



It is our pleasure to invite you to the presentation of **Dr Martin Keulertz** as part of our series *Spotlight Global South* on the topic of

**“Rebuilding agriculture in Syria and Lebanon: the role of water policy”**

**Topic overview:** Despite the onslaught of conflict penetrating Syria, post-conflict strategies must be and are currently planned and designed by international organisations. One of the key sectors to address in the immediate post-conflict era will be agriculture to provide food and employment for a large number of the Syrian population. The focus of the presentation is to shed light on current and post-conflict challenges for the water sector in the transboundary Akkar groundwater aquifer of which 75% are located in Syria and 25% in Lebanon. The agricultural sector in Northern Lebanon has been expanded by approximately 30% since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011. Syrian refugees do not only serve as cheap agricultural labourers but they have outnumbered the local population by 125%. Agriculture in Akkar is particularly prone to potato and greenhouse projects to grow perishables for the local and national market in Lebanon. However, since 2015, agriculture in the coastal areas of Western Syria has been revived leading to an inflow of agricultural exports into Lebanon. Farmers in Akkar have reported decreasing groundwater levels by 50% in the past five years causing a serious future concern for their livelihoods. As the aquifer is shared, the situation in Syria has been reported to be similarly concerning. The presentation will provide recommendations on how to govern the water resources in Western Syria and Northern Lebanon in a post-conflict setting. Contrary to the widespread belief in irrigation efficiency, the presentation will present two ways for post-conflict water management and policy. First, water allocation permits to physically account for water need to be introduced alongside technological innovations. Second, the presentation will suggest ways to harmonise water policy with agricultural subsidies to structure production patterns and water use in a region facing increasing water scarcity.

**Dr Martin Keulertz** is visiting assistant professor at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, American University of Beirut. He previously worked as a post-doctoral research fellow at Purdue University (USA) and Humboldt University Berlin (Germany). He obtained his PhD at King's College London (UK) in 2013 with a thesis on foreign direct investment in Sudanese agriculture by Jordan and Qatar. In 2008, he was admitted an MSc in Middle East Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) and a BA in Political and Social Sciences at the University of Wales, Bangor in 2007. Martin's research interests centre around the water-food-energy nexus with a particular focus on the Arab world, North America and Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, he has published on the global political economy of water and food. He is an associate editor of the journal 'Food Security' (Springer Link) and editor of the Handbook of Water, Food and Society (OUP, 2017).

**Date & Time:** Wednesday, 24 May 2017, 12:30 to 2 pm

**Venue:** Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut, Windausstr. 16, 79110 Freiburg

A notification of attendance is not necessary.