

Heisenberg-Stelle GloBe in Kooperation mit dem IZKT

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Vortragsreihe Globalgeschichte

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Herzliche Einladung zum Vortrag

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Africa and the Usefulness of “Theoretical Heresy” in the Study of Global History

The study of global reality does not allow a comprehensive understanding of every local detail. Yet, a growing appreciation of global interconnectedness and an obvious need to transcend normative implications of old Eurocentrism have made it impossible for historians to stay exclusively in secure enclaves of isolated localism. In their effort to explain broad implications of historical experiences, global historians have usually formulated explanatory theories through extrapolation from manageable, well-studied local cases. From the times of “social evolution” to those of “the end of history”, such theories have trended among historians until old data was interpreted differently or new studies revealed other local experiences that defied inclusion and rendered initially generalized theories untenable. In this paper, I call “theoretical heresy” any new data (or new explanation of old data) that refuses to fit into prevailing theoretical assumptions. Theoretical heresies eventually motivate historians to revise old narratives and formulate new theories, and, in the process, continually expand the boundaries of knowledge regarding a more genuine global history. With a special focus on globalizing theories of nationalism, I will illustrate the relevance of African content as useful theoretical heresy that has repeatedly called for a recalibration of old theories and a rethinking of global history.

Donnerstag, 8. Juli 2021, 19 Uhr

Link zur Online-Veranstaltung über

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