

**Public Space for Peace and Contention: Maydeen ash-Shuhadaa (Martyrs' Square)
Shaping Political and Social Spheres of the City of Tripoli, Libya (additional funding
for refugee scholars)**

Initiative: Transformationsprozesse in der arabischen Welt

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

Forschungsvorhaben im arabischen Raum

Bewilligung: 26.09.2016

Laufzeit: 1 Jahre 6 Monate

This research project investigates the role of public spaces in shaping political spheres in Libya, focusing on Martyrs' Square in the city of Tripoli. The square has served as a central stage for key political events: from the Italian occupation to Libyan independence, and throughout the rule of Gaddafi to the violent conflicts in post-Gaddafi Libya. Both pro- as well as anti-government actors have tried to use the square as a stage during these different periods. This study aims at investigating the use and perception of Martyrs' Square by both governments and non-governmental groups since the 1920s. While canvassing key moments of conflict in history, the research mostly focuses on the period since 2011. In doing so, the study will analyse for the first time the role of a central public space in Libyan history. In order to investigate the diverse uses as well the perceptions of people who were involved in the use of the square, a qualitative methodology is applied; employing, on the one hand, already existing literature such as books, documents, websites, newspapers and journals; and on the other hand interviews with participants and observers selected from various groups undertaking different political activities in the square. A basic theoretical tool will be Henri Lefebvre's theory of space, which he has conceptualized as being constituted by physical elements as well as, crucially, the practices and perceptions linked to a particular place.

Projektbeteiligte

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Freitag

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO)

Berlin