

Vacancy

Post-doc/Senior researcher

Water, Inequality and Social Mobilisation in the Crossroads Asia region

Full time, January 2011-December 2013

Under the BMBF funded research project

“Crossroads Asia: Conflict-Migration-Development”

(Component E3)

Description of research:

This research component undertakes comparative research on irrigation in the Crossroads region, ranging from the Amu Darya basin and Ferghana Valley in Central Asia to the mountain areas of North Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, to the Sindh/Punjab/Haryana border region of India and Pakistan. The Crossroads region's irrigation, backbone of its rural economies, encompasses 1) mountain and hill irrigation; 2) valley irrigation. The former are often 'community systems': mostly small scale, river/stream diversion systems governed and managed by communities of users with much local autonomy. Sophisticated, but not necessarily equitable, land and water rights systems have developed defining irrigations' institutional arrangements. These production systems are part of and carry strong local (clan, caste) identities and cultures of local independence. The latter, often large scale surface irrigation system in valleys and deltas, have played an important role in government rule and state formation in the region. This took serious form as part of colonial rule, but the expansion of state-controlled surface irrigation post-1950 is unprecedented. Pakistan has the largest contiguous irrigation system in the world; India experienced a valley and delta irrigation based green revolution; Soviet rulers transformed the Central Asian landscapes and societies for irrigated cotton cultivation. In Afghanistan this form of rule was less pronounced because of landscape and water availability, and a political history of invasion, occupation and warfare.

The research will investigate:

- 1) *Struggles over local autonomy in water resources management*: comparative analysis of the sustainability, decline and transformation of local irrigation systems in response to the incorporation of irrigation communities in broader development processes (expanding state rule, ecological degradation, violent conflict, social differentiation within the communities, changes in livelihood strategies), with a focus on articulation of community identities and in (in)equality narratives (state rule and small scale irrigation in Ferghana valley; farmer managed irrigation in North Afghanistan/Northwest Pakistan under violent conflict; Indian mountain irrigation and economic globalisation).
- 2) *Encounters at the state-water user interface in large scale irrigation*: 1950 marks the beginning of rapid post-independence irrigation development in India and Pakistan and the start of intensive Soviet intervention in the agricultural production systems in Central Asia.

Comparative analysis of the contestations generated by these different forms of irrigation-based state rule, with a focus on the local socio-economic and regional inequalities, identities and mobilisations that it has produced, will be undertaken at two levels:

- a) Conflicts around water appropriation by local elites in spatial forms of social differentiation, and the role of the state in the reproduction and transformation of these spatial patterns of

social networks (head/tail issue in Indian and Pakistani irrigation; emerging conflicts under transition in Uzbekistan).

- b) Inter-regional conflicts and separatism in relation to the political agency of rural agricultural elites at the regional and national level (Sikh separatism in India, riparian state conflicts in Pakistan; transnational and inter-regional conflicts over river water in Central Asia).

The research will be largely literature based; it includes two months of fieldwork travel per year. Expected output is minimum two scientific articles in international peer reviewed journals, contribution the project's book output, and intermediate reports and working papers as applicable. Paper presentations at international conferences are part of the research planning. The researcher will actively participate in project activities.

Qualifications:

- PhD on a relevant water resources/irrigation related topic
- Experience with intensive field research
- Interest in comparative research as a method
- Excellent English writing and presentation skills
- Experience in the region is a recommendation
- Experience with archival work is a recommendation

Application:

Applications should be sent to the project coordinator, PD Dr Conrad Schetter at email c.schetter@uni-bonn.de not later than Friday 5 November 2010.

The application should include: a letter of application explaining suitability for the position; a CV with list of publications; a pdf file of the PhD thesis; a second piece of writing, preferably a journal article; statement on availability (preferred starting date is 1 January 2011).

Information on the Crossroads project:

Information on the Crossroads project is available from c.schetter@uni-bonn.de.

Payment scale:

TVL-13