



Report on the workshop on

# Tajikistan's Episteme, Crossroads Asia and the Marine Future

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Volkswagen**Stiftung**



**CROSSROADS  
ASIA**

Conflict · Migration · Development



**Universität Bremen\***

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## Introduction

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On July 28-29 2015, the workgroup '*Development and Knowledge Sociology*' of the Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Ecology (ZMT) organized the VW-funded workshop entitled '*Tajikistan's Episteme, Crossroads Asia and the Marine Future*'. The event was convened in collaboration with the 3 year research project '**Conversion of knowledge in post-Soviet Tajikistan. The impact of governance arrangements on knowledge in agricultural production in Tajikistan**' (funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and implemented by the Center for Development Research University of Bonn). Moreover, the workshop enabled the participation and collaboration with a BMBF-funded transnational cluster working on epistemic cultures in Tajikistan and Georgia as well as the BMBF-funded competence network '*Crossroads Asia*'.

The two-day interdisciplinary scientific gathering served as a final workshop to the VW-funded project "Conversion of knowledge in post-Soviet Tajikistan." As a primary aim, the workshop created shared space and a joint platform for critical reflection on the project's long-standing research trajectory in Central Asia, together with key lessons learned on account of its international and local cooperation partnerships. Second, the workshop aimed at laying the groundwork for an integrative research agenda that paved the way for future collaborative work by not only deepening knowledge sociology and post-area studies perspectives developed in the past, but also through the advancement of novel approaches to analyzing terrestrial and marine spaces through a comparative lens.

As a transcontinental workshop, the event engaged participants from across Germany (Bremen and Bonn), Canada, Italy, the Netherlands and Tajikistan.

In particular, the workshop:

- (1) brought together two complementary teams within the VW-financed project 'Conversion of knowledge in post-Soviet Tajikistan', together with the BMBF-financed project 'Epistemic Cultures in the agricultural sector of Tajikistan and Georgia' in order to reflect on research processes and outputs (for example, farm diary data), and to finalize three publications during the writeshop-component of the two-day workshop (see the workshop program in appendix 2);
- (2) presented and reflected on research gleaned across the two Central Asian projects as well as 'Crossroads Asia' in its entirety, to colleagues from Bremen who also work on Central, South and Southeast Asia, together with the Pacific Rim;
- (3) Concretely mapped future activities and project concepts, paying particular attention to thematic currents and theoretical frames that enable synergistic links between marine and coastal research approaches, and ongoing research perspectives advanced by the Crossroads Asia network.

Approximately twenty researchers participated in the workshop representing the following institutions: Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Ecology (ZMT), the University of Bremen, the Center for Development Research (ZEF) at the University of Bonn, the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), the ARTEC Sustainability Research Center, the Research Centre for East European Studies (FSO), Leiden University's Institute for Area in The Netherlands, and Centre for International Studies (CÉRIUM), University of Montreal, Canada.

During the workshop FSO and BICC were introduced along with presentations of conducted research, for instance the VW-financed project 'Conversion of Knowledge in post-Soviet Agriculture' as well as the BMBF-financed project 'Epistemic Cultures in the agricultural sector of Tajikistan and Georgia'. This sharing of information not only strengthened existing networks, but initiated a platform, through which possible future collaborations and project ideas were communicated.

The first day of the workshop was structured as a scientific conference, with presentations on projects and work done by the participants of approximately 15 to 30 minutes duration. A plenary discussion consecutively followed after each session. As a result of the well-balanced number of participants, some of whom were formerly acquainted with one another, the open dialogue during sessions encouraged active sharing and exchange subjective experience.

On the second day, the meeting took the form of a writeshop in order to discuss and advance publications that were written by group members (see the detailed workshop program in the appendix 2). The format was guided by the knowledge that presentations made at an early stage (followed by constructive critique), enabled the authors to better reflect on their work and to strengthen their individual research processes. To this end, the second day started with a brief recap of the previous day and continued with five presentations of publication projects constituting work-in-progress.

## Summary of the Main Sessions

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The detailed program of the workshop is outlined in appendix 2 attached below. In the following a summary of the main sessions:

### Day 1 - Tuesday, July 28: Projects and Research Presentations

#### Day 1, Session 1

The workshop convened with the welcome speech of Prof. **Dr. Hildegard Westphal, director of the Leibniz Institute for Tropical Marine Ecology (ZMT), Bremen.** While sharing on how ZMT started, its ongoing work and uniqueness as the only publically funded German institute with a dedicated focus on tropical marine ecology, Prof. Westphal also elaborated on its long term international cooperation initiatives and

diverse partnerships around the world. The presentation also detailed on ZMT's international doctoral research program.

The welcome speech was followed by **Prof. Dr. Anna-Katharina Hornidge, leader of the working group on Development Knowledge and Sociology**, who shared more on the impetus of the joint ZMT-VW-Crossroads Asia workshop. Prof. Hornidge shared on her previous scientific work and about what she and her newly founded research group were intending to do at ZMT in the coming years. She drew attention to the fact that the workshop served as a first step in mapping common ground between research on terrestrial and marine spaces, communities and epistemes, while opening possibilities for further exchange and collaboration.



The first session moved on to specific project presentations. **Dr. Anastasiya Shtaltovna, Research Associate at the Center for Development Research (ZEF) & visiting scholar at CERIU, Montreal (Canada)** shared on the BMBF-funded research project 'Epistemic Cultures and Innovation Diffusion in post-Soviet Southern Caucasus and Central Asia. Pilot Study on Agricultural Knowledge Systems in Georgia and Tajikistan'. Dr. Shtaltovna presented a project outline, detailing how the initiative explored multiple dimensions of knowledge across Tajikistan and Georgia within the context of agricultural and rural development, against the backdrop of post-Soviet politics. She placed emphasis on the fact that the project aimed at exploring transformative processes, and combined mixed methods approaches, including household questionnaires and in-depth interviews for example. Project findings were shared across a range of formats and platforms including conferences, workshops, publications, including teaching exchanges in Georgia and Tajikistan.

The following presentation from **Andreas Mandler, Junior Researcher and doctoral candidate at the Center for Development Research (ZEF)**, summarized the activities of the Volkswagen Foundation funded project entitled 'Conversion of knowledge in post-Soviet Tajikistan. The impact of governance arrangements on knowledge in agricultural production in Tajikistan'. Mr. Mandler outlined the aims of this socio-anthropological project to explore the relation of knowledge and governance in the Tajik agricultural context that he studied, together with Dr. Hafiz Boboyorov from the Tajik Academy of Science. In the aftermath of the diverse socio-economic

processes undergirding post-Soviet transformation, an unstable political environment and persistently high dependence on agricultural production in Tajikistan, the research project scrutinized how local governance arrangements enable and constrain knowledge to be applied and thus, trigger innovation and professional, market-oriented agricultural production. To this end, field research in two different agricultural areas was carried out, plus long term farmers surveys in both localities (Tajik Farm Diary 2013).

The results of the research project show that at present time the conditions for rural households to engage in professional agriculture are not conducive, as large groups of the rural population do not benefit from state reform programs as privatisation and individual farming. The case studies show that it is not the missing agricultural expertise which is restraining progress in market-oriented agricultural production. Instead it is an uncertain socio-political and economic environment that hinders farmers to take up economic opportunities and stabilize agricultural livelihoods.

In the next presentation **Dr. Katja Mielke, Senior Fellow at the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)**, Bonn presented on her past and current work at the intersection between conflict and mobility. Furthermore, Dr. Mielke shared on the work of BICC. BICC examines the dynamics of organized violence at three conceptual levels: these are concepts, means and practices. The field of 'concepts' looks at discourses about war or civil–military boundaries. The research area entitled 'means' focuses on arms production and political economy, arms transfers and arms control, base conversion and arms destruction. Under 'practices', research themes such as mobilization and demobilization are explored together with the use of violence across structural contexts. Natural resources as well as migration are seen as intersecting research themes bearing multiple interlinks with organized violence. Dr. Mielke talked also about four new projects at BICC and her own involvement in the respective research. This is in particular within the Crossroads Asia project' work package 'Protected rather than protracted: Refugees', her research on forced immobility in Kabul, conflict-sensitive construction employment, and security-scapes. This research is either in progress or in the process of starting.

Dr. Mielke's presentation on BICC was followed by a presentation of **Dr. Marcus Kaiser, Senior Research at the Center for Development Research (ZEF)** and Coordinator of the Crossroads Asia project. Dr. Kaiser presented on the network's research and ongoing advances in post-area studies. He outlined why a post-area studies perspective was necessary, particularly against the backdrop of globalization, increased mobility, increased local and regional disparities. The network approach, he pointed, was aimed at overcoming the tendency of conceptualizing spaces as if they were impermeable containers. A network perspective therefore, sought to advance theorizations of space in terms of their positional relationalities and multiple entanglements. Within this equation, Dr. Kaiser spelt out several conceptual paradigmatic shifts, namely a shift in focus from statist thinking to people, from territory to the space of actions, a greater reflection of positionalities, and shifts from merely considering "translocality" to "transassociation."

**Session 1** ended with an **open discussion** among the workshop participants. With regard to the first presentation, Marion Glaser asked how the cultural specifics of knowledge could be taken into account with regard to which forms of knowledge mattered. Mr. Mandler responded by stating that the influence of power on knowledge lay at the heart of the question, particularly in terms of knowledge production and distribution. Dr. Bech-Hansen added to the discussion by raising the fact that conflicts of development were also rooted to projects of forced modernization.

The question concerning the efficacy of using resilience thinking within the Crossroads project was raised - particularly in light to its recent critiques - by Dr. Siriwardane. Kaiser responded by asserting that while the term could be perceived as a buzzword, the "resilience" of cultures - in terms of historic continuities - might prove a useful point of departure within the Crossroads project.

Prof. Hornidge problematized the value of adopting typologies, particularly in sociology and the limitations or value of such paradigms in revealing complexities.

## Day 1, Session 2

After lunch, the second session moved to the topic of 'New regional formations: Rapid environmental change and migration in coastal regions of Ghana and Indonesia' (Volkswagenstiftung) presented by **Prof. Dr. Achim Schlüter, Head of the Social Sciences Department at ZMT**. Given its multidisciplinary and integrative agenda, the work of three institutions crosscut the project comprising several thematic dimensions: Migrant trajectories (Freie University, Berlin), economic strategies (ZMT, Bremen) and policy responses (ARTEC, Bremen). The presentation briefly outlined current findings and pathways for future work. These included a deeper focus on mobility decisions beyond economic and individual theories, the emphasis on households as active decision-making agents, combining the study of migratory decision-making based on personality types. The presentation was followed by a brief question and answer session.

Dr. Kaiser raised the question of how a study of different personality types fitting was used - particularly in the context of qualitative research. Schlüter responded stating that qualitative questionnaires were used; however this method was seen to pose dilemmas with regard to participant access and classifications of empirical categories. While referring to particular community groups, for example Fante migrant fisherfolk in Ghana, Siriwardane questioned how far social histories and inter-generational biographies of mobility were integrated into the research, particularly with a view of understanding long-term patterns of mobility. Schlüter concurred that substantial differences were perceived between longer and shorter term migrants and that more recently, biographic research was also woven into the study.

Following to this, **Dr. Andreas Heinrich from the Research Centre for East-European Studies**) shared on his recent work on Central Asia. In particular he elaborated on two research projects: 'The Energy Sector and the Political Stability of Regimes in the

Caspian Area: A Comparison of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan' and 'Domestic debates and foreign policy-making in the Caspian region. The case of export pipelines from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan'. In addition, he talked about the clusters' work that was founded to explore transitions within post-Soviet societies in post 1982. He stated that since 2009, the focus shifted to studying political processes of consensus creation), combined with analyses on economic transformations. Key outputs of the project including reports and digitalized bibliographies and that currently, a concurred initiative was underway creating a digital platform serving as a repository for qualitative and quantitative data on these spaces.

Dr. Heinrich's presentation was followed by a brief question and answer session. Prof. Hornidge raised a question of how such a digital library could be operationalized, drawing attention to the ethical quandaries of open data sharing, confidentiality and anonymity. Participants also discussed particular issues with regard to the data content, specifically in terms of processes that ensured quality management, and asymmetries in integrating local knowledge across western academia and back. Also the issue of how the long term sustainability of keeping such a platform active was discussed.

In the following, **Dr. Roland Lippuner (ARTEC, Bremen)** talked about 'De-territorialization of assemblages: Conceptualizing geosocial complexities'. Dr. Lippuner orientated his presentation as an engaging theoretical discussion on the complexities of conceptualizing and exploring the "geosocial". While building on a general ecology of the anthropocene, Lippuner focused on how theoretical work on space as social construction and as a product of discourses, could be advanced ontologically. He presented on the merits of considering the concept of assemblages - and their socio-material complexities, in which nature-cultural hybrids could be more meaningfully studied. In this regard a typology was presented comparing paradigmatic shifts from globalized "late modernity" to the "age of the anthropocene."

Prof. Hornidge sparked the discussion by raising the point that more emphasis was needed in exploring diverse forms and processes of sense-making. Lippuner suggested that in the context of assemblages - drawing on the work of Deleuze - theories of social science themselves could be explored and contested, particularly at an ontological level. Dr. Mielke stated that it was important to critically reflect on processes of theory production and how we come to theorize - particularly by taking into account that science in itself is a practice, like many other forms of social practices. She also questioned the basis of differentiation between the anthropocene and late modernity, challenging how far the "limits" to assemblage theory/ontologies could be taken, particularly for the sake of empirical pragmatism.

### Day 1, Session 3

**Session 3 was opened by Prof. Anna-Katharina Hornidge** with one of her research group's core topics - 'Marine Epistemologies'. Prof. Hornidge broadly shared on the continuities and dissonances from her previous work at ZEF and ZMT. She stated that

she intended on widening thematic and conceptual horizon at ZMT by focusing on epistemological frontiers - combining nature-societal aspects, together with the marine and its terrestrial, particularly in terms of perceiving coasts as fluid boundaries or lines of intense interactions. Possible interrelated topics include: sense-making, variations of differentiation between marine and terrestrial spaces, including knowledge, innovation and policy.

The discussion was opened by Dr. Glaser who questioned the value of stating coastlines, suggesting that land-sea interactions may be as productive in broadening these empirical frontiers. Prof. Schlüter asked how useful it may seem to develop a typology of marine epistemologies that also accounts for cultural diversity. Dr. Lippuner reiterated how the importance of deriving more fluid epistemologies allowed spaces of relationality between subjects and objectives. Dr. Amoo-Adare stated that in such an undertaking, it would be necessary to critically reflect on epistemologies from “whose perspective” as knowledge, power and positionality sit at the heart of these debates.

Moreover, Dr. Kaiser raised questions with regard to the possibility of transferring concepts from the terrestrial realm to the marine - and vice versa, while taking into account their significant differences. To add to the debate, Dr. Glaser stated that there was a lively study conducted on diverse marine imaginations, spanning the objective to the mythical, very much akin to meanings of “wilderness” for example. As a tangible example, Dr. Ferse mentioned imaginaries in the Pacific Rim, as communities considered connections/fluidities between islands as a “Sea of Islands”.

The next presentation was by **PD. Dr. Marion Glaser, the Social Sciences Department, ZMT** on ‘Systems and Networks: Social-Ecological Analysis in Tropical Coastal and Marine Areas’. Dr. Glaser presented her past project work on Social-Social Ecological System analysis, particularly in Indonesia. She stated that such a focus would provide valuable in studying the fluid interactions of humans on ecosystems and vice versa, particularly with a view of exploring exchanges and feedback loops, taking into account both governance and policy intervention actions. Dr. Glaser concurred that such research necessitated a multilevel approach, combined by a mixed methods toolkit combining classical methods such as surveys and observations with participatory approaches. One of the more tangible outcomes of the project was transdisciplinary indicator development, entailing empirical outcomes with regard to social network analysis. She concurred that the island she studied in Indonesia could be taken as a microcosmic socio-ecological system in studying global space phenomena.

During the question and answer session, Prof. Hornidge drew attention to differences inherent between applied/solutions-focused research and empirical/theoretical work. Mr. Mandler stated that meaningful social network analysis requires much and sustained efforts. Dr. Siriwardane pointed to the fact that while social network analysis may prove useful, it raises questions on who is ultimately represented (or is made visible), particularly against the fact that such network assemblages are never empirically “complete.”

The last presentation in this session was by **Dr. Rapti Siriwardane, postdoctoral researcher at ZMT's Development and Knowledge Sociology** working group. Her presentation was entitled 'Something borrowed, something blue? Approaches to studying coastal lifeworlds, mobility and interdependence'. Dr. Siriwardane broadly sketched her previous work on coastal lifeworlds during her recently completed doctoral study on the politics of intergroup cooperation in hierarchical structures. While positioning her work within the broader research agenda of her working group, she problematized different frames of analysis that had been used in the past to study coastal locally-embedded lifeworlds - most often through the lens of resource competition. To further open the black box of conceptual approaches to coastal, fishing and maritime lifeworlds, she briefly shared an alternative approach that combined multiple dimensions that particularly took into account inter-subjective interactions and everyday relational practices. In advancing further research on sense-making practices, she shared on how further research that combined ordinary ethics of everyday life could be strengthened in order to explore more neglected thematic areas of research, primarily local forms of sense-making and the normative production of governance practices.

During the discussion, Prof. Hornidge raised the question of how an "ethics of the ordinary" may differentiate diverse forms of ethics. Siriwardane stated that this question lay at the heart of the debate, and moreover that a shift in focus from multiple moralities (i.e. collective norms, rules etc.) to less prescriptive and more reflective forms of sense-making was underway in recent conceptual shifts such as these. Dr. Glaser and Dr. Ferse addressed how far the "natural" was combined with ethic-moral foundations of decision-making. Dr. Siriwardane stated that natural-societal perceptions and materialities were very much at the heart of this research. However in order to explain seemingly paradoxical behavior – for example differences between communally agreed norms and the incidence of rule breaking – warranted equal attention to be paid to socio-cognitive perceptions of individual and collective wellbeing.



Participants during coffee-break discussions.

#### Day 1, Session 4

The last session of Day 1 of the workshop was dedicated to the plenary **discussion of relations and linkages of crosscutting themes**. In facilitating the open discussion, Prof. Hornidge asked the participants what critical insights they would like to share with regard to all the discussions on Day 1 of the workshop. Hornidge continued with the ideas and questions that she found particularly interesting. First, she drew attention to the value of exploring different epistemologies for studying marine-terrestrial concepts. In this context, she asked whether one could think of distinctly marine concepts, and how far conceptual fluidities between terrestrial and marine spaces, formations and interactions could be mapped. Moreover, she asked what themes, lenses or approaches could be used in such integrative work. Moreover, it raised a suite of broader questions for example, the limitations of knowledge transfer that prompts further reflection on the ways in which "science is done."

Second, Prof. Hornidge emphasized on the value of critically reflecting upon the differences between applied versus theoretical knowledge generation, which in turn further compelled institutions such as ZMT and ZEF to think about how much basic/applied research that they do. Third, the multidimensionality of space and its conceptualization of mobility/im-mobility were further raised, particularly with regard to several conceptual challenges and thematic oppositions - for example the study of territories as opposed to networks, resilience as opposed to vulnerabilities and risk, for example. She argued that it further prompted rethinking of particular perspectives as western-centric.

Dr. Glaser stated how she was struck by the fact that reference to "region/s" emerged as a prominent trope during the discussions. She concurred that this was the approach that ZMT was taking.

Other themes of interest that were raised by Dr. Ferse included: resource use and conflicts between distant shipping fleets and conflicts over diverse type of gear, including the kind of institutions that evolve round them, and differences between patron and non-patron driven fisheries. Dr. Kaiser shared that what he found fascinating was the progressions of debates, for example in the context of local knowledge that was often stressed - and that often enough such forms of knowledge comprise hybrids such as "neo-traditional knowledge."

Dr. Mielke focused on diverse advances of particular empirical styles, for example long term observations over a period of time - or in other ways - diverse forms of empiricism that lent themselves well to thematic crosscurrents of migration and mobility. Dr. Hansen briefly mentioned diverse imaginaries of the ocean, for example as seen through the lens of ancient tsunami repositories in Japan.

## Day 2 - Wednesday, July 29: Writeshop

### Day 2, Session 1

Day 2 began with a recapitulation of the insights and ideas raised over the course of the first day. Prof. Hornidge raised the question of what made the marine environment special or, to take the reverse perspective: Should we even perpetuate the opposition terrestrial/marine? How has this dualism emerged? How far does it remain a social construction, and one that is culturally relative? She also stressed the need to be careful and not succumbing to the colonial trap by normalizing the rhetoric of empty, uninhabited spaces, and marine spaces as unexplored frontiers, or seas in terms of their territorial boundary-lines.

During the discussion, the following similarities between the marine and the terrestrial were mapped.

Similarities in conceptual approaches and empirical themes included:

- The lens of "scapes": land- and seascapes e.g. through trade routes, economic pathways
- Aquaculture's developments parallel those of agriculture e.g. in terms of re-training of fisherfolk
- Resource extraction (increasingly deep sea mining) leading to conflict

Differences mapped across terrestrial and marine realms yielded the following insights:

- Marine environment lends itself to looking at flows rather than zones/areas
- Way more science funding for terrestrial areas
- Easier to see oceans as cross/transnational, because they are all connected
- Water as fluid and not space or place-bound place
- Water is easier to understand as a global commons, and can help us to conceptualize atmosphere and terrestrial areas e.g. biodiversity hotspots as commons
- There are marine spaces, albeit very few, that are still untouched by human influences

Furthermore, in attending to the other presentations, it was asked how for the anthropocene may serve as an analytical concept. Participants mentioned the notion of "finiteness" can serve as counterpart to Area Studies discussion on opening up finite spaces, the 'Limits to growth/planetary boundaries' discussion feeds into idea of linear growth, rather than challenging it with alternative concepts like circular growth, awareness, spirituality, meditation etc. (religion/spirituality even a topic at the Entanglements Conference in Bielefeld). In addition it was explored how far awareness of the finiteness of planetary resources contribute to more cooperation and wiser use, or rather selfishness and indulgence. Participants spoke about the

pressure to do “applied” research that donors want to adhere to status quo, and that the Anthropocene was a money-making buzzword at present. It was suggested that we should be aware of taking any one approach or series of approaches to the exclusion of other epistemologies and always go back to empirical research and incorporation of locally generated knowledge.

The third strand of the discussion moved on to ZMT's research on marine tropical ecology. It was questioned whether the tropics themselves held much value as a “legitimate” container. It was asked whether container thinking contributed to furthering stereotypes, such as tropical lifestyles and the myth of the “lazy native.”

ZMT: stands for Marine / Tropical / Ecology

- Are the tropics a legitimate ‘container’? Does thinking in that container contribute to furthering stereotypes of ‘tropical lifestyles’ e.g. the myth of the lazy native etc.? Participants also raised the question of whether it was valid to have ZMT change its disciplinary name, take “ecology” out, particularly if it were interdisciplinary.

## Day 2, Session 2

The following part of the meeting was arranged as a writeshop, i.e. presenting unpublished work, discussing the possible ways of improving and providing constructive feedback.

The first paper discussed in this format was the empirical chapter of **Andreas Mandler's** PhD thesis with the working title ‘**Knowledge in Tajik Agriculture: Safeguarding Rural Livelihoods, Shaping Local Governance and Building the Smallholder Economy**’. The presentation commenced with an overview on the thesis structure, its guiding research question, central theoretical concepts used and conclusions drawn from the empirical findings. The presentation chiefly focused on describing and summarizing the empirical findings of a particular chapter that had recently been completed. The presentation focused on four parts, which were then presented and discussed in depth: Knowledge in Rural Communities; Negotiating Access to Natural Resources; Exercising Power and the Case of *ariza* Complaint Letters; and Considering Agricultural Investments.

During the question and answer session, participants drew attention to the implicit assumption that ‘government’- as a term- is often conceptualized as an entity that actors can enter and exit pointing towards the fact that this notion is often too simplistic. Furthermore it was remarked that in the study, values, institutions, and norms were barely distinguished from each other conceptually. Here, it is necessary to draw a more explicit connection between concepts and empirical findings.

As strength of the paper was named its empirical richness, resulting from the length of time spent in the field and in particular the sub-chapter on the motivation of letter writing among local farming households.

In the following talk, **Andreas Mandler** and **Anastasiya Shtaltovna** presented a paper entitled '**Making Sense of Micro-Data in Central Asia: Farm Diaries as a Method**' based on joint data collection by A. Mandler, H. Boboyorov, A.-K. Hornidge, and A. Shtaltovna.

The methodology of writing a farm diary was introduced to remote areas in Tajikistan. The goal of the farm diary was to (a) capture the full agricultural cycle of farmers activities and (b) experiment with and develop further the qualitative data collection method of diary writing, especially in a non-Western agricultural context. Farm households documented their farming activities on a weekly basis for the period of eight months. Particular focus was placed on the thorough documentation of the weekly farming activities, the reasons and motivations behind them, including potential challenges. By exploring interactions with other farmers, authorities and clients, farm diary data was intended not only as a learning and data gathering tool, but also pointed towards required stocks and sources of knowledge in everyday life, from an experiential sense

Questions and recommendations from workshop participants at first referred to the principal differentiation of survey and diary. The data set of the Tajik farm diaries in its present form was required a further strengthening in approach as it contained both, elements of survey and diary methods. At the same time, the term survey or diary conveyed different connotations. Dr. Amoo-Adare remarked that the reported difficulties with local terminology do not matter in a diary, but may create problems for survey methods.

A number of detailed questions were raised regarding the implementation of the Farm diary approach:

- Asking for diary writing assumes literacy, further warranting the ability to stand back from experiences and reflect;
- The approach could be perceived as a monitoring/surveillance exercise, bearing negative connotations against a post-Soviet backdrop where technologies of documentation cohere with mechanisms of structural power;
- Having a code for filling out the diaries, developed with users together, could facilitate their use;
- Users will be motivated to fill out the diaries if they understand their value and purpose;
- Be aware of adding to the burden of additional work, especially in the case of women.

Other comments addressed methodological implications of the Tajik farm diary data collection. Firstly, it was questioned to what extent the project concretely developed or built on new methodology?

The farm diaries were intended primarily as a tool for data gathering. It would have been interesting to document and reflect the interaction of the research assistant with farmers and vice versa as a "research subject".

While discussing to the means of analysing the data adequately and in locating a fine red line that threads together a narrative, it appeared that there still lies a disconnection between method and the “thing” to be understood. It was therefore asked what meanings were attached to the data, and what the inherent data gaps in fact reveal?

The third paper to be discussed on the second day was presented by Ms. **Irna Hofman**, Leiden University from the Modern East Asia Research Centre, the Netherlands, on '**Fictitious Cotton Debts as Governance Tool**'. Ms. Hofman's talk focused on de-collectivisation of farmland in the former Soviet republic Tajikistan, and showed that agricultural land not always appreciated in value, but could devalue as well. The depreciation of land in Tajikistan was seen against the emergence of indebted fields, caused by particular local socio-political configurations in the aftermath of independence and its subsequent civil war. More importantly, these debts in Tajikistan's post-socialist era have been transformed from collectivised into individual property, and from a financial burden to a politically coercive tool used by local strongmen to control and secure cotton production. Shedding light on the changing nature of farm debts makes a contribution to theoretical debates within anthropology of the economy. Rather than perceiving farmers' inability to farm, land abandonment in southwest Tajikistan was seen as a result of state negligence and the continuation of the elite-controlled cotton economy in the south. This dynamic has given way to lethargy, abandoned fields, farm debts and de-modernization of rural livelihoods and farm practices. The political economy of cotton, that structured land reform in most of Tajikistan, continued to determine farming and the willingness to farm in this peripheral zone.

Workshop participants remarked that it would be desirable to strengthen the conceptual links between debts and power structures. Another comment underlined the Tajik civil war and its effects. Moreover it was asked from a political economy perspective, how could rent seeking in greater detail, be more explicitly woven in the paper? Thirdly, while the allusion to Michel Foucault and his concept of power is made several times, it was observed that these theoretical links were not explored in greater depth. Social and political structures surrounding cotton growing in Tajikistan are very entrenched.

It was suggested that potentially the status quo could be discussed as a “silent reality”, in the sense that resistance persists, but no revolution happens. This means in the Central Asian post-Soviet context a mixture of cotton-mafia, local strongmen, private debts, and a bonded tenants labor system. Thus, what is the role of the state then?

### Day 2, Session 3



**Dr. Epifania Amoo-Adare** reported on the conference 'Politics of Entanglements'

Dr. Amoo-Adare presented on how “entanglements” as a concept/metaphor can be traced back to quantum theory, which posits that one element of a system cannot be described without reference to others (relationality). An entanglement is neither positive nor negative per se, but just a state of being. An entanglement bears similarities to a rhizome, which has no beginning nor end, nor any hierarchical structure. As an analytical concept, entanglements can help dismantle binaries, including fact/fiction. Entanglements require new forms of presenting research that give weight to body over mind, context rather than text, and non-written forms of communication. The metaphor of entanglements may also illustrate that research can be successful by opening up new questions, not just by providing answers.

Dr. Amoo-Adare’s discussion began with a reference to Science and Technology Studies (STS) and highlighted new literature (i.e. Lock 2015) in this context. The discussion touched new research frontiers such Future Studies (Sardar 2010, 2015), with particular reference given to Funtowitz and Pereira *The end of the Cartesian dream. Science, Philosophy, Sustainability* (2015). Reference was made to the terming of “post-normal times” as part or complementary concept to “post-normal science”, following Thomas Kuhn’s theorizing of normal science.

The next paper was presented and discussed was a joint work by **Dr. Anastasiya Shtaltovna** and **Dr. Farah Purwaningrum** (Lecturer in Sociology at the Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam Brunei). The title of the paper is '**Positionality and Comparisons: Critical Views on Qualitative Research**

**Methodologies Across Asia'**. The paper examines the issue of positionality and qualitative methods employed in two regions Central Asia and Southeast Asia. Having conducted an extensive qualitative research in different parts of Asia over the past eight years, authors decided to take stock of their work and draw reflections. The main questions asked in this paper were: What are suitable ethnographic methods to access ethnographic data across Asia? What are the benefits in comparing methods across two Asian regions? The paper presented the following insights: Firstly, to compare qualitative methods of fieldwork from across Asia, a comparative approach in the paper drew on distinct empirical and ethnographical research conducted by authors in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam between 2008 and 2014. Secondly, to explore the issue of positionality/identity in the field, namely the advantages and disadvantages of being a female researcher in the particular field settings. Cognizant of the gender-identity aspect, how does it contribute to accessing reliable data and conducting research at all? Fieldwork experiences from different countries in Asia were presented, namely Brunei, Indonesia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. By doing so lessons and experiences are made available, viable for getting access to the field and in collecting reliable qualitative data in Asian states.

One of the main comments by the participants was that both, strength and weakness of the paper at the same time was its complexity. The paper was found somewhat intricate, because it is multi-sited and deals with a long time span. One of the ways to deal with suggested that it could be made more personal right from outset of its introduction. Furthermore, it was suggested that the authors should distinguish more or choose one or the other term - identity and positionality – and avoid the risk of conflating the two concepts. More nuanced interpretations were suggested, for example, a more thorough review the literature on positionality as a practice/as praxis. In addition, the authors were advised to be wary when using the controversial term “native” while demonstrating more reflexivity of wider debates surrounding its meaning and use. The authors were also asked to reflect more on what makes an “insider” and in whose eyes, and also by avoiding the reification of the oversimplified insider-outsider binary by referencing newer research. Participants requested that the authors should more firmly re-think Area Studies and the types of “mobile methods” that are needed and can be applied across diverse spaces, and not merely in Asia. Two final comments were made concerning the need to put more emphasis on personal reflection (autobiographical) rather than contextualizing the paper in the post-Area Studies debate, and second, to write on being female in the field from the perspective of sexuality (rather than gender and access to certain spaces).

#### Day 2, Session 4

As a last presentation in the writeshop format, **Dr. Claus Bech-Hansen** presented a book concept preliminary entitled “**Crossroads Studies: An Alternative Textbook for Rethinking Area Studies.**”

The proposed book addresses the overall need to produce synthesis work that summarizes, interprets and provides analytical frameworks based on a diversity of debates surrounding the reconceptualization of Area Studies (AS). A product of the two project phases of the Crossroads Asia (CA) network, it firstly aims at providing a methodological and theoretical toolbox for advanced BA and MA-students of AS and related disciplines. Secondly, as a product of the Crossroads Asia project, a textbook enables authors to further develop a specific 'CA perspective' (CAP) based on the inductive theorization of CA project findings and the development of methodological guidelines. Although the textbook first and foremost aims at students and lecturers of AS, the 'easy-access' textbook format makes it a resource on which wider audience, i.e. an interested public, policy-'workers', and anybody trying to make sense of the complexities, instantness, and simultaneity of processes in today's world.

Two proposals (Bonn, Berlin) put forward different topical structures: the Bonn proposal (developed with Katja Mielke, Epifania Amoo-Adare, Markus Kaiser and Claus Bech Hansen) has fewer topics and more sub-chapters; while the Berlin proposal (which incorporates input on the Bonn proposal from Andreas Benz and Dietrich Reetz) has a greater array of topics with fewer sub-chapters. Mobility is being considered as an over-arching theme.

The main discussion points of this book proposal included:

- Rethinking the Area Study (AS) debate: If it is a Crossroads Asia textbook, it should make use of Crossroads Asia terminology (reflexivity, positionality, etc.) throughout. A consensus is needed on what the Crossroads Perspective consists of. Narratives from other strands of the rethinking Area Studies debate (Entangled Americas; Center for Area Studies Leipzig; Comparative Areas Studies) should be included, but they need to be filtered and put into conversation with one and other. Despite integrating these different strands, the structure should be made topical.
- Authorship: Decisions need to be made on the core author team. Should it be restricted to Crossroads Asia, or can authors stem from outside the network? In what ways will non-core authors contribute?
- Pedagogy / Didactics: If there are resources to do an Area Studies reader, the text book could refer to specific readings within the respective reader. It could be integrated with online tools such as video clips.
- Publication / Distribution: A publisher should be chosen depending on the intended market (i.e. tailored towards tertiary education institutes, and by scoping out which disciplines and thematic areas are most fitting. Also, the possibility of making deriving an e-book was suggested in order to make the volume more accessible to students.

- Preliminary timeline: The 26-27 2015 October Workshop is deadline for concrete proposal with finalized structure and core author team. 14 December there will be a write-shop at the BICC Workshop.

## Conclusion

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The goals of the workshop were diverse: First, participants explored meaningful ways of conclusively reflecting on the research projects in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The findings and conclusions spanning approximately four years of work in this region were summarized, critically discussed and eventually brought re-threaded against the broader context of different research paradigms and geographic regions and conditions, for example in comparison to the marine ecology. In this light, the workshop provided adequate ground to present the work and research projects for colleagues mainly from Bonn, Bremen and particularly those who were less familiar with the two Central Asian projects. This event provided a meaningful space to recapitulate on personal research experiences and institutional development agendas.

Following this, the second day was dedicated to a writeshop in order to discuss the conclusions of a number of papers that participants were presently working on. These texts were shared weeks ahead of the workshop so participants could constructively engage with the different texts and adequately prepare for discussions that ensued on the second day of the workshop. The subsequent comments and remarks offered by the selected discussants for each paper proved valuable in providing insights for further revision.

Finally, the two days of enlivened discussions and debates inspired the participants for potential future collaboration around joint research projects and thus, strengthened and enlarged the academic network - both thematically as well as theoretically.

## Appendix 1: List of participants

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Email</b>
1	Epifania Amoo-Adare	Center for Development Research (ZEF)	<a href="mailto:eamooda@uni-bonn.de">eamooda@uni-bonn.de</a>
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8	Andreas Heinrich	Forschungsstelle Osteuropa (FSO)	<a href="mailto:heinrich@uni-bremen.de">heinrich@uni-bremen.de</a>
9	Irna Hofman	Leiden University Institute for Area Studies	<a href="mailto:i.hofman@hum.leidenuniv.nl">i.hofman@hum.leidenuniv.nl</a>
10	Markus Kaiser	ZEF	<a href="mailto:mkaiser@uni-bonn.de">mkaiser@uni-bonn.de</a>
11	Anna-Katharina Hornidge	ZMT	<a href="mailto:Anna-katharina.hornidge@zmt-bremen.de">Anna-katharina.hornidge@zmt-bremen.de</a>
12	Andreas Mandler	ZEF	<a href="mailto:amandler@uni-bonn.de">amandler@uni-bonn.de</a>
13	Katja Mielke	Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)	<a href="mailto:katja.mielke@bicc.de">katja.mielke@bicc.de</a>
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15	Achim Schlüter	ZMT	<a href="mailto:achim.schlueter@uni-bonn.de">achim.schlueter@uni-bonn.de</a>
16	Rapti Siriwardane	ZMT	<a href="mailto:rsi@zmt-bremen.de">rsi@zmt-bremen.de</a>
17	Anastasiya Shtaltovna	Centre for International Studies, University of Montreal (CÉRIUM), Canada; ZEF	<a href="mailto:ashtaltonvna@yahoo.com">ashtaltonvna@yahoo.com</a>
18	Hildegard Westphal	ZMT	<a href="mailto:director.@zmt-bremen.de">director.@zmt-bremen.de</a>



<b>Time</b>	<b>Workshop Program: Tuesday, July 28, 2015</b>	<b>Presenter / Facilitators</b>
<b>Session 1:</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Introduction to ZMT</b>	Hildegard Westphal, ZMT, Bremen
<b>10:00-12:00</b>	<b>Welcome from RG 'Development &amp; Knowledge Sociology' &amp; Introduction Round</b> <b>Project &amp; Research Presentations</b> (10 min. each & Discussion): Epistemic Cultures in Tajikistan/Georgia (BMBF) Knowledge & Governance in Post-soviet Agriculture, Tajikistan (VW) Current BICC- Projects on Central and South Asia, Conflict and Mobility Crossroads Asia	Anna-Katharina Hornidge, ZMT, Bremen  Anastasiya Shtaltovna, Centre for International Studies, Montreal Andreas Mandler, ZEF, Bonn Katja Mielke, BICC, Bonn Markus Kaiser, ZEF, Bonn
<b>Lunch: 12:00-13:00</b>		
<b>Session 2:</b>	<b>Project &amp; Research Presentations ctd.</b> (10 min. each & Discussion):	
<b>13:00-15:00</b>	New regional formations: Rapid environmental change and migration in coastal regions of Ghana and Indonesia (VW) Recent projects of the FSO on Central Asia De-/territorialization of assemblages: Conceptualizing geosocial complexities	Achim Schlüter, ZMT & Michael Flitner, Geographie, Bremen  Andreas Heinrich, East European Studies, Bremen Roland Lippuner, Artec, Bremen
<b>Coffee/Tea: 15:00-15:30</b>		
<b>Session 3:</b>	<b>Project &amp; Research Presentations ctd.</b> (10 min. each & Discussion):	
<b>15:30-17:00</b>	RG 'Marine Epistemologies' Systems and Networks: Social-Ecological Analysis in Tropical Coastal and Marine Areas Something borrowed, something blue?: Approaches to studying coastal lifeworlds, mobility and interdependence	Anna-Katharina Hornidge, ZMT, Bremen Marion Glaser, ZMT, Bremen Rapti Siriwardane, ZMT, Bremen
<b>Session 4:</b>	<b>Discussion of relations and linkages of crosscutting themes</b> (in plenary):	
<b>17:00-18:00</b>	- Terrestrial, Marine & Coasts - Mobilities, Boundaries & Borders: Multidimensionality of Space - Knowledge & Governance	
<b>19:00-open</b>	<b>Workshop Dinner in the Restaurant 'Haus am Walde'</b>	

Time	Writeshop: Wednesday, July 29, 2015	Presenter / Facilitator
<b>Session 1:</b> 9:00-10:00	<b>Recap and evaluation of day 1:</b> Identification of next steps, responsibilities, deadlines etc	Anna-Katharina Hornidge, ZMT, Bremen
<b>Coffee/Tea: 9:45-10:00</b>		
<b>Session 2:</b> 10:00-12:00	Safeguarding Rural Livelihoods, Shaping Governance and Building the Smallholder Economy Making sense of micro-data in Central: Farm Diaries as a Method  Fictitious Cotton Debts as Governance Tool	Andreas Mandler, ZEF, Bonn  Anastasiya Shtaltovna, Andreas Mandler, Anna-Katharina Hornidge  Irna Hofman, Leiden University
<b>Lunch: 12:00-13:00</b>		
<b>Session 3:</b> 13:00-15:00	<b>After Lunch Talk:</b> Conference Report 'The Americas as Space of Entanglement' Positionality and Comparisons: Critical Views on Qualitative Research Methodologies Across Asia Crossroads Studies: An Alternative Textbook for Rethinking Area Studies Marine Knowledge Scapes	Epifania Amoo-Adare, ZEF, Bonn Anastasiya Shtaltovna, Centre for International Studies, Montreal & Farah Purwaningrum, Institute of Asian Studies, Darussalam Claus Bech Hansen & Epifania Amoo-Adare, ZEF, Bonn Anna-Katharina Hornidge, ZEF, Bonn
<b>Coffee/Tea: 15:00-15:30</b>		
<b>Session 4:</b> 15:30-17:00	Writing & Discussing in small groups, focused on papers	
<b>17.00-17.30</b>	<b>Recap of Workshop &amp; Closure</b>	

**Purpose of Event:**

This workshop aims to act as platform for jointly reflecting on past research on Tajikistan, as well as thinking about potential future research, also involving colleagues from Bremen. Precisely the workshop aims to

- (4) bring together the teams of the VW-financed project 'Conversion of Knowledge in Post-soviet Agriculture' as well as the BMBF-financed project 'Epistemic Cultures in the agricultural sector of Tajikistan and Georgia' in order to reflect on the conducted research, the collected farm diary data and finalise three publications as part of the writeshop-part of the workshop;
- (5) present and discuss the research of the above mentioned two projects as well as of the BMBF-financed competence network 'Crossroads Asia' to colleagues from Bremen working on Central and South Asia;
- (6) think about possible future activities and project ideas – here paying particular attention to the potential of linking marine and coastal research with ongoing research activities of the Crossroads Asia network (i.e. coast lines as zones of intensified interaction and boundaries between the fluid/dynamic and the fixed/static).

**List of Participants:**

Andreas Mandler, Anastasiya Shtaltovna, Katja Mielke, Hildegard Westphal, Hafiz Boboyorov, Epifania Amoo-Adare, Claus Bech-Hansen, Markus Kaiser, Catherine Reynolds, Anna-Katharina Hornidge, Rapti Siriwardane, Irna Hofman, Achim Schlüter, Marion Glaser, Andreas Heinrich, Ronald Lippuner, Sebastian Ferse, Lukas Barning, Naomi Taylor, Elke Kasper