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Manchester, UK; 5th-10th August 2013

(SE32)

Anthropology of peace and war in contemporary Asia and Africa: reflections on the meaning of 'hybridity' and 'the everyday' in conflict studies

Location Roscoe Theatre B

Date and Start Time 07 Aug, 2013 at 14:30

Convenors

Nel Vandekerckhove (University of Queensland) email

Louise Moe (University of Queensland and the Danish Institute of International Studies) email

Mail All Convenors

Short Abstract

This panel wants to reflect on the value of concepts such as 'hybridity' and 'the everyday' in the study of war, peace and political order in Africa and Asia.

Long Abstract

In peace and conflict studies, scholars have increasingly acknowledged the crucial role of empirically based research in understanding how dynamics of peace and war play out, and affect, local communities in Africa and Asia. Central in this recent debate are the concepts of 'hybridity' and 'the everyday', highlighting the continuous processes of accommodation, negotiation and contestation between different forms of authority and power that shape political order. This panel wishes to reflect on the value of these two concepts, by bringing in wider anthropological debates on war and peace in Africa and Asia. While in the past, topics such as war, peace and state-making were rarely at the core of anthropological study, nowadays a wide range of anthropologists investigate the dynamics of war and peace in a variety of sites all over the world. Unfortunately, so far, regional knowledge and expertise on war and peace rarely meet. This panel aims not only at bringing the two disciplines together, but also to create a platform of exchange for regional experts who are willing to engage in conceptual thinking about war, peace and political order across disciplines. Central topics for discussion in this panel will be whether and how concepts such as 'hybridity' and 'the everyday' can facilitate the analysis of war, peace and political ordering, or whether we need to consider alternative conceptual approaches to further such analysis.

This panel is closed to new paper proposals.

Papers

The Simultaneity of Authority in Hybrid Political Orders (co-authored with Louise Winuff Moe)

Author: Peter Alexander Albrecht (Danish Institute for International Studies) email

Mail All Authors

Short Abstract

None provided.

Long Abstract

In order to more accurately grasp how hybridity produces new forms of political orders, it must be understood as more than the sum of the elements that intermingle. This article takes the analysis of 'hybridity' one step further, by shifting attention from interactions between 'Western liberal peace' and 'local agency' to the enactment and performativity of authority. Our analysis focuses on the post-colonial subject and his articulations of authority rather than on cultural and political entities ('the state', 'liberal peace', 'custom').

In his assertion of authority, the post-colonial subject draws on and practices several registers of authority simultaneously, including legislation, initiation into secret cults, locally and nationally orientated autochthony, etc.

By introducing the notion of 'simultaneity of discourse' we open up to the multiple, contradictory and complementary spaces of discourse and practice that are contained in the enactment of authority and in the production of hybrid orders. This suggests a model for reading dialogically concepts such as 'bureaucracy', 'autochthony', 'kinship', 'legislation' and 'policy'. Inherent to these spaces of discourse and practice is a perpetual tension of sameness and difference. It is the dynamism of this tension, which defines the hybrid order's quality of simultaneity.

This approach more accurately captures the syncretism and hybridity of ordermaking than current debates on hybridity that tend to fall into self-contradiction by insisting that forms of authority always already are pre-hybridized, while relying on analytical categories that represent the hybrid order as an amalgamation of the liberal state and a local order.

The Simultaneity of Authority in Hybrid Orders (co-authored with Peter Albrecht)

Author: Louise Moe (University of Queensland and the Danish Institute of International Studies) [email](#)

[Mail All Authors](#)

Short Abstract

None provided.

Long Abstract

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Militancy, Policing and the 'State Effect' in Northeast India

Author: Nel Vandekerckhove (University of Queensland) [email](#)

[Mail All Authors](#)

Short Abstract

This paper focuses on everyday policing in conflict-ridden Northeast India and how it gives form to state formation processes in contexts of prolonged political instability.

Long Abstract

Militant secessionism in Northeast India has occupied the minds of both anthropologists and conflict experts for several years now. Anthropologists, such as James C. Scott, argue that the pervasiveness of secessionism in this border region is best to be understood as part of a wider antagonistic political project of resistance, aimed at keeping the modern state at arm's length, both in ideological and practical terms. For conflict specialists, Northeast India owes this havoc primarily to a deep-seated institutional malaise, after years of political and economic disinvestment by the Delhi-based government.

This paper juxtaposes these supposedly incongruent views on the link between state performance in borderlands and the outburst of secessionist violence. Based on empirical study of everyday police work in Karbi Anglong, one of the remote hill districts in Northeast India, this paper will demonstrate how the two sets of literature are in fact part of the same

scholarly debate on state formation. Secondly, this paper warns for the danger of stretching too far the notions of 'non-state spaces' and 'state weakness' vis-à-vis peripheral or conflict-prone zones. State officials who operate in these contested spaces are often incredibly creative in adapting to the volatile political circumstances they encounter. In Karbi Anglong, for instance, a more deliberative approach to law-enforcement, allowed police officials not just to survive, but even to prepare the ground for the Indian state to strengthen its position in this border region.

Trash, prostitution and youth hanging around: Moral panic and purification in post-war Sri Lanka

Author: Bart Klem (University of Zurich) [email](#)

[Mail All Authors](#)

Short Abstract

This article explores the moral panic over the changes that take place in society when a forlorn region opens up to the world when the checkpoints and frontlines disappear.

Long Abstract

This case study of Trincomalee (eastern Sri Lanka) explores the end of a war as a process of re-articulating socio-political orders. It engages with a largely uncharted domain: moral panic spawned by the opening up of a previously forlorn region of checkpoints, frontlines and military surveillance. The re-connection of the region to its outside comprises a peace dividend of sorts. It enables resettlement, improved security, and mobility. But it also raises acute anxieties over the community's exposure to the moral decay of a globalised world. These concerns are wide-ranging - from trash and poorly dressed tourists; to prostitution, alcoholism, youth hanging around; to changing gender roles, and a demise of 'traditional' norms and forms of authority. Interestingly, these changes escape the received ethnicised plot of Sri Lanka's armed conflict and open up a much older register of purification and belonging, and 'impure' movement, which directs us to earlier breakpoints in Sri Lankan history, such as the tsunami (and the massive influx of agencies after it) and the liberalisation reforms of the later 1970s (labour migration, free trade zones). In closing, the article thus steers away from the somewhat gratuitous idea that war-time and post-war governance are hybrid, and underlines the importance of culturally informed understanding of authority, order and change, thus desisting the tendency to put formal institutions at the heart of the equation.

Human Network in and around an Armed Group: The Interwoven Thread of the Local, National, and Global Dimensions in the Kamajors of Sierra Leone

Author: Hideyuki Okano (the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science/Osaka University) [email](#)

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Short Abstract

This paper discusses how human networks in and around an armed group are constructed in the changing situations of the armed conflicts in Sierra Leone (1991-2002). Through this discussion it demonstrates the multi-dimensionality of warscapes, spanning local, international and global arenas.

Long Abstract

This paper discusses how human networks in and around an armed group are constructed in the changing situations of the armed conflicts in Sierra Leone (1991-2002). Anthropologists have explored various dimensions of 'warscapes' (Nordstorm 1997). Ethnographies on refugees, on child soldiers, and on combatants elucidate the lives and practices on specific groups of people. These researches might contribute to understand one dimension of the armed conflicts. However, their descriptions are limited to targeted groups. They cannot help but exclude other significant actors because they are 'out of research focus.' Such accounts do not adequately grasp the multi-dimensionality of the warscape, and the interrelatedness of the actors constituting it. In order to surmount the problem, I have carried out fieldwork on human networks in and around an armed group. An armed group is constituted by leaders, cadres, commanders, combatants, and staffs of logistical support. In addition, their families and girlfriends also reside in military camps. Civilians spend their daily lives in the occupied territories. They construct human networks across the differences of the respective social positions of the various groups. An armed group is the hub of the network, but the networks are not confined to the armed groups. I conducted research in Sierra Leone on such human networks of Kamajors, a pro-governmental militia. In the network, the threads of human relations are interwoven by subsuming the local, the international and the global dimensions of the armed conflict. These networks develop in the course of the war. In the changing situations of the armed conflict, some of the relations are maintained, while some relations have disintegrated.

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