



INSIDE IRAN

Social and Political Dynamics Beyond the Nuclear Debate

11-12 Nov.
BERLIN 2011

The Iran discourse is dominated by security policy concerns. The western focus on the nuclear debate has resulted in the marginalization of numerous (domestic) political and socio-cultural phenomena in Iran.

Covering a broad range of topics, the contributions from internationally recognized experts on Iran will serve as “investigations into Underlying Aspects”, that expose relevant dimensions beneath the surface of the nuclear and sanctions debate. In addition to scholarly experts, this conference will also give voice to directly affected stakeholders: Iranian journalists, bloggers, activists.

The conference is divided into the following panels:

PANEL 1

Domestic Politics

The discussion begins with an inventory of the current internal dynamics two years after nation-wide unrest. The focus here is on the political output, the consolidation and shift of power in the second presidential term of Ahmadinejad, and the religious advances of the “New Right”, as well as the economic performance of the regime.

PANEL 2

Civil Society and Human Rights

The speakers in this section discuss the scope of human rights violations and question the judicial and political implications on the international stage. Closely related to the topic of human rights is the question of civil society. How can civil society develop in such a repressive climate? The speakers here address the relevant parties and structures that strengthen and weaken Iran’s civil society.

PANEL 3

Internet and (New) Media

Despite systematic state repression, Iran has a vital media landscape. Since the “ritual” of establishing and shutting down media critical of the regime is an everyday reality in the Islamic Republic, a large segment of independent reporting has moved into the virtual world. Numerous Iranian bloggers act as authors and distributors of information. The speakers here address Iran’s conventional and virtual media landscape and the political and social impact of the internet.



A conference at the
**Representation of
Lower Saxony at the
Federal Government
in Berlin**

Confirmed

Payam Akhavan

Ali Ansari

Abdol-Karim Lahidji

Gholam Khiabani

Mehrangiz Kar

John Kelly

Hassan Yousefi Eshkevari

Sohrab Razzaghi

Ruprecht Polenz

Markus Löning

Annabelle Sreberny

Fereydoun Khavand

Nooshabeh Amiri

Pooneh Ghoddoosi

Isabel Schayani

Farhad Payar

Dieter Bednarz

Ehsan Norouzi

Mahmood Enayat

Christiane Hoffmann

Golineh Atai

Farnaz Seifi

**Simultaneous Translation
Catering
Cultural Programme**

Partner

WORDS OF GREETING 10:00 - 10:30 AM

Thomas Krüger (President Federal Agency for Civic Education)
Ali Samadi Ahadi (Chairman Transparency for Iran)

PANEL 1

Domestic Politics

Friday, 11.11.2011 10:30 AM - 12:45 PM

1 Ahmadinedjads second presidency

Despite the stagnation of civil society mobilization, there are indications of turbulence and power shifts within the system. This talk will explicate the traces that "Project Ahmadinedjad" left domestically.

LECTURE

A domestic „inventory“
Prof. Ali Ansari 20 Minutes

2 The coming of the Mahdi

Accompanying the talk about the Re-Islamification of the state and society, the clergy seems to be falling apart as the pillar of legitimacy in the theocracy. What function is religion assuming in Ahmadinedjad's militarized, security apparatus? Should the "New Right" be understood as a rational actor, or are we dealing with a new religious "sense of mission"?

LECTURE

Religion and politics under Ahmadinedjad
Hassan Yousefi Eshkevari 20 Minutes

3 It's the Economy, stupid!

It could ultimately be a little noticed political field that brings Iran to the tipping point again: dramatic inflation rates, escalating unemployment, the extreme rising costs of consumer goods are symptoms of Iran's economic policies. Dilettante mismanagement, or deliberate calculation in the political economy?

LECTURE

Iranian economic policy
Prof. Fereydoun Khavand 20 Minutes

DISCUSSION

Domestic Politics
With: Prof. Ali Ansari, Hassan Yosefi Eshkevari, Prof. Fereydoun Khavand
Moderation: Navid Kermani 60 Minutes

Panel

Civil Society and Human Rights

Friday, 11.11.2011 14:00 PM - 15:40 PM

1 The composition and significance of Iran's Civil Society

The largest and most promising potential for political and social change lies in the development of civil society structures. Authoritarian systems present civil society actors with enormous challenges. A culture of civil discourse must be developed, and for that reason a domination-free public sphere needs to be created. On strengths and weaknesses, strategies and challenges of the Iranian civil society.

LECTURE

State of Civil Society in Iran

Dr. Sohrab Razzaghi 20 Minutes

LECTURE

The role of women as civil society-actors

Mehrangiz Kar 20 Minutes

DISCUSSION

Irans Civil Society

With: Dr. Sohrab Razzaghi, Mehrangiz Kar, Christiane Hoffmann

Moderation: Golineh Atai 60 Minutes

Friday, 11.11.2011 16:00 PM - 18:10 PM

2 Human Rights in Iran: Universal and indivisible, or political bargaining chips?

Although numerous human rights reports document a constant and increasing number of blatant human rights violations, the subject is in danger of degenerating into an inconvenient marginal question in the course of nuclear negotiations. The panel discussions examine the breadth of human rights violations in Iran, and subsequently question the appropriate venue for the international community to approach human rights in Iran. Which outcomes could ensue from an aggressive approach by the international community with regards to human rights? What would a serious judicial and political implementation of human rights look like?

LECTURE

The Iranian judicial system and Human Rights

Dr. Abdol-Karim Lahidji 20 Minutes

Panel 2

LECTURE

International instruments and political implementation

Prof. Payam Akhavan *20 Minutes*

DISCUSSION

Human Rights in Iran

With: Dr. Abdol-Karim Lahidji, Prof. Payam Akhavan, Ruprecht Polenz, Markus Löning

Moderation: Isabel Schayani *90 Minutes*

CULTURAL PROGRAMME

PANEL 3

Internet and (New) Media

Saturday, 12.11.2011 10:30 AM - 12:45 PM

1 The Iranian blogosphere: “Counterpublic” and censorship in cyberspace

The myth of the “Twitter-Revolution” suggests the importance the internet has attained. Due to the strictly controlled public sphere, the numerous blogs and forums can be understood as the digital equivalent of the public sphere. Virtual spaces serve as a way to measure social and political dynamics apart from state controlled media. The lectures spotlight the use and significance of internet in Iran.

LECTURE **Who blogs about what? A cartography of the Iranian blogosphere**
Dr. John Kelly *20 Minutes*

LECTURE **Internet, politics, and social change in Iran**
Dr. Gholam Khiabany *20 Minutes*

LECTURE **The web and Censorship**
Mahmood Enayat *20 Minutes*

DISCUSSION **The Iranian blogosphere**
With: Dr. John Kelly, Dr. Gholam Khiabany, Dr. Mahmood Enayat, Ehsan Norouzi
Moderation: Farnaz Seifi *60 Minutes*

Saturday, 12.11.2011 14:00 PM – 15:40 PM

2 Media work in Iran

Year after year Iran finds itself lowly ranked in global freedom of the press rankings (Reporters Without Borders). Journalistic work in Iran takes place under strict government supervision. Utmost caution, censorship, and self-censorship are a part of a journalist’s everyday life. For foreign journalists it is almost impossible to obtain a press visa. The contributions give an overview of Iranian media work and through personal stories, describe journalistic everyday life in Iran.

LECTURE **Journalism and media landscape in Iran**
Nooshabeh Amiri *20 Minutes*

Panel 3

LECTURE

The story of a journalistic career
Masoud Behnoud *20 Minutes*

DISCUSSION

Media work in Iran

With: Nooshabeh Amiri, Masoud Behnoud, Mehdi Mohseni

Moderation: Dieter Bednarz *60 Minutes*

Saturday, 12.11.2011 16:00 PM – 17:20 PM

3 International reporting in the digital era

The obstruction and prevention of media reporting belongs to the classic repression and control mechanisms of authoritarian regimes. The digital era of New Media and “citizen journalists” yield new opportunities and formats for media work in and about Iran. With these developments, international reporters face new challenges in the established journalistic work methods.

LECTURE

The Revolution will be televised: Citizen Journalism in Iran

Prof. Annabelle Sreberny *20 Minutes*

DISCUSSION

International reporting in the digital era

With: Prof. Annabelle Sreberny, German editors and BBC editors

Moderation: Farhad Payar *60 Minutes*

CULTURAL PROGRAMME

About Transparency for Iran

Since the presidential elections of June 12, 2009, and the subsequent unrest, it has become very difficult for foreign journalists to obtain entry permits for Iran. Due to drastic repression by the Iranian regime, journalistic work has become much more difficult. The already unclear reporting of events in Iran continues to deteriorate. In the German public, Iran is primarily viewed and discussed from a security policy perspective, not least because of Iran's nuclear program. Manipulative and biased reporting by Iran's state-controlled media have also reinforced a distorted and incomplete view of the domestic state of affairs.

Moreover, after the Iranian security apparatus's violent repression of the mass demonstrations, the Iranian democratic movement is in danger of being forgotten by the international media. Reporting on the Iranian opposition and social dynamics is becoming increasingly rare. International attention is essential for the development and protection of a young civil society. Out of this necessity, **Transparency for Iran** was founded. Our overall objective is to create transparency about political and social developments in Iran, as well as raise awareness about this topic in the German public.

The correspondingly named and editorially managed website is independent and nonpartisan.

As a result of the strictly supervised public space in Iran, civil society exchanges have largely shifted to cyberspace. Critical journalistic publications have not been spared by this shift into cyberspace. **Transparency for Iran** takes this situation seriously and would like to accommodate the situation with its work. **tfi** understands the numerous blogs and online publications as measures of change in the socio-political developments in the Iranian society. The identity and future of the country is being negotiated through them. By documenting and evaluating the continuous process in persian-speaking opinion formation, **tfi** wants to provide transparency in the general discussions, and also show the underrepresented socio-political developments in the German media. Thus, a democratic opinion-formation process about Iran will ultimately be supported in the German-speaking public. Particular contributions and analysis should help to evaluate these changes.

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