

Goethe University | 60629 Frankfurt am Main
Faculty 08 | Department of Anthropology

To
The Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute of Iranian Studies
Faculty of Arts and Science
University of Toronto

10 August 2022

Letter of recommendation

To whom it may concern:

I have met Simon Theobald for the first time in 2015 when he was conducting the fieldwork for his PhD dissertation in Mashhad, Iran. Due to our common disciplinary, regional and topical interests we have been in contact since.

Taking into account that Dr Theobald has just finished his PhD in 2020, his academic record and achievements are outstanding. He has shown remarkable dedication, particularly in the midst of extremely difficult fieldwork conditions (which I have witnessed first-hand); with his focus on religion, utopias, values and ethics his areas of specialisation cover a considerable breadth of topics that are of both contemporary public as well as anthropological relevance; he has already published a series of articles in renowned international interdisciplinary academic journals and more than a dozen contributions to edited volumes and blogs, including for broader non-academic audiences. All in all, considering Dr Theobald's achievements and dedication at his career state, I have no doubt about his exceptional academic potential.

Dr Theobald's publications are both empirically exceptional and theoretically remarkable. I am confident that his future publications will be received as important contributions to the development of a contemporary anthropology of society and the political in Iran. Having read his previous work and large parts of the book manuscript, I am certain that Dr Theobald's first book will be received as a path breaking contribution to Iranian Studies and to the anthropology of religion.

With his dissertation connecting with key debates in contemporary anthropology and Iranian Studies, Dr Theobald's work combines a strong theoretical interest in the anthropology of ethics with a clear empirical focus on the link between Islam, certainty/doubt and utopia. His book will be of extraordinary relevance not only for

Faculty of History and
Philosophy
Department of Anthropology

Mirco Göpfert
Professor of Anthropology

Norbert-Wollheim-Platz 1
60629 Frankfurt am Main
Germany

Phone +49 (0)69 798 33078
Fax +49 (0)69 798 33065
goepfert@em.uni-frankfurt.de
www.uni-frankfurt.de

current theoretical debates within anthropology and Iranian Studies, but most likely also for broader public interest.

Concerning the pragmatics of book production, Dr Theobald is experienced in writing and publishing research papers in renowned academic journals, so that I am convinced that he will successfully bring the book manuscript to completion and reach a contract with a renowned university press within the fellowship period.

Sincerely yours,



Dr Mirco Göpfert
Professor of Anthropology