



Urban Studies Seminar 2014 - 2015

Twice a month,
Mondays 5 pm - 7 pm

Venue:

Conference Hall
Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin-Nikolassee

Please register
at the following address:
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Annual Theme: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Urban Marginality in Africa, the Middle East and Asia

Chaired by Prof Ulrike Freitag and Dr Nora Lafi

Monday, November 10th, 2014, 5 pm

Mobility from Iran to Kabul: "newcomers" as margins.

Lecture by Azita Bathaie

During the last decades, Iran and Pakistan hosted more than six million Afghan migrants. After the fall of the Taliban a large part of this displaced population decides to return to Afghanistan. This study deals with the mobility of young men and women of shī'a Afghan families between Iran and Afghanistan. In the same families the young educated generation are becoming part of the new elite in Kabul and others try to reach Europe illegally, whereas their parents still live in Iran.

The lecture will first focus on east Mashhad, where a specific migrants' neighborhood called "the Kabul of Iran" has developed during these last decades. This neighborhood is stigmatized by Iranian as "poor" and "dangerous", because of its foreign inhabitants; while to Afghans, living in this neighborhood becomes an identity claim. The second part of the lecture will emphasize the social dynamics of west Kabul in full growth, since the post- Taliban period. This rapid expansion is due to the internal migration and to the return of Afghan emigrants from Iran and Pakistan. In the Kabuli context, this new inhabitants coming from Iran claim their Mashhadi identity as a symbol of an urban sophisticated identity, while they are stigmatized as emigrant in Iran (irangaki) and as "newcomers". The lecture will discuss these different identities in movement and the transformation of both cities by the practices of these trans-border populations.

Azita Bathaie is Fernand Braudel Fellow (Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Marie Curie Actions and Fondation Fritz Thyssen) at ZMO. Her postdoctoral project deals with urban change in west Kabul and the key role of the "returnees". She holds a doctorate in anthropology from the Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense University. The subject of her dissertation is the migration of Afghans to Iran, France and Greece. She held a two year teaching position in anthropology at Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense University where she taught postgraduate courses on the anthropology of Muslim worlds and postgraduate courses on migration studies.

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