



Crossroads Asia Lecture

Masculinity, Cultural Idioms, and Shifting Subjectivities among Afghan Pashtuns: A Psychodynamic View on Conflicting Social Figurations.

Andrea Chiovenda

Wednesday, July 9, 2014, 18:00

Zentralasien-Seminar, Invalidenstraße 118, Lecture Hall 507

In Pashtun society cultural idioms of (hyper)masculinity, and the moral and ethical values that undergird them, are central to the shared representation of an ideal, honorable Pashtun man. Pashtun men in real life, then, must constantly confront themselves with public expectations and requirements entailed by such idioms of masculinity. Andrea Chiovenda argues that most Pashtun men struggle in some way (though to various degrees) to privately elaborate, negotiate, re-work the culturally shared representation that a man in Pashtun society is expected to publicly embody. In so doing, they develop idiosyncratic psychological dynamics in order to cope with the inner conflict between behaviors that they have to display, and behaviors that they would alternatively prefer to display, but often cannot. Analyzing one specific case study, concerning a young Pashtun man from a rural area of Paktia province, this presentation will discuss the interplay between the complex assemblage of cultural and social constraints that the individual has to navigate and manage, and his psychological dynamics, as well as the public behaviors that derive from such interplay.

Andrea Chiovenda is PhD Candidate in Anthropology at Boston University and currently 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 Ancient History from the University of Rome as well as a Master in Security Studies from Georgetown University in Washington DC. Andrea Chiovenda worked for the Italian Ministry of Defence and as freelance journalist and analyst for the Middle East. His recent research is based on original ethnographic material gathered during 18 months of fieldwork in Afghanistan, between 2009 and 2013.

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