Stenner, David: *Globalizing Morocco. Transnational Activism and the Postcolonial State*. Stanford: Stanford University Press 2019. ISBN: 9781503608115; XIV, 289 S.

Rezensiert von: Ana Moledo, Collaborative Research Centre (SFB 1199), Universität Leipzig

North Africa has witnessed a series of sociopolitical convulsions over the last decade. The winds of the Arab Spring that swept across the region in 2010 and 2011 led to armed revolts and significant regime changes in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. More recently, Algeria has known its share of popular unrest, which ended with the resignation of President Bouteflika after twenty years in power. In this maelstrom of protest and violent uprisings in its neighborhood, Morocco stands out as the only country that has not succumbed to the winds of change.[1] Part of the answer seems to lie, according to David Stenner's *Globalizing Morocco*, in the sophisticated public relations network that the Moroccan monarchy has succeeded in weaving since the years leading to independence in 1956. Central to these strategic maneuvers is the transnational anticolonial activism that crafted the unique transition from colonial rule to the Moroccan post-colonial kingdom, which constitutes the core of Stenner's book.

Globalizing Morocco: Transnational Activism and the Postcolonial State offers an all-encompassing reconstruction of Moroccan anticolonial activism abroad over the course of a decade (1946–1956). The detailed analysis of transnational structures, actors and nodal points of Moroccan anticolonial campaigning draws from an impressive amount of official and private archival records in several languages, as well as press clippings, bulletins and memoirs.

In the introduction, Stenner makes the case for the uniqueness of Moroccan anticolonial activism. Unlike more revolutionary versions of anticolonialism in the aftermath of World War II[2], the author portrays the Moroccan activists as „Wilsonian universalists" (p. 15) that were eager to play by the rules of the nascent global order. Moreover, the anticolonialists managed to present themselves inter-

nationally as a united front fighting for the same national cause despite the division of the country into two protectorates with diverse proto-nationalist groups. Even more remarkable is the fact that they all rallied behind King Sidi Mohammed, exalted as a symbol of a united post-colonial future. These are three convincing arguments for sustaining the singularity of the activist networks described by Stenner. Nonetheless, the „innovative strategy that positioned them in the vanguard of worldwide anticolonial movements" (p. 3) is a more questionable novelty in light of previous research on transnational anticolonial activism in earlier decades of the century.[3]

The structure of the book follows the five main stages of the international campaign for independence that correspond with the geographical hubs where this unravelled. Relying on a well-established analytical tradition in the fields of global and transnational history[4], the author uses the cities of Tang-

[1] Nicolas Pelham, How Morocco Dodged the Arab Spring, in: The New York Review of Books, 05.07.2012, http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2012/jul/05/how-morocco-dodged-arab-spring/ (09.01.2020); Driss Maghraoui, Constitutional reforms in Morocco. Between consensus and subaltern politics, in: The Journal of North African Studies 16/4 (2011), pp. 679–699.

[2] Algeria stands out as a paradigmatic case of revolutionary anticolonialism that also developed transnational patterns of campaign and mobilization, as illustrated by Matthew Connelly, A Diplomatic Revolution. Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era, Oxford 2002, and Jeffrey James Byrne, Mecca of Revolution. Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order, Oxford 2016.

[3] The case of Indian transnational anticolonial networks in the interwar period is well researched. See i.a. Zaib un Nisa Aziz, Passages from India. Indian anti-colonial activism in exile, 1905–20, in: Historical Research 90/248 (2017), pp. 404–421; Henrik Chetan Aspengren, Indian revolutionaries abroad. Revisiting their silent moments, in: Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History 15/3 (2014), https://muse.jhu.edu/article/562294 (09.01.2020).

[4] Analytical approaches like portals of globalization have put cities and international zones at the core of investigations on global connectedness and transnational encounters. In that regard, see Matthias Middell / Katja Naumann, Global history and the spatial turn. From the impact of area studies to the study of critical junctures of globalization, in: Journal of Global History 5/1 (2010), pp. 149–170. For particular examples on the anticolonial dimensions of cities like Paris or Cairo, see: Michael Goebel, Anti-imperial Metropo-

ier, Cairo, Paris, New York and Rabat as portals to trace the connections between the local and the global as well as between mobile agents and socio-political institutions anchored in these spaces. Although the anticolonial dimensions of some of these global cities have been previously exposed, Stenner's innovation lies in combining the spatial with a social network approach, allowing identification of more complex dynamics of coordination between actors in different hubs – what he refers to as „triadic closure" (p. 12). This methodological choice is informed by the vast existing literature in humanities and social sciences on network theory, and the author borrows main analytical concepts from this interdisciplinary corpus of research. For the sake of historical reconstruction, such an approach seems the most suitable to cope with the extensive linkages without losing the reader in too much detail about individual actors. Above all, it enables mapping of all these connections, which translates in the network visualizations included in the appendix. This combination of digital humanities tools with social network analysis is a brilliant addition although not so much explored in terms of comparison across space and time.

This is by no means a conclusive history of Moroccan anticolonialism, but rather of the transnationalization of its independence claims. The domestic stage is usually featured in relation to the international endeavors of the anticolonialists and their supporters. Nonetheless, Stenner's account of activist networking starts, at least geographically, on Moroccan soil, though under international control. The first chapter follows the activists to the international zone of Tangier, a peculiar cosmopolitan bubble connected to the outer world through foreign embassies and cultural, political and trade representatives. There, the „Moroccan's ability to befriend American citizens" (p. 29) – among them, intelligence officers, businessmen and labor activists – that passed by paved the way for a series of informal ties that would prove quite auspicious for conquering the hearts and minds of global audiences. Tangier is depicted as a gateway for internationalization, but it is also the place where crucial alliances between nationalist groups from the French

and Spanish protectorates came into being. According to the author, the seeds of the formation of the domestic front are to be found in shared exile experiences and the unifying strength of the sultan. However, due to the character of the surroundings and the exposure of activists to exchanges with foreigners, it is difficult to believe that these did not play an active role in the coming together.

In contrast to more informal strategies of networking pursued in Tangier, the subsequent chapters on Moroccan anticolonial activities in other international centers show an institutionalization of their activism. The office of the Arab Maghrib in Cairo, the Bureau de documentation et information du Parti Istiqlal in Paris, and the Moroccan Office of Information and Documentation in New York are some of the infrastructures used by the activists to lobby policy makers and international diplomats. Getting the United Nations to discuss the Moroccan question was the primordial goal, but Stenner shows that not all roads led to the General Assembly, or, at least, not in the way they would have expected. Despite extensive wrangling and mistrust that led, for instance, to the quick unravelling of the network in Cairo, or the frustration after the postponement of the UN debate on the status of the protectorate in 1951, the author shows a surprisingly positive and resilient picture of the network that the reader may embrace a bit reluctantly. This couples with an overemphasis of the Moroccan agency that comes up time and again when the author describes how the activists reached out, recruited or lured foreign supporters into their network, somehow disregarding the initiative and interests of their counterparts. This may be the result of the reliance on particular sources, primary accounts from activists themselves and colonial reports that tend to overstate the subversive operations of their antagonists.

The social network-based activism that constitutes the unit of analysis sheds light on an

lis. Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism, New York 2015; Eric Burton, Hubs of Decolonization. African Liberation Movements and Eastern Connections in Cairo, Accra and Dar es Salaam, in: Lena Dallywater / Helder A. Fonseca / Chris Saunders (eds.), Southern African Liberation Movements and the Global Cold War 'East', Berlin 2019, pp. 25–56.

array of lesser-known brokers and their actual influence in the overall network structure, as well as demonstrating the fragmented and even contradictory nature of the agendas of particular governments and institutions at the time. The case of US intelligence agents deployed in Morocco in the early 1950s, overtly engaging with the nationalists despite the US government officially siding with the protectorate authorities, is just one example showing that these should not be approached as monolithic entities. In that sense, the same high politics constellation of the early Cold War that the author regards as a major drawback for the advancement of the Moroccan cause calls for a more nuanced observation that integrates dissenting voices at different levels (intelligence, diplomacy, judiciary etc.).

Over the course of the nationalists' transnational outreach, contacts intensified and the advocacy network grew denser, but the narrative focuses the reader's attention on biographical insights and particular passages describing the personal relationships established with famous supporters like Eleanor Roosevelt.

A final aspect of note is the chapter on the homecoming and subsequent rollback of the nationalist transnational network after being co-opted by the monarchy in the years following independence. Instead of approaching this moment as an ending, the author builds a bridge between the colonial, anticolonial and postcolonial phases, hence highlighting persisting legacies and continuities that lasted throughout the subsequent decades.

Stenner's book is a great contribution to the research fields of anticolonialism and the history of decolonization. It confirms the multi-layered and multiplayer nature of anticolonial politics and the respective transition processes leading to the postcolonial period. It also provides interesting examples of how to use network approaches and Digital Humanities tools to deal with that complexity.