

## **Spaces of Conflict in Everyday Life: Figurations and Methodology**

**Crossroads Asia Conference,  
LMU Munich, October 11, 2014**



Crossroads Asia is a research network that focuses on the area which spans from Northern India to Central Asia and from Eastern Iran to Western China. Our main interest is to crosscut the conventional boundaries of area studies and to think across established demarcations of regions like South, West, or Central Asia. The research also focuses on societal processes that crosscut social boundaries. Border areas and processes of mobilization are among the network's research topics in which such crosscutting processes come to the fore.

Within the theoretical framework of Crossroads Asia, we regard conflicts as a normal and universal aspect of society. Nevertheless, the areas, which the Crossroads-Project focuses on, are characterized by a particularly high incidence of often violent conflicts. Bearing in mind questions of scale, conflicts also combine global, national, regional and local levels. Thus, an international cross-border conflict may have significant impact on the daily life in villages or urban neighborhoods. Even though our focus is not on "the state", state actors have to be taken into consideration as they are frequently involved in the everyday of conflicts, and "the state" may be an important aspect of the environment in which conflicts take place.

In this sense, we understand conflicts as 'figurations' that branch out from particular issues and, via networks, coalitions and oppositions, meander through different levels, sites and affairs. A conflict may start over a religious issue, yet most probably will not remain purely religious but shift towards political and economic spheres. And conversely, different conflicts may intersect at particular sites. Conflicts are not only divisive but also conjoin people in coalitions and forge crosscutting ties.

The conference aims to focus not so much on the contents of conflicts – what they are about – but rather on the *how* of conflicts: the ways and modes of action and mobilization, the imaginaries and narratives, the structures and linkages created through conflicts. As research itself becomes often part of conflicts, conflicts may therefore have a direct impact on research. We are thus also interested in methodological issues and the politics of research on conflicts, and in conflict situations.

**Venue:**

Lecture Hall L155, Oettingenstrasse 67, 80583 Munich, Germany

For registration please write to:

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## Programme

9.00 Registration and Tea/Coffee

10.00 **Martin Sökefeld** Welcome and Opening

10.15 Keynote

**Emma Varley** Brandon University Department of Anthropology

Inhospitable Hospitals: Sectarian Logics of Care and Harm in Gilgit-Baltistan

Session 1: 11.00-12.30

Chair: **Amélie Blom**

11.00 **Khushbakht Hojiev** University of Bonn/ Center for Development Research

Identity Construction and Mobilization in Conflict Processes: Case Study Of Intercommunal Conflict in Batken province of Kyrgyzstan

11.30 **Aksana Ismailbekova** Zentrum Moderner Orient Berlin

Invisible borders: coping strategies of inhabitants in the aftermath of the Osh conflict, Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia

12.00 **Katja Mielke** University of Bonn/ Center for Development Research

Not in the Masterplan: Dimensions of exclusion in Kabul

12.30 Lunch break

Session 2: 14.00– 15.30

Chair: **Katja Mielke**

14.00 **Nick Miszak** Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland

The moral economy of land grabbing in post-2001 Afghanistan: *Shafa* (right of pre-emption) as a concept of social justice

14.30 **Malgorzata Maria Biczuk** Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale  
The Autonomy without Autonomy: Muddling through the conflict in the Pamir Mountains

15.00 **Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra** University of Massachusetts, Boston  
Negotiating Space in the Contested Zone of Kashmir: The Borderlanders' Perspective

15.30 Tea/Coffee

Session 3: 16.00 – 17.30

Chair: **Emma Varley**

16.00 **Jan Koehler** FU Berlin, SFB 700  
Institution Centered Conflict Research – the method and its application in Eastern  
Afghanistan

16.30 **Lutz Rzehak** Humboldt University Berlin  
"You, obviously, think I am crazy!" Arguing out conflicts in the literature of the early modern  
Persian enlightenment

17.00 **Amélie Blom** Science Po/CNRS/EHESS, Paris  
'This was not at all what I thought it would be': The everyday life, radicalization and de-  
radicalization of Jihadist recruits in Pakistan

17.30 Concluding discussion

19.30 Dinner

**Malgorzata Maria Biczuk**

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**The Autonomy without Autonomy: Muddling through the conflict in the Pamir Mountains**

In this paper I analyze the possible backgrounds and everyday life strategies applied during the current conflicts in the Gorno Badakhshan region (Tajikistan). On July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the mountainous capital city of the GBAO region in Tajikistan faced its first violent conflict in over 100 years. Despite the unexpected nature of these attacks, different sorts of tensions between center and periphery have been present in the air for a long time. This paper attempts to analyze the different ways of explaining the emergence of this particular act of violence through the ethnographic data on the meandering between different conflicts in the village everyday life. I do so keeping in mind the 'big history' of the little mountainous autonomy, created at the borderlands of former empires.

Badakhshan as used in this paper refers to a province of the Republic of Tajikistan, administratively called the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province (GBAO). This is a part of the wider historical region of Badakhshan, situated in the mountain ranges of Pamir, between China, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The presented region is shaped by different categories of boundaries.

Gorno-Badakhshan Province, as an administrative unit, holding an autonomy status, can be seen as the direct effect of being located at the border of the empires – the Russian and British one. The region was a subject of Russia since 1895, when a delimitation of territories finished the time of the so-called 'Great Game' between Russia and British India. During the Soviet times this territory was granted an autonomy status and special care and supplementation, what could be read as an element of a propaganda strategy faced against the Western world.

The other dimension where the borders became important for shaping current tensions is the one that can be expressed in very spatial, vertical terms. What was by idea supposed to be an autonomous area at the borders of the USSR with Afghanistan became an administrative unit in the independent Republic of Tajikistan, showing certain, often imagined, threats to the country's unity. Here the borderline goes between the mountain region, holding certain linguistic and religious features differentiating it from the lowlands' majority, and the lowlands, representing the state.

A first layer of analysis in this paper focuses on an approach questioning the possible lack of reconciliation after the Tajik domestic war in the 1990s, when serious ethnic clashes against Pamiri people in the lowlands emerged. A second layer of analysis will focus on dynamics occurring within the center/periphery explanatory framework. I hereby also refer critically to James Scott's conceptualization around the mountain people and their need for freedom and autonomy. A third layer of analysis focuses on ethnic and religious dynamics.

People from Pamir tend to be seen by the lowland population as the odd ones since, according to their observations, they speak a different language, have different cultures and adhere to the different branch of Islam. Regardless the nation building policies, the *local* layman understanding of 'Pamirness' is shaped by everyday practices and the feeling of oddness toward either one or the other brotherhood.

Based on fifteen months of fieldwork conducted in the Pamir Mountains, I will elaborate on the role of everyday strategies in manoeuvring between harmony and conflict. By showing the everyday practices of Pamiri people, I want to analyse the existing tensions and strategies of muddling through them, which, put together with other elements of the puzzle, led to the violence in the summer of 2012 and its aftermath.

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**'This was not at all what I thought it would be': The everyday life, radicalization and de-radicalization of Jihadist recruits in Pakistan**

Using a prosopography based on sources which cannot be verified, most academic works on the phenomenon of suicide bombings tend to present a 'martyr' who is hyper-motivated to die. This contrasts with the life stories of former recruits from a Pakistani jihadi militia, which show that individual motivations might be less of a puzzle than the social mechanisms of self-sacrificial radicalization.

Three types of mechanisms can then be identified: the *fuite en avant*, the 'side-bet' and the desire to belong to a domineering group. This emic approach is also applied to the causes of de-radicalization to suggest, from an 'upside-down' perspective, that the act of self-sacrificial violence itself does not always derive from the primary socialization of the militant, or necessarily from a will to die but, often, from collective techniques of creating consent and individual 'absurd decisions'.

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**Identity Construction and Mobilization in Conflict Processes: A Case Study of Intercommunal Conflict in Batken province of Kyrgystan**

Conflict studies have been dominated by causal inquiry or analyses seeking to clarify cause-effect relations, on the one hand, and a persisting divide between instrumentalist (rational choice) and interpretivist (social-psychological) camps on the other hand. This segregation has been particularly sound in studies of (inter) communal conflicts emerging in multi-ethnic societies, where the authors of the two camps claim the priority of either rationality or contested social settings in explaining conflict. Yet, this divide, similarly to approaches seeking “root causes” of conflict, restricts our understanding of conflict dynamics, as discrimination of either of the two – rational choices of goal-oriented actors or effects of the contested social setting – may result in consciously ignoring one or the other essential aspect of conflict. A number of authors attempted to bridge this divide by thinking across ‘instrumentalist-interpretative perspective’ in analysis of inter-communal conflicts (Bates et al 1998, Horowitz 1998, Fearon & Laitin 2000, Esser 1993, Desrosiers 2011).

Building on the path taken by these authors, this paper addresses theoretical aspects of how to comprehend conflict from a process perspective with an approach that bridges the conventional dichotomy in conflict theorizing elaborated in the previous paragraph. For this purpose the analysis draws on insights from a case study of conflict mobilization which involved Kyrgyz and Tajik communities of a village in the Batken province of Kyrgyzstan, locally famous as the “Andarak events” (of 29.12.2011) that was conducted during fieldwork of the author in the conflict site throughout 2012. Reflexive investigation of this case revealed that the conflict in Andarak exemplifies one of many cases of (allegedly “small scale”) inter-communal conflict in this region that usually arise from a petty quarrel between representatives of two nationalities.

In this case it quickly developed a specific dynamic through mobilization and confrontation of two communities along ethnic lines; a violent clash between two armed crowds was merely prevented. The paper argues that although such types of conflicts often get marginalized in theorizing because they are viewed as “everyday conflict” (*“konflikt na bytovoi pochve”* framed in Russian), they raise several questions. An answer to these questions could contribute to understanding the process dimension of conflicts better and thus potentially contribute to conflict theory (e.g. of everyday conflict).

Against this background the paper focuses on framing and its implications in conflict dynamics. Taking a “narrative approach” in comprehending conflict processes, it attempts to understand how actors’ framing (within narratives) during conflict processes helps explain conflict development, its scope and impact on communities involved. Hence, the paper’s aims are twofold:



a) to demonstrate how framing (following Esser in his discussion on ethnic framing), as a useful concept bridging the instrumentalist-interpretative divide in conflict studies, is able to shed more light on the mobilization of violence, conflict escalation and de-escalation, and

b) to illustrate the role of symbolic and discursive dimensions of conflict processes in the example of identity construction and *othering* in conflict processes.

It is argued that through purposeful interpretation of an issue or conflict event, actors, functioning as signifying agents, become involved in the production and maintenance of (de)mobilizing ideas conditioned by the general social environment. The frames defined by actors evolve within broader cognitive frames, discourses and worldviews persistent in the society. This involves the 'framers' in identity construction by challenging the existing ethnic boundaries through activation of memory of the past communal violence, blame displacement and building on public reception of broader cognitive frames at the local level. At the broader level, the paper illustrates that framing of conflict events presents not only a specific narrative of conflict, but also constructs conflict in a specific way resulting in definition of wider social and political setting of conflict processes.

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**Invisible borders: coping strategies of inhabitants in the aftermath of the Osh conflict, Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia**

I would like to examine ethnographically the impacts of conflict on the Uzbek and Kyrgyz inhabitants of Osh, Kyrgyzstan and their distinct ways of adapting and rearranging their lives in the aftermath thereof. The Osh conflict in 2010 provided powerful narratives (Megoran, 2013), encouraging local inhabitants to shift their notions of community, ethnicity and authority, and to re-build their own city along ethnic lines. As a result, local people have accommodated new influences and made drastic changes and incorporated them into their everyday lives. My focus is on how the urban city has become a place of 'ethnic' division between Uzbek *mahalla* and Kyrgyz neighborhood. In the aftermath of conflict, both the physical and social mobilities of Osh Kyrgyz and Uzbeks intensified and pushed the city further into being divided in two parts. As part of the paper, I will examine how collective interests and political structures are related to ethnic territoriality and patterns of violence. I argue that Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in Osh protected their own space after the Osh conflict, thus dividing the city along ethnic lines, which was effected by drawing clearly separated lines in neighborhoods, mosques, transportation and land/houses, and through extremely limited social interaction.

How did Osh Uzbeks and Kyrgyz respond to political dilemmas and violence? Is boundary-marking between Uzbek and Kyrgyz good or bad in the long term for inter-ethnic peace? This paper concentrates on various experiences affecting the lives of those living in Osh after 2010. Ethnic segregation has been the focus of a lot of scholarly writing, especially the relationship between inter-group peace and the degree of separation of groups (Björkdahl, 2013; Aggestam and Björkdahl, 2013). My article hopes to contribute to this debate by giving a distinction between short-term and longer-term outcomes of conflicts.

Moreover, division along ethnic lines and boundary-marking are not unique to Osh events, rather this is a general trend in other parts of the world, such as the Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo) (Bieber and Daskalovski, 2003; Aggestam and Björkdahl, 2013). My case generates a new way of thinking about space, conflict and ethnicity, as the inhabitants of Osh have tried to physically separate themselves in order to avoid conflict and save lives within the limits of their ability and from a short-term perspective. However, the outcome of this division in the long term might prevent people from future integration.

The Uzbek minority (768,405 individuals) and the Kyrgyz majority (3,804,788 individuals)<sup>1</sup> are coping with the consequences of the recent Osh troubles in Kyrgyzstan. My main argument is that most ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz are following a strategy of avoidance (Meidung) (Elwert 2004). Elwert's central idea here is that conflicts must be regulated, or "embedded," in certain rules, if societal anomy is to be avoided. Shunning or avoiding an encounter is a compromising conflict style that is often described in terms of inaction and passivity, as I will show in this paper.

The socio-economic positions of two ethnic groups (Kyrgyz and Uzbek) are different. Uzbeks are not represented in the local governments of Southern Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz are in a better position because they are well represented in the state structure. Pressure of the local administration on the city's Uzbek population has led to a situation in which the latter must have recourse to norms, relationships and institutional arrangements that are based on revived customs and traditions, through which the Uzbek community finds alternative ways to cope with uncertainties. This division was the result of a lack of available options and resulted in weakening the political and economic resources of both ethnic groups, though it is presented in a positive light by my informants as a way of looking to a future trouble-free Osh. This paper is based on ethnographic research in Osh, which I conducted in 2011 when I visited the city for three summer months, and in 2012 for three more summer months.

## References

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<sup>1</sup> Population of Kyrgyzstan according to ethnic group, 2009. See [www.stat.kg](http://www.stat.kg)

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**Institution Centered Conflict Research - The method and its application in Eastern Afghanistan**

In this paper I introduce the methodological approach of institution centred conflict research and its application in two provinces of Eastern Afghanistan. The methodology is based on the nexus between conflict and institutions; it serves as heuristic tool to analyse dynamics of social order. In the case study of Nangarhar and Laghman in Eastern Afghanistan the focus is on social dynamics under rather unstable framework conditions, i.e. the question of social order in an area of intervened fragile, defunct or emerging statehood.

*Theoretical framework*

I treat conflicts and institutions as empirically observable social phenomena; all societies have to deal with conflicts and are defined by the collective rules they establish.<sup>1</sup> Conflict can disrupt established relations and fragment society; at the same time conflict can form and connect societal units and enable the dynamic adaptation of social order. Institutional rules that inform social interaction can be followed or broken. Sets of rules can contradict each other. Furthermore, institutions and their distributive consequences for actors can be questioned and contested.

Hence, there is a strong though ambivalent relationship between the two social phenomena: conflicts make and break institutions; institutions cause and contain conflicts. In this paper I use a working concept of conflict consolidated with an institution-centred theory of social order.

*Methodology*

Based on this theoretical foundation I introduce a research methodology to assess social order via the analysis of communal conflict processing. This approach is divided into four distinct modules of empirical investigation: historic and geographical context, actors' constellations, material and immaterial resources aimed at or used in conflict and, finally, formal and informal institutional rules regulating conflicts or targeted by conflict.

Each module is based on the theoretical framework of institution-centred conflict research and focuses on specific constraints that inform actors' choices in conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> I draw on classic theorists of social conflict (Simmel, Dahrendorf, Coser) as well as on recent additions towards a theory of social conflict (Elwert with a focus on social anthropology) and on basic works of (neo-) institutionalism (North, Scharpf, the pre-system-theory Luhmann; in addition: Elias figuration-centred sociology of the dynamics of social order).

### *Case study*

This institution-centred methodology of conflict analysis is used to analyse sub-national conflict dynamics in two regions of Afghanistan. The field research in 2005 produced 25 conflict case studies from 30 villages visited in 6 districts of Nangarhar and Laghman (together with a local research team I had trained). Based on few selected case studies I discuss how conflict interacts with the emergence, maintenance and destruction of institutions. Specifically, since Afghanistan at the time of the case studies (2005) was an area of complex intervention with institution-building as major focus, I show the effects of transnational institutional engineering on conflict and vice versa.

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**Negotiating Space in the Contested Zone of Kashmir: The Borderlanders' Perspective**

India and Pakistan continue to address the Kashmir conflict from a state security perspective. The conflict that led to multiple divisions of Kashmir between India, Pakistan and China ensued in 1947, when the two new nations – India and Pakistan – claimed Kashmir and fought wars in 1947-48 and later in 1965, 1971 and 1999. The ceasefires that followed led to a redrawing of the Line of Control<sup>1</sup> (LOC) in Kashmir. The lines of division were drawn and redrawn with disregard to the borderlanders' identity and space. The state actors – the dividers – remained in focus while those who lived on the border and experienced the consequences of the division – the divided – remained neglected. The border as a territorial fact and as a maker of state sovereignty became sacrosanct, while the borderlanders, their identity and perspectives – the emic context – remained subsumed under the state security led discourse on border and security. The borderlanders found their culture and identity besieged with tall security towers, barbed-wire electrified fencing, mining, gun totting security forces in the contested space. The intermittent firing, shelling and displacement became their everyday experiences. They lived in the territory of the state as conceived and demarcated by the states, while their nationality and ethnicity were fragmented.

The militancy that started in the late 1980s in the Indian part of Kashmir led to an increased rigidity of the border, which also became more violent with growing tension reflected in the increasing number of security personnel, permanent laying of mines to check cross-border infiltration, electrified fencing and observation towers. Pushed to the edge of power contestation between India and Pakistan, the ordeal of the borderlanders remained perilous as they negotiate the conflict on everyday basis and confront multiple problems including, but not limited to, firing and shelling, displacement, mining and fortified defence.

The borderlanders living within 5-7 km of border confront intermittent firing and shelling from across the border. A small trigger, such as a belligerent statement from a political leader from either side, leads to firing and shelling. Besides loss of hundreds of lives, the borderlanders have also incurred material losses in terms of destruction of houses and other immovable property and livestock. The nature and extent of the devastation can be gauged from this data: between January and 15 May 2003, firing took place as many as 1,007 times, claiming the lives of 29 people and damaging 49 houses.<sup>2</sup>

Displacement caused by wars, war scares, heavy firing, shelling or even the mobilization of security forces is another recurring phenomenon in the lives of the borderlanders, who keep

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<sup>1</sup> In Kashmir the dividing line between India and Pakistan is legally termed line of control (LOC), though it has emerged as de facto border since its division. The study uses the term border and LOC interchangeably, by following the popular usage. It does not focus on the legal aspects of the division in Kashmir but on the borderlanders and their perspectives, another crucial but least focused aspect of the conflict.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Excelsior* (a local newspaper in Kashmir), May 22, 2003.

ferrying between their native place and camps as nomads on many occasions. A study finds that the borderlanders have been uprooted nearly seven times since the late 1940s (1947-48, 1965, 1971, 1987, 1999, 2001 and 2002).<sup>3</sup> The period of displacement ranges from a few days to months and sometimes even years. Thus, the displacement is largely temporary but recurrent. In the camps set up for the displaced conditions are deplorable as the inmates are herded together without basic amenities such as proper shelter, water, or toilet facilities. At the best, they are at the mercy of public authorities for relief, which is not only meagre and irregular but also marred by corruption.

During the times of wars and war scares, mines were planted along the border, in cultivated lands and pastures, around infrastructure and even houses, to obstruct movement from across the border. These mines continue to jeopardize the lives of the borderlanders, their livestock and even wild animals living on the border. Though the exact number of victims of landmines is yet to be calculated, a report suggests that there are more than 2,000 victims of landmines in one sector – Rajouri-Poonch belt – of the border between 1947 and 1989.<sup>4</sup>

The fencing, done at a distance of 2- 5 km instead of at the edge of the border, has destroyed large areas of cultivable land and curtailed the mobility of the people. The barbed wire fencing proves dangerous and life threatening particularly in places where electrified, as livestock and stray animals fall prey to it. The multi-tiered defence on the border along with the presence of heavy defence personnel further add to the woes of the borderlanders. The presence of these personnel in and around the border villages is a permanent phenomenon, thereby restricting the mobility of the people and obstructing their normal activities. At many places, the borderlanders have to carry identity cards while travelling to and from their villages.

The domination of state security apparatus has also contributed to insecurity of the borderlanders and underdevelopment. Education, health services and other essential facilities like transport and communication have suffered as the tense atmosphere discourages development activities. The relatives of the borderlanders from the mainland shy away from visiting them, lest any misfortune of border life befall them. The borderlanders find it difficult to get suitable marital prospects for their sons since people from interior parts do not wish to marry their daughters to live on the violent border.

The borderlanders negotiate every day with a violent border for survival but their narratives are not part of the mainstream discourse, whether on border or on conflict between India and Pakistan. The paper seeks to rectify this asymmetry. Kashmir's potential as a 'dangerous place on earth' has often been flagged, but the borderlanders and their perspectives remain neglected. It questions the state-centric approach based on traditional notions of borders, security and territorial integrity. Based on my surveys in border areas of Indian side of Kashmir from 2005-2012, the paper focuses on an emic account of the contested space in Kashmir and aims at widening the discourse by centrally engaging the borderlanders and their perspectives. By positioning the borderlanders at the centre of the analysis, it seeks to rescue the geographic space from a border discourse dominated by the state.

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<sup>3</sup> Seema Shekhawat, *Conflict and Displacement in Jammu and Kashmir: The Gender Dimension* (Jammu: Saksham Books International, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> *The Kashmir Times* (a local newspaper in Kashmir), January 13, 2002.

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### **Not in the Masterplan: Dimensions of exclusion in Kabul**

Afghanistan's capital city Kabul is spatially segregated among the country's major ethnic groups. Based on field research around processes of mobilization and place-making in the West of Kabul, an area almost exclusively inhabited by Hazara, different dimensions of exclusion shall be investigated. While spatial exclusion and a heightened level of geographical immobility at the city scale is experienced on an everyday level by ordinary inhabitants due to the non-existence of connecting and link roads, it is also manifested in a perceived discrimination of the city district by the municipality in the eyes of the local neighbourhood representatives and the chief of the district administration. In their reading the municipality of Kabul strategically ignores District 13 using the argument that the territory is not part of the official Masterplan (*ghaire naqsha*) and thus not eligible for urban development measures (e.g. road building, electricity provision, health infrastructure) to be financed out of the city budget.

However, the grievances arising from this perceived discrimination are not the only source for the narrative of social exclusion. In addition, it is informed and strengthened by several loose ends of the meta-conflict figuration around ethnic conflict between Hazara and mainly Pashtuns in Afghanistan. Forming a 'figuration of figurations', it consists of several branches which unfold at different scales (national, regional, international, local/neighbourhood, city) and over time. To name but the most obvious ones encountered during field research in 2013, the collective memory of Hazara seems to be anchored in between a) the settler-nomad conflict between Hazara agriculturalists and Pashtun nomads (*kuchi*) at the regional and national level with direct effects in the neighbourhood given the UNHCR-initiated settling of *kuchi* in District 13, b) the historical grievance framed as dispossession of Hazara by the Pashtun King Abdur Rahman Khan during state formation in the late 19th century, and c) the massacres of Hazara-dominated neighbourhoods by armed factions in Kabul during the civil war in the first half of the 1990s.

Besides this analysis of the spatial and social disconnect and the narratives through which it is informed and perpetuated, the actual strategies and practices to bridge exclusion in terms of spatial and social disadvantages are investigated. The paper describes the activities of street and neighbourhood representatives to improve their constituencies' position illustrating the importance of scale-jumping through patronage-networks. In sum, the paper not only addresses several of the topics mentioned in the CfP issued by the conference organizers, but in addition contributes the perspective of a (meta-) figuration turned inside out – how national ethnic conflict is negotiated at the city scale. Last but not least the case study illustrates that time/a historical perspective is another important factor which underlies figurational research/approaches but has received little attention within the network's discussion on figurations yet.



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**The moral economy of land grabbing in post-2001 Afghanistan: *Shafa* (right of pre-emption) as a concept of social justice**

In the first decade of the 21st century, land ownership in the so-called Global South has seen a spectacular revaluation as large scale land acquisitions by multi-national corporations have been widespread and rapid. These processes have been accompanied by a renewed academic interest in land ownership as an analytical entry point to the analysis of power, politics and conflict (e.g., Engerman and Metzger 2004, Lund 2011). Much of the literature has discussed these dynamics around the term 'land grabbing' and linked them to new forms of enclosures (Borras Jr., et.al. 2012), the disassembling of national territory (Sassen 2013), conflicts opposing multi-national corporations or national states against local populations and a shift from subsistence based agriculture to the production of cash crops destined for export (Borras et al. 2011).

This paper contributes to the discussion by exploring a case of land grabbing in Afghanistan. Land grabbing in the Afghan context is both exemplary and unique (Monsutti 2013). Since the US-led intervention of late 2001, land grabbing has been a recurrent discussion in Afghanistan but revolves less around the production of cash crops destined for export than the appropriation of state and public property in urban and urban fringe areas for investments in the built environment such as housing, markets and roads (Harvey 1985). As in many other post-conflict countries, land ownership became one of the main theatres of accumulation (Esser 2004; Nathan 2009; Miszak and Monsutti, 2014) as large numbers of Afghans, many of which had lived for decades in Pakistan, Iran and other countries, returned to Afghanistan after 2001. Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, has seen its population pass from less than a million to perhaps four or even five million (Miszak and Monsutti, 2014). In this context, land grabbing became the order of the day as Afghan allies of the international military forces appropriated and redistributed land as patronage to their supporters (Nathan 2009). While these processes initially focused on the urban areas, the vast stretches of empty land around the major cities were distributed as well as new forms of enclosures for private development purposes. A former Minister of Urban Development referred publicly to a land mafia that more or less legally appropriates mostly state and public land and some calls by Members of Parliament for investigations into the matter.

The focus of public discussion on land grabbing in Afghan media and parliament has been on the role of "powerful persons" in pursuit of profit which evokes the same topography of power at work in Afghanistan as elsewhere in the so-called Global South (e.g., multinational corporations there, commanders linked to the international military here). However, focusing on powerful actors obscures that processes of land grabbing have long spread to rural areas and involve all segments of the Afghan population. The Afghan case shows that the seemingly powerless are not always inevitable victims (Scott 1976, citing Hobsbawm 1971) but can be agents of land grabbing as well. The thesis I will propose is that land grabbing in Afghanistan is also rooted in a moral economy (Scott 1976) which articulates an opposition to the concentration of power in the hand

of few. An understanding of this moral economy needs to go beyond questions of legality to issues of legitimacy informed by conceptions of social and economic justice and political subjectivity (Krause and Schramm 2011).

To ground the discussion, I will explore a case of land grabbing in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan, between two opposing Pashtun tribes, the Mohmand and Shinwari, over access to a strip of barren land which they wish to transform into a township for housing and markets. Located in the district of Mohmand Dara on the main transit route from Pakistan to Afghanistan, the area is a crucial hub for cross-border trade and guarantees easy access to markets in Afghanistan (Jalalabad, Torkham) and Pakistan (Peshawar, Landi Kotal).

This contribution focuses on the concept of *shafa* understood as a total social fact (Mauss 2002 [1990]) as an entry point to understand the conceptions of economic and social justice and political subjectivity. The term *shafa*, also called the right of pre-emption, originates in Islamic property law and is codified in the Afghan civil code where it has a precise meaning and designates the right of co-owners of property, owners of servitude in property, and the owner of an adjoining property to substitute themselves for the buyer in a completed sale of real property (Mulla 1905, Schacht 1964). However, conflict actors also use the term *shafa* in a larger sense.

On the one hand they deduce legitimate, pre-emptive rights to land, even if, and this is frequently the case, the act of taking possession is an appropriation of state or public property (Mumtaz 2013). On the other hand, *shafa* is used to mobilize people against the claims of others if seen to transgress certain limits, social boundaries and notions of territoriality. Hence, *shafa* represents a very concrete understanding of how people occupy space, conceptions of economic and social justice as well as political subjectivity including current and past relations of conflict actors to each other and their respective relations to current and past rulers.

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**"You, obviously, think I am crazy!" Arguing out conflicts in the literature of the early modern Persian enlightenment**

My paper deals with the question how supporters of modernity and their political or cultural opponents argued out conflicting ideas about the reasons of the alleged backwardness of the Muslim world and about the ways of overcoming this situation. In a regional perspective my paper deals with the Persian speaking world between Istanbul, Tehran, Bukhara and Calcutta. In doing so it covers the core regions of the areas studied within the Crossroads Asia project in an explicitly crossroads perspective. In a temporal perspective the analysis goes back to the turn of the 19th and the 20th century, it will reveal some strategies of persuasion that are deeply rooted in the cultural history of the named regions and that therefore cannot be limited to the mentioned period of time.

The paper is based on a hermeneutic analysis of several texts that were produced in Istanbul, Tehran, Yalta and Bukhara in the second half of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century and that, notwithstanding geographical and temporal distance, show striking similarities in text structure and in the ways of argumentation. Two texts were written in 1859/60 and 1870 respectively by Malkom Khan who held several high-ranking positions at the royal court of Naser-al-Din Shah in Tehran and abroad. Two other texts were published in 1909 and 1911/12 in Istanbul by the Bukharan intellectual Abdurrauf Fitrat. Another text was written by the Iranian merchant Zayn-ol-Abedin Maraghei in the Russian Caucasus. It was first published in Istanbul in 1888. It grew in popularity quickly in the whole Persian speaking world and therefore it was reprinted several times in Calcutta and Bombay between 1890 and 1910. Three of these texts are structured as fictive dialogs or even disputes of two persons. In every text one person stands for the supporters of modernity whereas the other person represents their political or cultural opponents. These dialogs are written in such a vivid way that the texts look like scripts for a theatre play but none of them was really staged.

The two remaining texts are written as fictive travelogues in which a Muslim foreigner visits Iran or Bukhara respectively to learn more about these countries. During these travels the protagonist of every travelogue has numerous discussions with local people that in content and structure remind the disputes of the first three texts.

For the analysis the texts are seen as natural speech acts. In the speech act theory arguing and persuasion are seen as types of linguistic behaviour that can be analysed on several levels. On the level of propositional coherencies it is asked which arguments are chosen, to what extent they are coherent to each other, on the one hand, and to the subject of the dispute, on the other hand. On the level of topical coherencies it is studied which central arguments are made and by which logical or sequential links they are related to each other. This also includes the analysis of typical patterns of causality, of analogies and of examples that are brought into the discussion. The level

of topical coherencies also includes appeals to emotions and others. Finally, on the level of the linguistic realization, several illocutive indicators are studied through which the mentioned coherencies are achieved.

On these levels all texts that will be analysed are rooted in the tradition of the classical literary genre of *munazira* where two discussants exchange their views on any controversial subject not with the aim of persuading each other but just to show different perspectives how the particular subject can be seen. But unlike the classical model the authors of the early modern Persian enlightenment did not limit themselves to the pleasure of arguing and disputing. Their protagonists aspired after persuading their fictional opponents. In that respect several levels of success can be distinguished: the acceptance of one's ideas as being true or the readiness to act on one's ideas.

In order to understand the role of these texts in the real arguing out of conflicts about modernity it is necessary to understand that the texts that will be analysed are fictional by definition, and that it is necessary to distinguish between the addressee of a statement within a particular text and the addressee of the text as a whole.

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**Inhospitable Hospitals: Sectarian Logics of Care and Harm in Gilgit-Baltistan**

Using ethnographic data collected over five years of fieldwork in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of northern Pakistan, this paper will explore how the Shia-Sunni conflict underpins the emergence of a complex array of sectarian imaginaries, medical economies, and logics of care which shape and imperil therapeutic encounters and result in the social production of risk and 'bad' outcomes in clinical facilities. With my research focused on the sectarianisms inherent to public sector maternal health services in Gilgit Town, the region's economic and administrative capital, my paper first traces the steady evolution and intensification of Shia-Sunni hostilities, violent protests, target killings and massacres between the late 1980s and 2012, and the corollary impacts of these instabilities and crisis for Gilgit's health facilities, patients and providers. I then proceed to discuss the specific ways in which sectarianism occurs at the District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ), the region's primary and best-resourced referral hospital. Situated in a Shia *mohalla* (neighbourhood) and with its services provided by predominantly Shia and Ismaili personnel, the hospital has been at the epicenter of numerous recent violent protests and attacks, during which Sunni physicians and patients have been denied care, injured or even killed.

Prior to the sectarian 'tensions' that have come to either destabilize or paralyze everyday life for Gilgit Town's Shia, Sunni and also Ismaili communities, the services at the DHQ and its Obstetric Ward in the Family Wing were described as symbolizing the inter-sectarian commensality, sociality and good-will attributed to pre-conflict social life and relationships. With the gradual cessation of cross-sectarian relationality in the 1980s, the hospital's services and therapeutic interactions between Shia and Sunni providers and patients came to reflect the chronic tensions and episodic crises afflicting Gilgit's broader social and political economies. For instance, and in purported retaliation for Shia community losses, Sunni physicians and patients have been targeted for attacks.

At the Family Wing, Sunni maternity patients have become the recipients of perceived and observed neglectful or abusive practices by non-Sunni providers during childbirth. Moreover, Sunnis' safe access has diminished significantly because of erratic security on-site and also along the roads which pass through adjacent 'militant' Shia *mohallas* and lead to the hospital. Indeed, the ethnographic evidence upheld my Sunni and also Shia and Ismaili interlocutors' charges that the DHQ's complex moral and sectarian economies of care and its embeddedness in a Shia neighbourhood have led to differential rates of health access and use, and, thereafter, higher maternal morbidity and mortality ratios (MMR) among Sunnis, ratios which were already among the highest in Pakistan.

Sunnis' logistical exclusions from the DHQ, and the killings of several high-profile Sunni providers and patients at the hospital, have figured strongly in the emergence of sect-specific health economies and institutions. In the past ten years two public sector 'Sunni Hospitals' have been established, first by community donations, tithing, and later by government funding

allocations, in nearby Kashrote Mohalla, and the village of Baseen, which is located at Gilgit Town's western outskirts. The building of 'Sunni' and recently also 'Shia Hospitals' has occurred alongside numerous other, sect-specific public and civil sector developments, such as 'Shia' and 'Sunni' *bazaars* (markets), link roads, bridges, and transportation routes and services, all of which evidence the failure of regional governance to stem either chronic sectarian hostilities or the ruptures and insecurities which fuel the social separation and spatial segregation of Gilgit's communities. Accompanying the establishment of these new hospitals are configurations of care which arise at the intersection of medicine and conflict and are additionally informed by the cultural sensibilities, moral economies, doctrines and politicizations of identity and practice particular to each community. As I seek to demonstrate, it is in reflecting on their experiences with such sectarian assemblages of care that providers and patients attempt to apprehend, understand and respond to the problematic nature of and interrelationship between Gilgit's conflicts, government health services and maternal outcomes.

With Gilgit Town's hospitals, clinical encounters, and service exclusions or avoidances mimetic of larger sectarian dissonances, questions of identity figured heavily in interlocutors' discussions of the DHQ's inequitable provision and distribution of available services and the reasons why Sunni delivery cases at the Family Wing 'went wrong'. Sectarianism also helped explain the disadvantages borne by Sunni patients referred away from the DHQ's admittedly uneven but specialized care, to the much more poorly-resourced Kashrote Hospital during times of medical emergency and sectarian crisis. They pointed to the sectarian economies of recognition increasingly used by providers to demarcate which patients would receive 'effective' or 'sub-optimal' care, or from which providers and hospitals care would be sought. Interlocutors' from across the sectarian divide explained how women and newborns maimed or dying as a consequence of 'sectarian' service dysfunctions or referrals confirm how, at least in the popular imagination, patients' bodies and public sector hospitals have become proxy sites for the socio-sectarian instabilities and conflicts marring everyday life in Gilgit Town. Therapeutic neglects, mismanagement, and the social and physical suffering they produced were seen as signifying the deliberate imposition of sectarian modes of dominance onto vulnerable bodies, with such harms being woven into interlocutors' narratives of the ways that maternal and newborn deaths stand as evidence of the 'injured' Sunni body politic. In these ways and more, hospitals have contributed to the formation of sectarian subjectivities that are also inextricably tied to broader conditions of mistrust, enmity, violence and unstable governance.

In attending to the enactment and expression of sectarian identities, imaginaries, and discord at the DHQ and Kashrote Hospitals, I seek to delineate the mechanics whereby Sunnis are marginalized from necessary obstetric care by fear, service exclusions or targeted reprisals, assess the production of medical risks and harmful outcomes along sectarian lines of affiliation, and discuss the service avoidances, strategies and solidarities employed by Gilgitis in order to safely meet their health needs. And by carrying forward and expanding Miller's (2012) notion of corrosive communities, which are characterized by "social disruption, a lack of consensus [and] "general uncertainty" in unstable settings, my paper not only evaluates the discord but also the solidarities that build up between patients and providers in these hospitals during periods of crisis. To this end, the emerging medical anthropology of conflict facilitates my analysis of Gilgit's hospitals as affective institutions (Street 2011) and spaces in which "social orders emerge and are contested" (Pinto 2004: 337).

Hospitals may also be viewed as the contexts in which social control, inequality (Sullivan 2012) and the production of “complex relationships between order and disorder, stability and instability” (Street and Coleman 2012: 5) occur, and sites of “terror and ‘point[s] of imagination and longing” (Street 2013: 1). My paper will conclude by reviewing how providers’ and patients’ varied experiences with and commentary on hospitals as vehicles of conflict permit interlocutors and also the anthropologist to reflect on and accord meaning to the complex and embattled circumstances of life in Gilgit-Baltistan. Ultimately, ethnographic chronicling of the actual and perceived dynamics of care at Gilgit’s ‘Shia’ and ‘Sunni Hospitals’ permits critical analysis of the diverse ways that sectarianism plays out through both quotidian and crisis-inflected therapeutic engagements, patient outcomes, and the seeking of care itself.

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