



Crossroads Asia Lecture

100 Years of Suffering: How Words and Images are Shaping a New Hazara Consciousness.

Melissa Kerr Chiovenda

Wednesday, July 16, 2014, 18:00

Zentralasien-Seminar, Invalidenstraße 118, Lecture Hall 507

Markaz Bamyān, Afghanistan, is a cultural focal point for ethnic Hazaras, a minority group that has suffered discrimination since its forcible full inclusion into the Afghan state in the late 1800s. Currently Hazaras are experiencing a period of opportunities, as they realize upward social mobility that was previously closed to them. In Markaz Bamyān, there is a large contingent of civil society activists that demand an end to inequality and recognition of past and current denial of Hazara rights. Markaz Bamyān is somewhat unique in that, as a peaceful area, activists more openly express views and protest perceived injustices, something which is dangerous in less stable parts of Afghanistan. This talk, based on more than one year of fieldwork in Bamyān, will examine the use and impact of images in the protests carried out by these civil society activists. The activists' own identity as part of the Hazara nation is shaped by the historical sites that surround Markaz Bamyān, such as the niches of the giant Buddha statues destroyed by the Taliban in 2001, which serve to connect them to an ancient past. These, and other historical images complement, contrast and overlap with a contemporary political iconography, populated by the images of recent political leaders and "martyrs". It will be analyzed in which way such visual language and oral rhetoric is used by Hazara activists to further the construction of a new sense of ethnic identity for all Afghan Hazaras.

Melissa Kerr Chiovenda is a PhD Candidate in Anthropology at the University of Connecticut, and holds a Master's Degree in Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies from Georgetown University. For her dissertation fieldwork she spent 18 months in Afghanistan. Previously, she was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, worked in Russia, and was a high school teacher in South Central Los Angeles.

GEFÖRDERT VOM



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung