Shadows of Slavery in West Africa and Beyond. A Historical Anthropology

From 2013-05-01 to 2018-04-30, closed project

Objective

Though the colonial abolition of West African slavery and slave trade is well researched, the aftermath of slavery still deserves attention. What does it mean to be of slave descent today? How does the legacy of slavery and the slave trade overlap with harsh contemporary forms of marginality and exploitation? Moreover, what do we see when these questions are raised in a much broader comparative perspective? This project looks at the follow up of the abolition of slavery and the slave trade, a global process that invested the world at different times with a rich and complex variety of outcomes. Most historical research has stopped at the early colonial period, a very well documented phase of world history. Here, the analysis expands up to the present, and beyond the boundaries West African studies. Four regions of the world, which are under scrutiny for trafficking and contemporary slavery, will be studied comparatively. These are Eastern Senegal (West-Africa), Libya (North Africa), Coastal Madagascar (Indian Ocean), and North Afghanistan (Central Asia). The ambition is to link the micro-study of lived experience, cultural meanings and practices with the analysis of linkages and broader historical processes. To get results, there is need of a dialogue with human rights, legal theory, studies of gender and racial discrimination as well as scholarly insights on globalization and neo-liberalism. The ultimate objective of the project is an analytically integrated study of the aftermath of slavery that captures both the variety of concrete case-studies and the larger history of linkages between different parts of Africa and the world, Europe included. Innovation stands at the crossroad of chronological, geographical and disciplinary boundaries.

Related information

Report Summaries

Final Report Summary - SWAB (Shadows of Slavery in West Africa and Beyond. A Historical Anthropology)

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