekt-Website: [https://www.zmo.de/forschung/projekte\\_2014\\_2019/spaces\\_of\\_participation\\_d.html](https://www.zmo.de/forschung/projekte_2014_2019/spaces_of_participation_d.html)

This project aims at expanding current understandings of political participation under authoritarian rule by analyzing the transformation processes in Morocco, Egypt and Palestine. Moreover, the project aims to cover new ground by (re)connecting the concepts and practices of participation and space. The research draws on a multilevel analysis of the types, functions and characteristics of the spaces in which individuals encounter the political realm, learn how to become social and political actors, develop collective actions and express themselves on public matters. More specifically, the project focuses on - intermediate cultural spaces" located at the intersection of the public and the private. It analyses (1) the main characteristics of these spaces and their transformation over time, (2) the multiplicity of practices and actors within them, and (3) their link to other kinds of locally, nationally and globally connected spaces. This will contribute to uncovering the dynamics of an under-studied, yet central aspect of participation, which helps to understand the socio-political processes that underlie the emergence of recent protest movements. It also allows addressing the issue of change in the region in a way that grasps the multiple reconfigurations of actors and practices while contributing to developing a theory of intermediate spaces of cultural participation in which socio-political socialization occurs in transitional contexts. Contemporary discourses on development and democratization highlight the role of inclusionary mechanisms of governance that decentralize power and include citizens. This has led to the worldwide expansion of intermediary spaces in which citizens participate. This project enables a deeper understanding of how such spaces function, how they can enhance (or slow down) the development of participatory democracies and what criteria should be considered when designing, shaping and funding them.

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