



Modernity in Afghanistan

A hidden phenomenon in research

Date | April 24th 2020

Venue | View 11, 22763 Hamburg

Language | Persian, German or English

Does a modern intellectual history in Afghanistan exist? In our planned symposium, we would like to address a number of questions that have revoked attention in both traditional and current research in Afghanistan: The heterogeneous range of influences of (western) modernity, directly or indirectly, on social and political processes and events in Afghanistan in the 20th century. The historical focus will be on the second half of the 20th century – not exclusively, but will still have to be supplemented by a clear reference to the present. We work with the primary hypothesis that there has been a significant, partial, impact of modernity in some areas of public life in Afghanistan, whose traces we seek to explore. The secondary hypothesis would be that the traces of modernity, manifold and variable, do not have an exclusively historical character, but rather have an impact on the measurable present of today.

Within the western canon from Barfield to Schetter, the study of Afghanistan is mainly limited to the study of the tradition(s) (vs. modernity) in the country itself. This narrative is arbitrary, if not intentionally exclusive. The intellectual history in Afghanistan that is impacted by the modern is mainly excluded from this narrative. One aim of this symposium would be therefore to pursue an objective and Afghanistan-centered approach and to discuss details of intellectual history of modernism in Afghanistan. In doing so, intellectuals, experts, artists and researchers from Afghanistan will insert them into the preexisting history of the global history.

The thematic and chronological spectrum of the symposium is wide-ranging and we invite you to all topics of the intellectual history of modernism (from sociology, political science, communication science and cultural studies), either methodical, theoretical, content-related or practical. By focusing on the knowledge produced within Afghanistan itself or on how global circulating ideas have been transformed within the geographic, political and cultural area of Afghanistan, the lectures can shed a light on how the country contributes a variety of intellectual traditions in the country itself and within the region.

The following questions have to be asked

- At what period, would you refer to historical evidence and does modernity appear in Afghanistan in the 20th century?
- Did the paradigm of liberalism in the political sphere of Afghanistan change anything in the 20th century?
- To what extent can mass media in Afghanistan be seen as the motor and catalyst of modernity and social change in the 20th century?
- What mechanisms were effective in the emergence of the political left?
- What is modernity in Afghanistan and in which areas of public life has it had an influence?
- At what point in time, based on historical evidence, does modernity appear in Afghanistan in the 20th century?
- Has the paradigm of liberalism in the political sphere of Afghanistan changed anything in the 20th century?
- What are the traces of modernity that still have an impact today?
- What is modernity in Afghanistan today?
- What are/were the motor and catalyst of modernity and social change (mass media) in Afghanistan in the 20th century?

These questions will build the basis for the discussion and Q&A rounds

Please submit a short abstract (max. 250 words) until March 31th 2020 to the following address: hbmail@posteo.de. Please enclose a short CV with your institutional affiliation, name and email address. The proposals will be provisionally accepted or rejected by March 15, 2020.

There is no registration fee, but participants should register their interest at hbmail@posteo.de

This symposium is organized by **Taher Badakhshi Institute (TBI)** and Centre Entwicklungskommunikation- Communication for social Change (**EC4SC**) research Centre of the University of Leipzig Germany.

TBI, based in Berlin Germany, is acting as a research institute for advanced studies on intellectual history of the specifics of modernism in Afghanistan from 1945 till Today. Research fields include characteristics of the political economy, anthropological analysis, main pillars of structures of the local and regional politics. The methodological base of our anthropologic research will be broad in its spectrum, still it will be a focus on three fields: Identity politics and its consequences, transformation processes and their structures, and future perspectives.

EC4SC (Head Dr. Kefajat Hamidi) is an facility of the Institute for Communication and Media Studies at the Leipzig University and dealing with communication and Social Change. The EC4SC works in three areas: Research, teaching and transfer.

Conference coordination

Priv.- Doz. Dr. med. Harun Badakhshi (Berlin)

Dr. Kefa Hamidi (Leipzig)

Dipl. Wirt. Inform. Jawid Badakhshi (Hamburg)