

## **15<sup>TH</sup> HUMBOLDT INDIA PROJECT LECTURE**

**THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> of January 2020**

**10:00 – 12:00 hrs.**

Department of South Asia Studies,  
Institute of Asian and African Studies  
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
Invalidenstr. 118, Room 217



**ARIK MORAN**

### **Submissive Subjects or Master Manipulators? – Rajput Historiography on the West Himalayan Borderland**

Histories of Himachal Pradesh invariably depict the pre-modern past as the idyllic preserve of pristine Hindu kingdoms. However, archival records dating to the early colonial encounter (c. 1815-45) indicate that this 'traditionalist' view was born from the markedly prosaic attempts of recently conquered ruling families to retain political relevance in an era of rapid political transformations. As the mores and practices of local elites collided with imperial agendas, ad hoc responses to discrete situations became interpreted as 'traditions' that were to define the 'Rajput State' with the consolidation of colonial knowledge in the Age of Empire (c. 1870-1920). The talk shall explore the reflection of these processes in male-centred historical narratives from the hills, their contrast with the factual dominance of Rajput women (Rajputnis) in politics, and the long-term effects these readings have had on the theorization of Indian history to date.

**ARIK MORAN** received his doctorate from the University of Oxford in 2010, and is a member of the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Haifa since 2011. He studies the oral and written histories and ritual cultures of the Indian Western Himalaya.