



Crossroads Asia Lecture

Land and conflict in Kabul

Urban landgrabbing as an ethnopolitical activity

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Kabul, a city known for suicide attacks, war and terror, is not only a place people are escaping from. It is also an important destination for big numbers of people from rural and suburban areas and from insecure regions of the country who seek shelter there. Many Afghans who had been in exile, after the collapse of the Taliban regime also returned to Kabul rather than other places.

This fast and unbalanced population growth has caused systematic landgrabbing and leads to conflict over urban territories. Politicians in their attempts to solve this major problem often turn a blind eye on the most important actors in this struggle for land, because these are protected by political networks.

This presentation tries to understand the logics and politics of landgrabbing in Kabul. It introduces the city as divided and fortified along ethnic and political lines, where land grabbing is bound into social life and is connected not only with commercial advantage but also with emotional and political gains.

Assadullah Ahmadi is a researcher and sociologist from Kabul, Afghanistan, and currently a visiting research fellow of the Crossroads Asia competence network, based at the Central Asian Seminar of Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. He holds a Master in Sociology from Tehran University where he is also PhD candidate. He has worked as a researcher and lecturer for several NGOs (among others, Integrity Watch Afghanistan), Afghan Government bodies, and educational institutions. Assadullah Ahmadi has published widely on Afghan history and current issues.

