

Einladung zum Kolloquium

Kyrgyzstan's Dordoy and Kara-Suu Bazaars: Exchange, Survival, and Eurasian Mobilities in a Post-Soviet Age

Vortrag im Rahmen der „Crossroads-Asia Lectures“

Assist. Prof. Hasan Karrar

(Lahore Univ. of Management Sciences (LUMS), Mushtaq Ahmad
Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences)

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Geo-Campus Lankwitz

Malteserstr. 74-100, 12249 Berlin

Haus G, Raum 202

With a population of five-and-a-half million and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of barely six-and-a-half billion US dollars, Kyrgyzstan ranks amongst Asia's poorest countries. Nevertheless, this resource-deficient, former Soviet periphery boasts two of the largest wholesale markets on the continent: Dordoy bazaar (in the capital city Bishkek), where close to 20,000 shipping containers have been converted into shops since the early 1990s, and Kara-Suu bazaar (twenty-five kilometers from Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan), with approximately 8,000 shipping containers turned into shops. These bazaars serve as pivots in a Eurasian commercial web that sprawls between Dubai, Guangzhou, Istanbul, Moscow, and Urumchi, and scores of smaller localities in between.

In the summer of 2013, I conducted four hundred open-ended interviews with shopkeepers in Dordoy and Kara-Suu. In this talk, I approach bazaars as (1) Rational and modern institutions where citizens negotiated the transition from communism by individually forging transnational connections, while staying within the parameters allowed by the state; (2) Encapsulating mobilities - of people, merchandise, capital and information - across central Eurasia; and, (3) Spaces that continue to serve a vital role as a survival mechanism in the absence of other lucrative opportunities.