

Understanding Asia: Bridging Margins

Transnational Figurations of Displacement in and beyond Asia – Ambiguous Network Relations and Syrian and Afghan Refugees' (Im)Mobilities

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Conversion

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16:00 – 18:00 c.t.
Zoom event

Millions of Syrians and Afghans are living in protracted displacement in and across Asia. While many endure precarity and rightlessness and are far from realizing a 'durable solution', most do not depend on humanitarian aid. Yet, they rely on others. In my talk, I will sketch the literally vital significance of social network relations for the displaced. Refugees maintain strong ties within their families and ethnic communities, but they also build bridges to host communities. Local connectivity is decisive for sustaining livelihoods. In many cases, refugees' networks beyond the place of living and across multiple countries are equally or even more important. Based on findings of the 3-year, multi-partner project TRAFIG, I will present new insights into Syrians and Afghans' "Transnational Figurations of Displacement" and discuss the – often ambiguous – role of networks in the displaced persons' lives and for their onward mobility.

Dr. Benjamin Etzold is a social geographer and migration scholar working at the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), a German peace and conflict studies think tank. He holds a PhD in Geography from the University of Bonn. He works on patterns and trajectories of migration and displacement and studies people's vulnerabilities, livelihoods, social relations, and mobilities in different regions. Currently, he leads the interdisciplinary, international, and EU-funded research project TRAFIG – Transnational Figurations of Displacement. The project aims to better understand how displaced people make use of translocal networks and mobilities to overcome conditions of protracted displacement.