

# “Tracing Connections – Explorations of Spaces and Places in Asian Multilocalities”

Crossroads Asia Workshop Report

Center for Development Studies (ZELF)

Freie Universität Berlin

June 20-21, 2013

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Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2013

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## 1. Introduction & welcome note by Hermann Kreutzmann (ZELF)

The Crossroads Asia workshop “**Tracing Connections – Explorations of Spaces and Places in Asian Multilocalities**” took place at the **Centre for Development Studies (ZELF)** at Freie Universität Berlin from June 20-21, 2013. The organizers **Hermann Kreutzmann, Andreas Benz** and **Henryk Alff** had chosen the topic based on the research focus of the Crossroads Asia competence network examining figurations and social connectedness that emerge across spaces though being anchored in particular places. The workshop started with a welcome note by **Hermann Kreutzmann**, director of ZELF. In an introduction to the workshop theme he referred to the analytical and methodological research objective of the Crossroads Asia competence network, grasping the nexus of mobility, migration, and multilocalities (fluidity) as well as the (social) construction of borders and borderlands (fixity). The first day session of the workshop focused on mobility and migration, whilst the second day more thoroughly engaged with border(land)s.

## 2. Session: The (re)production of multilocal geographies: space and place in networks of migration and mobility

The first key note lecture was held by **Tina Harris**, assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. In her lecture titled “**Tracing trade: Contemporary transformations of space and place in the Himalayas**” Harris discussed how the reopening of the Indian-Chinese border in the Himalayas at Nathu-la in 2006 enabled the reconnection between families and friends and re-facilitated mobility in the border region in contrast to the state driven discourse on security issues and economic benefits. After the lecture, debate arose around the questions what connections are actually constituted of and who does get closer through these connections. The role of trust and reliability in relations was particularly highlighted. Another talking point was the role of great power politics and the very different perspective and perception of the border in political discourse in contrast to people passing through it.

The first round of workshop presentations focused on the re-production of multilocal geographies in urban contexts. **Aksana Ismailbekova**, (Crossroads Asia/ Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO)), gave a talk on “**Urban space of Osh. Multilocal networks of migration and conflict**”. She analyzed the impact of the 2010 violent conflict and migration in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, on processes of ethnic segregation within the city. She concluded that the strict division of Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in post-conflict Osh could actually help to overcome conflict and the repetitious eruption of violence. Both ethnic groups do not only visit separate restaurants, shops and mosques but also have migrated to segregated neighborhoods forcing minibuses to change their routes in accordance to ethnic belonging. The conflict has thus created not only physical mobility through selling of houses and moving to one’s own ethnic neighborhoods or to Russia, but also social mobility especially for Kyrgyz taking a dominant position in the city administration. After the talk, discussion focused on the necessity of being sensitive to ambivalent representations of post-conflict everyday life if displayed to researchers or within the community.

In his talk **“Between urbanization and forced migration. How multilocalities touch the ground in an Afghan city”**, **Christoph Wenzel** (Crossroads Asia/ Humboldt Universität Berlin) presented a study of migration concentrating on a suburban neighbourhood of Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan. Mazar-e Sharif thanks to its favourable economic and security situation has not only become a basis of numerous international and non-governmental organizations as well as the US army, but also a major destination for many Afghan migrants from the surrounding provinces. However, the economic situation of migrants is not always favourable due to high unemployment rates and informal and irregular daily wage-labour opportunities, e.g. on construction sites and trade. Migrants use cheap housing offered by influential and wealthy families owning land plots in the outskirts of the city and rely on their family networks for their housing and employment needs. The debate after the presentation concentrated, among other, on the concept and definition of a household and how it was defined in this particular case.

The anthropologists **Ayfer Durdu** (Crossroads Asia/ Humboldt Universität Berlin) and **Ömer Akakça** discussed in their talk **“Spaces of matrimony building. The *hotal* institution in Mazar-e-Sharif, Northern Afghanistan”** the increasing social importance of so called *hotals*, privately owned public places ranging from cheap restaurants to huge wedding halls where feasts are organized and celebrated. Their talk focused on these places where particularly spatial segregation of gender takes a crucial role. Females are treated in this case as objects of exchange, although the primary social duty of females lies in organizing the wedding. Also the actual act of celebration differs gender-specifically: Men treat weddings in a more official manner, whereas females engage more in festivities with music and dancing. Separate rooms serve the negotiation of marriage and wedding conditions and for the bride’s preparation regarding make-up and hair. The study stimulated discussions about the origin and transformation of these institutions and the strict norms of gender segregation in public spaces and how these relate to gender segregation more generally.

In the afternoon round of talks with a focus on case studies in rural contexts, **Andreas Benz** (Crossroads Asia/ ZELF), discussed in his presentation on **“Multilocality as an asset - translocal development and change among the Wakhi of Gojal, Pakistan”** migration patterns and the meaning of multi-local household and family structures for securing livelihoods in the villages of Passu and Hussaini, located in the Gojal region in Gilgit-Baltistan, Northern Pakistan. These villages show high scores in human development - especially regarding education – as well as high rates of migration. Benz explained the dynamics of migration patterns to Gilgit, Karachi, Islamabad and central Hunza across three main chronological stages: (1) Earliest migrants left for military service offering high financial security and providing the base for migration for other family members. (2) In a second phase, villagers engaged in labor migration to cities in the lowlands. The pioneer migrants were dependent on symbolic ties offering support at the destination much more than migrants at later stages, who relied on social ties to the family back in the home villages and to those who had already migrated. (3) Finally student migration was enabled through ongoing support by labor migrants in the context of kinship networks. Often labor migrants would also take up part-time education. Later on, migration patterns also included family reunifications, migration for professional employment and migration due to health issues – and also marriage which was for females the most important type of migration before other patterns emerged as migration options for females. Based on the example of a household of Passu, Benz showed that soon strong social networks emerged between the village and selected cities, and financial support developed in the context of family solidarity. This support network spreading sometimes across the globe caused new mobilities strengthening the

multilocal configuration of what he called 'network remittances'. In the discussion after the presentation questions arose on the connection between early migrants and the local community and how possibilities to migrate actually evolved.

**Rana Behal**, former Crossroads Asia Fellow and current ZELF Fellow at FU Berlin, concluded the first workshop day with his talk on **“Transporting and transforming agrarian communities across geographical spaces under the British Imperial System: Indian immigrant labourers as coolies in Southeast Asian and Assam plantations”**. He presented his ongoing research on the mobilization and incorporation of Indian agrarian societies in systems of 'assisted migration' and indentured labour in the context of the modern imperialist capitalism and the colonial plantation economy in the British Empire during the period of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He showed how the growing demand for raw materials and other tropical agricultural products in the West opened up large scale spaces by the European – and especially British – capital for the production of such commodities for export production in modern plantations, set up as profitable agro-businesses in the colonies. He further showed how due to the inability to attract indigenous populations to take up employment in these plantations, a large-scale mobilization of immigrant labour from different localities of British India was set in place. After the talk, it was discussed how the presented results connect to the current debate on Indian labour migration.

Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2013

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### 3. Session: Perspectives from border(land)s as places of divide and interaction

The theme of the keynote lecture by **Paolo Novak** (SOAS London), titled “**Embodying global spaces**” was inspired by Novak’s experience of working with Afghan refugees in Peshawar, Pakistan. He stressed that the definition of refugees and the researcher’s decision about which connections of refugees to follow up and which ones to neglect constitutes in itself a political decision. Discourse on Afghan refugees is hence not only affected by the non-existence of legal definitions in Pakistan but also shaped through international aid agencies in Europe and the USA, as well as by Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia and academic discourse of (UK) universities, NGO’s and consultants operating in the field. Novak, therefore, concentrates on scales in order to avoid the territorial trap/methodological nationalism. Possible methodological avenues for social analysis could be (1) horizontal, such as through multilocal networks and transnationalism; (2) vertical through connections, e.g. rescaling the state; and (3) via new spatialities or area studies in a decentered way such as borderland studies. Borders are described as key institutions of the interstate-system showing similar patterns and structures – although always being contextual and therefore unique. They are especially interesting for research as borders can catch the fixed and the mobile simultaneously as well as due to the analytical scope of being located at the intersection of state and non-state actors. Borders are embedded in a given setting of power politics based on the international notion of state sovereignty and politics of humanitarian intervention. Social life however is interrupted by the division and control of borders resulting in an incomplete social spatial order. Borders also produce heterogeneous experiences. Borderlands are hence defined by social processes and political acts and are not a priori given. Novak’s talk stimulated debate on diverse border experiences and the concrete embodiment of borders.

The political scientist **Antia Mato Bouzas** (Crossroads Asia/ ZMO Berlin) in her presentation “**Moving borders and retaining orders in the Baltistan-Ladakh region**” focused on the territories adjacent to the *Line of Control*, which is deeply associated with the Kashmir dispute. According to Mato Bouzas it can be seen as new political space with multiple realities and simultaneously facing a high uncertainty about future prospects and conflicts. Exchange with the other side of the border is created through letters, mobile phones and also face-to-face meetings, e.g., during pilgrimage to Iran. Cultural activism is radiating across the border by display of cultural and social groups in order to shape the region although these seem to be powerless against state politics. Questions were raised on language issues in the context of cultural activism in the region.

**Just Boedeker** (Crossroads Asia/ ZMO Berlin) began his talk by showing the (arbitrary) social construction of space by area studies – and how, e.g., research on borderlands between constructed areas does not fit into the given construction of space. Furthermore, he discussed in his presentation “**Reframing social spaces. Examples of Baloch social practices at the political boundaries of states**” the social practices and interactions among Baloch groups in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Multilocal networks among Baloch between the three states create a social space that is not

congruent with a (state) territory in defined borders. The concluding debate dealt with the current political situation of Baloch in Pakistan.

**Henryk Alff** (Crossroads Asia/ ZELF) examined in his presentation **“Post-Soviet positionalities: relations, flows and the transformation of Bishkek’s Dordoy Bazaar”** the contextually changing spatial situatedness of trade entrepreneurs. He applied the concept of positionality by Sheppard to analyze the post-Soviet transformation of Dordoy bazaar and the role/positioning of the traders and other actors to one another and across spatial formations, which co-produce and facilitate ongoing processes of transformation. By drawing on biographical information, Alff showed in which ways the traders’ agency is shaped by and shapes the interplay of locales, flows and relations informing social change at Dordoy. After the presentation the concept of positionality and its applicability was subject to further debate.

**Rune Stenberg**, currently PhD candidate at Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies and in 2013-2014 Crossroads Asia Research Fellow at ZELF, in his talk titled **“Crossing at Irkeshtam. Networks of trade and marriage across the southern Sino-Kyrgyz border”** exemplified Uighur trading networks between villages in Kyrgyzstan and China in the creation of mutual dependency or even kinship-like social affiliation. Trading networks are established through the exchange of gifts and invitations already before leaving the home village and maintained while abroad on trading sites. In regards to social status, these networks even become more important than family ties. Traders from one village usually trade the same products using the same partners for production and transport. The rational logic of competition is hence replaced by social patterns of mutual support in a hostile environment. The situation of the traders abroad affects dependencies, kinship and also marriage arrangements at home. After the talk, a debate on religious matters arose and how these were displayed in social interaction by traders. Stenberg concluded however that religion is seen as a very private matter and therefore was not subject of display or talks.

In the final presentation of the workshop **“Remote Pathways – the non-peripheries at the edge of nation states”** **Martin Saxer** (LMU Munich) suggested a 90°-rotation of gaze at the Himalayan border region and the focus on pathways as spaces of connection rather than borders as spaces of disconnection. Pathways create wealth and although being spatially localized structures, very high mobility enabling the reproduction of everyday patterns of social life along these pathways. Although these pathways can be considered as remote they actually create connections in this border region. In conclusion, a discussion emerged on the relationality of remoteness/distance and the question of what is to whom remote.

#### 4. Closing remarks and way forward

In the closing remarks to the workshop **Andreas Benz** and **Henryk Alff** collected open questions, synthesized key issues from the workshop contributions and reflected on the need of social theory construction. The questions what exactly does connect and what connections actually are at different scales remain subject to further inquiry. In addition, further demand for discussing the notions of ‘tie’, ‘relation’ and ‘flow’ persists. The same is true concerning the importance of flows, how these are constituted, created and maintained. How does physical space structure flows, keeping in mind that flows are constructed by humans? Based on the examples given in the workshop presentations, ‘flows’ are created and affected, for example, by historical trajectories, external interventions, legal frameworks, physical infrastructure as well as formal and informal institutions. However, first and foremost, social ties or interactions are central to the constitution of flows reflecting power relations. How can these open questions be conceptualized? Further debate is also considered regarding the methodology of how to trace connections. An adaptation of research methods to grasp invisible, virtual connections gaining momentum through mobile and tele-medial connectivity might be important in order to complement a perspective focused on physical exchange and face-to-face networks. Conference proceedings are going to be published later this year.

## I. Annex: Workshop programme

### Crossroads-Asia Workshop

#### „Tracing Connections – Explorations of Spaces and Places in Asian Multilocalities“

20 -21 June 2013, at Centre for Development Studies (ZELF), Freie Universität Berlin  
Building G, Room G110, Malteserstraße 74-100, 12249 Berlin

Classical area studies in recent years have faced strong criticism, leading to vivid debates on how to rethink their underlying empirical and conceptual foundations. In the wake of the spatial turn and from a social constructivist perspective, classical area studies are disapproved for enforcing methodological regionalism. This shortcoming would eventually corroborate social, cultural and political essentialization in container-like spatial categories, with arbitrarily drawn boundaries to the outside and homogenization to the inside. The perspective on spatial fixity, however, in particular fails to grasp social practice in societies, in which people, material objects and ideas in motion are the rule rather than the exception.

In response to this criticism, various recent empirical studies have scrutinised the manifold processes of exchange, the flows and networks within and across groups, societies and borders at various scales. Tensions between dynamically changing trans-local networks and their multiple spatial anchoring in different, often geographically, socially and culturally distant contexts, raise questions about the linkage of space and place. What makes up the particularity of place in a web of interrelated and overlapping multilocal connections? How can the interplay between multilocal networks (structures, flows, relations) and particular locales (places) be conceptualized?

In the last years, a number of different relational, non-essentialist conceptions of space and place have been fed into the debate, particularly in an Asian context. Willem van Schendel's influential "Zomia" concept and what Arjun Appadurai called "process geography" are among the most prominent recent contributions, putting into question the established "geographies of knowing". Explorations of the cross-cutting relations and flows from the periphery (or 'from below') have informed new perspectives rethinking the meaning and interconnections of space and place.

In this workshop we want to empirically and theoretically inquire upon the meaning of space and place in multilocal settings rooted in Asian contexts. Recently suggested conceptions and approaches to space and place shall be discussed in particular from the angle of migration and border studies, from which some of the major contributions to the debate have originated.

### Workshop programme

#### Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> June

10:00 Registration

11:00 Welcome and introduction by Hermann Kreutzmann (ZELF, FU Berlin)

11:30 **Key-Note: Tina Harris (University of Amsterdam)**

'Tracing trade: Contemporary transformations of space and place at Asian crossroads'

13:00 Lunch break

- 14:00 **The (re)production of multilocal geographies: space and place in networks of migration and mobility**
- Aksana Ismailbekova (ZMO Berlin)  
‘Urban space of Osh. Multilocal networks of migration and conflict’
  - Christoph Wenzel (Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin)  
‘Between urbanization and forced migration. How multilocalities touch the ground in an Afghan city’
  - Ayfer Durdu (Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin) ‘Spaces of matrimony building. The *hotal* institution in Mazār-e- Šarīf, Northern Afghanistan’
- 15:30 Tea break
- 16:00 **The (re)production of multilocal geographies: space and place in networks of migration and mobility** (continued)
- Andreas Benz (ZELF, FU Berlin)  
‘Multilocality as an Asset – Translocal development and change among the Wakhi of Gojal, Pakistan’
  - Rana Behal (Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi)  
‘Transporting and transforming agrarian communities across geographical spaces under the British Imperial System: Indian immigrant labourers as coolies in South East Asian and Assam plantations’
- 17:00 Break
- 18:00 Screening of the documentary ‘Char – The no man’s island’ by Sourav Sarangi
- 19:30 Barbecue

### Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> June

- 10:30 Introduction for the day
- 10:45 **Key-Note: Paolo Novak (SOAS, University of London)**  
‘Embodying global spaces’
- 12:00 Lunch break
- 13:00 **Perspectives from border(land)s as places of divide and interaction**
- Antía Mato Bouzas (ZMO Berlin)  
‘Moving borders and retaining orders in the Baltistan-Ladakh region’
  - Just Boedeker (ZMO Berlin)  
‘Reframing social spaces. Examples of Baloch social practices at the political boundaries of states’
  - Henryk Alff (ZELF, FU Berlin)  
‘Post-Soviet positionalities: Relations, flows and the transformation of Bishkek’s Dordoy Bazaar’
- 14:15 Tea break
- 14:30 **Perspectives from border(land)s as places of divide and interaction** (continued)
- Rune Stenberg (Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies)  
‘Crossing at Irkeshtam. Networks of trade and marriage across the southern Sino-Kyrgyz border’
  - Martin Saxer (LMU Munich)  
‘Remote pathways – the non-peripheries at the edge of nation states’
- 15:30 Summary and discussion (Henryk Alff and Andreas Benz)
- 16:00 Closing of Workshop

## II. Annex: List of presenters with contact details

*(in alphabetical order)*

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### III. Annex: List of participants

No.	Name, Surname	Institution
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2	Akakça, François Ömer	HU Berlin
3	Alff, Henryk	ZELF, FU Berlin
4	Alymbaeva, Nazira	Otto-Suhr-Institut (OSI), FU Berlin
5	Atam, Yalcin	ZELF, FU Berlin
6	Azizi, Ahmad	Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin
7	Behal, Rana	Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi
8	Benz, Andreas	ZELF, FU Berlin
9	Boedeker, Just	ZMO, Berlin
10	Chies, Monia	Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin
11	Daxner, Michael	SFB ZOO OSI
12	Dick, Eva	TU Dortmund, Faculty of Spatial Planning
13	Doerre, Andrei	ZELF, FU Berlin
14	Durdu, Ayfer	Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin
15	Ehlert, Judith	ZEF, Bonn
16	Freundlieb, Friederike	Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, FU Berlin
17	Graetz, Tilo	ZMO, Berlin and Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, FU Berlin
18	Harris, Tina	University of Amsterdam
18	Hasanova, Nafisa	APRODEV, Policy officer for Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia / Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)
20	Hillmann, Felicitas	Institute of Geographical Sciences, FU Berlin
21	Hofmann, Annett	Institut für Ethnologie, FU Berlin
22	Horlemann, Bianca	Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin
23	Imtiaz Gul	Centre for Research and Security Studies, Islamabad
24	Ismailbekova, Aksana	ZMO, Berlin
25	Jarick, Paul	Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin
26	Killias, Olivia	Institute for African and Asian Studies, Humboldt Universitaet zu Berlin / BMBF-funded competence network 'Dynamics of Religion in Southeast Asia'
27	Kittaneh, Mohammad	ZELF, FU Berlin
28	Klinger, Julie	Irmgard Coninx Foundation fellow at WZB Berlin Social Research Center; Department of Geography University of California, Berkeley
29	Knaden, Monika	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Division Infrastructure, Emergency Response and Recovery (OE 3400) Competence Centre
30	Konzack, Alexandra	ZELF, FU Berlin
31	Kraudzun, Tobias	ZELF, FU Berlin
32	Kreczi, Fanny	ZELF, FU Berlin

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name, Surname</b>	<b>Institution</b>
33	Kreutzmann, Hermann	ZELF, FU Berlin
34	Loy, Thomas	Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin
35	Marschall, Tobias	Department of Anthropology, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen
36	Märtens, Carolin	Department of Anthropology, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen
37	Mato Bouzas, Antía	ZMO, Berlin
38	Mawlong, Lavinia	ZELF, FU Berlin
39	Nadjmabadi, Shahnaz	Department of Anthropology, Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen
40	Nilab Alokuzay	Embassy of Afghanistan, Berlin
41	Nokkala, Nelli	Crossroads Asia Head Office, Bonn
42	Novak, Paolo	SOAS, University of London
43	Osmonova, Kishimjan	Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin
44	Roepstorff, Kristina	Visiting Fellow, SWP Berlin
45	Sadyrbek, Mahabat	Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies (BGS MCS)
46	Sagynbekova, Lira	ZELF, FU Berlin
47	Saikumar C. Bharamappanavara	Dept. of Agril. Economics Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture Berlin
48	Sarmad Hussain	Deutscher Bundestag
49	Saxer, Martin	LMU, Munich
50	Schmidt, Matthias	ZELF, FU Berlin
51	Schütte, Stefan	ZELF, FU Berlin
52	Sgibnev, Wladimir	Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography / Institut für Länderkunde, Leipzig
53	Sonntag, Christian	ZELF, FU Berlin
54	Spies, Michael	ZELF, FU Berlin
55	Stenberg, Rune	Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies (BGS MCS)
56	Strothmann, Linus	ZELF, FU Berlin
57	Sulek, Emilia	Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin
58	Töpfer, Annette	Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich
59	Toktogytova, Mukaram	ZMO, Berlin
60	Turaeva-Hoehne, Rano	Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Halle, Germany
61	von Heusinger, Judith	Zentrum für Konfliktforschung MR

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name, Surname</b>	<b>Institution</b>
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63	Wenzel, Christoph	Central Asian Seminar, HU Berlin

#### IV. Annex: Information on the competence network Crossroads Asia

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 is the other key concept for studying Crossroads Asia, which 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.

- Five sub-projects in the working group “Conflict” will focus upon specific localized conflict-figurations and their relation to structural changes, from the interplay of global politics, the erosion of statehood, and globalization effects from above and below, to local struggles for autonomy, urban-rural dynamics and phenomena of diaspora. To gain a deeper understanding of the rationales and dynamics of conflict in Crossroads Asia, the sub-projects aim to analyze the logics of the genesis and transformation of conflictual figurations, and to investigate autochthonous conceptions of, and modes of dealing with conflicts. Particular attention will be given to the interdependence of conflict(s) and mobility.
- Six sub-projects in the working group “Migration” aim to map out trans-local figurations (networks and flows) within Crossroads Asia as well as figurations extending into both neighboring and distant areas (Arabian Peninsula, Russia, Europe, Australia, America). The main research question addresses how basic organizational and functional networks are structured, and how these structures affect what is on the move (people, commodities, ideas etc.). Conceptualizing empirical methods for mapping mobility and complex connectivities in trans-local spaces is a genuine desideratum. The aim of the working group is to refine the method of qualitative network analysis, which includes flows as well as their structures of operation, and to map mobility and explain mobility patterns.
- In the “Development”-working group four sub-projects are focusing on the effects of spatial movements (flows) and interwoven networks at the micro level with regard to processes of long-term social change, and with a special focus on locally perceived livelihood opportunities and their potential for implementation. The four sub-projects focus on two fundamental aspects: first, on structural changes in processes of transformation of patterns of allocation and distribution of resources, which are contested both at the household level and between individual and government agents; secondly, on forms of social mobility, which may create new opportunities, but may also cause the persistence of social inequality.

The competence network understands itself as a mediator 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 back 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).