Violence and politics of order-making in South East Asia

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In many Southeast Asian societies, the making of order and the provision of security are not the monopoly of the state but concern a variety of actors that apply violent as well as non-violent repertoires of order making and security provision. Order is thus created locally and its contents shaped by local settings that involve cultural, religious as well as state-based norms (Kyed and Albrecht, 2015). As such, order and the manner in which it is secured and enforced also include local power relations and politics and may be dynamically influenced by changes in either of these. In this panel we are interested in the 'arrangements of order', their enforcement and the security they offer, as we see them coming to the fore in Southeast Asian settings. In particular our interests lie with the ways in which local level order-making and security relate to national, state-based normativity and politics. We seek to understand constellations of actors and their organizational forms, the normative regimes according to which they operate and the origins of these, as well as the political orders that are narrated and performed.

In Southeast Asia today, the relationship between order, security and the usage of violence concerns state-citizen relations as much as national policies and local specificity. We look at order as a social phenomenon that is formed, made manifest and enacted as an outcome of societal and governmental constellations and seek to understand the relational capacities of order arrangements and actors (cf. Wilson and Bakker, 2016), state or otherwise. We seek to understand the daily practices of order-making and the ways in which they impact peoples' lives.

Paper abstracts

Plural Order-Making and Dispute Resolution in Myanmar.

Helene Maria Kyed (Danish Institute for International Studies)

Burma/Myanmar is a country characterized by legal pluralism and the co-existence of different authorities who engage in the resolution of disputes and in the dispensation of justice. The official state legal system, governed from the country's capital, constitutes only one among many other avenues for seeking remedies in criminal and civil cases. In fact from the perspective of ordinary people the official system is seldom the preferred option: it is seen as expensive, slow, distant and intrusive. Instead, village elders, religious leaders, local administrators, and/or ethnic armed organizations are the main providers of everyday justice, sometimes in unpredictable ways that involve a hybrid mixture of norms and remedies. This multiplicity of mechanisms and actors reflect, I argue, the prevalence of plural authorities in Myanmar, and in particular in the ethnic nationalities states. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Karen State's ethnic armed group controlled areas, I explore in this paper the everyday practices of dispute resolution and what this implies for the constitution of plural authorities and order-making at the village level.

Militant Islam and Indonesian order-making

Kari Telle (Christian Michelsen Institute, Bergen) and Laurens Bakker (University of Amsterdam)

Over the past decade, the role of religion as a source of order-making has become increasingly prominent in Indonesia. Both in the official field of governance through new, religiously inspired legislation, as in more informal settings of non-state, civilian groups attacking offending organizations and individuals. In this paper, our interest lies with the intersection of official legal prohibitions, Islamic legal opinions and vigilante violence. Focussing on to recent cases of 'popular', violent actions targeting groups accused of blasphemy –Ahmadiyas in Lombok and Gafatar in West Kalimantan - we seek to analyse the use of religion, and particularly of blasphemy accusations, in shaping societal power relations in contemporary Indonesia.

The political and social landscape of Malaysia: A potentially fertile environment for violence and terrorism?

Yik Koon Teh (National Defence University of Malaysia)

This paper argues that racial politics and Islam, the religion of the dominant Malay ethnic group and also the official religion of Malaysia, have increasingly become a political tool to gain and sustain power deployed by the ruling dominant coalition party, United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), which has been in power ever since Malaysia gained its independence from Britain in 1957. Non-Malays and non-Muslims, particularly the Chinese and Christians, have been portrayed as "bogeyman" to threaten the Malay community into submission to UMNO. Non-Muslims are being "demonized" to the extent of being recently called "kafir barbi" by the mufti of the state of Pahang. A section of the Muslim community has also been indoctrinated to hate the non-Muslims. Over the 60 years, racial and religious politics have reached a dangerous point and Malaysia has its share of Muslims joining ISIS and threatening the security of the country.

Differentiated sovereignty, states of exception and durable emergency rule in southern Thailand

Carlo Bonura (SOAS, University of London)

This essay examines the process of "order-making" at work in the imposition of emergency rule in Southern Thailand since 2004. The on-going violence in the region has killed 6500 people and displaced over 100,000. Six successive governments, both military and civilian, have enacted a state of emergency as the legal framework for combating violence and maintaining order in the region. The result has been a complex array of security zones, emergency rule and martial law. To analyse how sovereignty works in the region to transform human subjectivity and continuously reconstitute state authority it is helpful to return to Giorgio Agamben's critique of law and conceptualization of "bare life."Bare life as a category avoids an understanding southern Thailand's unrest in terms that would reduce social and political relations to tensions between bounded communities defined in ethnic and religious terms. Instead it focuses on the continuous preventive detention, torture, disappearance, extrajudicial killings and impunity for security forces all made possible by the

declaration of martial law in 2004 and subsequent imposition of emergency rule, which has been regularly renewed since its initial establishment, in 2005. Within the sphere of bare life, life may be taken with impunity, without violating the law or the symbolic constitution of the nation. The past 12 years have been punctuated by massacres, stand offs, and extra-judicial killings that have resulted in the mass "dehumanization" of Malay-Muslims. I argue that the highly localized imposition of security measures in the region demonstrates, what I will call the differentiated effects of sovereign power. The realization that the effects of emergency rule are differentiated expands upon Agamben's own understanding of bare life as a uniform condition across a given sphere.

War on drugs in the Philippines: reflections from the urban margins

Steffen Jensen (Aalborg University) and Karl Hapal (University of the Philippines)

The Philippines has seen an extraordinary increase in extrajudicial killings since President Duterte has been sworn in in early 2016. Duterte legitimized the killings with reference to the threats from crime and drugs. Following the initiation of the putative war, hundreds of thousands of especially poor, urban Filippinos have feared for their lives and have engaged in a battle of renounciations against each other. While the war on drugs is extraordinary in its violence, extrajudicial killings are not new in the Philippines. Couched in terms of national salvation, the police have engaged in the practices of salvaging, emic term for police killings at least since the Martial Law era. In this paper, I explore such practices historically and how they have become part of exchange relations of a very different order, organized around coruption. This historical analysis will then set the scene for how we must understand the present-day killings as part of entangled relationships in the slums of Manila. The analysis is based on longterm fieldwork and engagement6s with local hum,an rights organizations in a relocation site called Bagong Silang or New Birth.

The revival of the bamboo curtain

Luuk Knippenberg (Radboud University Nijmegen)

The name "Bamboo Curtain" was introduced during the cold war, and referred to the presumed existence of a clear dividing line between Asian countries with communist regimes, and Asian countries with non-communist regimes; or formulated otherwise.
In the late 1980s a new related term became in vogue, i.e. the notion Bamboo Network. The name referred to the coming into being of extensive networks between Mainland China and the so-called Oversees Chinese networks. This contributed heavily to the success and speed of the economic kick-off of China.

The expectation was, at least amongst western observers, that this economic take off would be accompanied by political liberalisation and more democracy, in China and elsewhere in the region. There were indeed already examples in Asia that seemed to support this reasoning. A good example was Thailand. From the late 1960s onwards Thailand began to open up politically. That process accelerated in the late 1980s, and 1990s, with as climax and crucial turning point, so it seemed, the election in 2001 of Thaksin, as prime minister. However, looking back, one has to conclude that this election was the apex of the process of democratisation in Thailand, and that the

run-up already offered an indication of the steep democratic descent that would unfold itself shortly afterwards. Thaksin was a populist. His stormy rise and early rule was followed by an equally turbulent fall, taking almost 10 year, and accompanied by a growing split between groups, regions and even families in Thai society, demonstrations, outburst of violence and destruction, and two military coups. This showed the unpredictability and divisive effects of populist driven democracy, and stimulated the other countries in the region, in the first place China, in to choose another road. The great shining example of that alternative road was Singapore. Economic development and security have been given priority over freedom of speech and organisation, and uncontrolled elections. The majority of the population seems to accept deep control of the public and private space, probably because of the accompanying tangible material benefits, and security.

The lesson the neighbours of Singapore did learn was that authoritarian democracy, or no democracy at all, is to be preferred above open democracy, as the Thai case clearly showed. One could this outcome interpret as 'the return of the Bamboo curtain', or frame it as the emergence of Bamboo Democracy. It now seems that even Thailand, is inclined to take this direction, if only to ensure a definitive curb of the violence and corruption accompanying contemporary democracy in Thailand. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the truth of this assumption, or, formulated in more general terms: to find out what the ideas of a selected group of informed people in Thailand are about the direction Thailand is heading.