Highlights

NEW CROSSROADS ASIA WORKING PAPER ON COPING STRATEGIES IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE OSH CONFLICT
Aksana Ismailbekova (July 2012) - Coping strategies: public avoidance, migration and marriage in the aftermath of the Osh Conflict, Fergana Valley. Crossroads Asia Working Paper No. 4

NEW CROSSROADS ASIA WORKING PAPER ON HILL IRRIGATION

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS CROSSROADS ASIA VISITING FELLOWS
The competence network Crossroads Asia annually provides research fellowships for academics. Visiting fellows should feel obliged to the core concept of Crossroads Asia and carry out research on a relevant topic of the competence network, which is not yet covered by ongoing projects. Read more.

HAFEEZ JAMALI JOINS COMPETENCE NETWORK
We welcome Hafeez Jamali to the competence network. Hafeez Jamali is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin and a Visiting Research Fellow in the Crossroads Asia competence network at Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) Berlin. His research focuses on the anthropology of globalization and development, the history of Indian Ocean trade, and the politics of identity and place in Balochistan (Pakistan). His doctoral research examines how Pakistani government’s investment in mega development projects such as transnational gas pipelines and commercial ports has affected the lives and transformed the political attitudes of ethnic Baloch people. His previous work has appeared in Cultural Dynamics, The Middle East Report, and Anthropology News. Read more.
Activities in the Network

Projects

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REACHED BETWEEN FERDOWSI UNIVERSITY MASHHAD AND THE EBERHARD KARLS UNIVERSITY OF TÜBINGEN

The Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen and the Ferdowsi University Mashhad have sealed a Memorandum of Understanding on research conditions and local teaching. The agreement was negotiated in April 2012 by Prof. Dr. R. Hardenberg, Head of Department of Anthropology at University Tübingen with various departments of the Ferdowsi University, and signed by the principals of the University of Tübingen and the Ferdowsi University, Mashhad in July 2012. Two students of Tübingen’s Anthropology Department will take up their studies in Mashhad in September 2012.

Publications

NEW VOLUME ON IRANIAN ANTHROPOLOGY PUBLISHED


This volume is the result of discussions held at the first organized encounter between Iranian, American, and European anthropologists since the Iranian Revolution of 1979. It is considered an important first step in overcoming the dichotomy between “peripheral anthropologies” versus “central anthropologies”. The contributors examine, from a critical perspective, the historical, cultural, and political field in which anthropological research emerged in Iran at the beginning of the twentieth century and in which it continues to develop today. Read more.

RELATED EVENT

Online Conference: MIGRATION IN A CHANGING WORLD: WHERE DO WE GO NOW? 5-9 November 2012

The next Wiley-Blackwell Exchanges online conference, Migration in a Changing World, is fast approaching! With 600 delegates registered from many locations around the globe, it’s shaping up to be another exiting event with a full line-up of lectures, workshops and scholarly papers for discussion. See website for more information.


Past Crossroads Asia Lectures


MONSUTTI, A.: “The good, the bad and the ugly, or the politics of reconstruction in Afghanistan.” Zentralasienseminar, HU Berlin, 20 June 2012.


Upcoming Workshops/Conferences/Presentations

Conference on „Figurations of Mobility“ to be held in November

This conference aims to provide a forum to discuss approaches of figurational sociology with the objective to re-conceptualize Area Studies. Hereby theoretical advantages and shortcomings of figurational sociology will be related to concepts such as networks or translocality as well as empirical case studies from across the world. The conference under the lead of HU Berlin will take place in Berlin, November 22-24, 2012. For further information, please visit our homepage.


BENZ, A.: “Rethinking the migration and development nexus from a translocal perspective. The case of the Wakhi of Gojal, Northern Pakistan”, IGC Cologne, 29 August 2012.


Past Workshops/Conferences/Presentations


On July 26th an internal workshop was held at Center for Development Research (ZEF) of the University of Bonn to discuss the development concept paper, and for researchers within the network to present their research. Presenters included Lutz Rzehak, Shahnaz Nadjimabadi, Elena Smolarz, Alisher Khatiyarov, Kamal Siddiqui and Joe Hill. The day-long session ended with a public lecture by Hafeez Jamali. Read more.


Workshop „The Nexus of Conflict and Migration in Afghanistan” Held in May 2012

An international workshop Crossroads Asia: The Nexus of Conflict and Migration in Afghanistan took place at the Center for Development Research (ZEF) of the University of Bonn on 24th May 2012. Read more.

Media Coverage of the workshop
» Waslat, H.-N.: Afghans use social migration as survival strategy (German translation: Afghanistan. Nutzen aus der Migration ziehen.) Deutsche Welle. 19 June 2012.

Interviews


News from the Field

Joe Hill in Tajikistan

Following his field research trip to the Kyrgyz Alai mountains, Joe Hill continued his journey overland from Osh via Murghab to the western section of the Tajik Pamir mountains. He stayed in villages located along the Gund, Shokhdara and Pyandsh river valleys, at varying distances from the provincial capital Khorog. Each of the villages visited are served by between two and ten wedhs (aryks/small canals), each of which vary in length (one km to 28km), in their water adequacy/scarcity, and in the area of land they serve. The materiality of villages and their farmland, positioned on mountainsides high up from the river, regulates and mediates social relations in different ways. Different types of organisational forms of water management were observed.

Similar to the Kyrgyz Alai, migration levels are very high, with most households having at least one member working in Russia and remitting a minimum of 80 to 120 Euro per month. The emergence of socio-economic differentiation relates to the livelihood strategies of households. For example, the few households that do not have people of age to migrate are the poorest. Before returning to Germany a short trip was made to a village in upper Zerafshan valley, located north of Dushanbe, to gauge the similarities and differences in the contexts of hill irrigation systems and farming practices. Upper Zerafshan evidently has a more diverse and healthy economy than the valleys of Gorno-Badakhshan. Whereas upper Zerafshan is only around five hours from Khujand, and about eight hours from Dushanbe, travelling from Khorog to Dushanbe takes 16 hours in a shared taxi!

Shahnaz Nadjmabadi in Iran

The second field research period between April and May 2012 was mainly spent in Mashhad, the capital of Iran’s eastern province, Khorassan. The purpose was to continue research related to questions of mobility and development along the Iran-Afghanistan and Iran-Pakistan borders.

In spite of the time limit, she succeeded in acquiring a remote insight into the functioning of some entrepreneurial networks and interacting groups engaged in retail and petty trade activities in Mashhad. She also established contacts with some small-scale entrepreneurs and merchants who used to have strong trans local and transnational trade relations with eastern and western countries (particularly with Germany) since the 1950s. However, they either had to shift the enterprise in a new geographical direction or to abandon their commercial activities due to political and economic transformations in the province of Khorassan. The collection of these data and their integration into the overall project will particularly give insight into the topics of „mobility“ and „changing figurations“.

Alff, H.: Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek), 17 March - 5 May 2012.

Benz, A.: India (Kumaon Region in Uttarakhand), 5 March - 16 May 2012.

Grieser, A.: Pakistan, February 2012 - May 2012, Pakistan (Gilgit), from April 2012 - now.
The competence network *Crossroads Asia* derives its name from the geographical area extending from eastern Iran to western China and from the Aral Sea to northern India. The scholars collaborating in the competence network pursue a novel, ‘post-area studies’ approach, making thematic figurations and mobility the overarching perspectives of their research in *Crossroads Asia*. The concept of figuration implies that changes, minor or major, within one element of a constellation always affect the constellation as a whole; the network will test the value of this concept for understanding the complex structures framed by the cultural, political and socio-economic contexts in *Crossroads Asia*. Mobility, the other key concept for studying *Crossroads Asia*, has always been a space of entangled interaction and communication, with human beings, ideas and commodities on the move across and beyond cultural, social and political borders. Figurations and mobility thus form the analytical frame of all three main thematic foci of our research: conflict, migration, and development.

Funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the *Crossroads Asia* competence network was established in spring of 2011. It aims to mediate between the academic study of *Crossroads Asia* and efforts to meet the high demand for information on this area in politics and the public. Findings of the project will feed into academic teaching, research outside the limits of the competence network, and public relations efforts. Further information on *Crossroads Asia* is available at [www.crossroads-asia.de](http://www.crossroads-asia.de).