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Locality, Islam and the code of friendship. The idea of brotherhood among Javanese sex-workers in Bali.

This paper discusses the role of locality and Islam in the creation and maintenance of social relations among Javanese sex-workers. It is based on ongoing fieldwork research carried out between Bali and the cities of Surabaya and Malang, as well as in the villages of the surrounding areas.

Javanese migrants constitute the majority of the population of migrant male sex workers in Bali. All migrants who work in the Balinese male sex industry group up in complex networks of antagonistic street ‘gangs’, who strive for the control of the sex market. The Javanese migrants call themselves brothers, but they also refer to themselves as a gang of hardworking friends.

This paper addresses two main issues. First, it discusses the importance of locality in the managing of social relations. Street gangs of sex-workers – as the Javanese case shows - are based on norms of solidarity, loyalty and as well as on hierarchies, but most of all they refer to a common origin, thus creating a strong bond of affiliation and continuity over time and place. Second, the paper addresses the impact of Islamic religious education in the creation of fraternity bonds among Javanese migrants.

I will then examine how local and religious affiliation are used as means to create specific codes of solidarity and loyalty and to build economic transactions that ultimately aim at providing support and economic emancipation to gang members.

Nir Avieli (Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Ben Gurion University, Israel)

Dog Meat Politics in Central Vietnam

Dog meat has long been a popular delicacy in Northern Vietnam, but not in the Center and South. In recent years, however, dog meat restaurants proliferate in the central Vietnamese town of Hoi An, as canine dishes become ever more popular among the younger members of the newly developing local middle class. In this article, based on extensive anthropological fieldwork conducted in Hoi An since 1998, I explore the various meanings attributed by the Hoianese to this new culinary preference. While post-revolutionary (post)modern consumerism is certainly a factor in this recent trend, I suggest that dog meat eating in Hoi An is imbued with cultural and sociopolitical ideas: it is not merely a male aphrodisiac or a mode of conspicuous consumption but also a marker of sophistication and cosmopolitanism, secularism and modernity. Yet most importantly, Hoianese dog meat feasts are political maneuvers, a way of engaging with Northern officials and other government functionaries and weaving social networks where friendship, socioeconomic interests, bodily pleasures and shame are inseparable. Concomitantly, widespread critique of this new fashion reflects moral and political stands vis-à-vis the current regime. In the discussion I suggest that the culinary realm is a privileged arena for managing problematic social relations, especially within authoritative political contexts.

Elin Bjarnegård (Dept. of Government; Uppsala University, Sweden)

Thai politics, clientelist networks and homosocial capital

The Thai political sphere is best characterized as ever-changing, and the party world is no different. This paper argues that clientelism is a political strategy used by Thai politicians in order to create predictability in a politically unpredictable setting. Clientelism is, more specifically, also an informal political practice that requires the building and maintenance of large and localized networks to help distribute services, goods and/or money in exchange for political support.

This paper builds on the mapping and in-depth study of the clientelist networks of political candidates in five constituencies in Thailand and uses and develops the concept of homosocial capital (Bjarnegård 2009). It shows that clientelist networks in Thailand are and continue to be male dominated because homosocial capital, a political capital accessible only to men, is needed for electoral success. Homosocial capital has two main components: a perceived pragmatic necessity to build linkages to those with access to important resources in society and a more psychological desire to cooperate with individuals whose behavior is perceived to be understood, predicted and trusted.

The study compares two Thai political parties: the Democrat party and the now defunct Thai Rak Thai party. The findings are based on interview material and show how male clientelist network members create their own support system in order to maintain and protect the clientelist way of doing politics. It also sheds light on the gendered aspects of clientelist networking by focusing on the fact that it is a political practice that, de facto, excludes women.

Anne-Meike Fechter (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Sussex)

Colleagues, Friends, and Beneficiaries: Cross-Cultural Relationships in Aid Work

In the context of international aid work, individuals from a range of national, ethnic and professional backgrounds interact, collaborate, and negotiate situations of conflict. While existing development studies often consider the institutional and policy-related dimensions of such encounters (Mosse 2005), much less attention has been paid to the personal and cross-cultural aspects of such relationships. This paper therefore aims to explore the interfaces between ‘Western’ development practitioners working in Cambodia, and Cambodian nationals. In particular, it pursues the question which relationships are considered personally meaningful by the respective individuals involved, and what are variously understood to be the conditions for such relationships to be established and maintained. This question arises in a context where international aid workers, depending on their length of stay, professional role in the host country, language skills, and personalities may experience very different levels of engagement with local Cambodians. Importantly, the people involved cannot be neatly categorized as ‘internationals’ and ‘locals’, since they include for example Europeans who have obtained Cambodian citizenship after long-term residence in the country, as well as Cambodian-American return migrants, and those normally resident outside of Cambodia with an ethnic Khmer background. The paper thus aims to examine the cross-cultural relationships that matter to people in a range of social contexts, and considers the role they play for both the life experiences and professional practices of aid workers.

Eric Anton Heuser (PhD candidate, University of Freiburg, Germany)

The art of managing social relationships: some thoughts on friendship and social theory

Ethnographic as well as sociological research on Southeast Asian societies suggests that people enact, practice, and/ or perform social relationships differently than in the West. Ethnographic data on friendship practices in Java, for example, has produced evidence that social relationships not only unfold according to a given socio-cultural context, but they are also likely to “overlap” and intertwine with other social relationships and social roles assumed by individual actors in their particular webs of social reality.

On an empirical level, this paper proposes studying friendship as a social relationship “in-between” that unfolds in relation to (and tension with) other social relationships embedded in a given socio-cultural context. This correlates with the findings of current friendship researchers who have noted that in practice friendship rarely reflects its ‘Western conceptual ideal’: a private, emotional, secular, loyal relationship between human equals. Yet, despite calls to interrogate this model, it is still widely used as a point of comparative departure and thus conceals conceptual specificities, particularly in contexts where friendship can be uncovered as an indigenous category.

On a theoretical level, this paper will ask and single out thoughts on how empirical data on friendship as an ideal type of in-between social relationships can be framed and contribute to advance social theory and enable us to account for the intersectional moments in social relationships.

May Tan Mullins (Division of International Studies, University of Nottingham, Ningbo Campus, China)

Lessons from the two financial crises: Social Resilience and Coping Responses of the Indonesia and Chinese fisherfolks

The current financial crisis differs vastly from the 1997-98 event in terms of origins, impacts, outcomes and planning for future regulatory policies. Implications also varied widely in the developing countries due to different institutional and political contexts. More importantly, the differential abilities of various social groups to recover (or transform totally in terms of livelihood) from both crises demonstrated the need to tease out a framework for understanding what constitute 'resilience' in these societies. In this paper, using evidence drawn from fieldwork undertaken in 1999 in Indonesia and 2009 in China, I examine the vital components of 'resilience' through a comparative examination of two culturally, socially and geographically different fishing villages. By examining how social capital manifested through various ethnic, kinship and religious networks, I will illustrate how access to these informal multi-scale networks creates new possibilities for participatory exclusions or inclusions. This paper is divided into four sections. The first will introduce the context of both crises while the second details the research methods and field sites. The third section will then compare and contrast the various strategies adopted by various social groups within these societies to cope with the crises. Through the analysis, the last section will tease out a framework to answer the main research question: 'What constitute 'resilience' for various social groups and how this knowledge could contribute to policy planning and coping strategies for future crises?'

James Mitchell (PhD cand., Macquarie University, Australia)

Kon baan diaogan or ‘we’re from the same village’ - star/fan interaction in pleeng luuk tung.

Luuk tung or Thai country music has played an important role in facilitating the regeneration of Lao-Isan identity and culture. If “studying fan culture allows us to explore some of the key mechanisms through which we interact with the mediated world,” then an examination of *luuk tung* fandom should reveal social and cultural realities concerning modern Thailand. This paper identifies the key demographics of the *luuk tung* audience and examines the social forces at work in the *luuk tung* fan system. These include the patron/client dynamic of Thai society, the extreme fan behavior found in *likay* and the community participation mixed with a sense of marginalization that typifies Isan social identity. The various points of interaction between stars and fans are described and analyzed. The Bangkok concert system is also described along with the role played by fan clubs in the dissemination of concert information. The practice of giving garlands, roses and presents to singers in return for personal contact is an essential part of the *luuk tung* scene. A singer and his/her fan club have a symbiotic relationship which evokes both the patron/client system and the close links of Thai family. The most devoted fans, here termed ‘superfans’, are able to achieve extraordinary levels of intimacy with the object of fan adulation. Various points of tension within the fan system are discussed along with their political and social implications.

Nattaka Chaisinthop (Ph.D. cand., Dept. of Anthropology, SOAS, London)

Social Relationships and Dynamics of a Thai Volunteer Group

This paper explores the social relationships of a volunteer group at a state-run orphanage in Thailand, based on 12-month fieldwork. It asks how the group's dynamic is negotiated and maintained. Internally, I suggest that the group's identity and cohesion is created and sustained by the cultivation of a particular way of relating to 'disadvantaged children', through everyday practice and interactions with both the children and the other volunteers, as well as 'the other' e.g. the visitors who came to make donations at the orphanage. In turns, I argue that the sense of community, friendship/'fictive' kinship, created within the group played a crucial role in motivating the volunteers to stay, some for over 15 years, despite the competing demands of their time from their jobs, studies, families and other urban aspirations. Externally, I examine how the group negotiated and maintained its presence within this state institution and look at the relationships, tensions and conflicts between the volunteers and the orphanage staff. I discuss how harmony and status quo had to be **actively** maintained and how the building of personal relations with staff members at all levels became a favoured strategy in this negotiation process (over a more overt strategy such as a confrontational protest.) All of this is seen within a broader context whereby a community of volunteers such as this is often conceptualised and portrayed as a kind of moral community of "good people" (**khon di**), against a backdrop of political corruptions and perceived moral decline in Thai society.

Erika Sörensson (Centre for Gender Studies; Umeå University, Sweden)

‘Insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ sustaining livelihoods in a tourism neighbourhood: the case of kampung Sosrowijayan in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

This paper highlights the importance of social understandings of space and place in forming social relations, and provides an analysis of socio-spatial relations in the backpacker enclave Sosrowijayan located in inner city Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The paper deals specifically with place-based narratives presented by tourism workers in Sosrowijayan, and it shows how social boundaries between different groups of workers are constructed and maintained on the basis of spatial understandings.

While ‘Western’ backpackers come to Sosrowijayan in search for cheap tourism-oriented facilities, for the general public in Yogyakarta Sosrowijayan is, if it’s know of, constructed as the central place for prostitution in the city. The inhabitants in Sosrowijayan however, draw boundaries between people and place in very refined ways. One example is that the persons who live and work in the tourism kampung actively differentiate between themselves and the people who inhabit the neighbouring kampung, where sex work is said to take place. This differentiation is very much a gendered one, but also related to ethnicity and social class.

The paper is based on repeated qualitative fieldwork, including participant observations and in-depth interviews, carried out in Yogyakarta between the years 2001 and 2006.

Thomas Stodulka (FU Berlin, Germany)

Empathy and Emotional Economies on the Streets of Java – The constraints of “rational epistemology” and the advantages of the “emotional man” model

The establishment of easy-to-activate short term socio-economic alliances, the maintenance of social relationships, the expansion of social networks, and the activation of social capital are all crucial tactics of survival among young adults living on the streets of a Javanese city. These highly elaborated strategies of coping with marginal circumstances are simply described as “street wisdom” or street children and youths as being “street wise” or “street smart”. So far, analyses of street life within and between both academic and non-academic disciplines settled for agreeing that “street wisdom” is hard to come to grips with analytically. Thus, the concept of “street wisdom” wobbles through the anthropological, pedagogic, social psychology, and medical literature. Most applied academic or NGO handbooks that prescribe strategies to “re-socialize” these “society drop-outs”, also fail to analyze or define this concept systematically.

By integrating theoretical approaches from psychological coping literature and psychological anthropology (of emotions) into the analysis of social fusion, fission, socio-economic brokerage, and social networking among young adults living on the streets, this talk aims to define “street wisdom” as the street youths’ art of both empathizing with their various social interaction partners and their perfection of an emotional economy of attention in various social fields. From a broader perspective, I argue that an “emotional actor model” enables us to explain phenomena, that are hard to grasp with the predominant traditional “rational man models” of the social sciences.

Nelson Turgo (School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, UK)

Saliva as Capitalism: "Transactional Friendship" in a Fishing Community in the Philippines

Much has been said about the withering away of intimate, face-to-face community relations in contemporary living brought about by developments in communication technologies, among other exigencies of modern life. This paper is a critique of this assumption and an elaboration of why in some places, far from the global core, kinship relations, both real and fictive, are very important in surviving the demands of market capitalism. Generally, this paper takes a look at market practices in a fishing community in the Philippines and shows how community relations play a big role in refashioning capitalist practices into highly localized transactions and create spaces where local capitalism could thrive and serve the ends of the community. Specifically, I would like to bring to the fore the market practices in fish brokerages in the fishing community as they are being played out in a specific geographical continuum that is both insinuated into and working its way out of the disciplinary logics of formal economic and market institutions of the state. The market participants – small-scale fishermen, fish vendors, fish dealers and fish brokers – face to face and interacting with one another constantly create and re-create their own rules of market engagement which while adhering to some of the basic tenets of capitalism have to take cognizance of and accommodate the socio-cultural imperatives of their milieu and community where market transactions take place. In addition, this paper will look at how market transactions in the community adhere to the capitalist mantra of maximum profit and the production of surplus value while at the same time accommodates and limited by personal relations, the logics of situated knowledges, different societal affiliations and community values that affect, re-structure and re-frame capitalist transactions. Fish trading in fish brokerages then becomes a stage that simultaneously caricatures and upholds the values of capitalism, and builds on a community that coordinates action not through impersonal channels but through personal/ized interactions.