Although the issue of violence against women (VAW) has received much attention, the scourge of violence in homes is far from being diminished. Though a universal phenomenon, VAW is also context-specific. For the Focus in this issue of The Newsletter, seven scholars explore the question of family ambiguity within a comparative Asian context, especially as to how family norms and state laws in diverse national, cultural and religious settings interact to address or worsen the problem. By dealing with family ambiguity as a central critique of the domestic violence debate, they interrogate the gaps between concept, law and process.
The Focus

The Asian family and domestic violence

Pages 21-23

Family ambiguity and domestic violence in Asia: Reconceptualising law and process

Guest editors Maznah Mohamad and Saskia Wieringa introduce seven articles that examine the effectiveness of family regulations and laws in the Asian context, with regards to domestic violence and violence against women (VAW). Comparative cultural and national responses to the issue have shown that the ambiguity of family underscores some of the gaps between the conceptual, legal and process-oriented solutions to the eradication of VAW in society.

Pages 24-25

Cultures of violence and silence

The family enjoys an iconic place in the social imaginary as an ideal unit. To establish how difficult it has been to distill domestic violence from ‘privacy’, Amrita Nandy highlights the philosophical foundations of a culture that subsumes individual identity under the family and community. The article traces the trajectory of family regulation in India.

Pages 26-27

Culture, power and narratives in domestic violence law

Zarizana Abdul Aziz lays the theoretical foundation for the claim that societal acceptance or rejection of domestic violence is shaped by those in positions of power and influence. To eliminate domestic violence, culture must be deconstructed. Instead of justifying domestic violence in the name of culture, culture should be enlisted to create a non-violent society.

Pages 28-29

The enforcement of heteronormativity in India and Indonesia

Heteronormativity in Asia is constructed around the claim that all its agents work towards the creation or preservation of harmonious Asian families. Yet, there is enormous violence involved in the perpetuation of this myth. Saskia Wieringa bases her contribution on the life stories of widows/divorced women, sex workers and lesbians in India and Indonesia.

Pages 30-31

Domestic violence and migration in the Philippines: Transnational sites of struggle and sacrifice

Drawing upon ethnographic fieldwork carried out between 2006 and 2007 in San Pablo City in the Southern Tagalog province of Laguna (the Philippines) Cheryl Alipio explores the migration decisions, economic strategies and familial sacrifices that women make when faced with domestic violence.

Pages 32-33

Investigating intimate violence: A problem of law

Narsayanan Ganapathy traces and analyses police response to domestic violence in the Singapore case. The article examines the context in which police intervention occurred in domestic violence situations, especially why it generated so few arrests, and the role of the state in all this.

Pages 34-35

The Indonesian family as a contested site of women’s rights

Nursyahbani Katjasungkana traces the process through which the Domestic Violence bill in Indonesia was enacted in 2004. There the family is seen as the fundamental unit of society; thus, even while using the principles of gender equality, human rights and non-discrimination, the ‘save our family’ discourse was consciously incorporated as a core value in advocating the bill.

Pages 36

Malaysia’s DVA: the clash of gender, cultural and religious rights

Maznah Mohamad documents and analyses the passage of the domestic violence law in Malaysia. Its historical development follows several periods, such as the early years, the campaign years and the stocktaking years. Ultimately what was negotiated and contested was only a compromise, rather than the completion of an agenda.
At IIAS we endorse story-telling by way of pictures and The Newsletter’s abundant use of colourful images has become one of its most recognisable features. Our contributors and readers come from all over the world and speak dozens of different languages, so what better medium is there to represent a global language we can all understand?

IN THE CELEBRATORY SPIRIT OF OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY we are inviting our readers and friends of IIAS to contribute to our growing image collection by taking part in the IIAS Photo Contest. The contest was launched on 1 January 2014, and will run through to 30 June 2014.

We would like to give you the opportunity to tell a visual story, to explore photography’s capacity for communication, to capture the unexpected, and to share with us the world you live in. The photos you send will automatically become eligible for publication in The Newsletter (always accredited to you), and thus provide us with an incredible new source of pictorial material. To reward you we are giving away a number of prizes, which will be in the form of gift vouchers from various online shops (selected according to where the winner lives), with which you could acquire, for example, new photographic equipment (cameras, lenses, etc.) or literature.

Please send us your photographs by using our online form, which can be accessed through our websites: www.iias.nl/photography

Please do read the rules and regulations before submitting.
Housing the largest Dutch East India Company (VOC) and Dutch West India Company (WIC) archive, the National Archives of the Netherlands also preserves many hand drawn maps, plans and topographical views of the Dutch overseas settlements. Between 2005 and 2012 these were reproduced in the monumental series of the Comprehensive Atlas of the VOC and WIC. Nevertheless, a hitherto unknown plan was recently uncovered from obscurity.1

Josien Bos and Barend Noordam

Military commission
The executives turned to the highest political institution, the States General (Staten-Generaal), for financial and military support. They pointed to the (alleged) gains the VOC generated, in terms of tax revenues and the employment of their countrymen. On several occasions the States General gave in to their pleas and provided loans or equipped an entire naval fleet in order to suppress indigenous resistance. In 1786, when yet another appeal was made, it was decided that a new loan would only be given after an independent inspection of the overseas settlements was carried out by a Military Commission. Its members would be appointed by Stadtholder Prince Willem V.

It took two years before the Commission was staffed and could set sail for Asia. Reason for this delay was the political turmoil within the Dutch Republic. The system, headed by the Dutch army and navy, had its proponents (Orangisten) and opponents (Patriotten) and the two groups regularly clashed, verbally or by spreading anonymous pamphlets. Tensions reached a violent climax in 1787. After the Prussian intervention in September the leadership of Willem V was restored, leading to a fragile status quo. Underneath the surface, however, the conflict persisted and never really faded. As a result of this unsatisfactory outcome, political decision making was paralysed. Even the nomination of the military commissioners became politically laden and took far too long, but in the end Captain J.O. Vaillant, Captain C.A. VerHuell and Lieutenant Colonel J.F.L. Graevestein were appointed to head the Military Commission. Their appointment was a clear indication that the Stadtholder, on the behest of the Dutch army and navy, attempted to strengthen his grip on the Dutch overseas empire. Although the formation of the VOC and WIC, in 1602 and 1621 respectively, were based on political decision making, both long-distance trading companies could permit themselves to loosen the political bonds with the States General and Stadtholder in the course of the eighteenth century. From the middle of the eighteenth century, however, the Stadtholder attempted to renew the ties with the overseas empire; in commercial, political as well as military affairs. In the years preceding the installation of the Military Commission the Stadtholder already offered high (military) positions within the VOC hierarchy to his confidants. The inspection tour by the Military Commission was a next step in the process of colonial empire building.2

Reception
The fleet of the Military Commission could finally set sail for Asia in February 1789. The first important stop on the route was the African Cape Colony. In Africa, as well as at the Dutch settlements in Asia, the commissioners noted a lukewarm reception by the local VOC-authorities. The authorities observed them with much skepticism, because the Commission had a mandate to operate outside the traditional chain of command. Distrust or – what struck Vaillant and VerHuell even more – a total lack of interest in military affairs were frequent responses to their activities.

The highest VOC-authorities in Asia, the High Government (Hoge Regering), presiding at Batavia (present-day Jakarta), displayed a more positive stance towards the Military Commission. Although not pleased with the idea of prying eyes, the graveness of the situation was agreed upon. For a guiding role in the process, the High Government reasoned that direct participation was essential. It was therefore decided that Carl Friedrich Reimer, the most capable military engineer in the service of the VOC at that time, would be sent to assist the commissioners in the role of advisor and (main) cartographer. To ensure treatment as an equal to the commissioners, Reimer was promptly promoted to the rank of Major. After receiving instructions by the High Government, Reimer was sent to Ceylon.

Here he would await the arrival of the fleet, sailing from the Cape Colony, and join the commission for a period spanning nearly two years.
positively on Reimer’s work pace and high quality of maps is striking. When Vaillant, VerHuell and Graevestein wrote his plan with official British maps of fort St. George the accuracy should be the leading principle in mapmaking; we would not hesitate to produce a plan in which every corner was marked on the plan. The engineer remarked that his predecessors then only under strict British guidance. This explains the blank areas on the plan. Visits to the Danish at Tranquebar and the British at Madras were planned, and would prove to be a great opportunity to take a peek at the European competitors. The commissioners were amicably received by the Danish and British, all though both nations were fully aware of the true intentions of their Dutch visitors. The visit to Madras was therefore subject to several restrictions. For instance, Reimer and his fellow members could not walk freely through the town or fortress. In his report, Reimer wrote that he was only able to inspect the fort’s defences of fort St. George as an example of early modern corporate espionage.

Epilogue

The total production of the Military Commission was enormous. Hundreds of written pages full of analyses and recommendations are to be found at the National Archives of the Netherlands. They are accessible by the plan in English during the Dutch test visit that breaches in security were fully expected. Considering the Company’s status as a commercial non-state actor, we can even consider Reimer’s plan of fort St. George as an example of early modern corporate espionage.

Considering the Company’s status as a commercial non-state actor, we can even consider Reimer’s plan of fort St. George as an example of early modern corporate espionage.

Military intelligence

Reimer’s mapping activities should also be considered an example of the extent to which (military) intelligence gathering was a concern of early modern military and political actors like the Dutch East India Company. There is still a persistent perception that pre-Napoleonic military intelligence as a practice did not amount to much more than reconnoitering the enemy’s battle formations just prior to an armed confrontation.7 The persistence of this notion can be explained by the general paucity of modern research on this topic and the fact that early modern states and other political actors did not commit their intelligence-gathering activities to paper. Recent research on the VOC wartime decision making and its information channels has revealed this fact for the seventeenth century.8

We have to keep in mind that military intelligence did not exist yet as it does today. There were no specific goal-oriented institutions tasked with intelligence gathering. Early modern states and other semi-political actors (like the VOC) relied on ad hoc activities, improving according to the needs and opportunities of the moment, involving different levels of the command hierarchies. The professionalization of the study on early modern military intelligence has a long way to go. Still, research has been done on how European states – during the conflicts of the seventeenth century – extensively sought intelligence on enemy war intentions.9 They did so by employing third-party double agents at rival courts, intercepting written communications, interrogating prisoners of war and actively recruiting information brokers behind enemy lines. When dealing with the different Asian powers, the practices gained within the European theatres of war and diplomacy were used. For example, in the 1620s the VOC campaigned diplomatically and, at times, aggressively to open Ming China (1618-1644) for trade. Even in this inter-cultural theatre, VOC-servants took intelligence gathering seriously and endeavoured to secure knowledge through the forced acquisition of Portuguese documentation, the translation of official Chinese communications, the employment of interpreters of mixed Chinese and Iberian descent and the quest for Chinese merchant-cum-pirate middlemen with influential connections to the Ming officialdom.10

Turning back to the late eighteenth century, the activities of Reimer and the Military Commission prove that intelligence gathering was probably not an ideosyncratic pre-occupation of some individuals during the previous century, but continued to be taken seriously by VOC-servants, as well as their company. At the company’s request, see Zandvliet, K. 2002. ‘Vestenbouw in de Oost’, in Knoopp, G. et al. (eds.) De Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie: tussen oorlog en diplomatie, Leiden: KITVU Press, pp.150-160.

An unpublished MA thesis by Carl Friedrich Reimer is still the most informative source on the life and work of the Prussian military engineer in the service of the VOC: van Gerven, M.B. 2002. C.F. Reimer: een voorkomend mens: De Militaire Commissie naast Ali, 1789-1793. Reimer was born in Königsberg (present-day Kaliningrad) and entered VOC service as a soldier in December 1767. He functioned as a (junior) surgeon on Ceylon until 1777. In that year he was promoted to ensign-engineer and his main task became land surveying. Before his involvement with the Military Commission he was promoted once more and became lieutenant-engineer in 1785.


Barend Noordam (1981) is a PhD student at the history department of Leiden University and is currently working on a dissertation dealing with Chinese general Qi Jiguang (1527-1588) and his involvement in frontier defence during the Ming dynasty.

Notes

1 This article is based on a handwritten report by military engineer Carl Friedrich Reimer. The hitherto unknown plan of fort St. George (Madras) was drawn as a visual companion to the report and folded between the sheets. The document can be consulted at the National Archives of the Netherlands. Ni-HAAR, Collectie Allting, t.10.03, inv nr. 76.

2 A considerable body of research is available on the decline of the VOC in the eighteenth century. We can recommend the analysis of the matters in Jacobs, E.M. 2006. Merchant in Asia: the trade of the Dutch East India Company during the eighteenth century, Leiden: CNWU.


5 Reimer was born in Königsberg (present-day Kaliningrad) and entered VOC service as a soldier in December 1767. He functioned as a (junior) surgeon on Ceylon until 1777. In that year he was promoted to ensign-engineer and his main task became land surveying. Before his involvement with the Military Commission he was promoted once more and became lieutenant-engineer in 1785.


10 Most of the source material has been collected by Groenewold, W.P. 1984. De Nederlanders in China. De eerste bemanningen om Ceylon in china en de vestiging in de Pescadores (1607-1624), u-Gravenhage: Ni-HAAR.
Sukarno’s art collection

Sukarno, the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, was an art connoisseur and lover. Following the proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia in August 1945, the President purchased art works on a large scale, either personally or via an intermediary. He bought works by Indonesian artists, and also European painters such as Rudolf Bonnet, Willem Hofker, Roland Strasser, Theo Meier and the aristocratic Belgian artist Adrien Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès, who had settled on Bali and who was also known as the ‘Paul Gauguin of Bali’. He mostly painted half-naked dancers such as his Balinese wife Ni Pollok. The Dutchman Willem Hofker also painted charming bare-breasted Balinese women. Other favourite subjects for these painters included tropical landscapes, sawas (rice paddies), temples and village scenes: ‘Beautiful Indies romance’. So, how did Sukarno’s extensive art collection become established and what happened to it after his death in June 1970?

Louis Zeevers
Luxury albums

Sukarno was proud of his art collection, which suggests a preference for nationalistic, romantic paintings, giving an idealised image of the Indonesian revolution, the landscape and women. The painting collection of ex-president Sukarno is sometimes spoken of rather facetiously as it is, apparently, the largest collection of naked women in Southeast Asia.

In the Calvini atmoshpere of the 1950s, Sukarno's artistic preference was almost considered pornographic. But similar paintings by the same artists would later collect impressive sums in the auction houses of Sotheby's and Christie's in Amsterdam, London and Singapore.

In 1964 five large-size luxury volumes with the title Paintings and statues from the collection of President Sukarno of the Republic of Indonesia were published. The first four volumes each contain one hundred colour reproductions of paintings, half of which were by the European artists who had worked for many years on the island of Bali. The last volume concerns his collection of sculptures and porcelains; the curator of this collection was the Chinese-Indonesian artist Lee Man Fong, advisor to and official painter at the presidential court. The 5 volumes are a significant documentation of Sukarno's art treasures.

Previously, in 1956, two major books had also been published and three years later another two volumes appeared relating to his paintings, edited by the Indonesian painter Dullah. Previously, the first four volumes each contain one hundred colour reproductions of paintings, half of which were by the European artists who had worked for many years on the island of Bali. The last volume concerns his collection of sculptures and porcelains; the curator of this collection was the Chinese-Indonesian artist Lee Man Fong, advisor to and official painter at the presidential court. The 5 volumes are a significant documentation of Sukarno's art treasures. However, all these books remained unpublished, because Strasser had produced a number of almost identical oil paintings featuring a Balinese man with a fighting cock.

Exodus

Many of the European artists on Bali whose works were collected by Sukarno were deported during the 1950s, when the political situation became increasingly difficult. The painter Rudolf Bonnet, prominent in Sukarno's collection, had to leave the country at the end of 1956 following the worsening conflict over New Guinea; he arrived back in the Netherlands disillusioned. He had previously been attacked by rampokkers (poor relatives); his house was ransacked, but he remained unharmed, so his biographer Dr. de Roever-Bonnet was prompted to tell him: "The Belgian painter Le Mayer did not get off so lightly. He was attacked in his home in Sanur on South Bali and received a large stab wound to his shoulder. In Sukarno's collection there is a portrait in oils, of a young Balinese woman; the painting is showing signs of cracking, and it is possible that this work was subsequently restored. This small painting was created by the German artist Arthur Jörg König who, in the summer of 1947, went to live in the cool and elevated village of Babahan on the east coast, which offered splendid views of the sea, the mountains and the valley. He told his biographer, the American journalist Cindy Adams, that these accusations were fabrications.3 But the political situation became increasingly difficult. The painter Rudolf Bonnet, prominent in Sukarno's collection, had to leave the country at the end of 1956 following the worsening conflict over New Guinea; he arrived back in the Netherlands disillusioned. He had previously been attacked by rampokkers (poor relatives); his house was ransacked, but he remained unharmed, so his biographer Dr. de Roever-Bonnet was prompted to tell him: "The Belgian painter Le Mayer did not get off so lightly. He was attacked in his home in Sanur on South Bali and received a large stab wound to his shoulder.

Incidentally, President Sukarno, a devout Muslim, had the most offensive canvases removed. Sukarno had great plans for his art collection. In 1965 he told his biographer, the American journalist Cindy Adams, that he would leave his paintings to the Indonesian people, and they were to be housed in a yet to be established National Museum. That museum never came to fruition. A number of paintings from Sukarno's collection still hang in the stately villas, receiving rooms and the offices of the presidential palace in Jakarta. That is to say, the more neutral landscapes and portraits; the whereabouts of the more erotic paintings from his collection are unknown.

In 1957, visited Sukarno in his palace in Jakarta. Waenaar told me just before his death in 1997: "It was relaxed conversation in Dutch. Sukarno even showed me his private collection of paintings. He ended the conversation with the confidential remark that he very much wanted to go to the Netherlands to meet the Queen."4 During another audience, Sukarno asked the journalist Hans Beynon if perhaps he could purchase an artwork by his uncle, the landscape and portrait painter Jan Daniël Beynon, who had an atelier on the Molenvliet in Batavia at the end of the nineteenth century. Beynon responded that these works were not for sale.5

Amateur painter

Sukarno not only collected paintings, but was also a talented amateur painter of realistic portraits. Thus, the volumes "Paintings and statues" ...[mentioned above] also reproduced his oil painting of the Indonesian Woman Rise from 1958. (image 3) According to Sukmawati Sukarnoputri, the youngest daughter of the former-President, this work was never passed on to the family.6

In February 1965, Sukarno told the Newsweek correspondent Bernard Krisher: "I have an artist's easel and palette and paints ready and if I do not like something in one of my purchased paintings, then I improve it a little." Krisher called this admission the ultimate proof of his vanity.7


Notes

1 This text is based on my article 'Een ertsicht Panorama Mesdag, Sukarno's kunstverzameling', in NRC Handelsblad, Culture Supplement, 15 October 1999, p.31. This is a reworked and translated version.
4 de Graaff, B. & Wiebes, C. 1998. 'Paintings and statues...'[mentioned above] also reproduced his oil painting of the Indonesian Woman Rise from 1958. (image 3) According to Sukmawati Sukarnoputri, the youngest daughter of the former-President, this work was never passed on to the family.
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The pursuit of happiness in modern Japan

The so-called rise of Asia has attracted renewed attention to Asian societies mainly as places of economic growth and business opportunities. But different socio-political orders throughout Asia also serve as a reminder of alternative priorities regarding the meaning of prosperity. Bhutan’s proclamation of Gross National Happiness and the popularity of Tibetan Buddhism are only the most eye-catching examples that have cast a light on the significance of subjective well-being and quality of life in contrast to promises of growth, wealth, and progress.

Torsten Weber


Happiness as a political concept

Happiness became part of the canon of modern political discourse following John Locke’s observation that all human action is guided by the “enjoyment of happiness” as the first and necessary step towards happiness and his statement that the perfection of human nature “lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness.” [An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, 1689]. Article One of the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776) first postulated “the enjoyment of life and liberty” as well as “pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety” as inherent rights. The same year, these rights famously became part of the US Declaration of Independence as “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) later provided a socio-philosophical basis to these ideas in his writings on utilitarianism. His utilitarian thought became known as the “greatest happiness principle”, which postulates achieving the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people as the aim of good government. These ideas also influenced political discourse in Japan, where politicised ideas of happiness emerged as part of the Movement for Freedom and People’s Rights in early Meiji Japan (1868–1912). In fact, one of the first political societies in modern Japan, founded by activist and politician Itagaki Taisuke (1837–1919), and others, named itself after ideals proposed in the Virginia Declaration – namely the Society for Happiness and Safety (Kōfuku Anzensha). The Movement’s ideological indebtedness to utilitarian thought was also reflected in its pressure on the Meiji leaders to promulgate a civil constitution, which also drew attention to the functions of the concept of happiness in public discourse as a proxy for more disputed social and political goals. In contemporary Japan, this article discusses how “happiness” (幸福) served thinkers and activists as a consensual substitute for more controversial demands such as freedom, civil rights, social, economic-farmers, non-hegemonic social, economic and political order.

Happiness and freedom in women’s magazines

In mainstream political discourse, however, happiness served less as a utopian goal than as a vehicle to promote alternative views of society as well as its traditional order and social institutions. This tendency can be observed particularly well in a new and growing medium of social discourse in Japan from the early twentieth century onwards: women’s magazines (fujin-zōshai). Their history goes back to the 1870s, and by the end of the Meiji period more than 100 different women’s magazines had been founded. The most prominent ones reached circulations of up to 500,000. The combined circulation of all fujin-zōshai climbed to 1.2 million in 1925, including a readership of 75–90% of all female students and women in employment.1 From being mono-lectic in content, many women’s journals served as progressive forums for critical debate about diverse social issues (shakai mondai), often with a particular focus on their linkages to women, marriage, and family. As Kaneko Sachiko’s research on the history of women’s discourse in Japan has revealed, such discussions were strongly influenced by utilitarian thought.2 In particular, John Stuart Mill’s On Liberty (1859) and his advocacy of individual freedom as the precondition for the attainment of happiness became cornerstones of debates about the role of women in modern Japanese society – and about Japanese society in toto. One of the most fervent advocates of the emancipation of women

use of the concept of happiness in formulating their socio-political viewpoint. Wu Zhuizi (1869–1953) of the Paris group of Chinese anarchists promoted the willingness to “abrogate all personal rights in order to pursue collective happiness”, while Japanese philosopher Kōzō Shūshi (1871–1911) emphasised the mutual links between freedom and happiness, as did the Korean revolutionary Sin Ch‘a-hoe (1880–1936), who in 1923 not only called for the expulsion of “Robber Japan” from Korea, but also for the destruction of social inequality in order to “promote the happiness of all the masses”.3 But the linking of their political agendas to the widely agreeable concept of happiness could hardly conceal their anti-government stance. Kōzō was executed for treason and Sin died in prison before Korea regained independence.

Notes

1 Asia is not included in the only monograph to date that provides an analysis of the history of happiness as a political concept: Motohashi, Hikaru. A History from the Greeks to the Present. London: Penguin. For a historical contextualization of the concept of happiness in modern Japan, see also: Weber, Torsten. “Research agendas to the widely agreeable concept of happiness could as easily be subsumed under “the pursuit of happiness” as the search for individual happiness in everyday life.” This binary of “smaller” and “greater” happiness finds its conceptual analog in what Reinhart Koselleck has called Erfüllungsbegriff (concepts of expectation) and Erfriedungsbegriff (concepts of experience). The former are usually more abstract and refer to goals that are projected into the future, while the latter are closely linked to past or present day experiences. Their contents – or the state of their attainment – can only be evaluated on a daily basis. Throughout history, and even today, happiness appears to have worked as a particularly suitable barometer to measure these expectations and experiences because most people are able to answer the question “Are you happy?” The general positive interpretation of the “pursuit of happiness”, already present in the early Meiji period, marks a significant departure from a utilitarian perspective was socialist activist and politician Abe Issui (1865–1949). In a series of articles published from the late Meiji period onwards, he published his women’s magazines such as Fujin Kōron (Ladies’ Review) or Shufu no Tomo (Housewives’ Friend), as well as in other mainstream journals, Abe proposed to review and reform the traditional socio-political institutions of marriage and family according to their con-
Making ‘new’ Muslim places in urban Malaysia and Indonesia

My research in 2013 brought me to various cities in Malaysia and Indonesia. It gave me the opportunity to visit a multitude of interesting venues, ranging from sacred places (Chinese-style mosques), to eating places (Chinese halal restaurants), retail places (shopping malls and Islamic boutiques) and living places (Muslim gated communities), and led me to develop a new research project in which I will study Muslim identities and aspirations in contemporary societies, by examining the constructions of place, claimson space and the architecture of built forms.

BY STUDYING the production and consumption of ‘new’ Muslim places, this research aims to provide fresh ways of thinking about Islam, and more specifically, of thinking about Muslims and their relations to the challenges of urbanisation, modernity and ethnicity in contemporary Malaysia and Indonesia. It will examine how and under what conditions, religious movements transform urbanity and, vice versa, how urban space triggers religious innovations. Yet, it does not see Islam as the only parameter to understand such dynamics, but also takes other aspects into consideration such as consumer culture, ethnic interaction, political contestation and economic development.

While this research engages with both current scholarly discussions of space and place, it highlights the material dimensions of spatial formation, by looking at places such as Chinese-style mosques, halal restaurants, Muslim gated communities and Muslim websites. Although they do not have a physical structure, online spaces entail material sensibilities represented by words and images. Instead of conventional Muslim places, such as mosques (in this case, non-Chinese-style), religious schools and shrines, this study emphasises the development of new practices and the formation of new ideas, as reflected in the making of new places I describe below.

Promoting inclusive Islam:
Chinese-style mosques

This project builds upon my ongoing work, ‘Translocal and Cosmopolitan Islam: Chinese-style Mosques in Malaysia and Indonesia’. Since 2000, at least ten Chinese-style mosques were built in Malaysia and Indonesia, clearly making them a translocal phenomenon. Inspired by the architectural design of old mosques in mainland China, different actors have built Chinese-style mosques in various cities in both Malaysia and Indonesia to preach the universality of Islam, as well as to show the compatibility between Islam and Chineseess.

Yet there are also different motivations behind the construction of each mosque. For instance, the Kelantan Beijng Mosque was sponsored by an Islamic party in Malaysia to promote an inclusive image of the party, while the Surabaya Cheng Hoo Mosque was established by the Indonesian Chinese Muslim Association to manifest a distinctive representation of Chinese Muslim cultural identity. In addition, the activities in the mosques are localized: the sermons are conducted in Malay or Indonesian, and most of the congregation members are non-Chinese Muslims. These mosques have also been promoted as sites for religious tourism (dissemination of Islamic messages), which some of them called ‘digital dakwah’.

Cyber spaces are important places where many Chinese Muslims share their religious experiences, their ethnic-religious identities, and spread Islamic messages to non-Muslim audiences. The internet not only connects Chinese converts who are minorities in both Malaysia and Indonesia, but also allows them to communicate with Muslims in China, and Muslim converts in the West; this might contribute to a new flow of online translocal ummiah network (see http://www.ummiah.com, http://www.zikria.net and http://www.onenur.net). Unlike conventional dakwah activities, which aim to strengthen the faith of Muslims, Chinese ‘dakwah’ digital dakwah aims to universalise Islam and invite non-Muslims to get closer to the Islamic faith.

In addition to ‘digital dakwah’, Chinese Muslims also conduct ‘street dakwah’, a new phenomenon in Indonesia, in which Muslims (both Malay and Chinese) take their faith to the streets in urban centres and share their religion with non-Muslims. Some Muslim individuals and groups are involved in both forms of dakwah, leading us to speculate about the ways in which the two are related. How, for example, does the interaction of new media and urban spaces contribute to new forms of religious activities?

Conclusion

From inclusive Chinese-style mosques to exclusive Muslim housing clusters, we witness placemaking by different Muslim actors, at numerous sites, in contemporary urban Malaysia and Indonesia. These places are sites of negotiation between Islamic movements and consumer culture, between religious piety and urban lifestyle; they are sites of interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims and between Muslims with different backgrounds. On the one hand, there is a growing demand for diversity within Islamic expressions among the urban middle class. They do not want to see the mosques built in a similar pan-Islamic architecture, thus they support the construction of Chinese-style mosques; they do not want to just eat Malay food, thus they visit Chinese halal restaurants. On the other hand, there is also an increased desire to mix religious messages with modern ideas, to forge an ‘Islamic way of modern living’, by building Islamic gated communities and Islamic cities. Even though this ‘Islamic way of modern living’ adopts modern infrastructure and ideas, it is often accompanied by strict regulations, religious segregation and sometimes even moral policing, which might alienate non-Muslims and non-conformist Muslims.

What are the translocal flows, national politics and local dynamics behind the ‘new’ places? Who are the producers and consumers of these places? What do these places tell us about Muslim piety and urban politics? How do these places engage with existing religious and cultural diversity in Malaysia and Indonesia? A study of urban Muslim places could provide us with deeper insights into the multifaceted and intertwined processes of ‘Islamisation’ and urbanisation in contemporary Indonesia, as well as the inclusionary possibilities and limitations of these processes of placemaking. These places could also tell us how and under what conditions, religious ideas and market considerations converge in urban settings.

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Note

1 An earlier version of this article was published in ZMO Orient Bulletin, No. 24, June 2013. (http://tinyurl.com/3ZM0auerlin24)

By STUDYING the production and consumption of ‘new’ Muslim places, this research aims to provide fresh ways of thinking about Islam, and more specifically, of thinking about Muslims and their relations to the challenges of urbanisation, modernity and ethnicity in contemporary Malaysia and Indonesia. It will examine how and under what conditions, religious movements transform urbanity and, vice versa, how urban space triggers religious innovations. Yet, it does not see Islam as the only parameter to understand such dynamics, but also takes other aspects into consideration such as consumer culture, ethnic interaction, political contestation and economic development.

While this research engages with both current scholarly discussions of space and place, it highlights the material dimensions of spatial formation, by looking at places such as Chinese-style mosques, halal restaurants, Muslim gated communities and Muslim websites. Although they do not have a physical structure, online spaces entail material sensibilities represented by words and images. Instead of conventional Muslim places, such as mosques (in this case, non-Chinese-style), religious schools and shrines, this study emphasises the development of new practices and the formation of new ideas, as reflected in the making of new places I describe below.

Promoting inclusive Islam:
Chinese-style mosques

This project builds upon my ongoing work, ‘Translocal and Cosmopolitan Islam: Chinese-style Mosques in Malaysia and Indonesia’. Since 2000, at least ten Chinese-style mosques were built in Malaysia and Indonesia, clearly making them a translocal phenomenon. Inspired by the architectural design of old mosques in mainland China, different actors have built Chinese-style mosques in various cities in both Malaysia and Indonesia to preach the universality of Islam, as well as to show the compatibility between Islam and Chineseess.

Yet there are also different motivations behind the construction of each mosque. For instance, the Kelantan Beijng Mosque was sponsored by an Islamic party in Malaysia to promote an inclusive image of the party, while the Surabaya Cheng Hoo Mosque was established by the Indonesian Chinese Muslim Association to manifest a distinctive representation of Chinese Muslim cultural identity. In addition, the activities in the mosques are localized: the sermons are conducted in Malay or Indonesian, and most of the congregation members are non-Chinese Muslims. These mosques have also been promoted as sites for religious tourism (dissemination of Islamic messages), which some of them called ‘digital dakwah’.

Cyber spaces are important places where many Chinese Muslims share their religious experiences, their ethnic-religious identities, and spread Islamic messages to non-Muslim audiences. The internet not only connects Chinese converts who are minorities in both Malaysia and Indonesia, but also allows them to communicate with Muslims in China, and Muslim converts in the West; this might contribute to a new flow of online translocal ummiah network (see http://www.ummiah.com, http://www.zikria.net and http://www.onenur.net). Unlike conventional dakwah activities, which aim to strengthen the faith of Muslims, Chinese ‘dakwah’ digital dakwah aims to universalise Islam and invite non-Muslims to get closer to the Islamic faith.

In addition to ‘digital dakwah’, Chinese Muslims also conduct ‘street dakwah’, a new phenomenon in Indonesia, in which Muslims (both Malay and Chinese) take their faith to the streets in urban centres and share their religion with non-Muslims. Some Muslim individuals and groups are involved in both forms of dakwah, leading us to speculate about the ways in which the two are related. How, for example, does the interaction of new media and urban spaces contribute to new forms of religious activities?

Conclusion

From inclusive Chinese-style mosques to exclusive Muslim housing clusters, we witness placemaking by different Muslim actors, at numerous sites, in contemporary urban Malaysia and Indonesia. These places are sites of negotiation between Islamic movements and consumer culture, between religious piety and urban lifestyle; they are sites of interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims and between Muslims with different backgrounds. On the one hand, there is a growing demand for diversity within Islamic expressions among the urban middle class. They do not want to see the mosques built in a similar pan-Islamic architecture, thus they support the construction of Chinese-style mosques; they do not want to just eat Malay food, thus they visit Chinese halal restaurants. On the other hand, there is also an increased desire to mix religious messages with modern ideas, to forge an ‘Islamic way of modern living’, by building Islamic gated communities and Islamic cities. Even though this ‘Islamic way of modern living’ adopts modern infrastructure and ideas, it is often accompanied by strict regulations, religious segregation and sometimes even moral policing, which might alienate non-Muslims and non-conformist Muslims.

What are the translocal flows, national politics and local dynamics behind the ‘new’ places? Who are the producers and consumers of these places? What do these places tell us about Muslim piety and urban politics? How do these places engage with existing religious and cultural diversity in Malaysia and Indonesia? A study of urban Muslim places could provide us with deeper insights into the multifaceted and intertwined processes of ‘Islamisation’ and urbanisation in contemporary Indonesia, as well as the inclusionary possibilities and limitations of these processes of placemaking. These places could also tell us how and under what conditions, religious ideas and market considerations converge in urban settings.

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Note

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South Asia is at present experiencing – beyond an assumed media dominance of Bollywood – the growing circulation of popular film in approximately one hundred different ‘indigenous’ languages. The culture of film viewing is explored here by means of an ethnographic field study in a village in Mayurbhanj (Odisha), whereby the complex interplay between VCD films and everyday life is described. Through an interview with a Santal film director, the contradiction of ideas about ‘indigenous’ media are emphasized.

Markus Schreiter

POPULAR FILMS AND MUSIC VIDEOS in Santali, the language of the Santal, are highly enjoyed in villages and small towns of Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal (India). A single film can get an audience of up to 5 million viewers, if one considers all means of distribution, namely cinema and VCD sales, but also pirated VCD copies or mobile downloads available in countless shops. The present success of indigenous media, such as Santal films, concurs with a strong reappraisal of ethnic claims in many regions of South Asia as well as a support for indigenous groups by NGOs and the UN on a global level.

Simultaneously, the wide availability of and accessibility to consumer range film making tools – digital cameras and editing technologies – have facilitated the professional making of films and music videos at extremely low costs.

In the intense academic debate on the success, but also ambivalence, of ‘indigeneity’ as a global assertive concept, Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart have drawn attention to the role indigenous media plays in negotiations for political and economic entitlements of indigenous communities. They state that such media is of major importance within politics of identity, as well as for a resistance of indigenous communities against their subordination. The appropriation of new media technology by indigenous artists would be a means of fostering local traditions and values, while the use of media simultaneously points to the fact that indigenous culture is a “living, dynamic organism”.

On the other hand, in Santragachi, a prestigious suburban district in the vicinity of Kolkata, a high-level officer of Santal origin told me: “Popular Santal films will lead Santal in the villages to succumb to modernity and forget about their own tradition”. Below, I will focus exemplarily on the ways indigenous media and village everyday culture are intricately intertwined, and suggest on this basis that conjunctures of media and village life are open to very differing and unprecedented outcomes, which defy both of the takes on the cultural effects of indigenous media mentioned above.

A film director’s view on indigenous media

So far, around 120 Santal films, and an estimated 250 music video clip compilations, have been produced by small scale film entrepreneurs. The main centres of Santal film production are Asansol (West Bengal), Tatangan (Jharkhand) and Baripada (Odisha). Two major film production companies of this industry are located in the latter town, namely Maa Ambika Studio of Sanjib Dwiwedi and Raja Mishra film studio. Both of the owners have a small team of employees, and about 200 freelance artists and film technicians, of whom half are of Santal origin.

Raja Mishra, an Odya high caste film director, not of Santal origin, also runs a photo studio on the 2nd floor of a market building close to Baripada railway station. Waiting to interview him, I sat in the back room of his photo studio. The tiny, bright-green room serves as the office of his film company and – equipped with two computers – also functions as the editing room. While waiting there, I observed an employee editing images, routinely whitening the face and blackening the hair of a photo studio customer. Finally, Raja Mishra came in, wearing a half opened branded shirt and a golden necklace. Surprisingly, he turned out to be utmost humble and friendly, and at the same moment, outspoken and rather self-confident man:

“I am a self-made director. When I started fifteen years back, nobody would invest in my company. Now we are doing films with a budget of 500,000 Rupees (approx. €6000) in this studio. When I did my first album, I had no equipment, I just owned a small camera. Back then, I could not even afford to rent a car to reach outdoor locations. First, I would bring my assistant on my bike to the shooting location. Then I would return in order to pick up the star actress. She and her mother sat on the backseat of my bike together, and I drove the whole way again.”

“It is important to show ‘traditional’ culture in Santali films?” I asked him.

“I am always keen on doing stories related to Santal customs. I will give you an example. Usually a Santal would marry outside his own lineage group (gotra). However, members of the two gotras Kisku and Marandi are not allowed to intermarry. Just now I am planning a film about two childhood friends, one a Kisku, and the second a Marandi, whose children have fallen in love with each other. We always bring in some of their traditions in a film, such as their dances or their rice-beer. I love the culture of Santals a lot, and have visited Santal villages often. Still, people of the villages want to see up-to-date films. They also want to watch dressy dance sequences, for example. You cannot deny it to them. Just recently, I made a video for a Soft song in Santal, which became a big success.”

“So, you love shooting fashionable films?”

“It’s not about choice. I would do a silent film with long shots, if I could make a film based on my own likes, just an intense screenplay with very long shots, like in films by the off-beat Bollywood director Ram Gopal Varma. Nobody speaks in them. One, two minutes, just silence. But these kind of films I cannot sell. If I do fast cuts and put in a whole load of sounds and effects … ‘Bum bam bum’ … Only then people say, ‘Oh, Raja Mishra has made a good film’.”

Santal films are indigenous films in the sense that they are in an indigenous language, that they cater to indigenous target audiences and that indigenous people are part of their production. The director’s words, however, illustrate the complexities of defining indigenous media as ‘indigenous’. In Raja Mishra’s work a variety of ideas concur that show a love for indigenous tradition, even though he is not of indigenous origin himself; but above all, his self-identification with cinematic artistic endeavours and his assumptions about audience demands are omnipresent. Thereby, he believes that the indigenous target audiences favour up-to-date cinematic fashions. Integrating depictions of ‘indigenous tradition’ in Santal films is thus part of a multi-faceted assemblage, in which a variety of very differing viewpoints on the making of films – not necessarily indigenous viewpoints – are negotiated.

A Santal video night

In 2002, I did my PhD research in a settlement of a Birhor tribe in the multi-ethnic indigenous village Durdura in Mayurbhanj (Odisha). Staying there, I came to experience the people’s fondness of Santal films. Especially the male youths in the village would consistently plead with me to make a donation for a video night. At that time I tended to argue that they should instead enjoy a night of dancing together. In April 2011 I returned to the village for my present research, only to find that not much had changed. One late morning I was sitting with a quick, but, in equal measure disgusting cup of instant coffee on the veranda of the small one-roomed house where I was staying, when Raja, a young guy from the village, showed up. He said to me:

“Hey Markus, you have already stayed so many days here with us. I would like to ask you to do something for our Birhor sub-village now. You see, everybody wishes to watch films...”
A village video night and the future of Santal ‘traditional’ dances

tomorrow. Could you give us just 300 Rs (around 4 Euro), so that we could rent a TV-set tomorrow evening?”

To his astonishment, eagerly in search of film audiences, I promptly agreed. And so, the following evening shortly after sunset, a video night started. Roughly 200 people, comprising all ages and genders, assembled at the dance area in the village. The video night started with an album of Santal music videos. Thereafter, the screening of films began, and through-out the hours of the night three Santali films were shown without interruption. Each film delivered a twisted love story embedded in a societal topic, like the exploitation by a giáo-some landlord. Thereby, the hero of the film, a young guy with sunglasses and fashionable jeans, protected his heroine against the villain. The latter usually did not survive the revenge scene at the end of the film. Each film included five dance sequences of popular Santali songs. The majority of viewers, warmly wrapped up in their blankets, stayed the whole night, intensely and silently following the stories — though a few of them did fall asleep in front of the TV. With the start of dawn Raja put a last music video album into the disc player.

A close look at such a video night reveals that the act of joining becomes meaningful to village inhabitants far beyond film watching. First and foremost, a video night as a collective event occupies the same space as ‘traditional’ dances – which is an occasion to enjoy with people with whom one shares a relationship (Hindi: rishta; or Bhhor, Santali: soga), and thereby to further bond these relationships. Likewise, village dances are a traditional opportunity for romance, and a video night consequently carries the exciting possibilities for (hidden) courting between youths.4

It became clear that the filmmaker’s ideas about his target audiences proved insightful. First of all, except for a few youngsters, no one in the village appeared to be interested in watching a Bollywood film. In Santal VCDs, village inhabitants stressed that they particularly enjoy the story (kahani) and thereby stressed that they particularly enjoy the story and the web of interrelated moral dilemmas, so I was surprised: All of the films are bad, may they be in Odiya or Santali, but to Santals all of them are bad. Dance is the main thing for Santals, it is the only thing that gives pleasure to us. Video will put an end to dance.”

Her husband, nearly 70 years old, though in line with her argument, disagreed on the last point, and elaborated on his more laid-back view on occurrences of cultural change in the village. “Dance will continue, it will never end. Some people may prefer video to dancing, it depends on them. Only the Bhhor are doing a maximum of video shows. Now it is everyone’s freedom, whatever one wishes to do, one can do. Before, we had not seen tobacco, no pants and no underwear. All these things have come, and also video comes now.”

Conclusion

In the village Dundra the culture of viewing Santali films refers to the meaninglessness of a ‘traditional’ dance night, and this has led villagers to celebrate these films as a means of enjoying time together. At the same time, villagers do expose the enduring nature of ‘traditional’ dances by comparisons with (the unworthiness of) ‘video nights’. As such, film watching and ‘traditional’ practices in a village stand in a reciprocal reference to each other, and such media practice becomes part of supporting ‘new media usage’ as well as ‘traditional’ dance forms. This, however, contradicts forecasts cited at the start of the essay, that the appearance of ‘indigenous’ media would respectively predetermine either a dissolution or a revival of ‘indigenous’ culture in these communities. In the village Dundra as such, ‘video’ and ‘traditional’ dances have co-existed already for more than a decade, of which the persistency can be interpreted para-doxically to have resulted from the simultaneous presence of the various and contradictory engagements with ‘indigenous’ media outlined above.

Wilson and Stewart have built their argument for Global Indigenous Medias to a large extent on the assumption that ‘indigenous’ media is an expression of ‘indigenous tradition’. However, on the basis of the interview with Raja Mishra, the Santali films he makes have been shown to be influenced by the filmmaker’s multiple self-identifications and viewpoints that go much beyond depicting ‘indigenous’ culture. At the same time, the ‘indigenous’ audience in a village proved to be not in need of depictions of ‘indigeneity’ in Santali films. As such, I would suggest to laud ‘indigenous’ media for much more than its references to ‘indigenous tradition’, which are not necessarily part of Santali films. This would allow one, in addition, to overcome prevailing (partly derogative) preconceptions of ‘indigenous’ communities, artists and media forefoot to be an outcome of an ‘archaic culture’, and much more to coequally recognize such ‘indigenous’ peoples’ media as contemporary popular films.

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Notes
4 Find an detailed analysis of such a video night in Schleiter, M. (forthcoming) ‘Santali Video Nights: An Exploration of the “Cultural Margin” of a VideoCD Circulation in a village in India’, in Mukherjee, Madhujita & Lotte Hoek (eds.) Video Landscapes.
Ramâwan commonly describes the important yearly ceremonies for the Cham-Bani community of Vietnam (also known as the ‘Awal’) that occur during the ninth month of the Cham-Bani calendar (sakawi Awal). There is also a reputedly small Cham-Bani community in Cambodia, predominantly known in the press and academic circles as the Kaum Imam San (kaum: from Malay for ‘group’, of Imam San’s lineage). However, there are clear differences between this Bani community in Cambodia and the Awal of Vietnam, which will be the focus of future studies. In this essay the authors focus on the Awal of Vietnam as they represent an important example of localization of Islamic influence in contemporary Vietnam.

William Noseworthy and Quang Văn Sơn

IN VIETNAM THE CHAM BANI number approximately 40,000 and live mostly in the dry coastal provinces of Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận, although a large number of Bani youth have migrated southward to Hồ Chí Minh City to live and work. Every year, just before the month of Ramâwan begins, the Bani community in the Cham homeland of Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận swells in size as all family members return to their ancestral homes. The central ceremony during Ramâwan, called êw muk kei, is in fact focused on, literally, calling the ancestors and is a ceremony that is shared with the Cham Ahei (Balamón or Shavite influenced Cham).³ In this way the central focus of the Ramâwan ceremonies are less comparable to the practices of Ramadan, from which Ramâwan is derived, but more comparable to the common practices of ancestral worship shared amongst many Southeast Asian peoples. Amongst the Thai peoples these ceremonies are associated with pu nyo ancestral spirit worship and amongst the Vietnamese these ceremonies are associated with (dù) and (bà) ancestral worship. With this regional context in mind it is helpful to remember that the specific context of Ramâwan is dictated by a priesthood – comprising the Po Gru, Imam, Katip, Mâdhîr and Acar – which is unique to the contemporary Awal.¹

In villages and small towns in Ninh Thuận province, (the Islamic Shafti) Sunni community’s month of Ramadan began one day before the Awal month of Ramâwan this past year. However, before the month of Ramâwan begins, the Awal priests participate in a ritualistic cleansing ceremonies called Njöp ndâm pôbô. The ceremony consists of offerings of soup, goat meat and rice – and is used to cleanse the essence of the priests before they lead Ramâwan ceremonies. As with all other elements of the month of Ramâwan, this ceremony takes places in accordance with the sakawi Awal. However, the location differs. A temporary prayer tent called a kôjông is constructed for the njöp ndâm pôbô ceremonies as follows:

— Acar njöp yôbjó hânhi ongôr (The lowest ranking priests: the Acar complete the ceremony on Wednesday)
— Mâdhîr njöp hânhi bu (The middle ranking Mâdhr priests complete the ceremony on Thursday)
— Imâm/njôp hânhi jô (The Imam and the Katip priests complete the ceremony on Friday)

After the priests have taken part in this purification ritual they can then lead the rest of the Ramâwan rituals. These include the visitation of ancestral graves (não ghur) before the month of Ramânaw technically begins, the ceremony of calling the ancestors (êw muk kei) and ceremonies of the month of Ramâwan (balon mbeng oôk – the month of fasting).

Nao ghur

The não ghur ceremony is possibly the most important Awal ceremony associated with Ramâwan. Although the ceremony occurs before the month of Ramâwan technically begins, it is understood as the gateway to the month. Ghur are ancestral grave sites of the Awal community. Each individual grave is marked by a headstone and a footstone. These sites are associated with each household and determined through matrilineal bloodlines. Depending on the household, each family may visit between two and four individual ghur sites, although the standard is three over the course of three days. The older sites are generally visited first, while the newer sites are visited later.

During the não ghur ceremony the Awul priests lay out mats and line up on one side of the ghur. Recently in the Awul community, due to the increasing ratio of priests to lay people, lay male assistants who act as priests in training may also recite the prayers, provided that they are able to remember them. They recite Qur’anic prayers to invite the ancestor spirits to return to earth, using a mixture of tobacco and betel leaf offerings. While the priests recite the prayers, members of the kinship group, predominantly female, but also younger males, prostrate themselves before the ghur. This process draws the ancestors back to earth, where their spiritual essence is then contained in a basket. These baskets are gathered up and brought home to the household, where an ancestral altar is constructed and offerings made to the ancestor spirits (êw muk kei). After approximately three days of the não ghur and êw muk kei ceremonies, further preparations are made and the individual family can enter the song məlık as the month of Ramâwan begins.

The song məlık

The majority of Bani ceremonies during the month of Ramâwan take place in the song məlık, or a Bani temple that serves as the center for village and small town life. In Ninh Thuận province, the local song məlık have formed a provincial board to redistribute donations from the wealthier small towns to the poorer villages and govern communal programs. Məlık is a local pronunciation of masjid, the Arabic term for mosque, and song is the Cham word for ‘house’. However, the song məlık are different from what one might expect of either Sunni or Shi’a mosques. Most song məlık only open their...
doors for life cycle rituals (weddings, funerals, etc.). Friday prayers and Ramâwan. While priests sit in the front of the song mâgik and live in them the entire month of Ramâwan, elderly women sit in the back of the song mâgik each evening during prayers. Furthermore, during the prayer ceremonies a major focus is the presentation of older women, younger women and younger men inside the song mâgik.

During Ramâwan the doors open to the public in the evenings around 6 o’clock. Priests begin the prayers by filing out of the song mâgik, performing cleansing ceremonies and then re-entering with a chant of ‘ta’auñ’. While tracing their fingers around ceremonial headdresses, while the Watp béats a drum, before beginning prayers at 6:30pm. After approximately twenty minutes, lay people, predominantly women, file in to be song mâgik in order to pray (yadik). At approximately 7:05 and 7:10, men shift their position for prayer. Then at approximately 8:15 the prayer begins to cease, as the nightly ceremonies and around 8:30pm. During the rest of the day, Awal priests remain in the song mâgik, during which time they are obligated to recite Qur’anic prayers five times per day (yadik). Each prayer session begins with the lighting of a special candle (bandle) and then the cleansing of the priests before they recite prayers for Awal deities such as Po Awluh (Allah), Po Mohammed, Po Ali and Po Phatimah (Fatima). Although the Awal and Austronesian deities (Balansam – Brahmanist influenced) cannot be fully explained in this short space, the Awal community has been known to map the deities on the human image in pictorial representations that resemble the Sufi concept of the ‘perfect man’.1

The many facets of syncretic Awal traditions The question of Sufi influence remains open historically, as in addition to certain Sufi markers (such as the concept of the ‘perfect man’ and the recitation of the phrase: Ilha-Il-wa-Ilaah), the Awal priesthood also shows markers of Buddhist influence, particularly as monks shave their heads, their clothes are embroidered with embroidery that repeats certain Buddhist motifs, and they chant using rhythms that have been clearly influenced by either deeper origins of the Bani community as Cham Mahayana Buddhists or have appeared through contact induced change with Vietnamese and Khmer populations.2 This milieu of cultural influence also explains why the senior (Po Ali) and junior (Po Phatimah) Awal priests have names that have Sanskrit roots. Further Indic influence is also thought to be found in the method of lay person prayer among Vietnamese population. For the slaves, they sit cross legged and at two points during the ceremony turn toward the center of the song mâgik, remaining cross legged, with hands clasped together at the center of the forehead. For women and younger males, during the middle of the prayer recitations, they enter the doorway of the song mâgik let their hands and touch them together in front of their forehead before they bow down. They sit completely at the base of the pillars, with the hands of the palms pushed upwards near the head; the palms are then turned slightly inward so that the thumbs and index fingers of each hand form a triangle, and the entire motion is repeated three times. They bow down three times, before making room for others to enter. Normally, during the first days of Ramâwan, when the song mâgik is more crowded, an individual may only do this offering one time. However, as the population of the small towns and villages wanes during the middle of the month, a given individual may bow down in prayer three or four times, perhaps more, during the nightly ceremonies. Notably, this method is shared amongst both Awal and Austronesian Cham populations, and is noted as a lay, rather than priestly, method of supplication.

While older and priestly members of the lay community may take on certain practices like eating a vegetarian diet (no meat except seafood), not cutting facial hair, or wearing turbans; refraining from drinking, and refraining from killing or eating animals. After fifteen days, the majority of the younger population is generally less strict with these practices. The villagers and townsmen are responsible for providing meals for the Awal priests during Ramâwan. Although the entirety of the month is focused on ceremonies and may appear to have an ornamental layering of Islamic practice, as previously suggested, the central importance of Ramâwan for the Bani community is ancestral worship, which reappears during the ceremonies of Mak Sun (the arrival of the deity Po Phatimah) on the fifteenth day of the month, and Ong Trun (the arrival of the male deity Po Ali) on the twentieth day of the month. After these deities arrive, a number of other ceremonies can take place. This includes the ceremonies of ruh bretch, which are offerings that parallel the traditional of asking, and the tohil kelam ceremonies (kelam from Arabic Qur’lam meaning ‘pen’, or ‘writing instrument’). Tohil kelam is particularly important, as it is during this ceremony that young males are symbolically (NB: not literally) circumcised (jotok) and that they begin the study of Awal prayers written in the localized script of Awlbani. Based on our current understandings, Awlbani is a localized version of Arabic with slight orthographic modifications and the absence of a certain number of letters to account for the differences in pronunciation between the Austronesian Cham and Semitic Arabic (Arabic script and pronunciation). Retaining approximately 80% orthographic similarity with standard Arabic. However, there are no institutions for the study of Akhar Bani other than the Awal priesthood. As such, study groups are held on weekends at the household of a Awal priest who takes the role of a teacher (gru, from Sanskrit guru) for the purposes of language study. The association with guru can be quite strong in the Awal community, with students holding almost kinship like loyalties to guru. However, the teacher-student relationship never trumps the relationship with ancestral spirits and this is evident throughout the month of Ramâwan. The month closes with tohil Ramâwan, which includes the return of ancestral spirits to their gur with rituals that assist their return to the spirit realm.

The emphasis on ancestral worship as part of the Ramâwan ceremony highlights the importance of the protection of Cham grave sites. Many of these locations are old Cham villages that the Cham people were forced to abandon during the relocation of the Cham people under the Nguyen Vietnamese Emperor Minh Mihn in the 1830s. Others are linked to Cham villages that were forcibly abandoned during the series of conflicts that devastated mainland Southeast Asia throughout the twentieth century. Consequently, because the land of these grave sites has not yet been protected in any fashion, new construction in the 1980s and 1990s onward has threatened the heritage of the Cham community. While some gur sites have been well protected, such as those in the village of Palei Pombly Biong, negotiations must be made at other sites between the Cham priesthood and local Vietnamese who either constructed, or farmed, upon gur sites, before Awal ancestral worship ceremonies can be performed. However, these are not the only issues surrounding gur sites. At the moment, there is a critical need for increased desertification as a result of unchecked water usage; and at others the apparent lack of ability to create a communal gur protection system has led to high piles of trash near ancestral graves.

Through a combination of history and contemporary concerns, the protection of gur sites has become one of the most important contemporary issues in the discussion between the local Vietnamese officials and intellectuals in the Cham community. Meanwhile, with the construction of a new provincial museum, local Vietnamese officials hope not only to promote tourism within the province, but also to improve public education; they continue the overall good relations that have existed between Cham and Vietnamese in the province over the past decades. Nevertheless, the protection of gur sites is but one amongst a host of issues that local officials must negotiate, as planning moves forward for the controversial construction of Vietnam’s first two nuclear power plants which (which was recently delayed as a result of safety concerns regarding the impact of rising sea levels on a comparative analysis of the Cham Awal of Vietnam and the ‘Ban of Cambodia’ or ‘Imam San’ group is certainly worthy of future research. This research was made possible through funding by the Center of Khmer Studies. The authors are incredibly grateful for their gracious support.

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Notes
3 By contrast the Bani of Cambodia, or the Kaum Imam San, have been influenced by more contact with Malay and Khmer culture. All priests are called Acar and there is no ‘Gru’. 4 Sàng is the Cham word for house. In the Phang Ran area, a consentment shift has led the initial ‘v’ to be pronounced as a hard (th) as in ‘Thomas’. Mâgik comes from a Cham adaptation of the pronunciation of the Arabic word mansaf, although, as in many places in Southeast Asia, the Cham developed their own form of construction for the song mâgik. The question of whether or not it may be better to understand the ‘song mâgik’ as an Awal temple is one for further research.
5 The most clear example can be found in the field notes of Dorris Blood dated to 1968.
6 This information, as with much of the information on the Bani community comes with great thanks to a long series of studies with Gru Hajan (Dr. Thành Phần) over the past several years. The authors are always grateful for his instruction. He mentioned the suggestion of possible Su’in influence on Bani traditions in a recent presentation: Thính Phúc, 2013. ‘Pêc: Môn hinh thiên tư trù và các dòng生态文明 và Việt Nam’, in Tạp chí Văn Hóc Chăm – The Journal of Cham Culture), No. 1, pp.4-12.
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http://newbooks.asia/review/Political-demography-indonesia

The city and the country
Reviewer: Heidi J. Miller
http://newbooks.asia/review/city-and-country

On to an erotic utopia?
Reviewer: Niels Mulder
http://newbooks.asia/review/erotic-utopia

History education and postwar national identity
Reviewer: Elizabeth Dutridge-Corp
http://newbooks.asia/review/history-education

Like a dancer
Reviewer: Lucien van Valen
http://newbooks.asia/review/dancer

Four decades on
Reviewer: William Noseworthy
http://newbooks.asia/review/four-decades

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Condemned to each other

Reviewed publication:

Lily Farid’s particular celebration of la condition humaine or ‘man’s fate’ is set out of the way locations, but most pertinently in contemporary Indonesia with anti-Chinese rioting and looting, with the gunfire of guerrilla attacks, and interreligious violence in the Moluccas. Even so, violence is not the privilege of the surrounding world outside, but looms in the very family room that has been booby trapped with mines and into which family members throw stacks of dynamite. Next to the familiar reaction of people sticking to themselves behind the closed doors and shutters of their privacy, we find the violence against the integrity of the individual, personified in, on one hand, the pervasive corruption of the servants of government and their concomitant abuse of privilege, and, on the other, the corrupting influence of social climbing. The holy cow of reputation and hypocrisy, all get their due in settings that strike as a run-away up-to-date style of life, with unwanted pregnancies, drugs and overdose, consumerism, and the abuse of those who do not enjoy the privilege of money and status. No wonder that the author’s satires on political realities come into sight that are far divorced from the overload of myths that colour the view of outsiders.

WITH family members, as a rule, being out of reach of each other, the author created the space for unexpected and often amazing powerful influxes of emotion. Another stratagem is her infusion of a mild streak of schizophrenia: people may be willy-nilly dependent on themselves, but they live with the voices of their alter-egos. Maybe it is the little girl of yore that keeps talking to the grown-up protagonist or commenting on her adult ways of life and preoccupations, and maybe it is the voices of former relations or even television characters (‘Daddy in the box’). Family Room is an anthology of short stories chosen from two collections of Farid’s work plus a few, at the time, unpublished stories. As a publication that appeared in the Lontar ‘Modern Library of Indonesia’, they have been translated by Melani Budianta. As it stands, the work teems with unexpected insights and sketches, and may be somewhat bewildering for those who know the country from before the days it was fully exposed to the exigencies of economic growth and the vagaries of modern life. The picture it paints is not inviting; the way the author does it, however, is innovative and refreshing. I look forward to reading more of her.

New York stories

Reviewed publication:

FROM HIS RETURN FROM CORNELL in the ominous year 1965 until his demise in 2002, Umar Kayam, or UK as his wife tenderly recalls him in her Introductions, was one of the towering figures on the Indonesian cultural scene, even as it lasted up to the publication of Senbu Kuning-Kuning di Monopoli with Pustaka Jaya in 1972, before he also established his name as a short-story writer.

The present collection of his stories divides into three parts that coincide with separate creative periods, of which in the first two – New York and 1965 – he deals with the challenges posed by living as a naive and relatively isolated Indonesian graduate student of New York University in the big city American environment, and then with the challenge of dealing with the incredible realities of massacre, fanaticism, incarceration and persecution. The third part, Lebaran, is set in the familiar families of the festive yet hectic Idul Fitri or Lebaran holiday – comparable to the Christmas season in Christian countries – celebrating the end of the yearly fasting month of Ramadan.

The light and sumerian tone UK’s New York stories combines with a mood of loneliness. In contrast to the sociability of javanese life, his New York characters are generally loners or feel themselves to be alone, and are fighting their own individual problems. Even as this may reflect his and his wife’s feelings of living in the midst of a concrete and steel jungle, the sketches of life in that environment strike as true to life and are always spiced with humour and refreshing amazement.

As may be expected, the tone set in the period of the anti-Communist pogroms of 1965-66 is entirely different from the light irony of the New-York stories. The three stories that

Oblation to status

Reviewed publication:

OKA RUSMINI’S Earth Dance brought to mind the time of her early experiences in Southeast Asia when I had difficulty in understanding the society I was living in – a hierarchically structured environmental. During my first year, at the dignified Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, my teachers despised whether there would ever be a chance in instilling a modern, appropriate language and manners in this blunt, egalitarian Dutchman. When being called up for military service, I was confronted with a system where a man is his rank, where he is a uniform with insignia. That lesson, however, didn’t sink in after six months, they sent me home. Ten years later, my Thai teachers treated me like a better class of oligarchs, and four years hence it was the turn of my Jogjanesan mentors… Reluctantly, I gradually learned that in Thai or javanese social life is a person is forever bound to the social rank and the inflexibility of his class. In such bondage, we find torture (‘closed shutters’) in which it is clear that we are inescapably vis-à-vis each other? reminded me of Sartre’s play Family Room, Farid, Lily Yulianti. 2010. Reviewed publication: Condemned to each other. Rusmini’s insider story. As a Jakarta-born (1967) Balinese, she confronted with anything but an idyll. This is the merit of Oka Rusmini’s tale is set in Balinese society and dwells on the inescapations of four generations of women who are hemmed in by caste, tradition, taboos and, naturally, by gender ideas. Through highlighting these limitations, and the escape routes of others, the graceful fluidity of dancing, of being beautiful, and of marrying a high-caste husband, Balinese realities come into sight that are far divorced from the overlaid myths that colour the view of outsiders.

The possibilities of ‘escaping’ are very limited, and so many characters are galloped to resort to alternative ways of ‘self’-expression, such as jealousy, backbiting, derision, intrigue, and even migration to the anonymity and freedom of life in the city. In order to bring the story’s main theme out in sharp relief, one of the main characters, a high-caste Balinese woman named Telaga, pursues her dream of marrying her childhood love Wayan, a gifted painter and, much more important, a lowly commoner (udin). This opens the gate to a life already controlled by her mother’s avarice, she now added the unrelenting bitter-ness of her mother-in-law and the greed of her sister-in-law. A noble woman marrying beneath her station is an insult to the good order, it breaks the taboo, and invited the wrath of super nature, which is confirmed by Wayan’s death after only a few years of marriage. In order to prevent further disaster, Telaga is persuaded to still go through the ritual of exiting from her high status and of becoming a real housewife.

Next to this, we still find a sad woman who was successful in marrying into a Brahman household which, consequently, opens the sluices of resentment at her very presence there. With these examples, the message becomes – for women as well as for men – that caste binds and divides, that hierarchy obliges and sets people apart.

Bali – a nice place? Touristy, spectacular, an Orientalist fantasy. Life on Bali? Hidden from the foreign gaze, we are confronted with anything but an idyllic. This is the merit of Oka Rusmini’s insider story. As a Jakarta-born (1967) Balinese, she knows what she is writing about. Earth Dance was first published in 2000, it earned the author a literary achievement award from the Department of Education. It was translated into English by Kari Amboyo and Thomas A. Hunter, and then commented upon in an Afterword by Pamela Allen. The present edition appeared in the Modern Library of Indonesia series of The Lontar Foundation. The book carries a very welcome Glossary, even as I would have appreciated glosses on the meaning of always recurring Balinese first names/titles, such as Oka, Putu, Wayan, etc.

New York stories

Reviewed publication:

FROM HIS RETURN FROM CORNELL in the ominous year 1965 until his demise in 2002, Umar Kayam, or UK as his wife tenderly recalls him in her Introductions, was one of the towering figures on the Indonesian cultural scene, even as it lasted up to the publication of Senbu Kuning-Kuning di Monopoli with Pustaka Jaya in 1972, before he also established his name as a short-story writer. The present collection of his stories divides into three parts that coincide with separate creative periods, of which in the first two – New York and 1965 – he deals with the challenges posed by living as a naive and relatively isolated Indonesian graduate student of New York University in the big city American environment, and then with the challenge of dealing with the incredible realities of massacre, fanaticism, incarceration and persecution. The third part, Lebaran, is set in the familiar families of the festive yet hectic Idul Fitri or Lebaran holiday – comparable to the Christmas season in Christian countries – celebrating the end of the yearly fasting month of Ramadan.

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Modern library of Indonesia

The following books have been published by the Lontar Foundation. All reviews supplied by Niels Mulder.
Crazy times

Reviewed publication: Marahimin, i. 2011. And the War is Over, Jakarta: The Lontar Foundation, 189 pages, ISBN 9789798083761

WHEN, IN THE LATE 1960s, i set out to do my first fieldwork among the Javanese of Jogjakarta, i was struck by the refer- ence to the period they were under Dutch rule as the azam normal or the period of normality. The japanese invasion of 1942 announces the turn of the wheel of time: the Dutch East Indies cease to exist, and country and people enter the turmoil of the zamanonon – crazy times. During such periods the righteous will suffer while rascals will rise and rule in a world turned topsy-turvy. The Dutch are interned and forced to labour under arbitrary Japanese, and may have to fill the bathtubs with rice, and the massacres that marked the end of his ‘guided democracy’ were still fresh in mind even to the point that some who had participated in them told me nervously that someone was going to disappear in myth. Whether the coming of independence heralded normality, Under Sukarno’s whimsical rule, they were fed slogans rather than rice, and the massacres that marked the end of his ‘guided democracy’ were still fresh in mind even to the point that some who had participated in them told me nervously giggling their stories. Would his successor – an eminently product of the crazy times, rising from a colonial non-com to the very apex of the nation – augur a period of order? And the War is Over is set in the final days of World War II in a small village in Northern Sumatra where the Imperial armed Forces have established a prisoner-of-war camp for Dutch internees and a site for a group of javanese forced labourers, the so-called romusha. It is a time rife with rumour and short on solid information, even as internees and the javanese are totally in the dark. Unaware of what is going on, a group of Dutchmen plans and prepares for their escape into the jungle for which they need the cooperation of some influential locals. An exceptional romusha – generally these are mistrusted and looked down upon by the local population – is about to propose the daughter of a prestigious haji. Some javanese remark that the united States has finally capitulated, as others commit suicide in the expectation that their out bombed country is about to surrender. As much as the narrative has an exceptional romusha, it also presents us with various leading and a crowd of outer villagers, willing to flee and staying-on Dutchmen, successful mistresses and whores, a human javanese officer and hard- line non-coms and soldiers, and the reasoning of wandering Minangkabau (West Sumatran) merchants. All of these play their part in ephemeral settings that change by the day – and that, as such, evoke flashbacks of life in java, in the Minang heartland, and in the normal Indies – while giving the author ample scope to narrate a complex story in relatively few pages. In order to add particular flavour to the variety of nationalities and customs, a modicum of javanese, Minang, Arabic (Muslim), Dutch and Indonesian words and expressions occur in the body of the text, next to a considerable number of specific Malay-Indonesian nouns that had better be left un-translated; they are explained in a six-page ‘glossary’ at the end of the narrative. Ismail Marahimin’s first and only novel was an immediate success as it was nominated the best of the year by the Jakarta

Notes
1 See ‘The Crux is the Skin; Reflections on Southeast-Asian Personhood’, in Mulder, N. 2012. Sapardi Djoko Damono: Civilisation in Southeast Asia; Reflections and observations.

Life’s course in lyrics


AS A JACK-OF-ALL-LITERARY TRADES – as essayist, short-story writer, translator, and poet – Sapardi Djoko Damono is best known as Indonesia’s foremost lyricist whose career meanwhile spans five decades of published work. It is the first four of these that are reflected in this collection of some 135 poems (1961-2001). The poetry is presented in chronological order, so yielding glimpses of the circumstances in which the author wrote the poems. Like its predecessors, it unfurls in amazingly effective language, touching on life’s salient points, clarifying them as it were while making them accessible to others. A very effective device to do just that, is that the poet is never alone but always accompanied by ‘something walking besides you’. It is a soliloquy, and at the same time an internal dialogue between an ego and its alter ego. The poet’s versatility is impressive, as he is able to draw powerful pictures with a minimum of words to a palette of poems, which a glance appear to be prose. The poem Distance (p. 40) may give an idea of the minimalist:

and Adam came down to the forest
to disappear in myth
and suddenly we are here, gazing
at the sky: empty and still ...”

Whereas Mediton (p. 116) is a short-hand illustration of Sapardi’s singing lyrics that sometimes seem to be prose:

Do not disturb i, the palmad, am meditating
in a cave, an egg or a word – is there in fact a difference?
And at some point in time when roots have encircled me and, i seed, how found meaning – will you, my friend, have the courage to approach?

Some pieces of the latter genre may run up to eight pages, of which i particularly like Sapardi’s observations on old age, such as the seven-page piece, Old Age (p. 37). The opening sentence, “Nothing will happen that has not already appeared in 1986 as And the War is Over” and the more conventionally composed title song, is the first four of these that are reflected in this collection of some 135 poems (1961-2001). The poetry is presented in chronological order, so yielding glimpses of the circumstances in which the author wrote the poems. Like its predecessors, it unfurls in amazingly effective language, touching on life’s salient points, clarifying them as it were while making them accessible to others. A very effective device to do just that, is that the poet is never alone but always accompanied by ‘something walking besides you’. It is a soliloquy, and at the same time an internal dialogue between an ego and its alter ego. The poet’s versatility is impressive, as he is able to draw powerful pictures with a minimum of words to a palette of poems, which a glance appear to be prose. The poem Distance (p. 40) may give an idea of the minimalist:

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A few poorly organised men

Indonesia’s transition from Suharto’s authoritarian regime to a more democratic government saw a number of violent upsurges, especially in the so-called Outer Islands. Apart from the separatist movements that sought to establish their own independent states (in Aceh, East Timor, and West Papua), many violent regional conflicts materialized along ethnic-religious cleavages.

Antje Missbach

A few poorly organised men

The worlds of Santosh, or Mohammed or the women of Yangzhou cannot be explained by globalization yet that does not relegate them to the category of ‘traditional’ or ‘backward’. They live in kaleidoscope worlds, as does anyone living in a rapidly changing capitalist city. It is a world in which making a living is an erratic, uncertain enterprise; in which faith can be regular observance, occasion for ‘traditional’ or ‘backward’. They live in kaleidoscope worlds, as does anyone living explained by globalization yet that does not relegate them to the category of lesser known provincial or second tier city “with which it was centre where “a great deal had been written” [p. 14] with a empirically by adopting comparative analyses of a metropolitan that “do not affect Western cities in the same way” [p. 3]. These which he interprets as the People’s Republic of China, the Indian Asian cities. Instead, he argues that cities in “developing Asia” – which he interprets as the Republic of China, the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia [p. 15] - face two processes that “do not affect Western cities in the same way” [p. 3]. These processes are urbanization (i.e., massive transformations of the social, cultural and built environment) and nation-building (i.e., the process through which a population of a particular territory acquires a shared identity). He supports his argument empirically by adopting comparative analyses of a metropolitn centre where “a great deal had been written” [p. 14] with a lesser known provincial or secondary tier city “with which it was more practicable for the researcher to become acquainted” [p. 14]. These are the three pairings of Shanghai with Yangzhou in China, Jakarta with Semarang in Indonesia, and Bangalore and Mysore in India. The book is organized into four parts. Following an introduction in Part 1, Part 2 discusses urbanization and cities: chapter 2 focuses on urbanization, defined as “the process by which cities and towns become more populous and more economically significant than rural areas” [p. 37], while chapter 3 focuses on urbanization, defined as transformations in cities as a result of urbanization, as a result of globalization. Part 3 discusses how various processes in Asian cities relate to nation-building: chapter 4 discusses businesses, i.e., the “building of domestic networks and markets by capitalist businesses” [p. 136], chapter 5 discusses the flows of domestic labour migration; chapter 6 discusses the travel and hospitality industries in cities; and chapter 7 discusses how commercial popular culture is a national and global phenomenon in developing Asian cities. Part 4 concludes the book and postulates the future of urbanization, urbanism and nation-building in developing Asian cities. McKinnon’s broader objective is to question Eurocentric dominance in urban theories that have been conveniently projected upon non-Western contexts. [p. 215], as well as how the shift from one type of globalization to another implicates processes at other scales (e.g., regional, subcontinental, national). However, a casual reader without the benefit of knowledge of recent debates in contemporary urban studies would find it difficult to follow McKinnon’s book since it gives prominent space to ethnographic accounts and detailed descriptions of urban phenomena in the respective chosen cities. As a consequence, little space is given to explain the theoretical conversations that locate itself within. It is as if McKinnon assumed that readers would be familiar with debates about Eurocentrism and the questioning of globalization in urban studies. As a result, the reader is left to do a lot of work: firstly, to connect the dots between the stories; and secondly, to understand how these fit into the flow of arguments at the broader theoretical perspective. On the other hand, as an academic researcher and writer, I find it hard to get past two shortcomings of the book. Firstly, while McKinnon has rightly identified that non-Western cities go through processes of urbanization and nation-building that were not similarly experienced in Western cities, this somewhat careless categorising of “developing Asia” repeats the role of Eurocentrism in urban studies. Furthermore, the purpose of the book is “to draw out common elements in the urban Asian experience of globalization” [p. 13]. McKinnon has instead generated and essentialized the “developing Asia” based on a few conveniently-selected case studies. Secondly, although McKinnon has attempted to address issues of bias in his ethnographic methods (e.g., selection bias, language barriers) [pp. 11-19], this appears cursory and lacks further elaboration. For example, no mention was made of how the book could have been informed from recently fieldwork visit, other than a quick mention that “ethnographic investigation was carried out periodically in the case study cities over six years” [p. 16]. Another sentence mentioned that “ethnographic material is least rich for China and richest for India” [p. 16], without explaining why and what implications this would have on the analysis. These shortcomings, unfortunately, do not do justice to his use of comparative urban research, as recently advocated by urban studies scholars.”

There is no doubt that McKinnon’s message is important: cities in “developing Asia” have divergent urban experiences “on the ground” [p. 69], which urban theories developed from the Western experience cannot quite capture and explain. Furthermore, processes and phenomena within a nation-state may better inform our understanding of cities, in addition to globalisation as a single factor. Unfortunately, this message has not been fully articulated and/or supported with convincing comparative analysis of both “developing Asia” and “the West”. For the significance of the underlying message contained within, I wish that this book had articulated the message loud and clear, instead of leaving the casual reader lost without a clear sense of how the case studies connect with each other and to a broader debate.

Sin Yee Koh, PhD Candidate in Human Geography and Urban Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) (s.y.koh@lse.ac.uk)

Notes
The heart of the book is an essay, “Reality of Represent- 

ation, Reality behind Representation: History and Memory.” Here Ghosh shows how the mytho-history of Ayodhya 

shock against those Indians who willingly permit their history to be shrouded in myth, so “myth and history hide beneath the skin of each other in a postdictory discourse that suppresses and misrepresents events” - all the better to feed the agenda of Hindu fundamentalists. [p. 18] The case study that forms the cornerstone of this essay is the north Indian town Ayodhya. Infamously, in 1992 a mob of tens of thousands of Hindus stormed the mosque in Ayodhya and tore it down, because the mosque reportedly stood on the site of the birthplace of Rama, an avatar of the God Vishnu. The mob could justify their actions by appealing to the collective memory among Hindus, of the Hindu temple that once stood on this spot. Ghosh convincingly maps how this “mytho-history” was created by British imperial scholars and later cultivated and developed by Hindu sotsus, politicians, historians, and archaeologists in order to produce “a public memory largely governed by communal discrim- 

ination and prejudice.” [p. 39] He plausibly argues that the mytho-history or heritage that has coalesced around Ayodhya provides a collective memory of fear and victimization, creating a screen upon which Hindu communal unity can be projected.

The Greek Goddess of memory, Memnoyne, was 

the mother of the muses, including Clio, the muse of history. With the professionalization of historical studies one could begin to imagine a balance that was the other way around – that Clio, the muse of history, gave birth to Memnoyne, Goddess of memory. But historians only offer one set of 

vantage points (among a multitude) from which to view the past. Novelist, politicians, artists and, increasingly, film makers 

offer the public representations of a past reality and when these representations come to be accepted they in turn contribute to the construction and distribution and maintenance of a mediated collective memory. In Ghosh’s words: “Modern media and the contemporary politics of memory are entwined in a mutual embrace”, and, moreover, “Riding piggyback on such megademystification-sensationalisation of the Hindu cultural past – the flow of cultural memory with its ‘entanglement’ in televisuality and popular culture – Hindu radicals win the major part of their battle by controlling public memory.” [pp. 56-57] in other words, when it comes to memory wars unleashed by non-Hindu religious believers, the Hindu fundamentalists have proven their political astute- 

ness by creating mytho-historical narratives through the use of televised religious epics and other media strategies.

Alessia Assmann has written of how a host of land can become “a sacred text” and how this usually happens in places considered to be “the localization of myths”. Ominously, she concludes that who he compares such a site “has to create a tabula rasa before he can engrave it with the tale of his own 

glory.” This would imply more trouble ahead in Ayodhya. One can understand why the Śrivaśnavas and the moderate 

Opposing the totalitarian certainty of the fundamentalist, Ghosh is aware of the sheer difficulty of doing history, what he aptly calls “the agony of history”, whereby the historian accepts that something always escapes his representations but this lack of understanding “makes him try his intelligence with greater 

enthusiasm and power to make deeper and varied sense of the past, perceiving that the past is not a matter of what happened once but is still a present, a force, a life.” [p. 78] The phrase, “the agony of history”, whereby the historian accepts that something always escapes his representations but this lack of understanding “makes him try his intelligence with greater enthusiasm and power to make deeper and varied sense of the past, perceiving that the past is not a matter of what happened once but is still a present, a force, a life.”

Paul Doolan

THE REVIEW | 19

At one point in his intriguing, provocative and 

sometimes irritating A Lover’s Quarrel with the Past: Romance, Representation, Reading, literary scholar Ranjan Ghosh claims that indigination and dissent “caninfuse a sense of discovery to our historical studies.” [p. 79] The phrase, subconsciously perhaps, describes Ghosh’s own work, a work that is not only written in dissent, but cries out in justified indignation.

Reviewed Publication: Ghosh, S. 2012. A Lover’s Quarrel with the Past: Romance, Representation, Reading. 

New York: Bergham books.

188 pp. ISBN: 9780857454643

the impending local elections. By studying the most prominent leaders and core combatants, McRae not only disentangles the medley of payback and revenge, he also reveals an astonishing shortage of direct political interests. But how does McRae then manage to fill this explanatory vacuum in order to explicate the shifting dynamics of aggravation? McRae divides the conflict in four specific phases that overlap and at the same time are each marked by very specific characteristics of patterns and participation in the collective violence. For each of these phases, McRae exposes different “divisions of labour” among conflict participants, which serve as one of the most outstanding factors for explaining the shifts in violent action. Whereas the first phase of fighting (1998-2000) started as a youth brawl and then developed into urban riots between rival patronage networks, the subsequent phase (May-June 2000) saw widespread killings carried out by Christian combatants, who had been recruited spontaneously and received some form of routine training. While the two-sided violence between Muslims and Christians continued as tit-for-tat murders and sporadic attacks on villagers during 2000 until 2002, the Christian dominance started to crumble with the arrival of mujahidin fighters from other parts of Indonesia. Not only had these mujahidin access to manufactured instead of only self-made weapons, moreover, because of their affiliation with Islamic terror groups, such as Laskar Jihad, some of them had previously received military-style training in other conflict areas, both inside the archipelago and overseas. Although these mujahidin brought

along a number of conceptions of piety and morality that they sought to impose on the newly recruited followers, they had no formulated further-reaching political objectives other than 

multiple revenge.

Given the swelling militancy and the enduring violence 

applied by the involved fighters, who did not shy away from 

bombing public markets, burning places of worship and 

beheading innocent civilians, the central government was forced to confront the fact that the splinter groups were 

all the other Indonesian troubled districts and provinces, but 

also mentions the shortage of funding, skills and resources 

among the local police that prevented them from conducting 

proper investigations. Moreover, the police were already 

implicated by the fear of reprisals towards law enforcers, as a number of officers had previously died while on duty. The inactivity of the central government and the collaborating provincial governments 

(1991) and once again, after the Bali bombings, when Indonesia saw widespread arrests of militant Muslims. Given the continuing 

violence and the risk that the Poso conflict might spread to other areas, the central government eventually had to stop looking 

the other way. The “cost of violence” among combatants increased 

as Laskar Jihad, some of them had previously received 

military-style training in other conflict areas, both inside 

the archipelago and overseas. Although these mujahidin brought
Over the years, the conjured image of Pakistani cricket is one of a road show which is exhilarating at times but summons nightmares for those who experience the ordeal. As a sporting institution it is always in turmoil. The Pakistan Cricket board is probably the only international administrative body to operate without a constitution. A touring English cricketer had once dunked a local umpire in a swimming pool in protest against a string of problematic decisions. Instances of suspect on-field behaviour of the Pakistan team had led to the nation’s honour being taken hostage by British tabloids. After a first round World Cup exit, the national coach died under mysterious circumstances. And finally, terrorists have shot at foreign players leading to a cricketing isolation that is still in place. These are snippets from the cauldron of Pakistani cricket, which is a melting pot of corruption, nepotism, exploitation and politics-defying, abounding talent that flourishes on the roadside and takes on the world.

Souvik Naha, doctoral student at the Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (souviknaha@gmail.com)
The book *Family Ambiguity and Domestic Violence in Asia* (2013; Brighton: Sussex University Press) raises pertinent questions as to why the incidence of domestic violence has remained as a continuing scourge. The Focus section in this issue of The Newsletter provides the abridged version of select articles within the book. Seven scholars examine comparative experiences in the Asian context in order to gauge the effectiveness of family regulations and laws in diverse national, cultural and religious setting. Although the issue of violence against women (VAW) has received much attention from scholars, social activists, policy makers and international agencies, violence in the home has persisted. Though a universal phenomenon, VAW is also context specific. As domestic violence (DV) per definition takes place within a family setting, the specific forms of families and their supporting ideologies greatly affect the specificities of DV in particular contexts. Comparative cultural and national responses to the issue have shown that the ambiguity of family underscores some of the gaps between the conceptual, legal and process-oriented solutions to the eradication of VAW in society.

Maznah Mohamad and Saskia Wieringa
Family ambiguity and domestic violence in Asia continued

The culture defence discourse and the right to family and privacy, act to seal the family as an isolated and autonomous unit. A human rights perspective is needed to re-situate the family within the justice system.

Violence against women is reinforced by the state conception of family as a private domain, as well as the notion of the harmonious family being the foundation of the nation. Male authority over the family and the women in it is further imposed as a religious norm.

AS HAS LONG BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED the family is no longer seen as primarily a site of production and reproduction, but also as a locus of tension and conflict, with violence among intimate partners being one of its manifestations. By conceptualising this issue as stemming from the family context, bestriding the private-public domain, this collection of research articles aims to uncover some of the sources of the difficulties and paradoxes in understanding domestic violence as an all-encompassing problem, from its legal to its cultural dimension.

Articles in this Focus section start from the concept-ualisation of family as sited within both public as well as private domains; and herein lies the source of its ambiguity. When the state intervenes in family matters (as in policies on reproductive health and in criminalising domestic violence) the family is treated as a public concern. However, the state takes a liberal stance on respecting individual human rights or even multicultural rights, when the sacredness of family as a private domain is emphasised. There are also extremes in degree of state intervention upon the family. States that enforce Sharia - Muslim laws - do not even limit the extent of their intervention upon private, individual and family lives, but for the most part, reinforce masculine dominance. Other states are selective about when and how they intervene. If domestic violence is conceptualised as a private hurt that leads to public harm, the state criminalises the offence; but when domestic violence is presented as being rooted in gender inequality and in need of more than just a legal solution, then the nature of state intervention may be more ambivalent.

Contextualising the analysis of domestic violence within the notion of family ambiguity thus allows the issue to be explored from its multi-faceted aspects. At the policy-level, it is hoped that these questions can throw new light on how the state should relate to the family as an ‘ambiguous’ unit, often used to represent the unified state, yet in contrast to the state itself when ‘family’ is considered a private domain. By theorising and presenting field evidence around the issue of ‘family ambiguity’ this volume studies the various intervention measures used to affect family and its positive and negative possibilities. The three main focal points of the book - Concept, Law and Process - are explicated below.

Concept

Articles under the rubric ‘concept’ capture some of the more salient debates surrounding the issue of domestic violence. There are conceptual issues that are still not reconciled or continue to be disputed, yet contribute towards how advocacy, law, policy and cultural norms are being shaped.

Culture-as-defence

One of the more prevalent defences of why violence happens in the home is that certain cultural and religious doctrines allow for its use, and that by using it, the boundaries of cultural and religious distinctiveness are defended.

Hence, domestic violence can be viewed as being a culture in and of itself, explains Aziz in her article. But she cautions that culture merely represents a socio-political symbolic discourse, which changes over time. By analysing several international cases of domestic violence, Aziz excavates how and why domestic violence continues to be erroneously placed within culture and why the intersecting issues of privacy, culture and honour with violence have gotten in the way of granting justice to victims of domestic violence. The culture defence discourse and the right to family and privacy, act to seal the family as an isolated and autonomous unit. A human rights perspective is needed to re-situate the family within the justice system. In this, state action and inaction sometimes work against this as they tolerate, if not encourage, domestic violence.

DV: Neutral or gender-based?

Another conceptual paradigm that has muddled the debate on domestic violence is the question of whether domestic violence should be seen as a neutral wrong rather than one that is specific to gender discrimination. The profound ambiguities that these debates reflect are relevant to the Asian context. It shows how universal the idea of family and its link to the perceived dichotomy between private and public has become. As our Asian case studies illuminate, at one level there is successful mainstreaming of the domestic violence issue implying feminist collaboration with institutions such as social work, healthcare or the criminal justice system. However, these are not necessarily in tune with the feminist position on domestic violence, as a form of violent discrimination against women.

The other dilemma is that while the human rights approach has succeeded in eliciting a state response to domestic violence, criminalisation must also include preventive and protective support measures. However, there is still scant recognition that violence is intrinsically related to gender inequality between men and women, a conceptual flaw that would need to be addressed all over the world.

Above: Protestors against gender violence, India. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of ‘Say No-India’ on Flickr.
Family as state construction

In exploring the breadth and depth of domestic violence, the family as social construction forms part of the intriguing puzzle. Just as state prerogatives have shifted, so has the image of the family. Nandy traces the trajectory of family regulation vis-à-vis domestic violence in India, where there have been major shifts in legislation and its discourse. Outlining ancient Indian family’s attempts at self-regulation, to modern state-based regulation, Nandy’s contribution makes note of different forces that have buttressed the notion of family privacy and sanctity all along. She argues that rights to conjugality have always superseded that of the individual’s. In locating family as a state construction, Ganapaty analyses the tenor of state paternalism when the proposed Bill on Family Violence was rejected after 30 days of parliamentary debates in Singapore. The grounds for this was that it would be detrimental to the family. The bill was said to be at odds with the state’s defined role of the family, considered the “fundamental building block out of which larger social structures can be stably constructed”. Popular sentiment has it that criminalisation is neither an appropriate nor an effective method to deal with abusers against their own family and that social service agencies are preferred over police intervention. Provisions in the 1987 Philippine Constitution define Filipino sexuality, and shape Filipinos’ “consciousness of what is acceptable and unacceptable, what is normal, and what is deviant or perverse”, as Alipio argues. Marriage, the family and the nation are interlinked. The Constitution “recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation” and therefore the state will actively promote its development. Additionally, The Family Code of 1988 explicitly proclaims that parental authority over the person, property and children is given to the father/husband, whose decision shall be paramount over the mother/wife. Thus, the belief that the husband has absolute authority over his wife and children, and the impossibility of divorce, enhances the belief that the man can do no wrong. Alipio’s study finds that for women their bodies have become their voice, by going abroad. This is seen as a silent but appropriate strategy to leave abusive relationships, especially since divorce is illegal in Catholic Philippines.

Katjasungkana similarly discusses the pervasive nature of violence against women that is being reinforced by the state construct. In her study, she finds that the harmonious family, and the women in it, is further imposed on the Filipino national narrative.

In Malaysia no ‘family code’ is explicitly worded, as there is in the Philippine and Indonesian cases. Hence, the family debate is largely captured under the rubric of Islam as analysed in Mohamad’s article. Due to the dominance of Islam in governance and the extending of provisions within Sharia law for Muslims, the Domestic Violence Bill was initially opposed because of the belief that the law (by encompassing Muslims and non-Muslims) would usurp the jurisdiction of the Sharia court over the Islamic family. Unlike the Philippines, India and Singapore, the notion of family protection and privacy was not the main narrative of that debate, but a power struggle between Islamists and feminists over legal jurisdictions. Interestingly enough, the objection around ‘marital rape’, being defined as one form of domestic violence was only rejected by the Islamic faction. In Malaysia it is as though Islam has become the de facto representative of all patriarchal forces, and assumes its role as the main builder and gatekeeper of the essential ‘moral’ family.

Heteronormativity as violence

Another crucial set of concepts explored here is heteronormativity and passionate aesthetics, and its link to violence in the family. Wieringa argues that in maintaining the internal cohesion of heteronormativity, violence is exerted in the physical and symbolic sense. Her research on domestic violence demonstrates that there is enormous violence involved in the perpetuation of the myth of heteronormativity as creating or preserving the harmonious Asian family. Wieringa explicates the meaning of aestheticism in situating violence within heteronormativity. It is a concept referring to a set of principles that underlie the making of morality. Heteronormativity as a system of values is subjective, while at the same time considered to have universal relevance. Any aesthetic distinction is based on subjective views, yet acquires a hegemonic power in a given context. Violence, as explored in Wieringa’s article is intrinsic to passionate aesthetics that underlie heteronormativity. Even when mental and sexual violence occurs the ideal of the harmonious heterosexual family remains intact. Women internalise their shame and guilt rather than blame the perpetrators. Hence, they attest to the power of the symbolic violence of heteronormativity.

Law

Besides ‘concepts’, the articles also centre their analyses of domestic violence in Asia around the issue of ‘law’. They touch on the role of law in bringing the issue of domestic violence into the public realm. It was in Malaysia that the first legislation on domestic violence was passed in Asia. The Malaysian Domestic Violence Act (DVA) was first passed in Parliament in 1994, but it took two years for it to be implemented. The two years that the law was held in limbo was due to pressure from various quarters, significantly the Islamic faction, which did not want Islamic family matters to be governed by what was perceived as a civil and therefore ‘secular’ law. Mohamad’s article argues that in the Malaysian case the state tried to be responsive to both feminists as well as the Islamic factions, resulting in a law that was ‘diluted’, and making it difficult to invoke. Violence to be charged either as a criminal offence or a civil wrong.

In Singapore, the first legislative change dealing with domestic violence came about in 1997 when the Amendments to the Women’s Charter (Chapter 333) were made to provide protection for family members. Most cases of domestic violence are set aside of the criminalisation process, due to the absence of support structures for ‘victims’ if criminalisation proceeds as the course of action. The paternalistic and patriarchal state also impedes women’s empowerment by prefixing the limits of police intervention in domestic violence. In a paternalistic discourse, protection is predominant over empowerment or equal treatment.

In the Philippines, despite the enactment in 2004 of Republic Act 9262 (The Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children [VAWC]) law, the implementation remains pervasive throughout the country, where reported cases of rape and acts of lasciviousness are high. Alipio argues that the protection of women’s rights does not amount to the enactment of a law. It needs to be followed through with implementation. Besides the problems of implementation experienced similarly elsewhere, there are also several national laws that are in conflict with the stipulations within the DVA. This constitutes one of the biggest structural barriers to the successful implementation of the DVA. The laws include the 1974 Marriage Law, the 1991 KHI and the Labour Law. Another problem is Indonesia’s system of Legal Pluralism, which is a legacy of Dutch colonialism. Additionally there is the dichotomy between civil and criminal court jurisdiction. Domestic violence straddles both. Regional particularity such as the comprehensive implementation of ‘Sharia’ in the province of Aceh has led to the difficulty of enforcing law that is based on the principle of gender rights as human rights.

Poor conviction rates in domestic violence cases and unwieldy court procedures have made legal remedies less useful for women. Hence, the passage of India’s domestic violence law, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PDVDA), did not radically transform the notion that family privacy is sacrosanct. Many surveys in India, as discussed in ‘Nandy’s article argue that domestic violence is a family affair’. The privacy of family will continue to sustain gendered hierarchies that are often dependent on the deployment of male domination and violence. In such a situation law “becomes a site of ambiguity instead of a force against it”.

The ambiguous status of the law, being both civil and criminal, has been said to be a solution. Mohamad’s study shows that gendered violence, even if defined within the ambit of the Malaysian Penal Code, will not be sufficiently addressed by it. Also, contributes to this nature of ‘hurt’ and ‘harm’ inflicted by intimate partners on each other.

Process

A third crucial layer, after concept and law, is the process itself – how actors are engaged with the issue to contest to get domestic violence on the agenda of national and global deliberations and interventions. In Mohamad’s article the Malaysian process is one of the most outstanding examples of law-making from below, involving the participation of a spectrum of interest groups.

The campaign and social movement behind the establishment of the DVA in Indonesia is another significant social process evolving rights consciousness on gender-based violence. Katjasungkana documents how NGOs like LHB-APIK and Rifka Anisa collaborated with state agencies, such as the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesian National Commission on VAW, to push for a legal instrument. She finds that the DVA was a historical contest to get domestic violence on the agenda of national and global deliberations and interventions. In Mohamad’s article the Malaysian process is one of the most outstanding examples of law-making from below, involving the participation of a spectrum of interest groups.

The above triangulation of civil society, politicians and bureaucrats finds similar resonance in the Malaysian domestic violence movement. The campaign for a DVA in Malaysia started as early as 1985, although the law was only passed in 1994 and enforced in 1996. Like the Indonesian case, the drafting of the bill was an inclusive process that engaged many different representatives of civil society and government, including the state itself.

But the process of making domestic violence a named subjectivity is not just the preserve of civil society; Ganapaty’s study reveals that the process of engagement undertaken by the police in the recognition or concealment of domestic violence as a punishable offence. In his study, police response to domestic violence is largely unsuccessful and ineffective, a state discourse that discourages its criminalisation.

Rethinking the Asian family

Violence against women is a global phenomenon, rooted in the unequal balance of power between women and men, in which women suffer severe forms of physical, emotional, sexual and economic harm. This essay reflects this recognition. The anti-women’s backlash spurred by the family violence approach may lead to the continuation of practices that put women and children at risk. However, the prioritization of Sexual literacy, legal awareness among women and gender awareness among law enforcers must be given special attention, as should education for girls and a ban on early marriages. As domestic violence takes place in the home and is often justified by patriarchal biases that stipulate that women should be deferential, dependent and submissive, the fallacy of the harmonious Asian family must be exposed.
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family matters has become a mere chink in the armour of the private family, as proven by the rise in the practice of dowry and dowry-related crime, the prevalence of honour killing, persistent domestic violence and so on. It may not be an exaggeration to say that while law tries to bring order in the family, law itself can be mediated by and enmeshed in culture. A significant reason for the much-valued notion of family privacy is the high moral, cultural and political stature allotted to the heteronormative family, the only ‘natural’ looking model validated by law and religion. While its reproductive, child-centred structure and system suits the state and the market, a monogamous, patrilocal and patrilineal family cannot represent the myriad of other family forms such as single-parent, adoptive and same sex families. In fact, the immense zeal of the Indian state to criminalize consensual homosexual relations vis-à-vis its protracted reluctance to criminalize violence in heterosexual private relations speaks volumes about its attitudes. Although feminists have long denounced the private-public divide, their challenge to and critique of the position of the heterosexual family has not been as forthcoming.

Reconceptualization of divides

Central to unpacking the private-public divide will be a compelling re-conceptualization of privacy. For one, the notion that the family has enjoyed privacy is artificial because the state itself has drawn the private-public boundaries. The mid-1970s national family planning drive or the Government of India’s Child Care Leave only for its women employees are examples of the state breaching boundaries. Perhaps Frances E. Olsen is right when he asserts that “non-intervention (of the state) is a false ideal because it has no coherent meaning […] the state is continuously affecting the family by influencing the distribution of power among individuals”.

Olsen strongly disagrees with the popular view that the state should intervene only when necessary because it “presupposes that non-intervention is a possible choice; and second, it usually accepts non-intervention as a norm or as an ideal.”

On another note, feminists and the women’s movement in India have had a difficult and paradoxical relationship with law. Since law is intrinsically involved in the very acts that it condones, controls and penalizes, it becomes a site of ambiguity instead of a force against these acts. As Nivedita Menon cautions, “our attempts to transform power relations through the law tend rather to re-sediment them and to assert dominant values.” It may, therefore, be useful to go along with feminist legal scholars such as Margaret Davies who emphasize the necessity to re-conceptualize law as ‘vertical’ or plural, open-ended, self-reflexive and inclusive instead of ‘vertical’ or hierarchical, positivist, autonomous and exclusive. This may create newer and alternative legal meanings that do not devalue subjectivities, and that imagine moving the ‘subject’ from a passive recipient of law to an active agent of its creation. It still begs the question – even though the family needs to be protected from violence, what if the family needs protection from the violent state? Self-regulation by the family seldom works. On the other hand, the state tends to become panoptic.

This discussion puts forth that while privacy of the family is valuable, it needs re-imagining within the framework of justice and human rights. Privacy has never been totally inviolate, especially because its boundaries have constantly been adjusted by the state. Although law in India does not view domestic violence as a ‘private’ matter, the cultural ideology that obliquely permits it, does. It contends that since law can subterfugely embody and perpetuate cultural codes, it cannot be expected to regulate, counter or undo prevalent socio-cultural notions and values, at least not single-handedly. The aspiration should be a holistic formulation of the concept of privacy that lies both inside and outside the legislative arena.

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Among all the social institutions in India, the family enjoys an iconic place in the social imaginary as an ideal unit. Dowry-related violence triggered a high-pitched women’s movement that pushed the Indian government to amend existing laws and protect women from violence.

It seems that notions of self identity, shame and honour exert more pressure and influence on the collective consciousness of women than laws that promise them redress.
This article presents the theoretical foundation for the claim that societal acceptance or rejection of domestic violence is shaped by those in positions of power and influence. The modern Westphalian state is uniquely invested with power to politically determine and mediate cultural narratives, as it can legitimize ethos, values, and practices through both legal and political machinations, as well as action and – more crucially – inaction. The state is thus imbued with the responsibility to encourage and create cultures free of domestic violence.

Zaritza Abdul Aziz

Local contestations within Pakistani society demonstrate that the justification of violence in the name of Pakistani culture' entails the adoption and legitimization of the narratives of only the male Mastoi tribal members. The role of the state in the political mediation of the conflict between competing narratives, it is not the state that is held at the mercy of culture, but it is the state that moulds culture and with it, cultural identity. Punishing the tribal leaders and providing reparation for Mukhtar Mai sends a powerful signal that the state does not tolerate sexual violence against women, and cannot condone all forms of violence. As long as men's 'conjugal mastery' over women can be rationalized as being rooted in tradition, culture, or religion, then the state's non-interference with the treatment of the 'honour defence' to that of self-defence, which is more commonly used by victims of domestic violence when they are prey to sexual and domestic violence.

In State v. Stewart (1988), the Supreme Court of Canada held that Peggy Stewart could not avail of a self-defense instruction to the jury because there was an absence of imminent danger. Therefore, it is not domestic violence per se that formed the basis of the conflict, but the domestic violence as a practice supported and re-enacted through cultural controls. It is not the state that is held at the mercy of culture, but it is the state that moulds culture and with it, cultural narratives; it is not the state that is held at the mercy of culture, but it is the state that moulds culture.

In order to analyze the practice and prevalence of domestic violence, it is important to inquire not only into the subordination of women, but also into relationships between men. The continuous competition for social status and hierarchy between men has given rise to what anthropologists call a “culture-of-honour” stance. This stance links the idea of male honour to physical prowess, toughness, and courage. It also requires men to define themselves as dominant to women, using violence if necessary. Commonly, the concept of culture-of-honour is circumscribed by the state, violence against women generally, and domestic violence specifically. In cases of domestic violence, the state assumes the role of intermediary. When the state assumes the role of intermediary, it points to a breakdown of societal order and the failure of states in discharging their duty to protect women from violence. Indeed, the state is required to exercise a higher degree of vigilance in relation to domestic violence, as violence in the home is so easily rendered invisible.

The state has an interest and duty in confronting and eradicating all forms of violence. According to dominant theories of political philosophy, rules against violence and the use of force are the historical imputus for society and the state. Therefore, confronting violence to incubate and domestic violence as a practice supported and re-enacted through cultural controls.

The condoning of domestic violence by the entire state is required to exercise a higher degree of vigilance in relation to domestic violence, as violence in the home is so easily rendered invisible. The state does cloak itself in an aura of neutrality while turning a blind eye to injustice and violence within the family.

The state's failure to enforce and re-enact sans state interference. Through its legal and political machinations, states create, sustain, and re-enact patterns of state action and inaction - the state perpetuates a culture of domestic violence against women. The condoning of domestic violence by the entire state is required to exercise a higher degree of vigilance in relation to domestic violence, as violence in the home is so easily rendered invisible. The state does cloak itself in an aura of neutrality while turning a blind eye to injustice and violence within the family. In so doing, the state cloaks itself in an aura of neutrality while turning a blind eye to injustice and violence within the family. In so doing, the state cloaks itself in an aura of neutrality while turning a blind eye to injustice and violence within the family. In so doing, the state cloaks itself in an aura of neutrality while turning a blind eye to injustice and violence within the family.
action to sanction against domestic violence, society will more readily associate domestic violence with its own cultural identity. Thus, when states fail to prevent or prosecute domestic violence, it is the state and not traditional practice or ethos that should be the focus of our inquiry. Examining domestic violence from the perspective of the state's role exposes domestic violence as a culture in and of itself. State inaction in enforcing the letter of the law coupled with signals given by the legal and judicial officers that domestic violence is tolerated, implicitly sanction the continued practice of domestic violence. Thus where a culture of domestic violence exists, domestic violence is transformed into institutional and structural violence that is found formally or truly embedded in society.

In international law, states are required to act with due diligence to eliminate violence against women. Despite this and international and regional instruments investing states with the responsibility to eliminate violence against women, many states lodge reservations on the grounds of culture. These reservations, in so far as they apply to domestic violence, are made all the more serious in view of the argument that domestic violence should be understood and treated as a form of torture and, when less severe, ill-treatment.

The prohibition of torture as a whole is a jus cogens that violates the demands of humanity and dictates public conscience. Torture is malum in se, namely that torture is just wrong and would be wrong whether positive law prohibits it or not. Acknowledging that domestic violence can be torture, or at the very least ill-treatment, elevates it into jus cogens prohibition in international law, which necessarily means that states are not able to derogate from their obligation to intervene, prevent, stop, sanction and provide remedies in cases of domestic violence. As there can be no ‘cultural defence’ against torture, there can be no cultural defence against domestic violence.

Conclusion

Traditional practices, ethos and values that form the ‘cultural excuse’ for domestic violence must be questioned. Domestic violence cannot be justified in the name of the family, society or national/traditional culture. Neither can perpetrators be given impunity under any guise. States should be held accountable for complicity in domestic violence, whenever they create and implement laws that directly or indirectly trap women in abusive circumstances. This includes accepting, justifying and excusing domestic violence on cultural grounds. The state’s sanction of domestic violence in the name of culture on the one hand, and its refusal to intervene into family life in the name of the right to privacy and family on the other, has created a fertile terrain for the perpetuation of domestic violence. It is essential that we remove the culture of violence from the family, eliminate state tolerance (and implicit encouragement) of domestic violence and emphasize the message that domestic violence has no part to play in the cultural identity of society.

Domestic violence is a systemic global practice embedded in masculinities, patriarchy, and the domination of women that is then justified in the name of honour, culture, and religion; in the process, this re-conceptualizes women not as victims of violence, but as violators of culture and family (male) honour. As long as men’s ‘conjugal mastery’ over women can be rationalized as being rooted in tradition and culture, the right to maintain and enforce this mastery through domestic violence will remain unquestioned.

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Heteronormativity in Asia is constructed around the claim that all its agents work towards the creation or preservation of harmonious Asian families. Yet, there is enormous violence involved in the perpetuation of this myth. This article is based on the life stories of widows/divorced women, sex workers and lesbians in India and Indonesia. I focus on the factors that produce domestic violence and make it intelligible within the normative patterns of Indian and Indonesian families. The emphasis is on the mechanisms, the passionate aesthetics, that inform the particular construction of heteronormativity in these countries. These aesthetics are commonly classified as ‘private’ as they are played out within the domestic unit.

Saskia E. Wieringa

IN THIS DISCUSSION the untenability of the distinction between the public and the private sphere becomes clear since heteronormativity is informed by social constructs and institutions. The research project on which this article (and the original book chapter) is based was conducted in the framework of the Kartini Asia Network. The fieldwork was implemented between 2005 and 2007 and explored the ways in which passionate aesthetics are being constructed in India and Indonesia. I first discuss the concepts used in this research and then list nine forms of different passionate aesthetics that emerged from the project.

Concepts used: passionate aesthetics and heteronormativity

Passionate aesthetics are defined as the institutions, dynamics, motivations, codes of behaviour and representation, as well as the subjectivities and identities that together make up the complex structure of desires, erotic attractions, sexual relations, kinship and partnership patterns that are salient in a given context. Passionate aesthetics thus underlie particular regimes of heteronormativity and of sexual subcultures. One of the effects of passionate aesthetics is maintaining the internal cohesion of heteronormativity; in constant processes of expulsion and repulsion, a category of abject others is created while the inner core group is silenced or seduced into subjection.

Heteronormativity informs the normativity of daily life, including institutions, laws and regulations that impact the sexual and reproductive lives of members of society as well as the moral imperatives that influence people’s personal lives. Heteronormativity refers to practices, norms governing those practices, institutions that uphold them and effects produced by those norms within individuals. These effects can be seen in behaviours and feelings as well as in the aspirations for the future that the narrators nourish for themselves and their children.

The life stories collected in this project provide rich examples of the effects these often-invisible norms produce in the lives of those who are positioned both within and outside the institution of normative sex. The passionate aesthetics displayed in these life stories demonstrate how heteronormativity is continuously produced, reproduced and also how change is possible, by displacement, partial adherence, fusion, subversion or downright rejection of dominant norms. Not all heterosexual practices or lifestyles have a similar status; there are hegemonic and subordinate forms of heterosexuality. Violence, as I will explore here, is an intrinsic part of the passionate aesthetics that underlie heteronormativity.

Passionate aesthetics within the ‘harmonious’ Asian family

The passionate aesthetics by which the present day heterosexual patriarchal family in Asia is represented as the ideal of a harmonious family – the repository of marital bliss composed of dutiful, virtuous wives and responsible husbands - are multiple. The glorification of this family model hides its underlying symbolic and physical violence. The passionate aesthetics explored here range from epistemological concerns (insistence on the binaries that inform heteronormativity), to rape and shame.

For women in India and Indonesia, the normative family model is based on pre-marital virginity, chastity during marriage, and motherhood. Self-sacrifice and dependence upon males is glorified for women. These norms are anchored in religious values.

The family is not always the safe haven, the model of harmonious life, that its proponents would like it to be. It can, in fact, be a very violent place, particularly for young girls. The two major studies on the Indian family system do not mention incest, other than referring to it as a category of marriage avoidance. In Indonesia too, talking of incest is taboo. Our narrators suffer the pain, guilt and shame in silence. They initially tried to hide these traumatic experiences and to paint a rosy picture of their childhood. Instead of blaming the perpetrators or those who shield them, most of our narrators have internalized the shame and guilt, thus attributing to the power of the symbolic violence of heteronormativity. Many feel it is their own fault that their ‘loving’ parents behaved so callously towards them.

The core of heteronormativity is formed by sexual difference – the assumption that humanity is neatly and ‘naturally’ divided into biological females and biological males who demonstrate feminine and masculine behaviours linked to their biological identities. A second binary is the split between ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’. The supposed naturalness of these divisions supports the hierarchy between sexes and genders. A third, less commonly noted, characteristic is that the ‘abnormal’ category is further subdivided into various types of abjection, while their shared origin has become blurred. The three categories of marginalized women we researched are similarly constructed as ‘object’ by their heterosexual normative societies, while they are each set apart as distinct categories. This makes it difficult to see through the barriers that keep them apart from each other. They do not see each other as allies but as differently abjected others and constantly weigh their relative distance from the socially valued ‘normal’. Their point of reference remains the heterosexual patriarchal family, not the commonality of their positions as falling outside its boundaries. The widows and sex workers do not blame the heteronormative construct for their current state of abjection, but rather their own bad luck. The lesbian activists see through the myth, but not...
all of our narrators were activists and even the activists structure their private lives along at least some major aspects of the ‘heterosexual matrix’. Pre-marital virginity remains important in India, for instance. In Madhya Pradesh on 30 June 2009, virginity tests were conducted before a Hindu court conducted mass wedding of rural women. Activists protested, but it is unlikely they made a dent in the underlying enforcement of virginity. The pressure to remain a virgin until the marriage date loads to early marriages, particularly for girls in poor households who cannot afford to attend secondary school. The 1974 Indonesian marriage law recognizes polygamy, although it sets certain conditions. A man can only marry four wives and the consent of the first wife is needed. However, many men either do not present a letter of consent to the registrar or marry in front of a religious official only, the so-called kawin sin or unregistered marriage. Needless to say, the new wife can be divorced without any difficulty by the husband. Children born in these unions cannot get a birth certificate and often find it difficult to enrol in schools (for which a valid birth certificate is needed). First wives are often unaware of subsequent marriages. The children in polygamous marriages suffer too as they experience the injustice done to their mothers. Traditionally, Indian women live with their in-laws after marriage. Sons are dependent on their mothers, and daughters-in-law are often treated badly. The problems often centre around money. Girls have to provide a dowry on marriage. There are many conflicts about these dowries, sometimes even ending in the murder of the young wife. In anticipation of a man’s success, women provide sex to their husbands, the household if they fulfill that role well. In Indonesia, men are supposed to be the breadwinner and derive social standing and power within the household if they fulfill that role well. In Indonesia, this is even formally stated in the marriage law. In popular understanding, women provide sex to their husbands, and men give their wives money. The housewife-breadwinner ideology does not hold up in poor households, where both women and men have to work, yet in anticipation of a man’s breadwinner role, boys receive better education than their sisters if there is not enough money to provide schooling for all siblings.

Although the characteristics of Indian and Indonesian heterosexual orthodox families differ in some aspects, both constructs are suffused with patriarchal values. The threat of polygamy with its accompanying deceit and jealousy in Indonesia, and arranged marriages and dowry issues in Indian families, are all supported by patriarchal values. Male superiority runs deep. Sometimes it is built on overt forms of violence, at other times the symbolic violence of one kind or another. Mental or intellectual superiority is accepted as natural by the women of the house. Women are supposed to adjust to the habits of their husbands. Fathers or husbands are the obvious sources of power, but if a vacuum arises then brothers and sons are quick to assume their roles in the patriarchal household hierarchy. The imposition and maintenance of patriarchal values is one of the major expressions of the passionate aesthetics of heteronormativity. These values include that men are superior, earn more money and have more power.

Two imbricating forms process the basis of the passionate aesthetics of ‘othering’: expulsion and repulsion. While expulsion has to do with the construction of physical, material and social barriers and taboos, with invisibilization and silence imposed on our narrators. We analysed the ways in which women within this structure are policed, in their natal families or in their adult lives, experienced injustice done to their mothers. We analysed the extent of the physical and symbolic violence of heteronormativity. The forms of passionate aesthetics discussed above range from epistemological considerations (the stress on binaries) to marital arrangements and internalized shame and guilt.

Our narrators, all of whom as intimate outsiders lived both normative and non-normative lives whether as children in their natal families or in their adult lives, experienced the ways in which women within this structure are policed, as well as the punishment meted out to those who transgress or are expelled from the boundaries of heteronormativity. The violence they experienced ranges from physical to symbolic, from rape to shame.

Notes
1 I am grateful for the generous grant from the Asiatic Research Institute at the National University of Singapore that allowed me to work on this project for three months in 2009. I also thank my co-authors, Abha Bhayana and Nonoylastname Kartunusikana, for their collaboration in the research. I am indebted to all the researchers who gathered the material for the interviews upon which this article (and book chapter) is based.
2 www.kartunia.org
4 In India, the lesbian group Sappho for Equality, in collaboration with the Kartunia Asia Network, documented 92 kinds of violence that lesbian women experience, ranging from abuse and ridicule to murder or suicide. See Chok, S. 2011. Vis-Map: Documenting and mapping violence and rights violations taking place in lives of sexually marginalized women, Kolkata: Sappho for Equality.

Sons are dependent on their mothers, and daughters-in-law in law are often treated badly. The problems often centre around money. Girls have to provide a dowry on marriage. There are many conflicts about these dowries, sometimes even ending in the murder of the young wife.
Domestic violence and migration in the Philippines

From actresses to migrant workers, stories of women from all socioeconomic groups, who courageously break their silence to speak up about domestic violence, show that despite the enactment in 2004 of Republic Act (RA) 9262 (the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act), domestic violence remains rampant in the Philippines.

With the inability of the law to stem domestic violence and by extension, gender-based discrimination, women have looked outside the confines of the state and family for ways to escape abuse.

Cheryll Alpino

WHILE A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT of academic research has been done on domestic violence in recent years, and research on domestic violence in immigrant communities continues to emerge, inquiries into the implications of domestic violence on migration and related policies have been less common, often focusing on the ‘running away’ experience of women. Drawing upon ethnographic fieldwork in San Pablo City (Southern Tagalog province of Laguna, Philippines) carried out between 2006 and 2017, this article explores the migration decisions, economic strategies and familial sacrifices that women make when faced with violence.

The patriarchal ideologies and institutions underlying structural inequality and gender-based discrimination govern the extent to which same-sex and opposite-sex partnerships are reflected in the legal system. Using feminist approaches to law, human rights, ethnography and poetry, I probe [beliefs] beyond the realm of familial piety and finance” to understand how “something as small as believing that women cannot leave the Philippines as migrant workers.” Despite the opportunities for self-transformation and empowerment from labour migration, women continue to struggle as they move from one form of abuse to another.

Colonial and Catholic constructions of gender

The roots of violence against women as a form of gender-based discrimination can be traced to Spanish and American colonial domination and its associated male-centred and male-dominated religion of Roman Catholicism. Spanish colonizers used the religion to facilitate their rule over the local people. Latin American feminist scholars have demonstrated the colonial ideology of the ‘chaste woman’ passed down, deprived of their own understanding of the legal rights given to women subsequently made women dependent, even subordinate, to male figures in their lives. In her poem, Ang Pagiging Bobo ng Umumuhay Sya Ponohong Digma [To Be A Woman is to Live at a Time of War], the Filipino poet, scholar and activist, Joi Barrios, writes: “I grew up with fear beside me like a future / of a hinge / at the men of my life (Father, brother, husband, son).” Like Chandra Mohanty, who points out that women are “constituted as women through the complex interaction between class, culture, religion, and other ideological institutions and frameworks,” Barrios describes how Filipino women and their lives are defined in relation to men. Similar to Dominica, as depicted in the text of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, are constructed in “procreative and heterosexual” cycles and are subservient and dependent on ‘men’ in their various forms: individually as fathers and husbands and collectively as the State, the military,” and I would include the Church as well as Barrios illustrates Catholicism’s strong influence, that the ‘fear’ it imposes in women’s lives. The poem also points to the Church’s protective and paternalistic ideology that places controls on women’s future movements, a ‘hinge’ that restricts their education to rudimentary reading and arithmetic, home crafts, the Christian doctrine and to any wishes and whims made by the men in their lives.

American schooling laid great emphasis on Castilian values and norms of sexual behaviour, such that the practice of monogamy and chastity prevails today. In the Philippines as migrant workers. Despite the opportunities for self-transformation and empowerment from labour migration, women continue to struggle as they move from one form of abuse to another.

The heterosexual and patriarchal beliefs that prevail over family formation, personal relations and cultural, spiritual and political practices in the Philippines demonstrate not only the limited extent of the legal system to capture the multiple identities and intersecting roles as women, but also indexes the wide extent to which the ‘public’ continues to be prioritized over the ‘private.’ By essentializing women to a common experience and identity, and privileging male hegemony over public life, gender discrimination remains the unresolved issue in the close connection between gender-based violence and violations of human rights and freedoms. In other words, the major forms of disenfranchise-ment, exclusion and oppression of women are to the disadvantage they suffer in the economic, social, and political realms. As Barrios writes in her poem, “… the cruelty of war / Lies not on heads that roll / But tables always empty” – a stark reminder that we must also “look at poverty’s face.” Below, I argue that Filipino women are made to sacrifice opportunities outside of the home and nation for the physical safety, psychological comfort and even financial security that they cannot fully gain domestically through legal means.

Transnational sites of struggle and sacrifice

To be a woman,” as Neferti Tiradriti states in her reading of Barrios’ poem, “is a way of life in a time of war; it is to make a living out of conditions of war,” such that “women’s being as a living” is an active undertaking.” If we further read the “conditions of war” as being the colonial and Catholic ideologies and institutions that structure women’s lives, then women’s “being and becoming are part of a form of work and survival as well as the practice of deference under general, socialized terror.” That is, as Barrios reveals, “No moment/Is without danger/in home/In my country/To fi ght against oppression/Is to lay itself/On the street/Walking at night/As I invite a stranger’s attack/In my country/To fight against oppression/Is to lay down one’s life for the struggle.” The fear that comes from colonial and Catholic forces is, therefore, turned into a direct “challenge [of] violence itself,” which requires a recognition that one’s own body and life is the site of such a fight and that the transformative struggle must actively take place both at home and in society. As Barrios declares: “I seek to know this war/To be a woman is a never ceasing struggle/To live and be free despite the danger, terror and fear.” “To speak, to defy,” however, is clearly a risk-taking activity that Tadros suggests is “brought about precisely by the gambling gestures women make” to reclaim futures and achieve another destiny that are not defined by the men in their lives.

Laura is a woman who dared to “make a living” out of abusive conditions by following the footsteps of her mother. At the time of my fieldwork, Laura was 30 years old and had just returned to the Philippines after leaving behind her four young boys at home with their father while she worked as a domestic helper in France for three years. It was not until she was married that her husband started taking drugs and became physically and verbally abusive. Because she loved her husband, Laura put up with him, eventually becoming addicted to drugs herself. Ultimately, she sought help for her addiction and realizing what her life had become, Laura decided to leave her husband and return to the Philippines, she chose to go back to her husband. At first, everything seemed better so she stayed, opening up a little tienda (small grocery store) to help support her three children who had remained in the Philippines, but then the abuse started again. Eventually Maria separated from her husband and went back to Saudi Arabia.

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In a community with a long history of family migration to France, Spain, Italy and Saudi Arabia, giving abroad is seen as a viable and convenient alternative to abusive relationships, especially with poor economic conditions and limited legal rights at home in the Philippines, where divorce is illegal. Thus, the decision by Laura and Maria to become OFWs rather than abused wives at home proclaims that they are willing to escape abuse in search of a better life elsewhere even though labour migration does not wholly promise liberation or happiness. Many female migrant workers explain their decision to go abroad in terms of pekpelengpapayan, or fate playing. This is an act of faith, where one risks and gambles on the chance of another future, of a different life hopefully free from abuse.

It may be the opportunities for self-transformation they find in their countries of destination that empower them to return back to the Philippines and articulate their grievances. The increased incomes and possibilities for

The Church holds a protective and paternalistic ideology that places controls on women’s future movements, a ‘hinge’ that restricts their education to rudimentary reading and arithmetic, home crafts, and the Christian doctrine and to any wishes and whims made by the men in their lives.
Transnational sites of struggle and sacrifice

Conclusion

Filipino women have long gambled on the prospect of better lives, taking risks in spite of their fears. Women, who choose to defy traditional gendered expectations and obligations in order to fight against oppressive abuse or poverty by migrating for work overseas, are more likely to face guilt and come up against criticism than to encounter praise for their initiative from those who control and normalize regimes of power and knowledge. Discourses on the traditional and ideal family remain strong and calls for its stability echo throughout the nation, from the media to the classrooms. Such media representations and national discourses vilify and shame migrating women, allowing the public an opportunity to further morally discipline women and resist changes in patriarchal beliefs and spirituality that first structured the 'state of fate'.

As Arjun Appadurai observes, globalization has commonly led to “ideas about gender and modernity that create large ideologies of ‘culture’, ‘authenticity’, and national honor and ideal family remains strong and calls for its stability echo throughout the nation, from the media to the classrooms.”

Transnational migration, consequently, is a contradictory process, exacting both freedom and costs in a “cosmic gamble of futurity.” In confronting the contradictions between the ideals of a dominant Western feminism and the lives of women in non-Western societies, Lila Abu-Lughod asks: “What does freedom mean if we accept the fundamental premise that humans are social beings, always raised in certain social and historical contexts and belonging to particular communities that shape their desires and understandings of the world?” Tadiar replies that “communities are not simply given but, indeed, shaped by and called into being by the very cultural practices of freedom and power that Filipinas exercise through their imaginative and bodily capacities.” To lessen domestic violence in the barangay, community members must pay attention to the actions of women like Laura and Maria, who choose to leave rather than find solutions and support from within their communities. For women who do leave violent relationships, it is indeed a gamble to migrate and leave their children behind with the abusive father, especially if social services, government offices and legal laws are unavailable or ineffective. Women, therefore, face the cruel decision of staying at home or leaving, one struggle of being a woman – per Barrios’ definition – “at a time of war.” As women choose to migrate from home to work abroad, the risk does not seem to bring a clear benefit to women. Instead, as women struggle transnationally – still hinging them from one form of abuse to another with the patriarchal beliefs and spirituality that first structured the discrimination they are subject to in cultural, social, economic and legal realms, now ironically resurfacing as a coping measure, reaffirming their suffering and sacrifice as they free themselves from unbearable conditions of violence and poverty. “Religious faith,” Laura poignantly expresses, “is important; You turn to ‘Him’ in times of trouble and when you are very down.”

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Notes

6 Here and in the book chapter, I have changed the names of informants in order to protect their privacy.
7 Tadiar, ibid., pp.98-99
10 Tadiar, ibid., p.123
12 Tadiar, ibid., p.137
In 1995, domestic violence surfaced as a problem in Singapore. The awareness of the issue came in the form of the Family Violence Bill introduced to the Singapore Parliament that year. Fundamentally, the bill would give the police greater power to arrest an abuser without a warrant or court order, making it a seizure offence provided for by the Singapore Penal and Criminal Procedure Code.

The state’s response was clear – it feared that the bill would introduce legislation at an early stage, leading to the disintegration of the family.

Narayanan Ganapathy

Despite this failure to have the bill passed as law, the Singapore Police Force’s willingness to improve the policing of domestic violence displays the commitment to the implementation of the Domestic Violence Project at a police division later the same year. This project, organized around an elaborate network comprising police and social service agencies, was essentially an administrative set-up designed to assist victims of domestic violence in making a formal complaint.

Under the scheme, the police referred the victims in non-seizable cases, to a Family Service Centre (FSC) for counselling. The counsellor at the FSC then worked closely with the Neighbourhood Police Officer on or in the locality to go on to outline the offender (a criminal perspective) or to monitor the victim’s progress (a social work perspective). A significant development in the implementation of the Domestic Violence Project was the extension of the socio-legal control mechanisms that dealt with the problem of marital violence and the empowerment of FSC, to effectively deal with domestic cases of assault that entered the criminal justice system. A notable legislative development arising from this police initiative was the amendment to the Women’s Charter (Chapter 353) that came into effect in May 1997.

The application of a protection order was extended to other family members including the spouse, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, siblings, relatives and incapacitated persons besides the ‘traditional’ categories of spouse and children. The definition of ‘violence’ was also broadened to include intimidation, continual harassment or restraining someone against his/her will. Significantly, a breach of the conditions of any of the Protection Orders – Personal Protection Order, Personal Protection Order with Exclusion Order and Expedited Order - was made a seizable (arrestable) offence (except for failure to attend compulsory counselling sessions which remains non-seizable).

To rank-and-file police officers, however, these changes implied marginal operational differences to the way most police officers responded to incidents of domestic violence. The disjunction between ‘street-level’ policing and ‘managerial policing’ raised some serious questions about the effectiveness of police or legislative reforms. Not only did it question the policies of various land divisions, the quality of training, and the effectiveness of police supervision and accountability systems, but it also cast doubt on the entire reform process as it related to making the police more responsive to marital violence.

To better conceptualize the issue of rank-and-file decisions to avoid arrest, feminist criminologists, in particular, have developed the concept of a ‘perpetual’ victim. They specifically seek to examine and delineate aspects of rank-and-file police culture that seem to determine handling of domestic situations. Using this perspective essentially presupposes that a negative police response, conceptualized as one equivalent to non-arrest decisions to avoid arrest, fails to adequately explain and support the views of most police officers.

In this context, the ‘pro-arrest’ perspective of police decision-making is, perhaps, familiar to most people, as a basis of the ‘crime’, ‘non-crime’ debate in Singapore. The general category of ‘hurt’ under Chapter 224 of the Singapore Penal Code is further subcategorised into the following:

- (a) permanent privation of the hearing of either ear;
- (b) permanent disfiguration of the head or face;
- (c) permanent privation of the hearing of either ear;
- (d) privation of any member or joint;
- (e) destruction or permanent impairing of the powers of any member or joint;
- (f) permanent disfiguration of the head or face;
- (g) fracture or dislocation of a bone;
- (h) any hurt which endangers life, or which causes the sufferer to be, during the space of 20 days, in severe bodily pain, or unable to follow his ordinary pursuits.

A consequence of this very ‘exclusionary’ classification, laid down by the law, is that most cases of domestic violence are diverted from the criminalization process. This probably would explain why the ‘referral’ and ‘advice’ roles of the police have to be incorporated, institutionalized and legitimated within the operational framework.

Police response to domestic violence

Theorically, although my observations of police decisions of arrest and non-arrest were largely congruent with the findings of situational theorists that combinations of variables, data gathered through qualitative methodologies of observation and case study was instrumental in developing a perspective that focused on the meanings patrology attached to these variables. As much as these meanings were constructed and sustained by the police operational culture, they were influenced by ‘triggering’ factors encountered within the political, social and legal context in which they exist, thus explaining the seemingly equivocal police response to marital violence.

Examining the context in which police intervention occurred in domestic violence situations – and in a way that generated few arrests – required an analysis as well as an explanation from the level of interactions (everyday policing encounters) to that of structures (context in which everyday policing was to be set at situational). Although police officers exhibited reservations at having to deal with domestic violence cases and offered resistance to incorporating it into the ranks of ‘real crimes’, the low arrest rate arising from domestic violence cases could not solely be attributed to the organized (cultural) resistance and circumvention strategies displayed by officers on the ground. That the majority of domestic violence cases did not result in arrest was a direct consequence of officers merely satisfying the statutory requirements of the law – most cases did indeed legally fall into the non-seizable category where the police cannot initiate arrest without a warrant.

The police response to marital violence is thus reflective of the low arrest rate arising from domestic violence cases in the context of the spread of ‘victim-blaming’ as an integral part of the institutionalization of police work. Victim-blaming is an essential part of police disciplinary and operational culture, as they seek to maintain an image of the ‘right’ decision without accurate information, support and advice. It assumes that the social and structural context that victims of violence inhabit is conducive to ‘free choice’ and that they are able to express their wishes uncoerced – both structurally and interpersonally. Third, the victim-choice approach also exposes women to the manipulation of others – perpetrators, police officers and family members – who might have an interest in the criminal justice process not being invoked.

My own perspective on this is that this effect comes about because of the way officers, especially patrolmen, marshal the institutionalized categories at their disposal. Of particular importance here, are the categories set up as polarities: ‘victim’ and ‘suspect’, ‘innocent’ and ‘guilty’, ‘no-crime’ and ‘crime’. These terms are, perhaps, familiar to most people, but they perform a special function in the semantic network of police work. Within the confines of operational response and subsequent processing of a domestic violence incident, there must be both a ‘suspect’ and ‘victim’. However, if the person with injuries in a domestic incident does not wish to step into the labelled box of a ‘victim’, it is difficult for the police to process the incident as a ‘criminal’ one. To the officers on the ground, such cases amounted to ‘victim failing to substantiate an allegation’, an analytical as well as an operational category that functions as a hinge between the polarities of ‘victim’ and ‘suspect’, ‘guilty’ and ‘innocent’, ‘no-crime’ and ‘crime’, before the case is admitted into or evicted from the police system. Thus, the policing of domestic violence becomes essentially a problematic category because the protracted and complex situation in which the violence takes place between known individuals makes it difficult to readily identify an offender and victim from the perspective of the police and as warranted by formal procedures.

Contrasting the ‘victim-choice’ model is the ‘pro-arrest’ policy, which occupies a position at the other extreme of the continuum of police response. A major irony in the case of domestic violence as far as the Singaporean experience is
If the person with injuries in a domestic incident does not wish to step into the labelled box of a ‘victim’, it is difficult for the police to process the incident as a ‘criminal’ one.

Police intervention in cases of domestic violence in Singapore occurs within a specific political regime and within the boundaries defined by the authoritarian and ‘hetero-patriarchal’ state. In a paternalistic discourse, protection takes precedence over empowerment or equal treatment.

State discourse on the limits of police intervention

As a whole, the discourse surrounding police intervention in cases of domestic violence in Singapore occurs within a specific political regime and within the boundaries defined by the authoritarian and ‘hetero-patriarchal’ state. In a paternalistic discourse, protection takes precedence over empowerment or equal treatment. An analysis of the Family Violence Bill provides an excellent opportunity to appreciate the state’s perspective on police intervention in domestic violence. The bill was rejected after 30 days on the grounds that it would introduce litigation at an early stage, which could be detrimental to the family. Given the Singapore government’s desire to promote the family as the “building block of society” and its constant warnings against “decadent western values” – thought to pose a threat to the wellbeing of the family – a Family Violence Bill that did not accept the state’s defined role for the family was deemed problematic. This was particularly evident in light of the state’s intent to ensure the preservation of the family unit whose role is clearly prescribed in the White Paper:

“The family is seen as the fundamental building block of society and its constant warnings against ‘decadent western values’ – thought to pose a threat to the wellbeing of the family – a Family Violence Bill that did not accept the state’s defined role for the family was deemed problematic. This was particularly evident in light of the state’s intent to ensure the preservation of the family unit whose role is clearly prescribed in the White Paper:

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... (continued)
Patriarchal religion and culture are embedded in various family laws, such as the 1974 Marriage Law. The socio-political context that allows fundamentalism to grow and influences the law-making process further weakens women’s position in the family and society. Fundamentalist groups managed to influence law makers at the local level to such an extent that by the end of 2011, 207 regional by-laws used ‘traditional’ cultural values and religious teachings as their sources; 78 of these were discriminative towards women. Lack of capacity among legal authorities and failure of the institution (the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection) mandated by law to uphold the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) adopted in 2004, also create impunity and limit female victims of domestic violence from exercising their rights and accessing justice.

Indonesia has some 300 ethnic groups, all with their own spiritual traditions and customs. Most of them share the notion of women’s subordination. Women’s economic dependence on men is another factor that made it difficult to punish perpetrators of domestic violence.
The silence around domestic violence and the inability of victims to report the abuse they experience is linked to the weak structural position of women vis-à-vis their husbands, their families and the public at large due to the prevalence of gender stereotyping in Indonesian society.

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Women, following its formation in 1998. The final outcome was a draft of the DVA as well as an academic paper produced by the drafting team in collaboration with the Centre for Gender and Law Studies of Brawijaya University in East Java. These were then disseminated and discussed in several cities in Indonesia. In 2002, the engagement of law makers started. The draft of the DVA (the bill) was submitted to the Indonesian Parliament and the Indonesian Government by APIK’s Coalition. Regrettably, there was no response by the government, represented by the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection (MWE & CP), although parliament members were actively involved in reviewing the draft. As the legislating process was going on, lobbying and campaigning activities continued. The parliament finally enacted the DVA on 14 September 2002.

The silence around domestic violence and the inability of victims to report the abuse they experience is linked to the weak structural position of women vis-à-vis their husbands, their families and the public at large due to the prevalence of gender stereotyping in Indonesian society.

Implementation of the DVA and access to justice

The UNDP defines access to justice as “the ability of people to seek and obtain a remedy through formal or informal institutions of justice and in conformity with human rights standards.” APIK conducted a desk study that concluded access to justice is not guaranteed by the state. The 2006 UNDP conceptual framework sets normative standards. All laws and procedures must be in place and understood by duty and claim holders. The DVA must be understood by legal authorities, other institutions mandated by the law and claim holders. However, the government has no national action plan to implement the DVA. The failure of the MWE & CP, as coordinator, in upholding the DVA also contributes to the lack of understanding of legal authorities, service providers and claim holders.

A second requirement is legal awareness by victims of domestic abuse, which enables them to have a better understanding of the legal aspect of their case and of the circumstances that triggered the abuse. In Indonesia, the public’s familiarity with the law and legal procedures is generally very low. This also applies to awareness of the DVA. Since its enactment, few initiatives have been undertaken to improve the public’s knowledge about the DVA. These efforts are inadequate in view of Indonesia’s population of more than 240 million, its large geographical area, and the low level of legal awareness especially among women.

The third component is access to appropriate forums, either formal or informal. The availability of legal remedies and legal awareness alone is not sufficient for women to gain access to have access to forums or other forms of mediation through mechanisms that are in their interest. Law enforcement agencies must also facilitate victims’ access to justice and be open to accepting domestic abuse cases. The dual court system - shariah and general court - and the dichotomy between the civil and the criminal courts are a major obstacle for abused women in their quest for justice. The criminal court system is oriented towards punishment, while family members are encouraged by cultural and religious authorities to formalize gender stereotyping. The public’s perception that it is an honour for a woman to be a wife and a mother, and that a mother’s primary role is manager of the household, as defined in the Islamic concept of a woman’s role, remain dependent - economically, socially and emotionally - on the perpetration of abuse. These norms have been legalized into various laws and policies.

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Notes

1 This article is based on LBH-APRI’s experiences, a study on the implementation of the DVA conducted by the Kartini Asia Network (APRI) (2009) and a follow up desk study.
3 In 2000 the Ministry for Women’s Affairs was renamed the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment, under the progressive Muslim Minister Khofifah Indar Parawansa. In 2009 ‘Children’s Protection’ was added to the name.
4 According to Islamic law, when a child is breastfed by a woman other than its mother, its status is the same as a biological child.
7 We extend our thanks to NOVIB, the Ford Foundation, USAID and other funding agencies and individuals/organizations, that we cannot list individually, for enabling APIK to produce a six-year strategic plan and formulate a draft of the DVA until it was enacted as the DVA No 23/2004.
10 Rifka Annisa is a women’s organization established in 1993 in Jogjakarta [Central Java]. It provides legal services and has furnished cases where women have successfully sued their husbands (e.g. APIK Lombaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia for Seadlan/Indonesian Women’s Association for Justice) is a legal aid society which provides free legal services to help women and does advocacy work or legal reform. The 2004 DVA is a result of the advocacy of LBH APIK from 1995–2004.
11 Data was obtained from the 2004 Asian Women’s Human Rights Studies, Padang University. The results of the investigation were requested by the Judicial Commission to evaluate the promotion of judges, for this reason, the researcher has requested that his/her name be excluded.
12 The appropriate term is polygyny, because the right to polygamy (marriage to more than one partner) is only given to husbands and not to wives.

Below: Conducting a wedding prayer, bhinneka. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of lbh-apikean on flickr. Image used solely to illustrate article. Implicated meaning is attached to the actual event portrayed.
Malaysia’s DVA: the clash of gender, cultural and religious rights

Enforcing the law

Even after parliamentary endorsement of the DVA in 1995, the government and many agencies representing the opposition party were anxious about how the law would resonate with their ‘sensitive’ constituencies, namely the Islamic lobby, which was then aggressively pushing for exclusive judicial control over Muslims. Within 10 days of what appeared to be a continuous reprise communicated through the press, the minister finally relented by announcing in the parliament that the act would be enforced in early 1997. Amidst the seemingly positive atmosphere surrounding the acceptance of the DVA, a new controversy erupted in 1999. While the police, perhaps playing its role as the de facto vanguard of the patriarchal state, seemed to resist the law’s implementation. Oddly enough, Minister Zaleha Ismail, who had been instrumental in the DVA’s enforcement, found herself at the receiving end of police and male ‘power’. The dispute was finally settled when then Acting Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim, intervened, noting that the police should have conducted their investigations into reports of domestic violence “in a manner acceptable to all”. Police officers were subsequently asked to attend courses on public relations, so that they could be more “courteous” and “helpfully, help improve the public image of the police”. With the introduction of the conflict between Islamists, police and women activists, the system seemed to be on women’s side. However, the DVA was still not a satisfactory piece of legislation. It was a version that accommodated the interests of many parties. It was not the law envisaged by its early initiators, who wanted to introduce a bill that explicitly recognized domestic violence as an offence, “as a statement from society that domestic violence won’t be tolerated”.

As the DVA needs to be read with the Penal Code, the law’s quasi-criminal, civil and procedural procedures. The ambiguity of the law, being both civil and criminal, is not the actual obstruction to the solution. Even if gendered violence is defined within the ambit of the Penal Code it will not be sufficiently addressed by it, given the complex nature of ‘hurt’ and ‘harm’ inflicted by intimate partners on each other. Malaysia’s DVA is a success story insofar as it mirrored the compromises and accommodations that contributed to the statute’s passage. However, the law does not satisfy all parties nor does it constitute a means to fully criminalize the offence of domestic violence.

Ongoing issues

By tracing the history of the passage of the DVA one sees how marital violence was conceptualized and defined by the courts in the early years before the DVA campaign took root. Legal judgements in the Shariah and civil courts revealed the dissimilar experiences of Muslim and non-Muslim women when they sought justice against their abusers in court. By the mid-1990s, domestic violence began to be slowly recognized and named as a grave offence; the right to guard the body against harm was recognized. This period saw an intense contestation involving the government, media, police and civil society interests. It was an unstable moment for gender consolidation. Although it was a historic law, the impact of the DVA’s provisions and the effectiveness of its implementation are still continually being assessed and critiqued. The stocktaking years revealed some of the difficulties of the DVA in resolving family matters, ranging from the seemingly simple procedure of obtaining a Protection Order to intimidating court procedures unsuitable for family deliberations, as well as the dilemmas around intervention and the autonomy of victims to decide if and how violence upon them should be criminalized. The legal campaigns to realize the DVA’s potential at raising rights consciousness. But it was also a manifestation of the limited capacity of law and the state in affecting social transformation. The campaign for the DVA allowed for much rethinking around the question of one’s own subjectivity (and empowerment) in relation to gender, family, ethnicity, religion and nation. However, the implications of the law also drove home the realization that domestic violence has yet to be deeply understood as a form of gendered violence and explicitly criminalized under the Malaysian legal system.

Notes

DAN LIGHTS HIS CIGARETTE as he climbs to the upper deck of the 45 minute ferry heading to the Indonesian island of Batam. Soon he will be massaged, pampered and desired. He will feel like a ‘real man’ once again. Singapore has played the role of metropolis to the hinterland of Batam since the early 1990s as part of the sub-regional ‘growth triangle’, which includes the Malaysian state of Johor. The metropolis, however, spills over more than just capital, skills or tourists – sexual desires and masculine identities are shared as well.

The sex industry on the Riau islands has grown and diversified in tandem with the maturing economic relations to Singapore. From the smattering of bars, discotheques, and massage parlors, in addition to traditional klinik-klinik (brothel compounds) in the early 1990s, a strong supply of low- to mid-range hotels, together with shopping malls, has since been established in Batam to cater to the increasing number of tourists. While Indonesian laws do not explicitly prohibit sex work, it is illegal to participate in the trade of women or to live off the earnings of sex workers, although prohibit sex work, it is illegal to participate in the trade of women or to live off the earnings of sex workers. Men who travel to Batam for sex are predominantly working class Singaporean men who married foreign brides were more likely to be older and less educated. In light of their subordinated masculinities, working class men interviewed generally speak of two things when they travel to Batam for sex. Firstly, they talk of being pushed or squeezed from the metropolis. Typical sentiments from respondents include: “It’s hard to make a living in Singapore”. “If you’re not rich [in Singapore], forget it...”, and “I’m not a foreign talent [lab], so cannot make it”. Secondly, they speak of seeking new spaces – both territorial and cultural – as necessary to regain their sense of self. “I come here to relax and enjoy, or else go crazy” says one. He goes on to reveal that, “go there [Batam], can cheng [Hokkien, meaning ‘to faint’]. In short, sex in Batam is “an escape into the fantasy of men-as-men and women-as-women, an uncomplicated distribution of roles which provide a refuge from life, because nobody has to step outside the prescribed exchanges and dialogues”.

“They are my friends”: beyond libidinal bonds

Dan is a 50 year old bespectacled Chinese warehouse supervisor who has been going to Batam, and occasionally Bintan, for commercial sex for about 10 years. He is married with two teenage daughters who, he admits, are closer to his wife than they are to him. He earns about S$2500 a month, only patronises massage parlors and returns to Singapore in the evenings, hardly ever spending the night away from home. Dressed neatly in well-pressed short-sleeved shirts and trousers, Dan prefers to go to Batam alone and dislikes pubs and discos because “they are too loud and noisy, very luan [messy]... Massage is more relaxing, and get special afterwards, no need to move around... it’s more convenient”. After the massage, Dan may bring the girl out for lunch if he enjoys her company. According to him: “There the girls have to survive on ‘special services’ [euphemism for sex acts]. Some of them go by contract basis [and] are recruited by their friends, and others come [on freelance] basis... I know some who worked in factories and got retrenched and end up in massage joints. Not much of a choice, since they have to feed their family back in kampung.”

Over the years, Dan has formed a series of friendships with girls lasting for as long as they remain on the island, some of whom he patroneses regularly. “They are my friends. I visit them to see if they are okay... Sometimes when they go back home [to their home province] I feel sad. I will give them an eng pao and tell them to take care of themselves.” Dan’s feelings of friendship suggest that the sexual encounter, though premised on economic power, may be characterised by more than just ‘libidinal bonds’.

On one hand, Dan’s ability to show care and concern has been deferred from the metropolis to the hinterlands. The imaginary frontier has allowed the sexual encounter to develop into a more socially complex relationship where money purchases the opportunity for men to display certain traits such as care and concern, which may otherwise not be required from his emotionally-distant wife or busy teenage daughters. In such cases, these scenarios of affection are intense and temporal, filled with physical contact like hand-holding, cuddling and playful teasing, but suspended when the man leaves the imaginary frontier in a mutual understanding that the woman’s sex work must continue until he arrives on the island again.

This arrangement, on the other hand, has also been beneficial for Batam sex workers who enjoy treats and gifts from men like Dan. “Indeed older girls often purposely nurse a series of such liaisons with different men, and then derive their main support from remittances, rather than from regular work in prostitution” The imaginary frontier is thus a space for the men to play out certain emotional needs and familial desires while the sex worker may willingly subject herself to such male imaginations, either because of the rewards at stake, or because her own imagination of a caring, perhaps even lovelorn, boyfriend offers a comforting counterbalance to the uncertainties and dangers in her profession.

Terence Chong
Dr John N. Miksic is the Head of the Archaeology Unit at ISEAS in Singapore. He is one of Southeast Asia’s leading archaeologists on the study of ceramics, and has published numerous works including Borobudur: golden tales of the Buddhas (1990); Old Javanese Gold (2010); Earthenware in Southeast Asia and the Historical Dictionary of Ancient Southeast Asia (2007). His latest book is Singapore and the Silk Road of the Sea: 1300-1800 (2013).

4. As a boy, you must pay lah**: playing provider

Khairun is a 33-year-old Malay Singaporean. As a contract worker with an emergency response team for a private company, his income is not stable, averaging between $51800-$52200 a month. Although single, he has other financial commitments, being a fireman and a member of a soccer team. Several months after my interview, I kept experiencing a nagging feeling that archaeology was still important, even though its practical applications were obvious. So I can be more effective in my work in archaeology.

When I was applying to PhD programs I was accepted to Cornell University’s Department of Anthropology on the basis of a research proposal to study a modern Chinese neighborhood in Penang, Malaysia. Two years after my interview, I continued working in Malaysia. Their deferred masculinity is the cyclical forward fulfilment of hegemonic fantasies, as feminist scholars have argued. Such a register needs to be set up, and it is in the interests of well-established dealers to subject to scrutiny in the interests of museums themselves to contribute to its development.

Q: What do you feel are some of your biggest contributions to your field?

The main change has been the growing number of Southeast Asian archaeologists who can operate independently of foreign advisors. I hope that in the future, collaboration between countries in Southeast Asia will become more common.

Younger scholars are eager to see this happen. When I started 38 years ago, very few Southeast Asians had archaeology degrees, or any significant field experience. They were reliant on foreign partners for funding and guidance. Few foreign archaeologists left a good impression on their Southeast Asian partners, and there was not much transfer of knowledge. Few of them learned local languages. This has changed completely. Now foreign and local archaeologists work as equals, or in situations where the Southeast Asians are the principal investigators. Foreign funding is still significant, but Southeast Asians are fully capable of planning and carrying out projects. The only remaining weakness is in publication. This is partly due to the fact that most archaeological projects in the region are conducted by national departments of archaeology, and their main performance indicator is to produce a report. These reports are usually not published, and often are very difficult for outsiders, including local academics, to obtain. This situation must change.

Q: What is the field changed and what are the pros and cons of it?

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Terence Chong is Senior Fellow at ISEAS and co-ordinator of its Regional Security and Strategic Studies Program. This essay is from a chapter in the SISORI Cross-border Region: Transnational Politics, Economics and Culture, edited by Francis Hutchinson and Terence Chong (ISEAS Forthcoming).
Singaporeans in Batam: living with discourses of danger and corruption

Su-Ann Oh and Reema Bhagwan Jagtiani

SINGAPOREANS RESIDING IN BATAM have received little attention from scholars. This is surprising given the nature of their sojourning, the economic importance given to the Singapore-Johor-Riau cross-border region, and the cross-border use of these experiences. The academic literature has tended to focus on the economic aspects of this configuration—the differentials and arbitrage opportunities in relation to industry and tourism—and the sociological impact on the lives of Indonesians on the island. While there has been some research on Singaporeans in Batam, it has mostly considered Singaporean interactions, masculinity and sexuality in relation to intimate relations with islanders. In 2013 we began a study attempting to address the gap in knowledge by examining Singaporeans living in Batam and their connections to Singapore, and to obtain as much information as possible about the lifestyles of Singaporeans residing in these two localities. Individuals were asked about reasons for moving to Batam, mobility patterns; frequency and mode of moving between Singapore and place of residence; consumption patterns; work arrangements; family arrangements; children's schooling; etc.

‘Singaporeans’ in this essay include both citizens and permanent residents of the country. For this essay, we draw upon the interviews conducted with five respondents living in Batam. As this is a small number of respondents, we make no claims about the generalisability of our findings. However, the interviews have provided us with insights into the experiences of Singaporeans living in Batam, particularly their encounters with discursive borders relating to danger and corruption.

Singaporeans in Batam: who are they?

It appears that the majority of Singaporeans live in Batam because they have been posted as agents and managers of Singapore-based firms or transnational corporations to set up and/or to manage subsidiaries on Batam. They tend to live in small flats close to work; their lives have a temporary and ‘expat-like’ nature. This group tends to be male. Those who are married travel back to Singapore over the weekends to spend time with their families, while those who are single do so less frequently. They may have to visit their company headquarters regularly. Another group of Singaporeans moved to Batam to set up their own companies and factories. From interviews it became clear that most respondents return to Singapore on a weekly basis.

Danger and corruption in Batam

In Singaporean media reports and the popular collective imaginations of Singaporeans, Batam is seen as a lawless frontier, where crime is rife, danger lurks every corner and moral and legal (sex tourism) and political corruption reign.

“...a lot of Singaporean place a psychological barrier lab about going over to live in Batam...” (Mr Toh, December 2013).

It is within this discursive framework that Singaporeans living in Batam situate their understanding and impressions of their adopted hometown, and which they have to reconsider when challenged by their actual experience of life there. Singaporeans in Batam constantly have to confront national narratives and discourses—through friends, colleagues, family members, newspapers, TV, radio—about Batam. The narratives that Singaporeans in Batam have to deal with the most are related to danger and corruption.

“I find overall, you know, Batam quite ok for Singaporean, say you want to retire there, buy a house there is much much cheaper you know and it’s not very far from Singapore. Strategically speaking, for people who want to retire there you know, to buy a house there. In my opinion, quite good...” (Mr Toh, December 2013).

For the majority of our respondents, their experiences of Batam are initially mediated through Singaporean characterizations—dangerous and corrupt. However, after some time, some aspects of these essentialised notions of Batam islanders and Indonesia begin to blur around the edges. In response, some Singaporeans manage to pull themselves out of Singapore-mediated notions of life in Batam, others remain in a limbo of contradictory narratives, while others find that these Singaporean-based constructs are reinforced.

Conclusion

This essay has provided a summary of the discursive borders that Singaporeans encounter and engage with while living on Batam. The regularity and frequency of return to Singapore places them in fixed circuits of mobility that shape their experience of borders in ways that are different from that of Singaporeans who remain in Singapore or those who live in more distant countries. First, unlike Singaporeans living in Singapore, they are regularly confronted with the border and its attendant routines, bureaucracy, laws and symbols. Second, unlike their counterparts in more distant parts of the world, they are acclimatised to events in Singapore through Singaporean media that is available in Batam, and frequent visits to Singapore and constant contact with friends and family based in Singapore. Consequently, they become caught up in material and discursive borders, which challenge their own notions of identity, Singapore and Batam.

Su-Ann Oh is a Visiting Fellow and Reema Bhagwan Jagtiani is a Research Officer at ISEAS. This essay is from a chapter in The SIJORI Cross-border Region: Transnational Politics, Economics and Culture, edited by Francis Hutchinson and Terence Chong (ISEAS Forthcoming)

Notes

1 We would like to thank our respondents for their time; names used in the text are pseudonyms. Our gratitude goes also to Francis Hutchinson and Terence Chong for their insightful comments and support.


International conference report

South Asia and the Long 1930s: Appropriations and Afterlives

6-7 December 2013, Leiden, the Netherlands

Sanjukta Sunderason (LIAS) andCarolien Stolte (Institute for History, Leiden University)

ON 6 AND 7 DECEMBER 2013, the international conference ‘South Asia and the Long 1930s: Appropriations and Afterlives’ was convened in Leiden. Conceptualised by an expanding and amorphous collective of historians of modern South Asia at the Leiden University, the conference was organised jointly by Prof. Nira Wickramasinghe and Dr. Sanjukta Sunderason from the Leiden Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) and Dr. Carolien Stolte from the Institute for History. The conference received generous funding support from the Dutch Royal Academy of Sciences, the Asian Modernities and Traditions research profile of Leiden University, the IAS, the IIS and the Leiden University Fund. It brought together South Asians across disciplines and research specialisations to focus on the complex forms and terrains of the political, social and cultural currents of 1930s. Yet the scope of the conference spanned beyond South Asia, and the organisers were fortunate to be able to include experts from other regions to engage with the currents and resonances of the 1930s. As a result, all panels benefited from discussions which provided inputs from the Middle Eastern, European, British, and Chinese perspectives. Showcasing modern South Asian studies in Leiden as well as opening up South Asia to thematic dialogues from other regions (and area studies perspectives) was one of the driving forces behind the conference.

The three panels in this two-day conference elaborated upon themes that can be seen to frame the 1930s: international Affinities, Aesthetics and Politics, the Market and the Ordinary. Reflecting research specialisations of the three key organisers, the panels were chaired by Carolien Stolte, Sanjukta Sunderason, and Nira Wickramasinghe respectively. The first conference day kicked off with two sessions on ‘International Affinities’. This theme was selected to shed light on the long-distance networks that had emerged in the aftermath of the First World War, the establishment of the League of Nations and the Bolshevik Revolution. Whether working towards world federation, religious revival, or national independence, and whether based on ties of friendship, solidarity or ideology, individuals and groups in this period sought new blueprints for a world-order. Examining networks and their formation and development, the organisers felt that while these networks were marked by considerable ideological flexibility throughout the 1930s, the 1930s experienced a sharper drawing of ideological boundaries. Earlier histories of South Asia have often subordinated these engagements to national narratives. The conference, by contrast, sought to examine these networks and affinities in their full international dimensions.

This internationalist enthusiasm was evident in the paper by Michele Loue of Salem State University, who spoke on the League against Imperialism. Rather than looking at the League’s formative years, she focused on the changing relationship between working class mobilisation and bourgeois radicalism in the 1930s. While this development closed some routes for the League’s Indian members, it also enabled the formation of new anti-imperialist networks. Ben Zachariah of Goldsmith University took up a different political divide of this period through the lens of Indian exiles in Germany. Berlin played host to persons whose contacts and connections, engagements, politics and personal relationships ranged across the world at a time of tumultuous change and potential revolution. Several Indian communists spent their formative years in Berlin, but many others’ anti-imperialist and reproductive practices were included in discourses of nation-building. He also showed how the public debates around this issue were entangled with discourses on infertility and population control. Asiya Alam from Yale addressed the intersection of social reform and internationalism in a different sphere, through Ibsalimovna Hussain’s engagements with both international feminism and local reform. Finally, there was room for how international politics intersected with regional issues as well. Uma Canesan of Berea College Kentucky, spoke on the Self-Respect Movement in South India. She raised the question as to whether we might see this movement not just as anti-imperialist, but also as anti-national. Her paper showed that the 1930s saw a development in which the class and caste radicalism of the movement gradually gave way to an ethno-linguistic focus in which an Aryan North was pitted against a Dravidian South. Ali Raza and Franziska Roy, both of the ZMD Berlin, delivered a joint paper on the Khakhar Movement, whose rise coincided with a proliferation of paramilitary and uniformed volunteer groups. This analysis of a social history of the Khakhars rather than an analysis of the movement’s leader Mashriqi, they were able to focus on the changing political alignments of the 1930s.

The second conference theme, entitled Aesthetics and Politics, examined new patterns and vocabularies of cultural radicalism and ‘front-making’ with artists, writers, performers, and spectators. Sanjukta Sunderason pointed that she was chosen for the new imperatives of cultural production that emerged in this period, bolstered with ideals and ideologies that were part and parcel of the anti-imperial and anti-nationalist populism. Under the catchword of ‘progressive’ art, realism was intertwined with modernism, activating notions of the social, the formal, the everyday and the national-popular. South Asian scholarship is still in the process of researching and rethinking the artistic and ideological lives of the ideal of ‘progressive’ culture, and the next six speakers of this session moved the discussion towards the cultural formations from workers, peasants and traders to women, ‘lower castes’ and modern consumers.

Three of the papers in this session dealt with cinema. Engaging with the question of Muslim identity, Sanjukta Sunderason spoke on the early years of sound in Indian cinema, in particular the social film. Specifically targeted to move audience to outrage, in the long 1930s, South Asian social films were part of an international discourse on sex, eugenics, birth control and population. Asiya Alam from Yale addressed the intersection of social reform and internationalism in a different sphere, through Ibsalimovna Hussain’s engagements with both international feminism and local reform. Finally, there was room for how international politics intersected with regional issues as well. Uma Canesan of Berea College Kentucky, spoke on the Self-Respect Movement in South India. She raised the question as to whether we might see this movement not just as anti-imperialist, but also as anti-national. Her paper showed that the 1930s saw a development in which the class and caste radicalism of the movement gradually gave way to an ethno-linguistic focus in which an Aryan North was pitted against a Dravidian South. Ali Raza and Franziska Roy, both of the ZMD Berlin, delivered a joint paper on the Khakhar Movement, whose rise coincided with a proliferation of paramilitary and uniformed volunteer groups. This analysis of a social history of the Khakhars rather than an analysis of the movement’s leader Mashriqi, they were able to focus on the changing political alignments of the 1930s.

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This session’s first speaker was Daniel Rycroft of the University of Birmingham, whose paper addressed anti-fascism, anti-imperialism, and the next six speakers sought to examine these through the lens of anti-nationalism and the effects of market induced practices of exclusion and inclusion upon a variety of social formations from workers, peasants, traders to women, ‘lower castes’ and modern consumers.

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The conference ended with a final roundtable session entitled ‘Making the Familiar Unfamiliar: Retelling Empire Stories from the South’, designed specifically to draw together a cross-regional, inter-disciplinary dialogue around archives and narratives from the global South. Yash Minhas and Ali Sardar Jafri, the roundtable’s keynote speakers, set the tone with the idea that the mid-1930s was an intricate dialogue between images of primitivism, policies of integration and narratives of conflict. Daniel Bass of Southern Connecticut State University elaborated on representations of ethnicity, in this case by looking at the societal transformations taking place in late colonial Ceylon. Mass labour struggles, as well as the introduction of universal suffrage, further transformed the social and domestic sphere through the large-scale introduction of new goods in the 1930s. This celebration of new global commodity flows contrasted sharply with the contemporaneous khab movement and prompts us to rethink the domestication of the global ‘modern’ in consumer aesthetics.

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Threads of Time: Traditional Textiles and the Contemporary Transformation in Taiwan

25-28 November 2013, Leiden, the Netherlands

Willem Vogelsang (IAS)

FROM 25 TO 28 NOVEMBER 2013, a delegation from Taiwan visited IAS for an intensive one-week series of events that focused on the theme of traditional Taiwanese textile crafts. The programme, which included a series of lectures, demonstrations, workshops and a small exhibition, paid special attention to the use of indigo dye and the weaving techniques of the indigenous Atayal tribe. The programme was sponsored by the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture in the framework of its ‘Spotlight Taiwan Programme’ and organised by Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) in cooperation with IAS, and supported by the Textile Research Centre (TRC) in Leiden.

Exhibition

The Atayal people, one of the 14 indigenous communities in Taiwan, believe that the lifetime of a human being is woven by god. The temporary exhibition ‘The Spinning of Life’ at the Textile Research Centre in Leiden (www.trc-leiden.nl), which was set up in the context of the Taiwanese visit to Leiden, took the form of a circle interlinking with other circles. It showed the interaction between people, and emphasised that the opening of each circle sends out welcoming messages for more people to join. Featuring different textiles and outfits and celebrating various types of Atayal woven forms, the exhibition attracted a steady stream of visitors. It also acted as background to the indigo dyeing workshops and lectures organised during the same week.

Lectures

On Tuesday 26th November, the programme included a series of lectures by representatives of Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) and the Zhuoye Studio, which is dedicated to the education of traditional arts at TNUA. Finally, Mr. Cho Tzu-Lo from the Zhuoye Studio presented an example of indigo revival. In the afternoon the programme continued at the Textile Research Centre with a lecture by Ms Yuma Taru (Atayal artist and founder of the Liang Studio) entitled Atayal traditional weaving and its contemporary transformation. The day was concluded with a viewing of the exhibition ‘The Spinning of Life’ and a reception.

Indigo dyeing workshops

On Wednesday 27th November, a series of workshops was organised at the Textile Research Centre (located at Hogewoerd 164 in Leiden), which introduced the participants to the techniques of indigo dyeing. Indigo dyeing has been practised in Taiwan for hundreds of years, but disappeared from ordinary life in the twentieth century due to the import of chemical dyes. In the 1990s, researchers started to revive the traditional craft. The Zhuoye Studio in Taiwan intends to preserve the traditional techniques as well as to improve the production process with modern technology. The Studio also hopes to bring the indigo memories back into everyday life. They make indigo clothes, everyday items, decorative items and art works in order to bring indigo back into daily life and allow more people to get close to this clean and non-toxic traditional industry.

The three consecutive workshops, given by Ms Cheng Mei-shu and Mr Cho Tzu-Lo, of the Zhuoye Studio, focused on making beautiful indigo motifs with chopsticks, wooden sticks and rubber bands, or with wax-resist techniques (batik). Before the start of each of the workshops (which were fully booked well in advance), a 20-minute introductory lecture was given in order to present the traditional processes and techniques involved in producing indigo dyes. The lectures also touched upon the historical development of the indigo industry in Taiwan and introduced the Zhuoye Studio.

Review of the Asiascape: Digital Asia conference

Revisiting the Emancipatory Potential of Digital Media in Asia

24-25 January 2014, Leiden University, the Netherlands

Florian Schneider

Editor’s note: below are the opening paragraphs to F. Schneider’s report, which can be read in full at http://tinyurl.com/digital-turn-in-asian-studies

LIKE ANY INTERDISCIPLINARY ENDEAVOUR, studying digital communication in Asia can be challenging: not only does such work have to convince area specialists, it also has to connect with research across different disciplines, such as anthropology, economics, political science, media studies, or the computer sciences. About a year ago, several of my colleagues and I discussed how we could create a platform for those who are taking on that challenge. We decided that we needed a new academic journal, and that the work that we would showcase there should also be accompanied by events and discussions, both online and offline. As a result, we are launching the first issue of our new journal Asiascape: Digital Asia this March and in the run-up to that launch we organized an international conference at Leiden University to discuss what it means to be part of the digital turn in Asian studies.

From the 24th to 25th of January 2014, we asked participants to help us revisit the debates surrounding digital media and their potential to emancipate people. Throughout five panels and three sessions of lively plenary discussion, our contributors presented empirical evidence from societies in Asia and debated the theoretical and practical implications of how digital media are used in diverse settings, ranging from China to Korea, from India to Indonesia.

Rather than going chronologically through our conference programme, which is available online along with the book of abstracts, I want to take this opportunity to highlight what issues we came across in our discussions and suggest how our work on ‘digital Asia’ might fruitfully proceed. Before the conference, we asked our guests to send us answers to three short questions about digital media and Asia, and much of our discussion revolved around the responses to these questions: where might we find ‘digital Asia’, how should we study our subject, and who might benefit from digital media’s supposed ‘emancipatory potential’. I’ll go through each of these questions in turn. Throughout, I’ll also include examples from the conference, links to various useful resources, as well as reference to related books and articles.

Asiascape: Digital Asia is a new academic journal on the political, social and cultural impact of digital media in Asia. Information: www.asiascape.org
WHY IS IT THAT, AT THIS POINT IN HISTORY, heritage has become a pertinent issue across the world? What's at stake in the process of heritage-making in our societies today? These were the two main questions raised during the conference on State Policy and the Cultural Politics of Heritage-Making in East and Southeast Asia, held on 16-17 January 2014 at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore, and co-organised by ISEAS, the Singapore Research Nexus and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore (NUS), and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS).

The conference brought together scholars from different regions of varying academic seniority. From more than 200 submissions, the conveners – Hui Yew-Foong (ISEAS), Daniel Goi (NUS) and Philippe Poycam (IIAS) – selected 21 papers and organised them into seven thematical panels, with the last two focusing on heritage in Singapore.

With his insightful, thought-provoking keynote speech entitled The Politics of Materiality: Monuments and Manners in the Construction of National Selfhood, Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University) set the tone for the conference, challenging the participants to reconsider some of the common reified dualisms (for example, tangible/intangible, formal/informal, material/symbolic, structure/practice, and state/people) that inform the discourse of heritage. At the same time, he situated heritage politics in the context of its linkages to colonialism and its reproduction within the UNESCO multi-state schema.

In the first panel, entitled Intangible Cultural Heritage and Its Discontents, the presenters looked at state-sponsored heritage-making among the Kam minority community of Southwestern China, analysed the legitimization of religions as heritage in China, and examined policy and practice pertaining to Kantsuern folk music in Thailand. The second panel, Contesting Memories, Contesting Representations, based on case studies in Sarawak, South Korea and Taipei, broadened the discussion by exploring how different political and social forces – including urban governance, ‘artistim’ (artistic activism), cinematic representation, and post-colonial constructions – competed for space in the sphere of memories and representations. The third panel, Heritage and the Making of Cities and Nations, presented a contrarian perspective on the ‘legacy’ of heritage in the politics of the changing nation-state, discussed how, in Jakarta, heritage can be embedded in modalities entangled within social and material relationships, and investigated the contestation of national independence heritage in Malaysia. The first day ended with a welcome dinner and speech by distinguished guest speaker Michael Hisao (Academia Sinica), where he shared his observations on how the state ‘imagines’ heritage-making and collective memories in Taiwan in the past three decades.

The second day opened with the fourth panel, The Vicissitudes of World Heritage Status (WHS). One paper analysed the role of Norodom Sihanouk’s administration in the articulation of Preah Vihear as national heritage, while another investigated the processes of participation, institutional arrangements, spatial planning, resistance and alliances over WHS listing in Bali. A third paper highlighted the case of Hoa An and the problems that UNESCO WHS listing could lead to for vulnerable, less affluent sites. The fifth panel on The Dark, the Vanishing, and the Forgotten, looked at the conservation movements of underground war-related sites in contemporary Japan, questioned architectural heritage and gentrification schemes in Manila, and studied the cultural politics of making or not making colonial prisons into heritage sites in Taipei, China and Singapore.

In order to better engage local communities and state actors in Singapore on heritage issues, the last two panels were dedicated to Heritage in Singapore: Challenges, Conversations and Consequences. For the first of these panels, Articulating Singapore’s Cultural Resources, the papers discussed the historical developments of heritage assessment in Singapore, the excessively top-down legal schemes that regulated its historical built environment, and the potential of an intercultural approach in heritage interpretations in Singapore. The second panel, Singapore – Sites of Aspiration and Memory, examined the roots and spirits of the rediscovered Chinese cemetery at Bukit Brown, the contested urban landscape of Geylang Serai as a site for the Malay-Muslim community, and the history and repositioning of Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall in Singapore over the past six decades. TC Chang (NUS) wrapped up the conference with a short overview of the Singapore Research Nexus and its website www.fas.nus.edu.sg/vrn, where academic publications, creative works and consultancy projects related to Singapore can be accessed.

The conference had started by questioning and challenging the premises of heritage politics and its associated discursive dualisms, as well as interrogating the complex interactions between different actors in the heritage-making process. These broad dynamics were then explored through the various case studies from different regions that were presented and debated at length. It ended by bringing these considerations to the Singapore context, providing a platform for policy-makers, civil society actors and academics, both local and international, to engage in the deliberation of heritage policy and politics and their implications on the ground.

Next conference and publication

Space does not permit a more detailed review, but a publication is being planned at this stage. The next conference in the series ‘The Cultural Politics of Heritage-Making’ will be held on 11-13 December 2014 at the Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica (Taipei) and will focus on the role of citizens and civil society in the process of heritage-making. Further information will be made available at www.iias.nl/events-iias.

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For conference details, see: http://tinyurl.com/ISEASconference
Urban Hybridity in the Post-Colonial Age

16-20 December 2013

THIS PAST DECEMBER, the IIAS’ Winter School on Urban Hybridity in the Post-Colonial Age brought together distinguished professors, experts, and graduate students from four continents and several disciplines for a lively week of discussion and research in the fascinating city of Macau. Following on the successes of two previous IIAS Summer Schools held at the institution’s headquarters in the Netherlands, this year’s organizers collaborated with the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Macau to hold the Winter School at its main campus on Taipa (one of the small islands that make up Macau). This location proved to be the ideal setting for both the participants’ intellectual conversations and the urban hybridity in the classroom, and their hands-on exploration of it in the streets and squares of the metropolis’ diverse neighbourhoods.

The week began with presentations by graduate students on their own doctoral research, as well as by the Winter School’s three co-conveners – Professor Engseng Ho (Duke University), Professor Akira Akashi (University of Tokyo), and Professor Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University) – each a world-renowned scholar in the field of anthropology. In the true spirit of the Winter School’s stated themes, the students’ work proved to be extremely diverse, with PhD projects ranging from studies of protest spaces in Malaysia and ‘Chinatowns’ in post-war Japan, to histories of immigration and economies of Australasia and modernist city planning in Pakistan, to ethnographies of youth heritage activism in Indonesia and urban beautification projects in Sri Lanka. They offered insightful comments on all of these projects, but also began each day’s session with lectures based on their own research. In these, they knitted together various issues raised by the student presentations, while also drawing upon their own extensive fieldwork in India, Thailand, and Singapore.

In addition, throughout the week the Winter School also facilitated guest lectures from local and foreign experts on the history and architecture of Macau. Presentations by Jeff Cody, a conservator at the Getty Institute; Tim Simpson, a don at the University of Macau; and José Marques Sales, the last Mayor of Macau under the Portuguese administration, together presented a multifaceted picture of the city and its past. In his presentation, Jeff Cody discussed the role of the built environment, focusing on material changes to Macau over time. He explored the use of particular materials and building styles that both reinforced and made connections between Macau and Las Vegas (the American city to which it is so often compared) while emphasizing the former’s unique aspects. Tim Simpson traced a complex history of gambling and the ever-present question of illicit activities on the islands, producing a humorous yet astounding picture of the massive capital that flows through Macau. Finally, José Marques Sales offered an elegiac portrait of changes to the city from the mid- to late-twentieth century through the lens of a personal biography. He discussed the changing world of a Portuguese city trying to make sense of the growing political influence of China in Macau’s affairs. At the same time he stressed the singular position through which Macau is able to maintain its relevance, particularly to the people of Taiwan and as a demonstration of China’s internal complexity.

Words, history, and the senses

From these presentations, lectures, and our spirited discussions that followed over tea and dan tat (Macanese egg tarts), three major themes arose. The first was a shared effort to rethink the terminology we use to discuss post-colonial cities. Hailing from departments of anthropology, history, media and culture studies, music, and architecture, the graduate students worked together as a highly interdisciplinary group. Through these interactions, we found ourselves reconsidering several terms long central to our respective fields; for instance, notions of ‘identity,’ ‘heritage,’ ‘nostalgia,’ and ‘hybridity’ itself. While all are undoubtedly useful, in some cases these concepts cannot effectively capture the kinds of complexities in urban physical and social form that each of our research projects aim to understand. Over the course of the Winter School, many suggestions were made of how to re-work this existing terminology (for example, ‘hybridity’ rather than ‘hybridities’) in a manner we felt could better reflect the realities we faced in our fieldwork and allow us to communicate ideas more effectively between our different disciplines. In this vein, Professor Herzfeld himself made a strong case for moving away from the usual talk of ‘identity,’ a word that often carries with it a false sense of fixity and internal coherence, and towards experimentation with the more nuanced concept of ‘positionality.’

The second theme to emerge from the Winter School was a desire to draw connections between the past and the present of Asian urbanism. Indeed, all of the participants shared a strong interest in historical depth – whether of physical urban landscapes, social relations of city-dwellers, or exchanges between cities within Asia – and in how that depth was represented (or left unrepresented) in contemporary heritage discourses and other public displays of an ‘official’ past. Professor Ho, in particular, pointed out that many of the urban centres that served as the field sites of the graduate students’ research were in fact part of long histories of colonial domestic houses and squares of the metropolis’ diverse neighbourhoods.

A third major theme arose. The first was a shared effort to rethink our terminology (for example, ‘hybridities’ rather than ‘hybridity’) and towards experimentation with the more nuanced concept of ‘positionality.’

Finaly, while the Winter School’s participants came to Macau from far ranging countries and disciplines, a strong common curiosity quickly became clear – a curiosity in the spatial, material, and sensory make-up of cities, and in how urban hybridity (or, rather, hybridities) might be understood or observed in these terms. This interest ran throughout both the individual student presentations and the lectures of the co-conveners, from Professor Ho’s discussion of the impact of the striking architecture of ‘global cities’ like Dubai and Singapore have on visitors and residents alike.

Experiencing Macau

This shared interest in the material, spatial, and sensory dimensions of urban hybridity in Asia is a theme that the students were able to explore further in the second half of the Winter School. We split into small groups to conduct independent ethnographic and media research projects around Macau using the ‘toolkit’ of qualitative and quantitative research methods that the co-conveners had presented in the opening meeting of the workshop. Each group was paired with a local student from the University of Macau, who contributed enormously to our brief fieldwork experience in the multi-layered, and sometimes daunting city. They served both as cultural and linguistic mediators and as theorists in their own right, helping the graduate students to navigate important issues regarding the cultural complexity and history of Macau.

Each group had a condensed time frame in which to pursue their own research project in Macau. This seeming constraint, however, encouraged the participants to develop innovative approaches to their fieldwork and to experiment with new methods. Some participants interacted with local residents, identifying and interviewing key informants in order to understand the history of residential associations in Macau and the role of local trade. Other groups, wanting to understand how the spatial organization and architectural construction of Macau is itself reflective of hybrid cultural dynamics, embarked on walking tours. They paid particular attention to the aesthetic and sensory features of Macau’s diverse cityscapes: from the UNESCO World Heritage Site that is its historic colonial core, to the working-class neighbourhoods just off this tourist trail, to the wide avenues of its glitzy casino district.

The result of these explorations into the tangible and social dynamics of Macau was a series of short presentations on the final day of the workshop, each packed with great detail and creative insights that reflected participants’ wide-ranging expertise, while also coalescing their shared interests under the general themes of the Winter School. Of the groups that focused on the spatial and sensory aspects of the city, one studied the official celebrations (coincidentally, occurring during the week of the Winter School) commemorating the handover of Macau from Portugal to China in 1999. They found that these self-conscious representations of Macanese heritage strategically depicted its Portuguese past as part of a politically benign multiculturalism. Another group of students examined the ubiquitous Portuguese tiles that pave the streets and sidewalks of the historic centre; tracing their historical background and connections to Portugal. They pointed out that despite their importance, today these tiles are relatively overlooked by pedestrians and tourists going about their daily affairs. Still others took a more explicitly sensory approach to Macau, producing field recordings that highlighted the aural landscape of activities concentrated in distinctive neighborhoods.

In addition to these aesthetic and sensory themes, another set of students addressed the social aspects of everyday life in Macau. One group focused on the material infrastructure of local markets, including questions of zoning and regulation. They linked these back to issues regarding local trade amongst fruit and vegetable vendors and the larger market that has emerged in order to supply casinos. Taking a fine-grained look at the history of associational life in Macau, a final group produced a rich visual and ethnographic portrait of residents’ patterns of living. In great detail, their fieldwork revealed residents’ long-standing yet evolving relationships with the wider city, particularly their ambivalent engagement with mass tourism.

Overall, the diversity of themes explored by the graduate students opened up a vivid cross-section of Macau and a realistic picture of life in this complex, and sometimes contradictory city. As was the original aim of the IAS in holding the Winter School outside the usual confines of its Leiden office (a logistical feat in itself), Macau served as the perfect backdrop for participants, both students and professors alike, to think through the larger comparative and theoretical issues that the phenomenon we called ‘hybridity’ continues to raise in post-colonial cities across Asia.

Photos: (top) Colorful preparations along the route of the parade celebrating the anniversary of Macau’s handover to China. (middle) Apartment balconies in central Macau (both photos by Lauren Yapp).

Below: Street scene, Macau. Sketched by Nerul Aaren Azlan during the group research project.
International conference report

Cultural Heritage: Environment, Ecology and Inter-Asian Interactions

6-8 January 2014, Nalanda University, Bigar, India
Jointly organised with IIAS

Michael Baas

FROM 6-8 JANUARY 2014 Nalanda University hosted a highly successful conference on ‘cultural heritage’ specifically highlighting the role inter-Asian connections and environmental/ecological factors have played in the establishment and continued existence of heritage sites. Keynotes were delivered by Professors Engseng Ho, Akira Matsui and Frederick M. Asher. The final session of the conference on the heritage of Bihar was held on the lawn of the archaeological museum, right opposite the ruins of the ancient University of Nalanda itself.

Approaching cultural heritage
In Asia, the notion of ‘heritage’ is often associated with the construction of post-independence nation-state models, the definition of national ‘traditions’ and the idea of pre/post-colonial historical national continuity. As a result discussions about heritage often tend to be state-dominated, leaving little room for regional and trans-regional views. This dilemma is of particular relevance to Nalanda University, a new international university that is in the process of establishing a highly innovative academic program and campus with world class facilities in Patna, the capital of Bihar, India. This new university takes forward the academic excellence, teaching-learning model, and inter-Asian character of the ancient Nalanda. The conference on ‘cultural heritage’ took inspiration from this and sought to highlight how Asian connections and interactions have often given shape and meaning to the establishment of particular cultural heritage sites. Nalanda’s first two Schools, Historical Studies and Environment & Ecology Studies, will commence in August 2014 and as a result the University was keen to explore the role ecological and environmental conditions have played in the establishment and preservation of particular sites as well.

Inter-Asian connections
In a highly thought-provoking and insightful keynote, Engseng Ho of Duke University kicked off the conference by highlighting the network of trade, politics and religion across the Indian Ocean through which he was able to lay bare the prophetic genealogies as well as the density of inter-Asian connections and interactions. Professors Akira Matsui and Frederick M. Asher opened the first session by focusing on the centrality of India in the imperial Chinese era of the fourth century CE. India was imagined as the ideal kingdom at the time, while China was seen as inhabiting the margins. Subsequent papers by Padma D. Maitland (Berkeley) working on tourism and pilgrimage in Bodh Gaya and its central place in the Buddhist imagery; Olga Deshpande of the Hermitage in St-Petersburg discussing how the image of Buddha travelled in Theravada; Andrea Acri (ISEAS Singapore), exploring the history and ecology of Indian palm-leaf manuscript culture; and Grazia Marchiano, (University of Siena-Arezzo) investigating South Asian rock carvings from the Palaeolithic era, all perfectly illustrated the importance of examining the interplay of inter-Asian connections and ecological/environmental factors when focusing on cultural heritage.

Technological interventions
How research on this can benefit from technological interventions was made clear by another set of papers. Making use of digital techniques in order to recreate the architectural complexities of temples from the period of 400-900 CE, Sambit Datta (Curtin University) was able to highlight the many architectural linkages between temple building traditions of South and Southeast Asia. Making use of satellite imagery M.B. Rajan (Nalanda University) explores the man-made water bodies in the vicinity of the ancient university in order to understand its evolution and development. Investigating the Giant Tank in the Mannar District of Sri Lanka and making use of much simpler technology, Lodevijck Wagenaar (University of Amsterdam) and Alan Potkin (Digital Conservation Facility, London) aim to understand how the tank was originally ‘engineered’ and why subsequent restoration works during colonial days was only partially successful.

Questions of authority, autonomy and ownership
Questions of authority, autonomy and ownership, often drawing directly upon the observation of changing geo-political conditions, clearly bound another set of papers. Independent scholar Alex McKay kicked off with a particularly pertinent question informed by his work on the emergence of Gangotri as a prominent pilgrimage site: who actually has the authority to determine the importance or sacredness of a particular site? Engaging in Japanese naturalist Minakata Kumagusu’s work and criticism of the Japanese state’s attempt to regulate Shinto shrines, allowed Bijj Tanaka of the Institute of Chinese Studies in Delhi to elucidate on the question of state authority and nation-state building, which often has far reaching consequences for the way (sacred) sites continue to function or even exist. Saayan Chattopadhyay (University of Calcutta) provided a reading of similar issues in his exploration of the rapidly growing popularity of the Durga puja festival in Kolkata. Christoph Anton (Deakin University), raising awareness of the often contested nature of intangible heritage, brought to light the way ‘rights discourses’ take shape especially in relation to the environment in which they are said to have originated. In relation to this both, Prateek Sharma (Jawaharlal Nehru University), Shaik Azhar Shaiq Hussain (University of Malaysia Serawak) and Alice Lowsens (University of Exeter) drew attention to the way landscape, regions and memories are connected, respectively in the case of the Buddhist sites of Suryapahar (Assam), the heritage left by the ‘white rajputs’ in Serawak, and the trade in heritage items in the Chettinad region of Tamil Nadu. As the work of Elizabeth Cecil (Brown University) illustrated (focusing on a number of cave sites in Maharashtra), there are a myriad factors that determine if a particular ‘sacred’ site becomes heritage and how this is engaged with ‘locally’. Sudhini Sen (Jahangirnagar University) raised an important question that had direct relevance to this: how can we understand the growing disparities between the perceptions of heritage?

Environment, ecology & great Asia
Akira Matsui’s evocative keynote on the devastating effects of the 2011 tsunami in Japan not only brought to the fore the way environmental factors can impact on cultural heritage, but also that when it comes to such disasters there are no national borders. In that sense many other papers sought to highlight further the idea of a Greater Asia or a pan-Asian characterized by connections and interactions. While Sun Bo (National Museum of China and Peking University) illustrated how inter-Asian linkages and related geopolitical developments had informed the construction of Xudong Temple Pagoda; Sraman Mukherjee (Presidency University, Kolkata) took an inter-Asian perspective in order to make sense of the circulation of Buddhist corporeal relics especially in relation to the ‘articulation of pan Asian moral geographies’. Examining the work of several Great India scholars, such as Kalidas Nag, enabled Carolyn Stolte (Leiden University) to discuss the way in which relationships between India and Central Asia developed. Finally Maraekte Bloembergen (KITLV) focused on the scholarly and spiritual knowledge exchanged between India and Indonesia in relation to two major javanese sites: Borobudur and Prambanan.

Nalanda University, Patliputra and ‘Bihar’
In his powerful keynote on the final day of the conference, Frederick M. Asher (University of Minnesota) elaborated on ‘Monsoon Asia’s’ pre-modern connections via texts, histories and ideas especially in relation to the role of ecology in stimulating trade and sustaining large networks. As such his keynote generated the discussion about the present Nalanda University as well as other important historical sites in Bihar. Other presentations such as the one by Divakar Kumar Sinhraj (Delhi University) on Buddhist sites in and around Nalanda, Abdushel Amaru (Hamiton College) engaging in questions of heritage and history-making in the Gaya Region; Muran Kumar Bh (National University of Singapore) discussing the rise and demise of Pataliputra (current day Patna), the capital of Bihar as an imperial centre in the fourth century BCE, and Sraman Mukherjee examining the displaced identity of Bihar Sharif as a centre for collectible heritage.

Research agenda and network
The conference was highly successful with engaged participants from 15 countries. This conference unveiled the launch of a new research agenda that aims to give inter-Asian connections and environmental/ecological factors a more prominent place in research on cultural heritage. Furthermore, it has led to the formation of a new network of scholars working on related topics who will find a welcome and enthusiastic partner in Nalanda University.

Michiel Baas, Fellow at Nalanda University (Bihar, India)
First joint NIAS/IIAS PhD platform meeting

The Power of Knowledge: Asia and the West

7-8 November 2013, Sønderborg, Denmark

Willem Vogelsang (IAS)

ON 7 AND 8 NOVEMBER OF LAST YEAR, some twenty-five PhD students and senior scholars met at Campus Sønderborg of the University of Southern Denmark, for the first annual joint NIAS/IIAS meeting of PhD students in Asian Studies from Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. With this meeting, NIAS and IAS launched a new series of annual joint ‘PhD Platform Meetings’, which are intended to take place once a year in different European cities.

This year’s PhD Platform Meeting was organised by the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), the Nordic NIAS Council, IAS and the University of Southern Denmark within the context of the European Alliance for Asian Studies. Led by NIAS Director Dr Geir Helgesen, the meeting revolved around the theme of ‘The Power of Knowledge: Asia and the West’, and succeeded a conference on the same theme from 4 to 6 November.

The meeting included presentations by the PhD students of their previously submitted paper, which was then discussed by a senior scholar and the other students. The structure of the Platform Meeting allowed for ample time to discuss the various papers, and the interaction between the European students was further enhanced by their joint social programme during the evenings in the truly beautiful city of Sønderborg. The group of PhD students included students from Scandinavian universities (themselves originating from all over Europe) as well as an enthusiastic group of eight young scholars from the Universities of Amsterdam and Leiden in the Netherlands, who had also participated in the preceding conference.

The senior scholars were: Nandita Chaudhury (Delhi), Geir Helgesen (NIAS), Nikita Khalmarova (Kabul), Channong Liu (the deputy director of the Fudan European Centre for China Studies), Donghao Min (NIAS), Willem Vogelsang (IAS), and Qi Wang (Sønderborg).

The PhD Platform Meeting was regarded by all participants as a great success, and it further strengthened the growing cooperation between NIAS in Copenhagen and IAS in Leiden. The next PhD Platform meeting is planned for 13-17 October, and will take place in Reykjavik, Iceland.

International conference report

Patterns of Early Asian Urbanism

11-13 November 2013, Leiden, the Netherlands

Willem Vogelsang (IAS)

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES (RMO), located on Leiden’s stately Rapenburg canal, was the venue for a stimulating and very well-attended conference on Early Asian Urbanism, held from 11-13 November 2013. Organised by IAS, with the active support of the Faculty of Archaeology of Leiden University and the Archaeology Unit of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore, the conference opened with four keynote lectures and featured 80 conference papers. The topics under discussion covered a vast geographic expanse, extending from the Indus valley in modern-day Pakistan, via the urban centres of medieval Mongolia and the large cities of Southeast Asia, to the cities of historical China and the urban centres of early Japan.

The conference was sponsored by the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), the Leiden University Funds (LUF), and the research profile area ‘Asian Modernities and Traditions’, also of Leiden University.

After the official welcome by the hosts (IAS Director Philippe Peyram, Head of Collections and the museum’s Research Department Pieter ter Keurs, and Willem Vogelsang, Institute manager at IAS and an expert on the ancient history and culture of Afghanistan), the opening plenary session was dedicated to four keynote speakers, who delivered their lectures in the main hall of the National Museum of Antiquities.

Keynotes

The keynote lectures and presentations focused on one of three broad themes of the conference: ‘processes of urban development’, ‘urban economy’, and ‘the social fabric of the Early Asian city’. John Miksic (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore) elaborated on ‘Convergent pathways to urbanism in Southeast Asia between 1000 and 1600 AD’. Miksic differentiated between various economic and societal factors that led to seemingly similar urban features, following different processes of development. John Bintliff (Department of Archaeology, Leiden) addressed ‘Urban origins, social composition and economic change in cities of the pre-modern Mediterranean and Europe’. Like Miksic, he stressed the varied nature and origins of cities all over the world, thus placing the major theme of the conference, Early Asian cities, into a global context, while drawing upon his extensive knowledge of Early Greece. The third keynote speaker was Norman Yoffee (Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York), who focused on ‘Early cities and the evolution of history’. His lecture discussed Volume 3 of the Cambridge World History, ‘Early Cities and Comparative History’, recently edited by Yoffee and to be published shortly. In both this volume and in his lecture, Yoffee reviewed various aspects of the social fabric of early cities: as the arena of performance, as places of information exchange, and the distribution of power in early cities. The fourth and final keynote by Roland Fletcher (The University of Sydney), concerned the topic of ‘Tropical forest urbanism and the significance of Angkor’. Fletcher’s lecture focussed on the low-density, agrarian urbanism that developed in many parts of the world in the first millennium AD, for instance in lowland Central America, northern Sri Lanka, and the eastern lowlands of Sabah. Fletcher’s main point was that the large-scale site of Greater Angkor, which covered an area of about 1000 square km during the 12th and 13th centuries, is an example of climatic change to climatic changes in the 14th century. Fletcher hypothesised on the demise of the Angkor civilization. According to Fletcher, low-density urbanism was and still is particularly vulnerable to climatic change.

Peta

During the lunch break on the opening day all participants were invited to visit the museum’s special exhibition featuring the ancient city of Petra, located in the Jordanian desert. Lucas Petit, the curator of the Museum’s Near Eastern collection, gave an introductory lecture on the archaeological significance of Petra, hence widening the comparative perspective on ancient urbanism addressed in the conference.

Parallel sessions

The two parallel conference days were dedicated to three groups of parallel sessions with brief, 20-minute presentations, followed by discussions. The sessions were organized along the main three themes of the conference, and broadly divided into three geographical areas: South Asia, Southeast Asia and Central and East Asia.

Some of the sessions were organised by participants themselves, with three or four scholars introducing aspects of one particular theme, as for instance ‘Asian urbanism through time in context: Facilitating ancient to modern comparisons’ (organised by Benjamin Vu, Leeds University); other sessions were formed according to thematic foci, such as, for example, ‘Asian port cities in comparative perspective’.

For South Asia, much attention was given to the so-called early medieval period, commonly regarded as a period of urban decline. A number of papers opposed this generally accepted idea of decline, basing their argument on archaeological evidence suggesting continuity and even urban growth. Attention was also drawn towards the role of Buddhism in processes of urbanism. Regarding Southeast Asia, a number of papers reviewed Angkor and its evolution as an urban centre, while other contributions discussed the urban development in Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia. Central Asia was the focus of presentations concerned with, for example, the architecture of Samarkand, the oasis settlements of Xinjiang in western China, urban development in Tibet, and the (proto) urban sites located in today’s Mongolia. Both the development of ancient cities in China and the history of urbanism in Japan were the topics of a considerable number of presentations. In addition, quite a few papers concentrated on urban centres founded or developed by the Portuguese, for instance in South Asia. A range of papers discussed urban development during the contemporary Mughal period in India.

Furthermore, special attention was given to highly advanced technology for remote sensing in archaeological Airborne laser scanning and the impressive results of such remote sensing techniques have contributed to our understanding of complex sites, as highlighted by the case study of Angkor and its vast low-density territory.

The participants found the conference to be a successful and productive event. It offered stimulating presentations and discussions, and above all it brought scholars from all disciplines together to exchange views and to widen the scope of comparative research within the field of early Asian urbanism. The farewell reception at the end of the third day resulted in many email addresses being exchanged and future plans and ideas developed and discussed.

Abstracts of the lectures and papers can be downloaded from the IAS website at: www.ias.nl/event/patterns-early-asian-urbanism
The architecture of Southeast Asian cities: how do architectural and urban expressions relate to heritage?

Adile Esposito

The International Conference (12-14 June 2013), organised by the research group AUSSER, together with the European-funded network UKRA, the architecture school of Paris-Belleville (ENSAPB), and the international research network on architecture and urban planning “Les architectes face au changement d’architecture et de développement des villes d’Asie du Sud-Est.” This broadly defined geographical area is characterised by its diversity of human communities, which historically have experienced intense cultural exchanges with each other and with other cultures from beyond Southeast Asia. These historic interactions have led to the creation of distinctive spatial cultures. Today, Southeast Asian cities are experiencing both rapid urban transformations and increased globalising influences, which are reflected in the changing nature of the agents, models and tools of urban development. In analysing these trends, the conference questioned the interrupted cultural memory inherited in the shaping of recent projects. Contemporary debates in urban studies often centre around the idea of a uniform kind of globalising urbanisation that is spreading worldwide. This conference examined the hypothesis in light of the history of each city, the persistence of ancient urban morphologies, and heritage policies promoted by various Southeast Asian nations.

The conference was organised around five thematic panels, where presenters reflected upon how agents responsible for physical changes, and the operational tools employed in urban development interact in the designing and implementing of architectural and urban projects. They retraced the circulation of models and their reception by different kinds of agents – particularly by the inhabitants - who appropriate, transform or contest urban projects, imposed from above. The papers also dealt with questions such as: do projects embody a particular vision and expression of architectural and urban modernity and, if so, how? Are these expressions of modernity specific to Southeast Asian cities because they are the result of the encounters between exogenous inputs and locally-based cultures? In addressing these and other questions, the papers analysed the originality of recent projects and spatial solutions in Southeast Asian cities. The papers not only focused on architectural and urban creation, but also on projects, which aim to conserve and/or enhance inherited urban forms and spaces. In the same way, the design of new projects is likely to be influenced by international and local models, distinct representations of heritage that inform conservation projects often drawn upon external cultural backgrounds, while making reference to specific local cultures. The conference deliberately focused on Southeast Asian countries, because, recently, analytical backgrounds and operational tools involved in urban development easily circulate among the countries comprising ASEAN, where transnational exchanges are becoming increasingly frequent. The conference explored the perimeters, parameters and networks associated with these exchanges, which sometimes extend beyond the limits of Southeast Asia, to include China, India, Japan and other nation states. The conference also questioned the role of regionalisation – which has mainly been studied from the historical, geographical and political point of view –in shaping contemporary Southeast Asian cities.

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Scientific direction
Prof. Pierre Clément, Prof. Charles Goldblum, Prof. Nathalie Lancet

The scientific committee selected some of the papers from the conference to be edited and included in a forthcoming book. All the conference abstracts will soon be published on the AUSSER’s blog: http://umr-auser.hypotheses.org

The Panels

Building the Southeast Asian city in the era of internationalisation: cultures of projects, urban ideals and other ingredients of urban shaping in Southeast Asia

Coordinator: Charles Goldblum (Emeritus Professor, University Paris 8)

IN THE LAST FEW DECADES, Southeast Asian cities have experienced rapid urban development, which has dramatically changed their forms, scales and social compositions. Beyond these dramatic transformations, these cities are still marked, at cultural and social facts, by their diversity, which is one crucial peculiarity of the region. However, against this background, urban development strategies and the processes of projects’ implementation operate in these cities. These projects are often large-scale (mega-projects that activate mega-urbanisation); they are frequently driven by economic rationale and shared professional cultures (conveyed by the same categories of agents, sometimes by the same people, e.g., developers, international experts, architects, urban planner, engineers, tour operators, etc.). Through their material realisations, these powerful movements draw on common sources, extend beyond the ASEAN’s geographical and political framework and are echoed in both East Asia and South Asia. This interplay is based on exchanges and is crossed by hierarchical networks (e.g., international urban cooperation and international donors). In this context, the long distance circuits will exert an influence over urban shaping, such as the dissemination of concepts and techniques, knowledge and know-how of the international cooperation collides with (and in some short distance circuits) which convey models of consumption and images through various media, including the Internet. These dynamics deeply impact urban practices, and especially idealised housing types.

The topic of the panel was situated within the field of comparative urban planning cultures. It examined new urban shapes established at different scales of metropolitan territories, analysing the specific conditions in which these shapes emerge in the cities (‘grafts’, ‘plating’, but also de-foundation, expropriation, elimination or exclusion of certain forms), and relating them to pre-existing urban realities, the phases and the contexts that have preceded urban development. The papers crossed three introductions to the subject, depending on the cities of reference, the project rationale and the types of strategies: the new architectural and urban forms; the territorial shapes in which these forms are located, or that they contribute to shape; and the agents, organisations and institutions (public, private and others; local, national, regional or international) who act as prescribers, convey forms, influence agents and regulatory agencies.

This panel addressed the question of urban models and their assumed standardisation via the detox of techniques, agents and conceptions, which play a part in ‘regular’ or normative urban development. It did not neglect eventual confrontations, ‘spill-over’ or combinatorial associations with other circuits of knowledge, that have led to the undermining of real estate mechanisms underlying the new spatial configurations elucidated the modalities of urban de-foundation/re-foundation in the contemporary metropolis. It enlightened the system effects generated by these processes and the deviation from regulations (supposed or imposed) to which these processes expose themselves.

Presenters
Buy To Uyen (University of Toulouse) ‘L’environnement urbain-critique dans le processus de l’urbanisation accélérée de la ville de Hanoi à travers les projets de nouveaux quartiers’
Christian Ziegler (Wekerl Parisien d’Urbanisme) ‘L’interprétation de l’information géographique et du changement d’image’
Marion Sablini (Centre Asie du Sud-Est) ‘Le développement urbain de l’Est de la Chine et des perspectives de l’urbanisme’

Heritage and tourist cities, the challenges of safeguard and development

Coordinator: Adile Esposito (Research Associate, IPRAUS-Lecturer, BIAEsident University and Jeffrey W. Cady Senior Project Specialist, Getty Foundation, Los Angeles)

IN ASIAN CITIES, intense and rapid processes of urban development often coexist with the emergence of heritage awareness. Institutional agents recognise the heritage values of archaeological remains, inherited buildings and urban areas. These cultural policies, which are involved in the construction of national identities. These policies influence the design of conservation projects and have indirect effects in the territories surrounding the heritage objects and sites: tourism development sometimes engenders spatial transformations and urban development, and either urban or territorial management follows from these spatial transformations.

The papers in this panel focused on the conception, implementation and reception of policies, planning and projects, which aim to safeguard architectural and urban forms in Asian cities. They analysed the role of multiple stakeholders in the design and the implementation of instruments of planning (e.g., politicians, public officers, experts, etc.) and also the resistance to cultural heritage’s conservation. The papers questioned the cultural backgrounds associated with plans and projects for heritage conservation, as well as the control of urbanisation for the safeguarding of heritage: heritage representations, tourist images, analytical frameworks (heritage concepts and theories) and operational principles. Lessons from heritage conservation projects are often shared on an international scale, as they are disseminated by the international organisations. The papers questioned the appropriation and the application of these projects and plans in particular contexts where they interact with local societies.

The papers analysed the social and spatial transformations of ‘historic’ cities. They scrutinised the effects of heritage policies. They questioned the role of tourism in these processes, evaluated relevant management proposals and examined spatial configurations created either by inhabitants and/or real estate promoters who benefit from tourism development. Authors investigated new urban forms and spaces created by projects situated at the margins of heritage sites.

Presenters
Punto Wisamanto (Architect) ‘Managing heritage districts in Indonesia case study: Kostogde, Jogjakarta’

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The circulation of spatial cultures: criss-crossed receptions and cultural-mix process

TODAY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, the architectural and urban fields are experiencing diversified renewal processes. This panel analysed new situations and resulting changes introduced by architectural and urban projects. The panel asked whether the projects are the results of policies, the opening of modernity which, simultaneously, relate to local contexts? The panel focused on the analysis of projects and the degree to which they provide a full account of the motivations and the individual decisions through which professionals or inhabitants shape space. The proposals focused on the spatial cultures, which give form to projects. They investigated the circulation of spatial cultures, the phenomena of modernity, the architectural vocabulary and the representations of the architectural and urban practices. Conversely, do agents having a different culture of ‘traditional’ forms and techniques in these types of construction practices? Do architects integrate elements of innovative role in the design and renewal of the projects? The circulation of these cultures, which give form to projects. They investigated the circulation of spatial cultures, the phenomena of modernity, the architectural vocabulary and the representations of the architectural and urban practices. Conversely, do agents having a different culture of ‘traditional’ forms and techniques in these types of construction practices? Do architects integrate elements of innovative role in the design and renewal of the projects?

EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD, because of rapid urbanisation and extension outside of their ramshackle and historical frameworks, cities have recently colonised larger territories. This form of colonisation has taken different shapes: urban sprawl and extension of peripheral areas; suburbanisation, which has absorbed villages and created new neighbourhoods; and voluntarist policies, which have tried to manage urban extensions through the creation of satellite towns located a few kilometres away from the main city. Because of these kinds of urban territorial expansions, architects and urban planners have to face new challenges associated with energy-related crises, the will of responsibly using natural resources, climate change and CO2 emissions. Urban creations, which until recently had been confined to the field of empiricism and imagination, now require both scientific knowledge and traditional expertise. The main question posed by this panel is located at the intersection of two methods: traditions, which have been adapted to specific local conditions, and the experimentations of new practices which involve other disciplines.

Although the cities will focus on the territory covered by ASEAN, the panel also compared the consequences of urban projects realised in countries situated beyond ASEAN, on the historical and contemporary transformations of Southeast Asian cities. The papers analysed the conditions and conceptions under which projects emerge; new spatial scales considered by them and their consequences on urban transformations; the instruments of management situated at the interface of these scales; and the influence of cultural specificities, local models, innovative knowledge and indigenous know-how.

Presenters
Labib Hossain (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology)
Housing in a shifting ecosystem in Khagrachari, a suburban area of Dhaka City
Prin Hjearanecheotchetcha (AUSIER)
‘From the agricultural patterns to the city’s form: the map of the Bangkok peri-urban to the Thon Chon River at the beginning of the 20th century’
Fang Yu Hu (AUSIER)
‘Interaction between urban spatial organisation and flood risk: ‘Trapper case study’
Anil Kumar Roy (CEPT University)
‘Revitalising natural heritage through urban planning tools: the case of Sthalpur riverfront development in Ahmedabad, India’

Resilience/resistance: the city is built, appropriated and defended by its inhabitants

The city is often designed and conceived by professionals, politicians, urban planners and architects, but it is also practiced, transformed, adapted and sometimes defended by its inhabitants. Inhabitants are involved in urban shaping in different ways. In Western countries, participation is often limited to political or residential choices. Through the vote, some urban concepts emerge and are employed in policy-making, which sometimes engender short term or long term impacts on the urban reality. Through the residential choice, inhabitants exert an influence on the housing sector and choose among a relatively narrow range of housing solutions. The relation between the demand and the offer is ambiguous: the demand engenders the offer, or conversely. In Southeast Asian contexts, the inhabitants act in several different, sometimes singular or unusual ways, depending on their relation to the power: local democracy, the laissez-faire allowed by the authorities, or conversely, policies based on incentives, determine the role played by the inhabitants and sometimes encourage their active participation in the urbanisation processes. The residents are agents in the housing field: they transform, adapt and appropriate their dwellings according to their exigencies. In so doing, they counterbalance inadequate projects, which have been conceived in an authoritarian way and without public participation.

The frequency of these kind of transformations show that there is a gap between projects, as they are imagined and realised by architects and decision makers, and realities of daily urban life which are often neglected by experts and politicians. Inhabitants also convey the sense of urbanity in some areas of the city, especially in new neighbourhoods which are often planned, designed and built in a short time, to the detriment of the quality of public spaces and architectures. Inhabitants are able to rapidly appropriate these places and bring civilisation and sociability. This is the case of the new settlements created for the relocation of ejected people, which maintain their social cohesion and their sense of belonging.

The resistance to urban projects exerted by inhabitants expresses a power that should not be neglected by decision makers. In Vietnam, some projects have been deeply transformed, sometimes abandoned because the power of residents’ associations (village-based communities, neighbourhood associations, etc.) were minimised. However, this resistance has some limits and can also produce negative effects. Abusive behaviours occur when the authorities do not set up a clear framework for compensation and relocation.

Presenters
Fanny Gerbaud (Université de Bordeaux)
‘Vers une fabrication comme espace virtuel de négociation de l’espace réel’
Professor, University of Paris East

Notes
1. AUSIER is a research unit (CNRS, National Centre for Scientific Research/MCC, Ministry of Culture and Communication). The group consists of departments from IPRAUS (Paris Institute of Research in Architecture, Urbanism and Society), ACS (Architecture Culture Society), OCS (Observatory of the Suburban Condition), ANITTEP (Architecture, History, Techniques, Territory, and Heritage), and is hosted by the AUSIER research unit (Architecture, Urbanism, Society: Knowledge Teaching Research). The scientific committee for this conference included 14 members coming from 10 different institutions.
2. The Urban Knowledge Network Asia, piloted by the International Institute for Asian Studies, brings together more than 100 scholars and professionals from 16 institutions in Europe, Asia, and the United States.
New book series at Amsterdam University Press

Paul van der Veldt

IN THE ARTICLE ’20 years of publishing at BAS’ in the previous issue of The Newsletter (p.49) we reflected on past publications at BAS. We also informed you that the IAS and ICAS Publications Series would be discontinued at the beginning of 2014, and we briefly mentioned that we were planning three new series that are more in line with the BAS research agenda. Now that the contract with Amsterdam University Press (AUP) has been signed, we are happy to inform you that these three new series have been established. Below you will find the relevant information (series editors and editorial board members) on the new book series: Global Asia, Asian Cities, Asian Heritages.

In the course of this year five to six books will be published and by the time the series is officially launched at ICAS 9 in Adelaide (2015), we hope to present 15 books during the ICAS Book Presentation Carousel. If you are interested in publishing a book in one of these series, do not hesitate to contact the series editors.

Global Asia

Series editor: Taku-Wing Ngo, Professor of Political Science, University of Macau, China (takwingngo@gmail.com)

ASIA HAS A LONG HISTORY of transnational linkages with other parts of the world. Yet the contribution of Asian knowledge, values, and practices in the making of the modern world has largely been overlooked until recent years. The rise of Asia is often viewed as a challenge to the existing world order. Such a bifurcated view overlooks the fact that the global order has been shaped by Asian experiences as much as the global formation has shaped Asia. The Global Asia Series takes this understanding as the point of departure. It addresses contemporary issues related to transnational interactions within the Asian region, as well as Asia’s projection into the world through the movement of goods, people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies, and so forth. The series aims to publish timely and well-researched books that will have the cumulative effect of developing new perspectives and theories about global Asia.

Editorial board
Kevin Hewison, Sir Walter Murchison Distinguished Professor of Politics and International Studies, Murdoch University, Australia
Loraine Kennedy, Directrice de recherché, Centre d’Études de l’Inde et de l’Asie du Sud, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, France
Hagen Koo, Professor of sociology, University of Hawaii, USA
Guobin Yang, Associate Professor, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, USA

IN ADDITION to the three new BAS series, Amsterdam University Press would like to introduce the two latest book series in its Asian Studies domain: ‘Emerging Asia’ and ‘China’s Environment and Welfare (CHEW).’

Emerging Asia

Series Editor: William A. Callahan, London School of Economics, United Kingdom

THERE IS MUCH POPULAR INTEREST in the rise of emerging powers in Asia, especially China and India, and also other countries. However, as yet there is very little committed academic analysis about what the rise of Asia would mean for Asians, and for the world. The ‘Emerging Asia’ book series publishes monographs and edited volumes that address 1) the analysis of the impact of the rising individual countries (e.g., China, India, Korea, Indonesia) on Asia’s international politics; 2) comparative analysis of intra-Asian relations (e.g., Sino-Indian relations, India-ASEAN relations); 3) the role of Asia in global affairs; and 4) the promise and possibility of Asian ideas and norms influencing a post-Western world order. It encourages both discipline-based research and inter-disciplinary research.

If you are interested in publishing a book in one of these series, or if you would like more information about AUP’s Asian Studies programme, do not hesitate to contact the series editors at AUP’s Senior Commissioning Editor for Asian Studies, Saskia Gelting (s.gelting@uap.nl).

China’s Environment and Welfare (CHEW)

Series Editor: Anna Lora-Wainwright, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

CHINA’S ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES are an issue of global concern. This has, however, meant that in much writing on the topic the ‘environment’ has become equated with ‘pollution’. In similar ways, the study of welfare has become synonymous to the study of illness. This book series champions a broad analytical rethinking of these terms, and encourages explorations of their complex interconnections. Practices under scrutiny may range from fengshui and hygiene to farming, forest governance, mining and industry. Topics may be equally wide-ranging, spanning from climate change, waste incineration and cancer villages to everyday environmentalism and cultural and ritual engagements with environment and welfare. Geographically, the series covers rural and urban areas as well as their growing hybrid meeting points. Interdisciplinarity in scope, the series will feature disciplines from across the social science and humanities, including anthropology, sociology, geography, development studies and political science. As a whole, the series promotes a conception of welfare that positions human welfare as part of broader ecological welfare and probes human-ecological interactions. It will make an excellent contribution to the study of China by significantly improving understanding of these major topics and redefining them in a creative and innovative way. The series will also contribute to key debates in Chinese studies on state legitimacy, agency and social change through a close study of these topics.

Saskia Gelting will also be present at the AAS conference in Philadelphia (28-30 March 2014). Furthermore, University of Chicago Press (UCP) will be representing AUP during the conference at booth #310.

Asian Heritages

Series editor: Adele Esposito, Research Associate ENSAPP, Paris; Lecturer and MA Coordinator ‘Critical Heritage Studies’ IIAS/Leiden University, The Netherlands

THE ASIAN HERITAGES series explores the notions of heritage as they have evolved from European based concepts, mainly associated with architecture and monumental archaeology, to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and value. This includes a critical exploration of the politics of heritage and its categories, such as the contested distinction ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’ heritages; the analysis of the conflicts triggered by competing agendas and interests in the heritage field; and the productive assessment of management measures in the context of Asia.

Editorial board
Sadih Boonstra, Postdoctoral Fellow, Columbia University, USA
Chang Min-Chin, Assistant Professor, Taipei National University of the Arts, Taiwan
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Michael Herzfeld, Ernest E. Monrad Professor of the Social Sciences, Harvard University, USA
Aarti Kawra, Research Associate, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India
Ronki Ram, Professor of Political Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

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Asian Studies Association of Australia Book Series

New & forthcoming books

Southeast Asia Series published by National University Press / The University of Hawaii Press & NIAS/KITLV

Series Editors: Edward Aspinall (edward.aspinall@anu.edu.au) and Andrew Walker (andrew.walker@anu.edu.au)

New Books

Robbie Peters, Surabaya, 1945-2010: Neighbourhood, State and Economy in Indonesia’s City of Struggle

Loh Kah Seng, Squatters’ into Citizens: The 1961 Bukit Ho Swee Fire and the Making of Modern Singapore

Nicholas J Long, Being Malay in Indonesia: Local Autonomy and Daily Life in the Riau Archipelago

Marcus Mietzner, Money, Power and Ideology: Political Parties in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia

Forthcoming

Philip Taylor, Kampuchea Krom Reclaimed: Environmental History, Cosmology and Sovereignty in the Land between Cambodia and Vietnam

Sandra Khor Manickam, Taming the Wild: Aborigines and Racial Knowledge in Colonial Malaya

East Asia Series published by Routledge

Series Editors: Morris Low (m.low@uq.edu.au)

New Books

Guy Ramsay, Mental Illness, Dementia and Family in China

Ando Takemasa, Japan’s New Left Movements

Forthcoming

Vera Mackie (ed.), Gender in Japan: Power and Public Policy

Women in Asia Series published by Routledge

Series Editor: Louise Edwards (Louise.Edwards@unsw.edu.au)

New Books

Emma Fulu, Domestic Violence in Asia

Seung-kyung Kim, The Korean Women’s Movement and the State: Bargaining for Change

Kyungja Jung, Practising Feminism in South Korea

Bianca Smith and Mark Woodward (eds.), Gender and Power in Indonesian Islam

Kay Schaffer and Xianlin Song, Women’s Writing in Post-Socialist China

Forthcoming

Kabita Chakraborty, Young Muslim Women in India

Larissa Sandy, Women and Sex Work in Cambodia

Cynthia Joseph, Gender, ethnicities and education: Growing up female in Postcolonial Malaysia

South Asia Series published by Routledge

Series Editor: Peter Mayer (peter.mayer@adelaide.edu.au)

For more information about the ASAA please visit our website at: www.asaa.asn.au

In celebration of our new series, Amsterdam University Press is offering 50% off selected backlist publications (IIAS and ICAS) from now until the end of April 2014!

Order at www.aup.nl and enter the code AS2014 then click ‘Apply Discount’ to receive the 50% discount code. Valid until 30 April 2014.

Titles available at a 50% discount include, but are not limited to those books pictured above.
Recent articles include:

- Marketing war and the military to children and youth in China: Little Red Soldiers in the digital age Orna Naftali (vol. 28, no. 1)
- The rise of ‘Republican fever’ in the PRC and the implications for CCP legitimacy Zhang Qiang and Robert Weatherley (vol. 27, no. 3)
- Subaltern pliability in modern Tibet: Critical discourses in the works of Shogdong Dan Snyer Yü (vol. 27, no. 2)

Don’t miss our upcoming special issue!
Special issue on cyber politics guest edited by Guobin Yang (vol. 28, no. 2)
Meet Titia van der Maas, programme coordinator for the new IIAS programme ‘Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context’

ON 1 FEBRUARY 2014 Titia van der Maas joined IIAS as Programme Coordinator for a new IIAS programme entitled ‘Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context’ (2014-2016). This three-year pilot initiative is aimed at strengthening and redirecting Asian Studies and is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York.

The programme is built on a practice of close interactions between Asian, European, American and African partners, and aims to foster new humanities-focused research and educational opportunities in the field of Asian Studies on the basis of a trans-regional interdisciplinary collaborative platform. The initiative will include a range of scholarly activities in five topical areas, or ‘forums’:

Forum 1: ‘History and Asian Intellectual Traditions: Modal Epistemology and Theory for AmEurAsia’ (META)
Forum 2: ‘Uses of Culture and Cultural Heritage in Asian Contexts’
Forum 3: ‘Asian Spatialities’
Forum 4: ‘The Idea of the City in Asian Contexts’
Forum 5: ‘Views of Asia from Africa’

Further information and submission (application) forms can be found at: www.africas.asia
Contact: m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl

IIAS National Master’s Thesis Prize 2014

IIAS offers an annual award for the best national master’s thesis in the field of Asian Studies, in the Netherlands.

Deadline
1 October 2013, 9.00 am
Submissions should be sent to:
Secretariat
International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)
P.O. Box 9500
2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands
iias@iias.nl

The Award
– The honorary title of ‘Best Master’s Thesis’ in Asian studies
– A maximum three month stipend to work at IIAS, in order to write a PhD project proposal or a research article

Criteria
– The master’s thesis should be in the broad field of Asian Studies, in the humanities or social sciences
– The thesis must have been written at a Dutch university
– Only master’s theses which have been graded with an 8 or higher are eligible
– The thesis must have been evaluated in the period 1 October 2013 – 30 September 2014
– Both students and their supervisors can apply

Submit four hard copies of the master’s thesis and a cover letter including the grade awarded and your contact details

As Programme Coordinator Titia will work on the planning, monitoring, reporting and coordination of the logistical aspects of the five dialogical forums and the activities included in the programme.

Titan van der Maas obtained a bachelor’s degree in Language and Culture Studies at Utrecht University and a master’s cum laude in International Relations in Historical Perspective, also at Utrecht University. As a political historian she is interested in the diverging socioeconomic dynamics and political developments in Asia in a globalised setting. Over the past four years she has worked with various Leiden University institutes. Titia was Programme Coordinator with the Training Indonesia’s Young Leaders Programme; subsequently she served as Project Officer for the Islam Research Programme, commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Most recently she worked with IIAS as Seminars Coordinator.

For more information on the programme, see The Newsletter #66 (page 16) http://tinyurl.com/IIASrethinking
International conference report

Religion and the Politics of Development: Priests, Potentates, and ‘Progress’

28-29 August 2013, Robin Bush, Asia Research Institute

The Religion and the Politics of Development: Priests, Potentates, and ‘Progress’ international conference took place at University Hall, National University of Singapore, on 28-29 August 2013. This conference was jointly-funded by the Henry Luce Foundation and the Asia Research Institute.

The conference was well-attended, attracting an audience of over 100 people, including scholars from multiple disciplines and universities in the region, practitioners from a range of development and humanitarian organizations, civil servants, and students. The conference began with introductory remarks by the organizers, calling attention to recent shifts in the geopolitics of development assistance and the power imbalances that still mark the fight against poverty. The organizers called for an introduction of analysis of ‘religion’ in conversations on the politics of poverty, and discussions of ways in which development and religion are mutually constitutive. Both days of the conference began with a dialogic keynote panel in which two senior scholars made substantial presentations, followed by incisive commentary by AR/NUS experts, and discussion with the audience.

On the first day, the keynote session, featuring Katherine Marshall and Jeff Haynes, focused on ‘Development Actors’, and on the second day, the keynote session, featuring Carole Rakodi and James Putzel, focused on the role of the state. Following each keynote session were parallel break-out panels in which 18 scholars presented papers across the following broad sub-themes: transnational religious actors, humanitarians & religion, interrogating religion, entanglements with the state, engaging Islam, and secularity. These sessions featured rich, empirically grounded case study research on the nexus of religion, development, and politics in Central Asia, West Asia, Thailand, Myanmar, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Malaysia, China, Japan, and Bangladesh. A number of the papers presented by junior scholars were particularly strong, with exciting new paradigms and rich analytical frames being presented and discussed.

One of the foremost objectives of the organizers was that this conference would represent conversations not just among scholars, but that development practitioners’ voices would also be a key element of the debates. As such, one of the innovations of the conference design was a Practitioner’s Panel – held as the capstone session on each day of the conference. In these panels, 8 senior development practitioners representing OECD, AusAID, ICRC, Tony Blair Faith Foundation, The Asia Foundation, World Vision, Save the Children, and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (NUS), shared their insights into the role that religion plays in various aspects of development. On the first day, the practitioner panel focused on discussions of development policy, and on the second day, it focused on grounded and field-based experience. Many people remarked on the practitioner panels as being a forum that worked remarkably well, and that were a highlight of the conference. The debate and interaction between practitioners and scholars was not just limited to these panels, however – it prevailed throughout all of the sessions of the conference, and indeed became a primary theme of discussion. That is, the ‘bridge building’ objective of the conference became a point of discourse itself, and as a point of dialogue was enthusiastically embraced by participants. Points of potential collaboration that were identified included the need for more rigorous data and evidence, the need for systematic and detailed mapping, and the need for comparative case studies. In terms of networking, both practitioners and scholars mentioned their appreciation for the opportunity to meet and connect with cross-disciplinary colleagues.

Across the two days of the conference, a few key themes emerged as prevalent talking points. One of these was the broad disjunction between many scholars, who felt there was a ‘urgence’ of interest in religion in development studies and social science more broadly, and some practitioners who felt that religion was of little interest to many development agencies and absent in development policy. Another frequent theme was the lack of data or evidence on how engagement with religion affects development outcomes, and vice-versa, how engagement with development shapes religious institutions and identities. A third point of discussion was the complex and varied relationship between the state and religion in differing historical and political contexts, and ensuing implications for citizen welfare. While the goal of the conference was not to arrive at a general consensus or overarching conclusions, generally it was felt that the provocative conversations enabled a more nuanced and complex understanding for both scholars and practitioners about how religion, politics, and development interact.

Conference organizers are in the process of producing an edited volume containing some of the papers from the conference. The volume will be entitled Religion and the Politics of Development, and will be published in Palgrave MacMillan’s International Political Economy series. The volume is expected to be available in late 2014.
IIAS Research and Projects

IIAS research and other initiatives are carried out within a number of thematic clusters in phase with contemporary Asian currents—all built around the notion of social agency. The aim of this approach is to cultivate synergies and coherence between people and projects and to generate more interaction with Asian societies. IIAS also welcomes research for the open cluster, so as not to exclude potentially significant and interesting topics. For more information visit www.iias.nl.

Asian Cities
WITH A SPECIAL EYE on contemporary developments, the Asian Cities cluster aims to explore the longstanding Asian urban “tradition”, by exploring the origins of urbanism and urban culture in different parts of Asia and linking the various elements of the field: urbanism and urban culture, urban planning and design, social welfare and healthcare, including pensions systems, and the implications for social agency. The aim is to address the challenges facing governments in Asia, in particular in China, India and other Asian countries, by exploring the origins of urbanism and urban culture, urban planning and design, social welfare and healthcare, including pensions systems, and the implications for social agency.

The Postcolonial Global City
This research examines the postcolonial cities of South, East and South-East Asia, and how some of them have made the successful segue from nodes in formerly colonial networks to global cities in their own right. It was aimed at an inter-disciplinary research endeavour, the Postcolonial Global City has, thanks to events such as its seminars and lectures, brought together not just architects and urbanists, but also people from other disciplines, such as geographers, sociologists and political scientists, as well as historians, linguists and anyone else involved in the field of urban studies. A key factor in the research is architectural typology. Architecture is examined to see how it can create identity and ethos and how the post-colonial era these building typologies have been superseded by the office building, the skyscraper and the shopping centre, all of which are rapidly altering the older urban fabric of the city. The research programme organises a seminar every spring. The 2013 seminar Asian Cities: Colonial to Global Flows into the Postcolonial Global City’s wider research focuses on city design and city governance, and its investigations into institutions of governance, rule of law, and the role of language, as well as issues of environmental sustainability and urban transformation.

Coordinator: Greg Bracken (gregory@cortlever.com)

Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)
Consisting of over 100 researchers from 14 institutes in Europe, Asia, China, India and the United States, the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) represents the largest global academic network on Asian cities. UKNA’s objective is to nurture contextualised and policy-relevant knowledge on Asian cities, and seeks to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the centre of urban governance and development strategies. To this end, the programme hosts a variety of research projects through the exchange of researchers of the participating institutions, focusing on the three research themes (1) Ideas of the city; (2) Cities by and for the people; and (3) Future of the cities. UKNA is funded by a grant awarded by the EU and runs from April 2012 until April 2016. IAS is the coordinating institute in the network and administrator of the programme.

UNRNA Partners: Ambedkar University; Beijing University of Technology’s College of Architecture and Urban Planning; CIPT University, China; Colombo University’s Faculty of Architecture and Design; TU Delft Faculty of Architecture; Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture Paris-Bellevue; Hong Kong University of Science and Technology; Japanese University of Asia; King’s College London; National University of Singapore; Paris Descartes University; Peking University; Seoul National University; Vienna University of Economics; University of Macau’s Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities; University of Southern California’s Sol Price School of Public Policy; Strategic partners are: Asia Research Institute (AMR) of the National University of Singapore and the Graduate Institute of Building and Planning (ITUBP) of National Taiwan University.

Coordinator: Paul Tang (p.tang@kln.hku.hk) and Gan Sen Tan (g.s.tan@iias.nl)

Asian Borderlands Research Network (www.asianborderlands.net)
The Asian Borderlands Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central and East Asia. Based on the challenges of the ABRN, the network focuses on the challenges presented by the management of borders and border regions. The network aims to address the challenges presented by the management of borders and border regions in a bloc of countries, in order to understand the relationship between the various countries and the role of the network in shaping the development of the region.

Energy Programme Asia (EPA)
The EPA research programme is designed to study the effects of geopolitical energy security on the one hand, and policy to increase energy efficiency and estimating the prospects for the exploitation of renewable energy resources on the other. The New Joint Research Project is called The Transnationisation of China’s Oil Industry: company strategies, embedded projects, and relations with institutions and stakeholders in resource-rich countries (2013-2017). Involving various Chinese and Dutch research institutes, this new joint comparative research project of the Energy Programme Asia will analyse China’s increasing involvement with governments, local institutions and local stakeholders in the energy sectors of a number of resource-rich countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, notably Sudan, Ghana, Saudi Arabia, Botswana, and Venezuela, and it seeks to determine patterns of interaction between national institutions and Chinese companies, their relationships to foreign investors, and the role of capital flows and the potential for cultural transfers – in the local economies. A core team of principal authors will present individual studies on various aspects and different countries. The resulting studies will be published in refereed journals, such as Energy Policy, Social Aspects of Energy (Elsevier), China Information, and a book volume. This project is sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Social Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IAS.

Coordinators: M. Aminlu, Programme Director.
EPA-IAS (m.aminlu@iias.nl or m.aminlu@iias.nl), Y. Guang, Programme Director.
EPA-IAS/IAS (www.iias.nl/research/energy-programme-asia-epa)

IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance
The IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance in Asia, is engaged in innovative and comparative research on theories and practices—focusing on emerging markets of Asia. Its multi-disciplinary research undertakings combine approaches from political economy, law, public administration, criminology, and sociological in the comparative analysis of regulatory issues in Asia and in developing theories of governance pertinent to Asian realities. Currently the Centre facilitates projects on State Licensing, Market Closure, and Rent Seeking; Regulation of Intra-governmental Conflict; Social Costs, Externalities and Innovation; Regulatory Governance under Institutional Void; and Governance in Areas of Contested Urban Planning and Design.

Coordinator: Tak-Wing Ngo (t.w.ngo@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Asian Heritages
THE ASIAN HERITAGES CLUSTER explores the notion of heritage as it has evolved from a European-originated concept associated with architecture and monumental archaeology to a broader diversity of cultural forms and values. This includes the contested distinctions of ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’ heritages, and the importance of cultural heritage in defining one’s own identity or identities vis-à-vis those of others. It addresses the variety of definitions associated with heritage and the implications for social agency. It aims to engage with the concepts of ‘authenticity’, ‘national heritage’ and ‘shared heritage’ and issues pertaining to the political economy of heritage. It will critically address the dangers of commodification of heritage and the implications for social agency, as well as the role of language, as well as issues of environmental sustainability and urban transformation.

Coordinator: Carla Risseeuw (c.risseeuw@iias.nl)

ABBA South and Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology Index
The ABBA project is a global network of scholars co-operating on a bibliographic database of publications covering South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology. From March 2013, Brill Publishers is taking over the A-ASIA database from the AFA Networks office as an online digital bibliographic project.

Information: www.abba.net or e.m.raven@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Open Cluster
Aging in Asia and Europe
It is projected that by 2050 there will be nearly two billion people aged 60 and over, three-quarters of whom will be living in the developing world. Ageing in Asia is attributable to the marked decline in fertility shown over the last 40 years and the increasing longevity. In Western Europe, ageing populations developed at a slower pace and could initially be incorporated into welfare policy provisions. Currently governments are seeking ways to trim and reduce government spending, social welfare and healthcare, including pensions systems, unlessing substantial public debate and insecurity. Many Asian governments are facing similar challenges with an ageing population, involving both the state and the family, but are confronted with a much shorter time-span. This research programme, in short, sheds light on how both Asian and European nations are reviewing the social contract with their citizens. Research network involved: Réseau de Recherche Internationale sur l’Âge, la Soi-disant ‘Third Age’ (RCIC/DRACEN/FR 1020); Coordinator: Carla Risseeuw (c.risseeuw@iias.nl)
## CURRENT FELLOWS

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## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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**AFTER MORE THAN 30 YEARS of reform and opening up, China is now undergoing a deep transition period in the development of a market economy and society, which brings along significant changes in the relationship between government and society. The market economy is now playing the most important role in social life while the state-owned enterprises are facing further reform. The rapid growth of the market economy is accompanied by an equally rapid development of urbanisation, but the city management, or governance, is still permeated with the features of a planned economy. This means that the government can one-sidedly decide how a city should be developed, with little or no room (or rights) for other parties to put their ideas forward. China’s urban planning lacks the amount of elasticity that may be desirable for a system that allows agencies by various market parties, and, primarily serving the government, leads to a blueprint.**

I call this pattern of urbanisation, which is most common in China, the “formal development”. Although this pattern is an efficient approach in centralised decision-making, and it not only brings along a rapid growth of the urban population but also a modernisation of the urban constructed area as well as a more and more globalised economy, “formal development” also neglects the demands of other market agencies, and usually leads to serious urban problems, among others in the areas of the environment, traffic and social issues. In urban planning, and even in China’s political atmosphere, the reconstruction of the relationship between government and market has become a most important topic.

But, I have also discovered that there exists a pattern of “informal urbanisation” in China, which has captured my utmost interest and which is the topic of my research with IAS. This second type of development, with Wenzhou in Zhejiang province as an example, lacks government guidance. In contrast to “formal development”, the driving force behind “informal development” is endogenous, coming from the activity of local private persons or persons. The town of Longgang in the Wenzhou metropolitan region is the most typical case of a town that was planned and built by the local farmers instead of the local government. Nonetheless, Longgang now is an important sub-centre in the larger Wenzhou Region.

The decision-making process of urban construction in Wenzhou is more democratic in nature, with more participants, than that of other cities in China. Many important public buildings were realised with funds raised by the citizens. Although the weak government in Wenzhou leaves room for more consideration for a wide variety of demands from the market and society, it has also faced many public problems, most notably the degradation of the environment. A better way to sustainable urbanisation would be to clarify the relationship between government and society, and to strengthen the role of the government in development and governance.

My stay with IAS and access to the Urban Knowledge Networks of the EU and Asia provides me with the opportunity to learn about and understand the role of government and NGOs in the urban society of Western developed countries, which will be very helpful in conceiving the future of China. The ample opportunities for informal discussion at IAS, for example during the lunch lectures, has also helped me to study the urban social transitions from different angles. This transition may mean an important reform of China’s urban planning method.
Natsuko Akagawa
The University of Western Australia

Heritage conservation and cultural diplomacy in Southeast Asia

DURING THE FIRST PHASE of my fellowship at IIAS, I completed the manuscript of my monograph Heritage Conservation in Japan: Cultural Diplomacy: Heritage, National Identity and National Interest, which is currently in press, to be available in late June 2014. In this book I have established the theoretical nexus between the politics of heritage conservation, cultural diplomacy and national interest. The book examines Japan’s role in developing international heritage protocols through its influential involvement in UNESCO and its contribution to the development of heritage policy and practice in Southeast Asia. This work has also established the implication of immaterial or non-physical or intangible elements underlying heritage conservation and has questioned the apparent dichotomy in East-West heritage practice at a global level. I have also worked on two book chapters on intangible/immaterial heritage for inclusion in two forthcoming key texts in heritage studies. In one chapter for Theorising Heritage (Routledge), I reveal how the former East-West binary in heritage discourse has gradually dissolved in a discourse on the necessity of respecting cultural diversity across and within nations when developing global heritage frameworks. In a chapter for New Heritage Studies Companion (Blackwell), I explore the notion of embodiment and cultural identity. During the subsequent part of my fellowship, I will be conducting a project Heritage Conservation and Cultural Diplomacy in Southeast Asia. This will involve a broader examination of heritage practices in Southeast Asia in the context of global and local heritage discourse and cultural diplomacy in colonial and post-colonial, as well as non-colonised states. In preparation for this second phase of my fellowship I held a number of consultation visits with officials of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and Dutch Centre for Popular Culture and Intangible Heritage to enable me to gain first hand understanding of Dutch heritage policies and current development of its ‘mutual’ heritage program in association with countries including Indonesia, Japan and Australia. I have also been studying the EU Commission’s approaches on safeguarding moveable and immovable cultural heritage of Europe under the terms of the EU Treaty (Article 167, 1993). Investigation at the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde (National Museum of Ethnology), technical site visits and informal interviews with local residents have also provided me with good insights on different perspectives on erfgoed, heritage, in the Netherlands. In addition to the above, I had the opportunity to participate in the IIAS Roundtable Meeting in Macau in December where I was able to draw on my long-term research on the historical and heritage legacies of Macau to contribute to discussion on how urban historic areas with high economic interest could be adequately safeguarded for local people. It was particularly pleasing for me to note the interest in the Netherlands in immaterial erfgoed, intangible heritage, including the existence of a number of the University courses which are prescribing the book Intangible Heritage (Routledge, 2009), which I co-edited. I certainly feel it has been a productive Fellowship so far.

I IIAS FELLOWSHIPS

ASC-IIAS Fellowship Programme
A joint fellowship offered by the African Studies Centre and the International Institute for Asian Studies

This fellowship aims to attract researchers whose work is informed by current theoretical debates, in the social sciences and humanities, on global connectivities and who are able to critically engage with shifting paradigms in "area studies" beyond those that have traditionally been conceived in the West. We are particularly interested in receiving fellowship proposals that go beyond a mere analysis of current issues associated with African-Asian comparative economic developments or Chinese investments in Africa – although none of these themes, if appraised critically and for their societal consequences, will of course be excluded. Our definition of Asia and Africa is broad and inclusive: Asia ranging from the Middle-East to the Pacific Coast, and Africa from North Africa to the southern tip of the continent.

Application deadline: 15 March and 15 September each year
For more information and application form, go to: www.iias.nl/page/asc-iias-fellowship-programme

Asian Heritages
This cluster concentrates on the critical investigation of the politics of cultural heritage, and explores the notion of heritage as it has evolved from a Europe-originated concept associated with architecture and monumental archaeology to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and values.

Asian Cities
The Asian Cities cluster deals with cities and urban cultures with related issues of flows of ideas and goods, cosmopolitanism, métissage and connectivity, framing the existence of vibrant "civil societies" and political urban microcultures. It also deals with such issues as urban development in the light of the diversity of urban societies.

Global Asia
The Global Asia cluster addresses Asia’s role in the various globalisation processes. It examines examples of and issues related to multiple, transnational intra-Asian interactions as well as Asia’s projection in the world. Historical experiences as well as more contemporary trends are addressed.

Research projects that can contribute to new, historically contextualised, multidisciplinary knowledge, with the capacity of translating this into social and policy relevant initiatives, will be privileged.

For information on the research clusters and application form go to: www.iias.nl
Treasures from Korea

Through May 26, the Philadelphia Museum of Art is presenting an extraordinary exhibition, *Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392–1910*. As the first major exhibition in the United States to survey art and culture of a significant historical period of Korea, this exhibition seeks to broaden the understanding of Korean civilization, featuring 150 objects drawn from the renowned collection of the National Museum of Korea, important temples, and other institutions around the country, and includes National Treasures. The exhibition will travel to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Theatre and its influence

The Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910) was the world’s longest-ruling Confucian dynasty, reigning in Korea for over 500 years. Its substantial legacy continues to manifest itself in Korea today, influencing modern etiquette, cultural norms, and societal attitudes. The exhibition examines this important chapter of Korean art and offers valuable insights into Korea’s past and its enduring influence.

To illuminate the artistic accomplishments and dynamics of Korean cultural life in the Joseon period, the exhibition is organized around five key themes: ‘The King and His Court’, ‘Joseon Society’, ‘Ancestral Rites and Confucian Values’, ‘Changes and Continuity of Joseon Buddhism’, and ‘Joseon in Modern Times’. These themes are unified by a thread of Confucianism, the founding philosophy of the dynasty. It extensively influenced all aspects of the society, providing aesthetic standards and specifying the proper manner of production and utilization of objects used in various occasions. Under these themes, paintings, calligraphy, books, ceramics, sculptures, furniture, costumes and metal works together vividly illustrate multi-faceted aspects of Korean history, philosophy, and society.

The first section focuses on the highest artistic achievements of the Royal Court and the central role it played in shaping the unique culture of Joseon society. Most prominently, screen paintings, crafts, costumes, and the books of royal protocols, Gugye (designated as a ‘Memory of the World’ by UNESCO in 2007) will be featured with detailed textual and visual descriptions about their uses in court rituals and events. The second section explores the diversity and dynamics of Joseon art and culture within the rigid Confucian class system. Two room settings distinctively displaying men’s and women’s quarters suggest their segregated life styles as different social groups. The book and letters written in Korean alphabet Hangeul, a means of written communication for people of all classes, give a glimpse into the vibrant cultural interplays among different social groups in the society. The third section features ritual wares of various materials and introduces Confucian ancestral rites. As an integral social activity that consolidated the ruler’s authority and strengthened hierarchical social structure, ancestral rites were performed at all levels of society, from national to private. The implements not only visually represented such rituals, but also symbolized the ideal of Confucian austerity that was intended to govern the life and thoughts of all people.

The fourth section focuses on religions and belief systems other than Confucianism that primarily took a role to ensure welfare of the society. Buddhism, the greatest counterpart to Confucianism, was increasingly suppressed under Confucian rule. Its longstanding tradition, however, could not be entirely eliminated from daily life across all classes. One of the highlights of this section is the large-scale Buddhist ceremonial banner paintings, or Gwaebul (40 ft high). These were uniquely Korean Innovations, used as focal points of worship in outdoor Korean Buddhist ceremonial rituals. In this exterior setting, Yeongsan (designated a ‘World Intangible Cultural Heritage’ by UNESCO in 2009) were performed on the 49th day following a person’s death, in the hopes of helping to effect a smooth transition of his or her soul from this world to the next. Yeongsan will be performed during the exhibition.

‘Joseon in Modern Times’, the last section, delineates how the rigid Confucian society proceeded modern Korea while encountering and being challenged by world changes. The featured objects show the adaptations of Western civilization into dynastic traditions and formalities in the late 19th century. This section addresses the cultural issues in the order of time: from the early indirect influence of the Western civilization through China to a series of Western-inspired institutional reforms during the Korean Empire (1897–1910). A range of archival materials contribute to demonstrate the encounters of the East and West toward the end of the dynasty.

Treasures from Korea is expected to enhance the public’s understanding and appreciation of Korean art and culture while making an important scholarly contribution to Korean art history. ‘Joseon in Modern Times’ is a subject that has received little proper attention even in Korea, not to mention in this country, until now. Due to the difficult and still politically sensitive history of Korea during the first half of the 20th century, when it was annexed by Japan, this period has not been favored as a research subject. Incorporating this dynamic and important transitional period enables Treasures from Korea to be the first truly comprehensive survey of the dynasty’s art and culture. A new and broad overview of the art of the Joseon dynasty will benefit all audiences, deepening their knowledge of Korea.

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**Fig. 1:** Sun, Moon, and Five Peaks 19th century Eight-fold screen; colors on paper Overall 210.5 x 32.3 cm Private collection

**Fig. 2:** Bottle with Rope Design 16th century Porcelain with underglaze iron decoration H. 123⁄8 inches (31.4 cm) National Museum of Korea, Seoul. Deoksu 6294 National Treasure No. 1066

**Fig. 3:** Jar with Design of Bamboo and Plum Trees 18th–17th century Porcelain with underglaze iron decoration H. 15 1⁄4 inches (40 cm) National Museum of Korea, Seoul. Deoksu 6294 National Treasure No. 105

**Fig. 4:** Sakyamuni 19th century Porcelain with underglaze iron decoration H. 15 1⁄4 inches (40 cm) National Museum of Korea, Seoul. Deoksu 6294 National Treasure No. 105

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*Hyunsoo Woo*

Hyunsoo Woo is the National Curator of Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392–1910 Philadelphia Museum of Art, March 2 – May 26, 2014

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**Fig. 5:** Assembly 1653 Banner painting; colors on hemp 12 3/8 x 74 inches, Gurye National Treasure No. 305

**Fig. 6:** Design of Bamboo and Plum Trees 18th–17th century Porcelain with underglaze iron decoration H. 15 1⁄4 inches (40 cm) National Museum of Korea, Seoul. Deoksu 6294 National Treasure No. 105

**Fig. 7:** Yeongsanjae (designated a ‘World Intangible Cultural Heritage’ by UNESCO in 2009) were performed on the 49th day following a person’s death, in the hopes of helping to effect a smooth transition of his or her soul from this world to the next. Yeongsan will be performed during the exhibition. **Fig. 8:** ‘Joseon in Modern Times’, the last section, delineates how the rigid Confucian society proceeded modern Korea while encountering and being challenged by world changes. The featured objects show the adaptations of Western civilization into dynastic traditions and formalities in the late 19th century. This section addresses the cultural issues in the order of time: from the early indirect influence of the Western civilization through China to a series of Western-inspired institutional reforms during the Korean Empire (1897–1910). A range of archival materials contribute to demonstrate the encounters of the East and West toward the end of the dynasty.

**Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392–1910** is organized by Hyunsoo Woo, The Maxine and Howard Lewis Associate Curator of Korean Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, in close consultation with Dongsoo Moon, Associate Curator of the National Museum of Korea, of which efforts supported by curators of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, co-published by the Philadelphia Museum of Art with Yale University Press.