

Acknowledgements

This book has been a collective project from the outset, and emerged first and foremost from the wonderful collaboration among the Fellows of the Interdisciplinary Fellow Group (IFG) *Inequality and Mobility* from the Merian Centre of Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM), the academic coordinators from Leipzig University (LU), and the many Tunisian or Tunisia-based scholars who enabled and participated in the IFG's seminars, events and field trips.

Essential for this collaborative work has been the scientific cooperation with Tunisian universities and academics, among which the following partners were particularly central: the Laboratoire Gouvernance et Développement Territorial at the Université de Tunis, with the active support and participation of Mourad Ben Jalloul, Faouzi Zerai, Hend Ben Othman and others; the Laboratoire SYFACTE at the Université de Sfax with the active support and participation of Ali Bennasr, Hassan Boubakri, Maha Bouhlel and others; the Department of Anthropology at the Université de Sousse with collaborative efforts led by Ramzi Ben Amara; the Institute of Environmental Technologies, Urban Planning and Building at Carthage University (ISTEUB) with the invaluable support of Yasmine Turki and others. Hoda Laroussi from the Université de Carthage/Tunis and Imed Melitti from the Université de Tunis El Manar were always ready to share with us their unique insights and perspectives on Tunisian society. The editors would like to thank these institutions and colleagues for their warm welcome and spirit of collaboration and academic enthusiasm!

The editors would also like to thank the independent researchers and civil society organisations, as well as art space institutions, who participated in co-organising public events, field trips or discussions in Tunisia with the MECAM fellow group, amongst whom we express particular thanks to: Arwa Labidi, the Observatoire Tunisien de l'Économie (OTE), Habib Ayeb and the L'Observatoire de la Souveraineté Alimentaire et de l'Environnement (OSAE), Olfa Lamloum and the team of International Alert, Central Tunis, Marouan Taleb and the Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain (IRMC), Leila Ben Gacem and the entire team of Dar Ben Gacem as well as the Dar El Harka coworking space, and the many other stakeholders and activists – from the municipality of Kesra, to environmental activists in Sfax – who shared their insights with and dedicated time to our Fellow Group. The meetings and discussions with Moroccan

partners in Tunis, particularly with Fatma Ait Mous and Hind Ftouhi, in the summer of 2022, not only led to new collaborations with Tunisian institutions and social scientists, but also inspired new approaches to and research formats for the promotion of early-career researchers.

Without committed institutional support and precise administrative knowledge, such a multidimensional co-operation project is inconceivable. From the very beginning, Habib Sidhoum, president of Université de Tunis, together with Rachid Ouaisa from Marburg University, were the driving force in the joint development of the MECAM in Tunis. We thank the local management and administrative team of MECAM for their support to our Fellow Group. In an early phase of the project, Sihem Lamine, from the Centre of Middle East Studies, Harvard University, generously shared with us her expertise in the establishment of a research centre in Tunisia.

Our particular thanks go to the administrative staff of Leipzig University. They have been consistently committed to the meaningful realisation of our collaborative research project, even in challenging situations. Our very special thanks go to Sindy Schug, Application Counselling and Research Funding (LU), for sharing her administrative knowledge and facilitating access to different institutions within Leipzig University; to Kerstin Hirsch and Angelika Dunkel, management of third party funds (LU), for their professional and very labour-intensive inputting of receipts and certificates into electronic accounting systems and the clarification of queries by the project administrator, the German Aerospace Centre (DLR Projektträger); and to Birgit Dräger, former Chancellor of Leipzig University, for developing the LU Guidelines for the Award of Research Fellowships to Senior and Junior Fellows (including doctoral candidates) for MECAM. These fellowship guidelines tackled inequality in academia and allowed for equal payment of the fellows, independent of their origin.

Translating and editing this volume were also co-working processes: all contributors engaged in discussing and commenting on early drafts of the chapters in Arabic, French, and English, starting with the joint writing and peer review workshop in Nabeul in summer 2022. This was followed by in-depth-discussions and revisions of all papers. From the original final drafts, two chapters written in Arabic and French were translated into English by Leonie Nückell and Najla Achek. Subsequently, other non-English chapters have been translated into English and all received further feedback by the editors. Max Sivertsen did a great job in providing a first language review of the entire draft version in English. Jaldá Simon de Martínez not only facilitated communication between the authors, she also helped to organise the workshop and meetings in Tunis and Nabeul, as well as reviewing the drafts, and checking citations and bibliography. Jessica Sommer has kindly taken over the formatting of the manuscript. Finally, Erena Le Heron very skilfully engaged in the scientific proofreading of the edited volume. She has significantly improved the readability of our texts, so our very special thanks go to her.

The team at transcript publisher, particularly Karin Werner, supported this book project from the very beginning and allowed it to develop. Thank you 'team transcript' for this outstanding collaboration!

Ultimately, our most heartfelt thanks go to the contributors, first and foremost for your stellar research and book chapters, but also for your trust and openness to new encounters and experiences, the eagerness to learn and listen, and the motivation to contin-

uously engage in multiple translations (e.g. linguistic, cultural, methodological) that are the basis for critical research – all this, for us, has been great fun and a fantastic learning experience, and has made this book possible!

