



minor  
cosmopolitanisms



CfP

International Workshop

June 14-15, 2021

**Modern Jewish experiences beyond Europe - *minor perspectives* on modernity**

For decades, postcolonial thought sought to trouble the universalist ideas behind the project of Modernity. As a result, there have emerged productive attempts such as Dipesh Chakrabarty's invitation to provincialize Europe, Talal Asad's critique on the secular model of progress as the core of modernity, and David Scott's assertion of being conscripted to modernity.

In Jewish studies, scholars like Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin and Devin E. Naar offer to think Jewish history from *minor perspectives* such as Mizrahi/Sephardic Jewish ones. One of the recurring questions preoccupying scholars in the field of Jewish studies is what it meant to be modern for Jews. In the focus of many of these inquiries stood the European Enlightenment and the emancipation of the Jews within the emerging European nation states - in short, the experience of Jews living inside of Europe. In recent decades, however, growing interest in Jewish communities around the globe has prompted questions regarding modern Jewish experiences outside the European Metropole. It shows that investigating different experiences of modernity, such as the ones of Sephardic Jews as well as of Jews under colonial rule, offers a wider understanding of Jewish history as well as a space where Jewish studies and postcolonial thought can meet. From one side such studies delve into how colonial modernity transformed the lives of Jews in multiple forms beyond Europe. While on the other, it can provide useful templates for understanding questions which are central concerns in postcolonial studies, such as how to think about concepts like minoritarianism and diaspora.

We invite scholars from Jewish studies as well as different fields and disciplines to further explore and think together while engaging with the following questions: how can *minor perspectives*, such as the Jewish one, alter the idea of modernity beyond Europe? How can new concepts and terms emerge in the field of Jewish studies or other disciplines that include wider historical, geographical and political contexts? And how might such concepts, in turn, influence our (major) understanding of modernity?

**Please submit a title and an abstract of around 300 words for a 20-minute talk and a short CV by April 15 to [j.hirsch@selma-stern-zentrum.de](mailto:j.hirsch@selma-stern-zentrum.de).**

Organized by the Selma Stern Center for Jewish Studies Berlin-Brandenburg, and the RTG minor cosmopolitanisms, University of Potsdam. The workshop will be held in English and online.