

Claudia Derichs' research covers Asia and the Middle East (MENA), and addresses contemporary political and social developments. It is largely empirically driven. After graduation as translator for Arabic and Japanese, Derichs submitted her first monograph (PhD dissertation) on the Japanese radical left movement of the 1960s ff. (*Japans Neue Linke* [Japan's New Left], Hamburg 1994). The study of "another Japan" than the one covered in Western mainstream media drew from extensive fieldwork and participant observation in the late 1980s & early 1990s, analysing exclusive first-hand sources and oral testimonies. Conceptually embedded in social movement theory, social and political activism in Japan continued to form a current of Derichs' future research. The edited volume *Soziale Bewegungen in Japan* (*Social Movements in Japan*, co-ed. Anja Osiander, Hamburg 1998) was one the results tracing the conceptual as well as empirical development of Japanese civil society activism.

Postdoc studies covered political science topics with a transdisciplinary approach, resulting in a second monograph on *Nation-building in Malaysia* (Hamburg 2004). The regional shift to Southeast Asia (primarily Indonesia and Malaysia) was triggered by an increasing interest in crossregional and translocal relations of Muslim communities in Asia and the Middle East. Parallel to her work on crossregional connectivities, studies in politics of the Asia Pacific region resulted in several publications, among them a co-authored volume on ideas and discourses in Asian politics (*Why Ideas Matter. Ideen und Diskurse in der Politik Chinas, Japans und Malaysias*, co-authors Thomas Heberer and Nora Sausmikat, Hamburg 2004), two edited volumes on *The Power of Ideas. Intellectual Input and Political Change in East and Southeast Asia* (co-ed. Thomas Heberer, Copenhagen 2006) and elections systems in inter-regional comparison (*Wahlsysteme und Wahltypen. Politische Systeme und regionale Kontexte im Vergleich*, co-ed. Thomas Heberer, Wiesbaden 2006), and a textbook *Introduction to East Asian Political Systems (Einführung in die politischen Systeme Ostasiens*, co-ed. Thomas Heberer, Opladen 2003), which is currently available in its third edition (Wiesbaden 2013). *The Power of Ideas* and *Why Ideas Matter* analysed political discourses in East and Southeast Asia. Referring to the contemporaneous situation known as the "Asian crisis" (Asienkrise), the team of authors researched how ideas of and demands for political reform diffuse into policymaking in non-democratic regimes. The hegemonic concept of political participation, for instance, was then mainly defined by Western, democratic notions. In going beyond those, the book revealed pathways to political articulation and interest aggregation under authoritarian conditions and reflected critically on "concept stretching" and the "conceptual travel" in Western political science. The volume on elections and electoral systems presented a critical assessment of elections as a means of political participation and a tool to mobilise political change. The compilation of case studies from Asia, the Middle East and Subsaharan Africa confirmed the inference that electoral manipulation, cooptation, tacit intimidation, informal influence strategies and the like are common practices of regimes that seek to preserve the image of compliance with rules of free and fair elections, but nonetheless prevent losing power.

The works of the late 1990s and early 2000s tied into several emerging fields of political science research, including the intensive study of authoritarian regimes and an ever growing interest in the transformative power of digital media. The latter formed a crucial field of study in Derichs' research on Malaysia. The backlash caused by the financial crisis of the late 1990s notwithstanding, the Malaysian government invested heavily in gearing up for the country's international competitiveness in the IT sector. The opening up of new communication channels for technology industries and IT companies appealed not only to the corporate world, but also to civil society. Demands for political reform became increasingly articulated in digital outlets such as web newspapers, blogs and special online media formats. In cooperation with scholars

in Europe, the USA and Southeast Asia, several journal articles and contributions to edited volumes addressed this trend and formed a cluster of Derichs' research on political change and reform movements in Southeast Asia (e.g. *Political Crisis and Reform in Malaysia*; in: Gomez, E. Terence (ed.): *The State of Malaysia: ethnicity, equity and reform*. London and New York 2004).

In a similar vein as her early work on "the other Japan", civil society activism in "the other Malaysia" ("the other" understood as other-than-mainstream/official) was analysed in a couple of funded projects. Parallel to this research current, another cross-cutting theme became important: gender. From 2010 onwards, the politics of gender, gender and development, gender regimes, quota regulations, women's rights, women's movements and the like formed the core of the gender studies cluster in Derichs' research portfolio. Research on transnational women's movements, Islamic feminism, gender and security shaped this thematic branch (e.g. *Women's Movements and Countermovements. The Quest for Gender Equality in Southeast Asia and the Middle East*, ed. vol., Cambridge 2014). Putting the MENA region and Southeast Asia systematically into perspective, the focus on transnational women's movements fostered her interest in transregional connections. A particular contribution to knowledge emerged through her work on dynasties and female political leaders in Asia. Several book and journal publications, conference proceedings and collaborative outputs, primarily in co-authorship / co-editorship and co-organisation with Andrea Fleschenberg and Mark R. Thompson, hail from this period (2003ff.). Turbulent developments in some Asian countries (assassination of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, release from house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar, rise and fall of Park Geun-hye in Korea – to name but a few) made the study of dynastic female leaders in Asia an almost eternal research theme. A cut was thus made in order to present the results of a decade-long research to a wider public; the volume *Dynasties and Female Political Leaders in Asia. Gender, Power and Pedigree* (co-ed. Mark R. Thompson) was released in 2013. The topic of female political leadership, however, continues to be relevant on a global scale.

The importance of dynastic relationships as an analytical concept for studying politics not only in non-Western "dynastic" regimes but also in Western politics revealed itself during these years. Making this inference more productive was particularly motivated through a half-year guest professorship at Dokkyo University, Japan (2013/14) and a fellowship in the research group Kinship & Politics at Bielefeld University's advanced studies' centre ZiF (*Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung*, 2016-17). The focus on kinship as an analytical concept in social science revived a topical current of Derichs' research which had been somewhat relegated to second rank during the preceding decade. That is, reflecting on how kinship-related terms have been translated into languages other than English and German, and what it means for the process of knowledge production when the scholarly discourse on kinship builds primarily on a terminology that is based on Latin script or letters. In her article "Languages of Kinship", which contributes to a forthcoming volume on the reconnection of kinship and politics (eds.: Erdmute Alber, Tatjana Thelen, David Sabeau and Simon Teuscher), she discusses the relevance of including non-letter based scripts (such as Japanese) and the history of translation of concepts into the analysis.

Two decades of fieldwork in Muslim Southeast Asia, the MENA region and Japan resulted in the most recent monograph *Knowledge Production, Area Studies and Global Cooperation* (2017). Writing up this monograph was facilitated by a senior fellowship at the *Centre for Global Cooperation Studies* (Käte Hamburger Kolleg) in Duisburg (Universität Duisburg-Essen). The book is a thorough reflection on Area Studies in Western academia, suggesting to re-think the conventional segregation into "geographical" regions and pay intensified attention to transregional and translocal connectivities between actors, institutions, ideas and beliefs. Its

main arguments derive from tracing the epistemic project of an “Islamization of Knowledge” that gained mileage in several parts of the world and provided a vantage point for re-thinking hegemonic tendencies in the global generation and dissemination of knowledge. The plurality of ontological ecologies studied in this book are currently taken further and put into relation with one another. In combination with this critical approach towards academic knowledge production, current research addresses a topic of social movement studies that has been relatively neglected thus far, i.e. the emergence of transregional and international Islamic movements of the 1960 and 1970s. While historians’ recently introduced – or re-introduced – notion of the “global sixties” serves as a heuristic concept and invites intensive, empirically based analysis, Derichs joins in with an innovative perspective on the semantics of a perceived “global” and its accompanying reference objects. Published work on this current of research includes an article in the *Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties* (eds. Chen Jian et al., London and New York 2018), and a chapter on Japan and the Muslim world in the collaborative volume *Women, Global Protest Movements and Political agency. Rethinking the Legacy of 1968* (eds. Sarah Colvin and Katharina Karcher, London and New York 2018). More studies are forthcoming. International collaboration on the topic is enhanced through participation in several discussion formats (e.g. conferences on the “global” or “radical” sixties in Cambridge, Tokyo, Brighton).