Focus Group: Social Support and Kinship in China and Vietnam

Minerva Group: Traders, Markets and the State in Vietnam

Department 'Resilience and Transformation in Eurasia'

MAX-PLANCK-GESELLSCHAFT

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

Socialism with Neoliberal Characteristics

edited by
Kirsten W. Endres
Chris Hann

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology
Department ‘Resilience and Transformation in Eurasia’

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Preface

China and Vietnam are neighbours which share a long history, including a recent ideological commitment to socialism. Both countries shifted in the 1980s from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented economy. In an era in which 'neoliberal' has become a standard shorthand descriptor for the global economy, China is a major world player and Vietnam has been one of the most successful performers in the ASEAN region. But what are the implications of these developments for social relations and personhood? Neoliberal markets everywhere depend on states for their very existence, but what difference does it make when the state is dominated by a single political party that claims to remain loyal to the goals of socialism?

The party-state in East Asia no longer intervenes in citizens' everyday lives as it used to, but bureaucracy remains vast. As national income rises, states are extending public provision in ways that seem to resemble the emergence of welfare states under capitalism. The introduction of social security entitlements guaranteed by the state and other impersonal institutions in place of the support of family and kin is often understood to be an inevitable concomitant of industrialization, urbanization, and the bureaucratization of social life. But the teleological assumptions of 'modernization' theory are inadequate for anthropological understanding. There has been no simple convergence with the welfare state model found at the other end of Eurasia. The speed of change and the nature of rural-urban relations present ordinary citizens in both town and countryside with formidable challenges. Through fieldwork, social anthropologists illuminate how people experience these changes and thereby contribute to social science understanding and explanation. At another level, paying attention to East Asian societies in terms of their own histories can help to correct endemic Eurocentric bias.

On the initiative of Chris Hann, the Focus Group "Social Support and Kinship in China and Vietnam" examined everyday life practices, ideas, and modes of securing help and coping with multiple forms of insecurity in various fieldsites across China and Vietnam between 2006 and 2016. Kirsten Endres was appointed in 2009 as a member of the second wave of researchers with a project to study social support mechanisms among market-traders in Vietnam. After completing her *Habilitation* (based on earlier fieldwork in Vietnam concerning popular religion), she was awarded a Minerva professorship by the Max Planck Society. With additional resources provided by the Department, this allowed her from 2011 to lead the autonomous group "Traders, Markets, and the State in Vietnam". By focusing on activities central to theoretical debates about the reform socialist economy and on persons who might be expected to exemplify the entrepreneurial neoliberal subject, the research of this Minerva Group on a classic topic of economic anthropology complemented the theoretical and empirical goals of the larger Focus Group. The researchers interacted constantly, often drawing on the same sources of theoretical inspiration even when their empirical investigations diverged. Both projects were formally concluded at

the end of 2016. This publication presents overviews and summary reports of the major individual projects pursued in these two groups.[1]

During more than a decade of research we have accumulated countless debts. In addition to meetings in Halle, we have also convened in Beijing and Hanoi. It is a pleasure to put on record our enormous debt to our institutional partners in these cities: Professor Yang Shengmin at the Minzu University in Beijing, and Professor Vương Xuân Tình at the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi. Another fruitful collaborative meeting was graciously hosted by Maria Six-Hohenbalken at the Institute of Social Anthropology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna in December 2013. At the MPI we have benefited from many conversations with colleagues in other units, in particular Keebet and the late Franz von Benda-Beckmann, Patrick Heady, and Tatjana Thelen. Inside the Department, researchers have interacted productively with numerous colleagues working on other topics within the same broad geographical region. Even though, for a variety of reasons, their individual projects with us did not come to full fruition, we acknowledge the inputs of Giovanni da Col, Xiaoqian Liu, and Sarah Schefold.

Many scholars around the world have been generous with their advice over the decade, including dissertation examiners, conference participants, and numerous guests in Halle. We especially thank: Regina Abrami, Susanne Brandtstädter, Yuhua Guo, Stevan Harrell, Thomas Hauschild, Ellen Hertz, Michael Herzfeld, Benedict T. Kerkvliet, Andrew Kipnis, Turdi Koyum, Ann Marie Leshkowich, Lynne Milgram, Gustav Peebles, Christina Schwenkel, Linda Seligmann, Äsäd Suleyman, Sarah Turner, Chuan-kang Shih, Charles Stafford, Anne-Christine Trémon, Gábor Vargyas, and Li Zhang.

Finally, we would like to thank Anke Meyer and Berit Westwood for their support over many years in the departmental office, and Jennifer Cash for her expert copy-editing.

Kirsten W. Endres and Chris Hann

January, 2017

[1] The first positions were advertised in 2005 and those appointed began their research in early 2006 on the basis of the proposals they had submitted. Both teams have been replenished at various points. The last PhDs were submitted in 2015 and the last conference took place in Halle in September 2016. While a few postdoctoral researchers stayed for five years, some left after much shorter periods (usually to take up a permanent academic position). The individual reports in Parts I and II take account of work undertaken before and after Group membership, as appropriate in each individual case. Part III provides a combined listing of the main workshops, conferences and panels we have organized over the last decade. The comprehensive bibliography in Part IV includes some works that are still in press or in preparation.

I SOCIAL SUPPORT AND KINSHIP IN CHINA AND VIETNAM

Map of Focus Group fieldsites

Introduction

Chris Hann

Background

The main focus of research in my department of the new Halle Max Planck Institute in the years 1999–2005 concerned transformations of 'property relations' in the postsocialist states of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (notably Siberia). From 2003 we expanded the purview to include religious change in the aftermath of socialism, within the same broad geographical space. In these same years I outlined a long-term programme to address the entire landmass of Eurasia, both historically as it has evolved since the Bronze Age and contemporaneously through field research. In the latter respect, two East Asian countries that still proclaimed themselves to be socialist had a strong claim on our attention. Until recently, China and Vietnam were poorly documented in the world anthropological record. This was particularly true in Germany, where (for historical reasons) East Asia barely figured at all in comparison with other world regions. These countries have become increasingly accessible for foreign researchers; if one takes the necessary precautions, respects the constraints, and cooperates with local scholars, then many subjects are potentially open to empirical investigation.

In the immediate wake of the Cold War it was widely assumed that it would only be a matter of time before political democracy and capitalist market economy prevailed everywhere on the planet. Three decades later, those expectations look misconceived. Some postsocialist states in eastern Europe openly embrace 'illiberal democracy' and do not hesitate to manipulate economic mechanisms for populist political purposes. The situation in China and Vietnam is even more puzzling for outside commentators, who resort to terms such as state capitalism, or market socialism, oligarchical hybridity or "neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics" (Harvey 2005: ch. 5). In joining other scholars to elaborate on what those characteristics might be, some anthropologists raise more fundamental questions about the nature of 'modernity' and the adequacy of the Western social science tool kit for grasping the long-term history of Eurasia and the world (Goody 2006). In our projects at the Max Planck Institute, however, researchers focus on more recent transformations. We prefer to speak of "socialism with neoliberal characteristics" because this has the merit of reflecting the local classifications. For the great majority of Chinese and Vietnamese citizens, their social system *is* still (a reform variant of) socialist or "neo-socialist" (see Pieke 2016).

I had two additional motivations for launching a new Focus Group (*Schwerpunkt*) to investigate these particular socialist states. First, together with Ildikó Bellér-Hann, since 1986 I have been a regular visitor to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, north-west China. I have acquired no competence as a Sinologist, but since 2006 within the frame of this Focus Group my familiarity with the Uyghur minority

has been significantly extended through the best part of a year of field research in the eastern oasis of Qumul (Mandarin: Hami) (see Bellér-Hann and Hann, below).

Second, in my earlier work on Hungary before 1990 I had explored the nature of 'market socialism', an interest dating all the way back to my undergraduate studies of economics. Clearly there are vast differences of scale as well as history and civilizational background. China is more than a hundred times larger than contemporary Hungary. Yet some of the issues concerning markets, regulation, property rights, and so forth are essentially the same. The central question here is whether China and Vietnam can succeed where Hungary apparently failed, and come up with a viable 'third way' between the principles of the market and central planning. Empirically, many features of the East Asian reform socialist economies resemble phenomena well documented for the former Soviet bloc countries, notably the reliance of citizens on additional sources of income together with informal networks of 'favours' or 'protection' to cope with shortages and the rigidities of socialist institutions. It is important not to exaggerate the differences between capitalism and socialism by taking their ideological representations at face value. Similar principles of commodification and bureaucratization were at work in both First and Second worlds. In the moral dimensions of economy, however, the boundaries of public and private were drawn differently as a consequence of different power structures. Ordinary working routines and corruption developed distinctive forms, which undergo further changes when central planning is modified by an expansion of market mechanisms (Henig and Makovicky 2017).

But if some aspects of the 'second economy' in contemporary China and Vietnam are eerily reminiscent of Hungary in the 1970s and 1980s (even the jokes that citizens tell when holding socialist powerholders to account by their own ideologies and ethical standards), and the general trend towards increased social inequality is the same, the wider political economic context is nowadays very different. The distinctive features of the East Asian socialisms of this millennium are shaped by the global domination of markets, even though the state continues to dominate the commanding heights of the national economy. Single party rule constrains political and civic freedoms at every level, and the state remains omnipresent. Yet in comparison with earlier decades this is a "socialism from afar" (Zhang and Ong 2008) that is generating new subjectivities among citizens who are much more mobile than ever before. It is in the emergence of new forms of personhood that long-term continuities manifest themselves. The constitution of the Chinese person with high *suzhi* (quality) in reform socialist conditions is very different from the forms of neoliberal personhood we observe elsewhere in the contemporary world. Such a person combines reference to ancient Confucian traditions with new notions of patriotism and nationalism (Kipnis 2007). In Vietnam, too, the blanket attribution of 'neoliberal' in describing techniques of governance does not help much in making sense of the mixture of resilience and transformation unfolding in practice (Schwenkel and Leshkowich 2012).

Kinship and Social Support

Pragmatic local factors also played a role in the decision to focus on these topics. With the help of a large European Union grant, my Halle-based colleague Patrick Heady led and coordinated a large-scale comparative project on "Kinship and Social Security in Europe" (see Heady et al. 2010). At no stage did we seek in this East Asian research directly to emulate the methods of KASS, which was a sophisticated combination of the rural and the urban, the historical and the contemporary, the qualitative and the quantitative, in eight European countries. But we were inspired by the agenda of the KASS team, and saw no reason not to pursue the same basic questions at the other end of Eurasia, confident that they would allow us to carry out field research at the micro-level of society without attracting too much suspicion on the part of the authorities. We substituted "support" for "security" in the title of our Focus Group, lest our intentions be misunderstood in the sensitive climate of the years following 9/11. Unlike KASS, however, our projects were only loosely related to each other. Each researcher had ample scope to formulate individual priorities, and then to adapt the project to follow up particular themes that emerged as important only in the course of the field research.

'Kinship' and 'social support', our two central concepts, have a very different weight or standing in the history of socio-cultural anthropology. The former has been at the core of the discipline ever since the pioneering studies of Lewis Henry Morgan in the nineteenth century. The links between changes in kinship terminology, household organization, and social change have been exhaustively studied. Yet kinship remains an exciting topic, one that generates contestation as to basic definitions. The KASS project showed that, even within the macro-region of Europe, significant differences in kin reckoning have persisted; patterns of residence and cooperation vary considerably, especially between the smaller and more mobile families of northwest Europe and the denser, more supportive kinship networks of the south and east. The variation cannot be adequately explained by economic factors alone.

By contrast, social support is a coinage that does not figure in the same way in textbooks of the discipline, even though it is implicitly present whenever we write about interpersonal relations, or cohesion, or whenever we use the word 'society'. Theoretical foundations have been laid down by legal anthropologists Keebet and Franz von Benda-Beckmann, who were our colleagues in Halle until 2013. They have elaborated and applied a complex "functional and layered approach to social (in)security" (2007: 5) that takes account both of state provisioning and of a wide range of non-state organizations, religious and secular, as well as less visible forms of support generated 'from below' through domestic institutions, communities, and interpersonal networks. Like kinship, the field of social support is currently an area of intense theoretical creativity, as shown – for example – in the recent reformulation of "care" put forward by Tatjana Thelen, who worked with the von Benda-Beckmanns in the "Legal Pluralism" group in Halle (Thelen 2015).

The Projects

This Focus Group, like its predecessors, sought to identify the mixture and balance of transformation and resilience in contemporary social change. For example, Confucian patriarchal traditions remain powerful in shaping gender relations, though more and more households find themselves obliged to modify these norms in practice. Alongside male-female relations, generational difference figured prominently in most projects. The physical hardships and emotional scars experienced by those old enough to recall the production-oriented ideological campaigns of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution and Ho Chi Minh's war to liberate the whole of Vietnam contrast sharply with the aspirations of those who are young today, which generally focus on consumption and finding a comfortable place in the rapidly expanding ranks of the middle classes. In addition to the resilience of patriarchy, however, patterns of social differentiation are marked by persisting sociological continuities, notably the rural-urban divide. Several researchers (notably Chen, Nguyen, and Zavoretti) paid close attention to the migrants, whose cheap labour power has been the basis of economic growth. Although implementation has become more lax in recent years, both China and Vietnam still have laws that inhibit permanent settlement in the cities. In the case of China, we have grouped the individual project reports accordingly, beginning with the two based in major cities. These sections are followed by a separate section for projects located in China's vast borderlands (mostly rural, but including Heila Sha's urban project), and finally by the two Vietnam projects of this Focus Group.

Having previously worked for her doctorate in the capital Beijing, for this Focus Group Friederike Fleischer was based in the southern metropolis of Guangzhou. Roberta Zavoretti chose to continue her research in the historic capital of Nanjing. Both postdocs were struck by processes of class formation and the myriad ways in which material inequalities create uncertainties and undermine commitments based on relatedness. Fleischer contrasts the new urban middle classes with the traditional category of 'common people' and shows how a Protestant congregation defining itself in terms of 'love' offers its members an alternative to neoliberal consumerism. Zavoretti focuses on the institution of marriage, noting how the New Marriage Law of 1950, which ushered in an era ostensibly based on free choice and 'romance', is nowadays consolidated through practices that bear a resemblance (at least on the surface) to the property-based strategies of the feudal era. Marriage remains virtually universal and a prerequisite for legitimate sexual relations and social status; it is central not only to class formation but to citizenship and national identity.

Tight links between "intimate choices" and patriotic identity are also noted by Gonçalo Santos in connection with the state's role in regulating procreation. Drawing on many years of fieldwork in rural Guangdong Province, where nowadays grandparents commonly provide childcare on behalf of parents who are working as migrant labourers, Santos argues that diagnoses of a global convergence (often glossed as individualization) are simplistic. Patriarchy in China has been transformed but welfare remains basically 'familialistic', and the intimate choices approach

(Santos 2016c) offers a corrective to excessive emphasis on neoliberal individual agents. In addition to Santos, two other researchers also paid close attention to the moral (or ethical) dimensions of contemporary social change in rural townships in southern China. Meixuan Chen concentrated on the social impact of the emigrants of earlier generations. Overseas Chinese who have prospered outside China are now encouraged by the reform socialist authorities to return and invest in the community of their ancestors. This leads to novel forms of cooperation and support, but also to tensions (e.g. concerning burial practices). The returnees provide a role model for local youth – who stand little chance of emulating them. Hans Steinmüller's research continued his earlier work on ethical dimensions of everyday life. Adapting Michael Herzfeld's concept of "cultural intimacy", he paid particular attention to the ways in which subtle forms of irony disguise cynicism and political complicity.

In the northern village of Cheer, some 200 kilometres from Beijing, Xiujie Wu found that the boundaries of solidarity were nowadays drawn more narrowly than before. Although the family remained a "resilient institution" and the state encouraged local networks of support, legal disputes were increasingly common, even between siblings. Such rampant individualism was less evident in the community study of Helena Obendiek, whose doctoral project in a remote region of Gansu Province focused on education as a path to prosperity and social mobility. She found that the hallowed belief that one's fate can be changed through hard study and success through examinations has been vigorously revived in recent decades. It shapes family support strategies among poor Han villagers, where girls no longer suffer the discrimination they experienced in the past.

In our joint project on social support in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, where the indigenous population is predominantly Muslim, I concentrated on socio-economic and religious dimensions, while Ildikó Bellér-Hann paid close attention to the ways in which constructions of the pre-socialist past are shaped by the legitimation concerns of the present. Sawut Pawan practised a quite different form of historical anthropology, focusing in his doctoral project on how the enforcement of class identities transformed the rural social structure of the Uyghurs during the first three decades of socialism. Although hardships were experienced by all, the beneficiaries of this revolution may still experience nostalgia for the decades under Mao. In her work in a rural township near Kashgar famed for its trading economy, Ayxem Eli noted that loans without interest were a significant source of help for the deserving and trustworthy poor. Islamic charity, considered by the state to be a cultural practice rather than a form of religious activity, was a more significant form of redistribution here than Ildikó Bellér-Hann and I were able to observe in Qumul. In both locations, however, state support has become increasingly significant: not only public assistance for the needy but the extension of universal benefits such as an old age pension.

The nationwide trends of individualization can be observed in the border province of Xinjiang as everywhere else. They were clearest in the doctoral project of Heila

Sha, who studied support and care in a new urban settlement of the unique frontier institution known as the Production and Construction Corps. Focusing on the elderly, she emphasized the new ways in which old people themselves exercise agency (e.g. in adopting healthy living strategies and in practices such as widow(er) remarriage). Like several other researchers, Heila Sha also noted the enhanced role played by daughters, especially in the provision of emotional support. In her parallel doctoral project focused on infants and young children of the Akha minority in a remote region of Yunnan close to the Myanmar border, Ruijing Wang's research demonstrated the importance of the traditional cosmology in providing spiritual and emotional support. Ethnic traditions have not been displaced by the expansion of state institutions and modern biomedicine, but rather persist in complementary fashion.

As noted in the Preface, in 2011 Kirsten Endres was awarded a position to develop her Vietnam research with an autonomous Minerva Group, the results of which are presented in Part II of this publication. However, two other postdoctoral specialists in Vietnam worked as integral members of this Focus Group. In her research with migrants to Hanoi specializing in the trading of waste products, Minh Nguyen distinguished between the levels of everyday practice, ideological discourses, and institutional relationships between different providers of support. Drawing on recent feminist contributions to the theorizing of care, she explored how gendered caring roles are continually renegotiated inside the household as both men and women move between city and countryside. Thanks to the profits earned in this informal, low-status activity, the local social structure has changed considerably; however, cultural ideals of patriarchy remain powerful.

Markus Schlecker's research into rotating credit associations in another north Vietnamese commune led him to draw a distinction between purposive acts of support and those resulting from a pervasive "mutuality" that persisted in spite of all economic changes. Notions of primordial indebtedness underpin the ways in which villagers relativize memories and 'truth' in the negotiation of their "support encounters" (Schlecker and Fleischer 2013). Even in a very poor commune, lavish outlays on ritual become intelligible when one appreciates the uncertainty of support itself. By probing discourses and historical connections beyond the empirical detail of who is giving (or selling) support to whom through which combinations of practices in the present moment, the Vietnam specialists of this Focus Group echoed the conclusions of their colleagues working in China. The study of social support and kinship has to be a holistic, composite undertaking. Care and support must be centre-stage in the formulation of new theoretical explanations of social reproduction as well as comparative empirical investigations of the many guises of neoliberal political economy.

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* The works of members of the Halle research groups are listed separately in the combined bibliography below (Part IV).

METROPOLITAN CHINA

Soup, Love, and a Helping Hand: Social Support in Guangzhou

Friederike Fleischer

Friederike Fleischer is Associate Professor of Social Anthropology at the Department of Anthropology, Universidad de los Andes, Colombia. Her current work focuses on the social, spatial, and economic effects of the city on people's everyday lives and subjective living experience in China and Colombia. Previously, she has worked on suburbanization in Beijing; practices and ideologies of social support in Guangzhou (her project in Halle); and volunteering and civil society in Shanghai.

The God of Wealth, as Ikels (1996) wrote two decades ago, has indeed returned to Guangzhou. Residents are without doubt better off than during the Mao period: incomes are higher, living standards are better, and life expectancy is longer. At the same time, these advances are much more unevenly distributed than before the reform period (Wang 2008). As elsewhere in urban China, wealthy Guangzhou residents purchase apartments at prices that compete with those of Hong Kong and New York. They own luxury cars, travel internationally, and buy high-end consumer articles. Government policies are targeted at further increasing the growing middle class that leads a comfortable life, and is marked specifically by the ownership of one or more homes and – increasingly – of cars. Yet, despite growing affluence, a large number of urban Chinese have entered neither the middle nor upper classes. Low-qualified labourers, the self-employed, those who have been laid-off, the elderly, and the disabled often have problems making ends meet and lead precarious lives. The combined social, economic, and political reforms of more than 35 years have caused new strains and challenges alongside improvements.

This project began as an enquiry into the fate of the *laobaixing* (common people) during the reform period, and more precisely as an examination of social support in Guangzhou. Since the beginning of the reform period, the social contract between state and citizens has changed significantly. Under Maoism, urban residents depended on the state which provided them with a complex safety net of social welfare provisions. The last three decades have been marked by the continuous curtailing of these provisions. As the 'iron rice bowl' of guaranteed lifetime employment and benefits for urban workers has become dented and chipped, cradle-to-grave social security has vanished. Increasingly, urban residents have turned to organize their own social welfare. By examining who helps whom, how, when, and why, my inquiry into social support enables an examination of China's changing social contract as a set of ideologies, practices, and social relations and interactions.

China's newly affluent 'middle classes' have been much discussed, but much less is known about the 'common people'. Admittedly a slippery term, it is used to

refer to those who are on the lower rungs of urban society and neither visibly poor nor visibly affluent: lower-rank white collar workers and the self-employed. Many refer to themselves as being "just in the middle". Compared to the new and upper classes, 'common people' can meet the costs of maintaining the apartments they were able to purchase cheaply when socialist housing was privatized, but they have little disposable income and lack social capital and socio-political connections. 'Common people' manage to get by in daily life, but an unexpected turn of events such as unemployment or illness poses a serious challenge to their household economy.

How do such people deal with the uncertainty in their lives? How do they ensure present and future well-being for themselves and their dependents? What forms and possibilities of support exist from family (household and kin), neighbourhood and community, or other social domains? How do people explain their ideas and practices regarding help? And, what are the individual and collective challenges that arise from practices and expectations of support?

I began this study with a focus on two extended families. As I followed the interactions, interchanges, and ideas in their everyday lives, it quickly became evident that there were important social relations 'beyond' the intimate ties of kin and neighbours that contributed in important ways to social support. Consequently, I expanded the scope of analysis to include the religious domain and social relations that emanated from church membership, and also relations linked to volunteering.

The resulting study provides an in-depth analysis of a society in the midst of an enormous generational, social, and economic transformation. Based on participant observation, formal and informal interviewing, surveys, and mapping, I examined different modes and ideologies of support, reciprocity, relatedness, and state-society relations in contemporary China. Throughout the study, I interrogated interlocutors' fears, anxieties, and worries, as much as their ideas about (moral) obligations, social expectations, and visions of contemporary urban Chinese society.

Adults who supported at least one elderly parent and one of their own children felt themselves 'in the middle' in a second sense. They were commonly enmeshed in tight networks of mutual support to meet all of their obligations. As Obendiek found in rural Gansu (this volume), I too found that siblings (neglected in most studies) play an important role in these support networks. Support relations between siblings (and other kin), however, are not simply given; they are formed over time, and past experiences and memories inform present-day practices. Moreover, increasing socio-economic inequalities, even within kin groups, create tensions over the capacity and willingness of each relative to offer help or return previous help. As consumer society expands, the favours, expressions of gratitude, and gifts used to establish and maintain social relationships display an increasingly material aspect. Contemporary social networking is tied intimately to consumer spending; value is increasingly conceptualized in terms of money. Thus, forms of give and take – help and reciprocity – are highly contested. My research shows how individual means and capacities – both material and immaterial – are negotiated through and across

ideologies of kinship and support. Moreover, while kin is an important node in social support networks, relatedness is not always an asset: a large number of relatives creates numerous social obligations and expectations which some – especially among the better-off – would prefer to reject. Conflicts over value – both economic and moral – often prove disruptive of relatedness.

Young volunteers organize afternoon actvities for underprivileged pupils from the countryside (2009).

This study also demonstrates that practices and ideologies of support are connected to politically-defined generations. Specifically, there is a decisive divide in perspective between persons who grew up during the Mao period and younger adults who came of age in the reform period. Life experiences, ideologies, and attitudes differ between these two generations, as do their basic social and economic circumstances. Moreover, concepts of the person in society, as well as individual desires have been shaped by the differences between the generations, with wide-ranging effects. The older generation has been stripped of its role in guiding and teaching the younger how to be in the world; and has even been denied the status of being valuable and contributing members of society. The younger generation suffers from a lack of guidance in the larger questions of life, but it does not see any relevance in parents' answers, drawn as they are from experience in the life-world of pre-reform China. The challenges faced by younger Chinese urban residents are acute: the political sphere is uncertain, their own social net is relatively precarious, and they have access to few if any state-provided services. Moreover, as members of the one-child generation, many are denied the social bonds and shared responsibilities (of caring for elderly parents and other relatives) that come with having siblings. As a result, these two generations follow different moral orders; even when they refer to the same 'traditional' moral concepts, their interpretations can diverge widely.

Contrary to neoliberal curtailments of state-provided services, the government in reform China has remained "next door" (Tomba 2014). The state is very much involved in processes of socio-economic transformation, and the 'middle classes' are the result of social engineering. The party-state's ongoing project of modernization includes policies that favour some groups over others and encourage certain practices to proliferate. My research shows, however, that the state is not the only actor. My interlocutors seek and shape their social spaces, negotiating conflicting ideologies and desires in creative ways. Non-kin relations and forms of sociability based outside the family have taken on new meanings and importance in individuals' lives. In contrast to the Mao era, these social relations are defined increasingly by shared interests and less by physical proximity. New social relations help my older interlocutors make sense of their new life-world and to redefine their self-worth, following the de-legitimation of the older socialist values.

The church offers an alternative community for some city dwellers. This poster in a Protestant church in Guangzhou proclaims that "love will never stop" (2006).

Such changes are highlighted in the growing importance of religion, and especially of Protestant churches, in contemporary China. With its doors open wide (both literally and metaphorically), the Protestant church at the centre of my investigation offered an alternative community to urban residents who felt socially, economically, or emotionally at a loss. This community, founded on the concept of 'love', is conceived of as an alternative domain, with its own moral order, ideology, and practices.

The search for meaning in and through new social domains also holds true for the generation of only children. Young people feel burdened by high expectations and (future) social responsibilities. Through involvement in volunteer organizations, they seek to break out of their daily routines, expand their social networks, and 'develop' themselves. The transformation of self, indeed, appears as a dominant theme for the younger generation. While this process is related to the party-state's project to improve the population's 'quality', my research shows how young urban Chinese follow *personal* agendas of transformation without becoming oppositional to state projects.

In sum, this study shows how social, spatial, and economic transformations have 'disembedded' the lives of China's urban residents in many ways. Yet against growing *anomie*, interlocutors continuously work to establish and maintain social relations with kin and neighbours, as well as in domains beyond, through material and immaterial exchanges of support. Through these practices, they continuously (re)negotiate kinship, relatedness, and morality. The picture that emerges is one of a highly dynamic, but also conflictual society, ever more divided along socio-economic, generational, and spatial lines. By putting local ethnographic data into conversation with other studies and theoretical reflections, this project contributes to a general debate about the interrelations between social support, morality, and kinship in contemporary China and beyond.

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Marriage and Social Mobility in Contemporary China

Roberta Zavoretti

Roberta Zavoretti is a social anthropologist of China who was educated in Venice (Ca' Foscari) and London (SOAS). She worked as Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology from October 2010 to October 2015. Her research mainly revolves around the entanglements between social class and gender in the People's Republic of China.

In the People's Republic of China, the transition to a market economy has greatly changed the way in which people access and conceptualize goods, jobs, and services. In Chinese cities, young people can today spend free time in consumer spaces that present romance, and not socialist construction, as the driving force of love and conjugality. The romantic ideal is depicted as belonging to the realm of personal fulfilment and conspicuous consumption. This ideal – of a prosperous, self-supporting family life – is based on naturalized differences of age and gender, as much as on class. Contemporary China may appear to be yet one more site for the reworking of a 'global' model of conjugality based on individual preference rather than on wider social relationships. My research project, however, challenged the idea of a neat dichotomy between the individual/personal and the social/public, conceptualizing them instead as discursive fields that are renegotiated in practice according to the conditions and dispositions of social actors.

Marriage emerges as one of the strategies put in place by social actors to maintain, strengthen, and widen kin-based bonds as well as larger social relationships. From this point of view, Chinese family life is not inevitably torn by a contrast between lineage and alliance. Rather, marriage continues to play a pivotal role in the continuation of the family line. Marriage contributes too to the production of relationships of care and reciprocity within the family and beyond.

The project analysed the ways in which people in post-Mao urban China shape their choices around marriage, care, and intimacy to maintain a desired level of security, with reference not only to financial assets but also to emotional stability, social status, and a satisfactory perception of self. The project highlighted the recurrent interpenetration of emotional elements and material interests, questioning whether marriage is best seen as concerning the reproduction of class or as the pursuit of 'individual' interest, including 'romantic' inclinations. I therefore explored the mechanisms through which informants negotiate 'good matches' that seem to respond to both emotional requirements and socio-economic imperatives.

Ethnographic data were collected in the city of Nanjing between October 2011 and June 2012 (with a short follow-up visit in February–March 2014). Nanjing, which has an official population of some 6.5 million people, is the principal city of Jiangsu Province, one of the most prosperous in the People's Republic of China. While the

metropolis has a long-standing cultural heritage as one of the former capitals in Imperial and Republican times, it is generally considered more provincial than nearby Shanghai or Beijing. In order to make the most of informants' family connections, I collected additional ethnographic data in Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Yangzhou, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong. Research methods included participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires. Informants were selected through random and snowball sampling, drawing on contacts established in the city during my earlier doctoral research. The resulting informant pool included manual labourers of both urban and rural origin; middle-class public- and private-sector employees; and a few representatives of the upper-middle class. Recurrent research locations included street-based public and commercial spaces; popular commercial areas of the city centre; informants' working places and homes; match-making corners in parks; and popular entertainment venues.

Personal ads posted at Xiangqin corner in Nanjing by those in search of a spouse (2014).

Findings

In present-day urban China, marriage constitutes, at least officially, a prerequisite for sexual relations and childbearing. Marriage and childbearing are the most important moments in a person's path towards adulthood, as they enable young men and women to reciprocate their parents' caring efforts as articulated in the discourse of filiality (*xiao*) (Stafford 2000). As such, marriage and childbearing entail strong assumptions

of hetero-normative gender roles within the couple and the family. Age at marriage is on the rise in the large urban areas of the east coast. Throughout China it remains quasi-universal, unlike other countries in the region (Davis and Friedman 2014). Marriage constitutes an obligatory passage into adulthood. While intimacy before and outside marriage is not uncommon, it lacks social respectability. People who remain unmarried in their late twenties and thirties are often labelled as 'abnormal' (*bu zhengchang*), gossiped about, and accused of being unfilial.

Securing a 'good' marriage is an all-important opportunity to consolidate and advance one's status within one's kinship group *as well as* in a wider circle of social relations. This is particularly important nowadays because the post-Mao state has largely relinquished its role as provider of jobs, goods, and services. The gradual rollback of the state has coincided with its promotion of competition and consumption as ways to attain the middle class ideal. The increasing commoditisation of labour and service provision has contributed to a fast process of social segmentation and to the emergence of complex inequalities (Zhang 2010). At the same time, the state has revived Confucian narratives promoting the virtues of social and familial harmony and stability.

While the institutional tenets of marriage did not change noticeably after Mao's death, the emergence of a market-led consumer society fostered novel ways to practice courtship and marriage. State-owned and private media and advertisements suggest that romance constitutes the lifeblood of 'modern' marriage and family harmony. State-sponsored ideas of romantic love, however, do not refer to ephemeral feelings; love is invoked to promote stable and long-term alliances. In other words, the post-Mao state recasts romantic love and emotional fulfilment in terms of family responsibility and intergenerational support. Most informants endorsed both choice-based marriage and family responsibility, casting the latter as a natural outcome of the former. However, Nanjing residents of different ages and social backgrounds also criticize what they see as the demise of moral values in favour of individual hedonism.

A trope of separation echoes an opposition that since late Imperial China has featured prominently on the political agenda of modernist Nationalists and Communists alike: that between forced marriage based on economic interests (feudal) and free-choice alliance based on affinity and mutual affection (modern). In the aftermath of Liberation, the Communist leadership could draw on this rhetorical opposition to promote itself as the champion of young people's (and especially women's) emancipation and, as a consequence, as the modernizing agent for the whole country (Croll 1981, Evans 1997). Building on this opposition, informants often define present-day marriage and courtship practices as specific to the post-Mao era. Today's marriage negotiations, in fact, often revolve around property investment and the economic prospects of the bride and groom. They are therefore widely articulated through the vocabulary of a market-led, consumerist society. For many, and in particular for those who have lost security in the post-Mao era, such

negotiations are hardly compatible with the idea that marriage should be based on mutual affection. Younger people tend to idealise the era of Mao as one in which marriage was unburdened by the weight of economic interests. People who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s give more complex accounts of their own courtship and marriage experiences, providing evidence that marriage negotiations in those times often were anything but free or egalitarian. However, their opinions about the present and the past tend to vary according to their own fortunes and life courses.

These debates not only highlight the importance that marriage holds for the livelihoods of individual and families alike; they also underline that, because of the fundamental role of marriage reform in the building of the Chinese nation-state, this institution constitutes a signifier of national identity for Chinese citizens. In turn, non-normative bonds of care and intimacy are often associated with either pre-Liberation feudalism, or with an imaginary 'West' where individuals pursue their desire for wealth and pleasure without any regard for moral values. Marriage in China, then, is not only an institution through which class and social status are consolidated and reproduced; it also becomes key to the strengthening of a post-Mao order revolving around the citizen's moral responsibility towards family and the nation. The principle of free choice does not, in itself, challenge the institutional role of marriage as a fundamental link between the individual, the family and the nation-state as family writ large.

Personal romantic gifts to mark the new custom of Valentine's Day (2012).

In this context, young women and men come under increasing pressure to fulfil gender-specific roles produced by both the state and the market as inherent in middle-class prosperity and respectability. Through marriage, the state interpolates the citizen as a striving individual (rather than as collective subject), re-inscribing him or her into the national project via the entrenched discourse of family responsibility. The progressive devolution of choice and responsibility from the state to the individual citizen, therefore, does not 'free' the individual, so much as it applies the disciplining technologies of 'choice' and 'responsibility' that are central to neoliberal forms of self-government. Informants' narratives confirmed that these concepts play a fundamental role in their keenness to practice class distinction through courtship and marriage in the present day. In the past, ideas of personal choice and responsibility were upheld by Nationalist and Communist leaders as the solution to the evils of 'feudal society'. Nowadays, ironically, they reappear under the guise of policies that rehabilitate Confucian familialism and class distinction against the collectivism of the Mao era.

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RURAL CHINA

Lineage, Migration, and Social Support in South China

Meixuan Chen

After completing her BA in English Literature and Language in Nanjing University, Meixuan Chen obtained a Masters (2004) and PhD (2013) in Social Anthropology at University College London. She continued her research as a postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (2013–16), and is currently Senior Research Associate at the University of Bristol.

The departure point for this project is that forms of social support develop and change within specific socio-cultural and historical contexts. Two key historical facts frame my project in South China: the absence of state-run social security and welfare for most people, most of the time; and the radical economic and social changes that have taken place in the post-Mao era. I explore the links between two very different (and yet overlapping) waves of migration in an 'emigrant village' (*qiaoxiang*) in Meizhou Prefecture. International and internal migrants are often treated separately,

Entrance archway to the emigrant village studied in this project. (2005).

but the two historical experiences are very similar in the local imagination and in practices of social support (cf. Oxfeld 2004, Trémon 2015).

Comparing old international emigrants – the Overseas Chinese or *huaqiao* – and new internal rural-to-urban migrants, I find more similarities than differences in the ways that social support is mobilized and negotiated from the outside world into the village. The village and its surroundings, which are both the senders and recipients of 'wandering sons and daughters' (*youzi*), is an ideal ethnographic site to examine the transmission and transformation of social support. Conceptually, the project draws on anthropological theories of ethics (see Stafford 2013), particularly in relation to the return of migrants. Discourses of ethics, morality, and family or community obligation on the one hand, and the indisputable trend of individualization on the other, are both evident in the negotiation of social support. The anthropology of charity is highly relevant here, as are ideas pertaining to age, which is a key factor in constructing care needs and in specifying the concrete resources for the provision of care.

Based on data collected for my PhD thesis over 18 months' fieldwork in a Guangdong village, I examine interactions with Overseas Chinese who have made return visits and invested in their ancestral village since 1980. The village community has been transformed in the ensuing decades, due both to relations with *huaqiao* and changing state policies. The lives of those who remain behind are continuously shaped by those who leave and return. Homecoming is not necessarily positive. In official national discourse, *huaqiao* are positively welcome and often romanticized. At the local community level, however, there is much ambivalence, as expressed in the phrase "eating *huaqiao*". The expression refers to the practice of taking financial advantage of one's *huaqiao* brethren, and to the metaphorical consumption of *huaqiaos'* (absent) presence in everyday village life.

Such 'eating' is a central thread in the life stories of various local actors: government cadres, lineage leaders, powerful young women, and *huaqiao* who come back to redress both familial and personal wrongs. *Huaqiao* do not live in the village but their financial and social presence is strongly felt by the locals. On the one hand, because of the state's preferential policies toward *huaqiao*, locals become second-class citizens in their own community (e.g. during vital social practices such as death rituals). On the other hand, my work also explores how locals have experienced globalization without budging from their village, as their home community is dramatically altered by the financial, political, and cultural omnipresence of *huaqiao*.

'Eating' is not a dead metaphor; people really enact it. Just as the foods they eat form part of their self or personhood, their interaction with *huaqiao* involves a process of self-construction through which locals reimagine and act upon their most important life decisions. What they draw from these interactions becomes part of their social-cultural capital. Villagers creatively select both historical and contemporary resources to make moral judgments about *huaqiao* and their fellow locals. Neoliberal logic, Maoist ideology, and traditional values are juxtaposed in

varying combinations by villagers from different social positions in order to make value judgments about the donations made by *huaqiao*. Relations with *huaqiao* are an important part of migration patterns, both linking and reproducing the historical and cultural linkages between internal and international migration (cf. Mallee and Pieke 1999).

My project also provides answers to a question that has continued to puzzle many observers of contemporary China: why do lineages continue to matter? Specifically, I have focused on moral reputation and cooperation among members of a lineage sub-group. Drawing on a case study of conflicts over land ownership, I suggest that neither kinship ties nor shared cultural values in themselves are enough to persuade people to cooperate. Instead, I explore the concern for reputation (cf. Sperber and Baumard 2012) that is at play in cooperation processes involving *huaqiao* and local residents, as well as cooperation between locals in a range of projects. When Overseas Chinese make return visits to their ancestral villages in Guangdong, they make many things happen. Their philanthropic patronage, notably in the building of temples, is performed for the glory not only of the family but also for that of individuals. In this way, the benefactors' 'absent presence' may be very disruptive and create moral dilemmas for local people. I show how the lineage sub-group members renew and strengthen their cooperation in ancestral worship in spite of conflicts related to monetary and moral interests. In this 'conflict-laden cooperation', they have to negotiate long-term reputational concerns of their group and immediate individual monetary gratification. I demonstrate that in this process the concern for moral reputation is a central mechanism for the process of materializing cooperation.

A third aspect of my work concerns the socio-cultural production of local imaginaries of mobility and fixity. The departure point is that mobility is an issue not only for the elite overseas sojourners, but is also experienced by those who are (self-) identified as 'left behind'. Overseas visitors, young and old villagers, village cadres, and local officials who stand in unequal political-economic power relations construct the village in different and often contradictory ways. Home-county narratives (*qiaoxiang*), for instance, are part of the Chinese state's project to 'localize the global'. In the process of the cultural reproduction of the village as a *qiaoxiang*, the village is imagined as a centre to return to, through nostalgic narratives of belonging that value rootedness. By contrast, the omnipresence of *huaqiaos'* wealth and reputation in the village assign positive values to migration and mobility. The residential presence of increasing numbers of returnees has triggered in elderly villagers a consciousness of chances for migration foregone in the past and the lack of mobility in the current socio-political hierarchy. The presence of the *huaquaos* also feeds into the way today's youth imagine their future potential to be mobile. This imaginary influences their life decisions. In order to belong fully to this village, one should leave and then return one day as a successful migrant who has moved up the social-economic ladder.

A fourth strand in my work concerns the coexistence of two conceptually contradictory practices of ancestral care: cremation and earth burial. The state's intervention is examined with regard to relations of care between the living and the dead. I pay particular attention to the ways in which governmental reform constitutes an attack on traditional practices and conceptions, the exceptions made for overseas emigrants, and how these exceptions incite local people to circumvent the new law by reinventing double burial. In my analysis I draw both on concepts such as *suzhi* (human quality) and on analytic vocabulary such as technologies of subjection and subjectivity.

Girls walking on a path funded by Overseas Chinese (2006).

A fifth strand concerns the building of new houses as common causes in the emigrant community. By building and naming houses in which local kin (sometimes two or three generations removed) will take up residence, they forge kinship and sustain mutual support despite transnational distance. Such new houses are typically named after the common ancestor(s) of the overseas funder and the actual inhabitants of the house. Such houses can be viewed as efforts to restore 'operational' relationships after a hiatus of over 40 years due to the hostility of Chinese state policy in Mao's era. The new house fulfils local aspirations to lead a good life in a modern space and the transnational desire to make a glorious return while simultaneously honouring

one's ancestor. Both central and local state officials support the building of these properties as part of the official schema of development and modernization in rural areas. The new house thus becomes a common cause for the Overseas Chinese, the villagers, and state cadres. A small architectural feature, the inscribing in stone of the name on top of the gates of the new house, reveals the source of the financing. These overseas-funded houses are contrasted in local moral discourses to the 'self-reliance' houses funded by villagers' own hard-earned money. Both are connected with the 'old houses' (i.e. ancestral halls). I therefore examine the house as a site of intimacy and hierarchy for the Overseas Chinese emigrant visitors and their village-based kin, and as a critical mediator of their personal and social relations.

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'Changing Fate' – Educational Mobility and Social Support in Rural North-West China

Helena Obendiek

Helena Obendiek obtained her MA in Sinology, political science, and sociology from the Free University of Berlin. The research described here was the basis for her PhD in anthropology, which she obtained from the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in 2011. Currently she manages the East Asia Programme at Konstanz University of Applied Sciences.

Educational aspirations have been documented to be astoundingly high in urban and rural regions of eastern China (Fong 2004, Kipnis 2011, Hansen 2015). China's north-western Gansu Province is one of the most impoverished regions of the county, yet here too residents put enormous effort into supporting their children's educational pathways.

On the arid loess plateau of Gansu, high educational aspirations were closely intertwined with the rural population's need to secure family-based social support. Under conditions of persistently low agricultural yields, lack of state welfare to secure against life risks, and few options for local economic development, educational mobility was considered the 'only way out' of an impoverished life. Moreover, the notion of education as a springboard to upward mobility was strengthened by a peculiar mixture of conventional Confucian ideas that couple education and social success with the legacies of high socialist and early reform policies that guaranteed government employment and comprehensive social welfare to all graduates. Since the late 1990s, rapid expansion of national university enrolment quotas combined with the abolition of state job-allocation to graduates has led to fierce competition in employment markets. One might expect that rural families would stop investing in their children's education given three factors: 1) graduates from poor rural backgrounds are disadvantaged in the employment market because they have little to offer other than their academic degree; 2) university education has turned into an extraordinarily expensive endeavour; and 3) living costs are skyrocketing for new graduates who seek work in China's cities. Taken together, these factors severely threaten the financial return that rural families can expect from education. In fact, local peasant families have reacted to the new insecurities with *increased* educational ambitions, even at the risk of putting the whole family into heavy debt. This is because higher education is their only hope to 'change fate' away from their peasant lot and to participate in the country's rush towards development.

Thirteen months of ethnographic fieldwork (in 2006–07) conducted partly in a village of Huining County, and partly among students and graduates from the region who lived in the provincial capital or Beijing, provided the data for documenting local families' desperate hope that the educational success of a single family member

would lead the whole family to upward mobility and better access to urban social support resources. Because of their assumed role in bringing future success to their families, educational achievers who moved on to urban areas enjoyed high social standing in their home community and brought honour to their family. During the various stages of their education-based rural-to-urban mobility successful students were integrated continuously in their family's support network. A sense of gratitude and obligation to their supporters, along with the desire to succeed, was cultivated in students through repeated references to the success of previous students and through enrolment celebrations.

The parents of educational achievers enjoyed some rewards for supporting their children's education: social prestige in the community, parental feelings of accomplishment, and hope for the next generation's advancement. Yet given the lack of a state pension system in rural China (a pilot project of a basic rural pension system started in the region only in 2007), it is not surprising that local parents were also motivated to support their children's education by expectations of longer-term returns: China's rural elderly are dependent on their offspring's support when they become too frail to work in the fields or as urban-labour migrants. Conventional notions of the sons' responsibility for eldercare were still prevalent locally, even though the old intergenerational contract was hardly reliable in practice.

There were few adult children available to care for ageing parents. Family planning policies had reduced fertility to two or three children per couple, and almost all local youth left the villages either as labour migrants or to pursue higher education. Irrespective of gender, almost all labour migrants aspired to gain long-term urban residency. Yet even if they succeeded, the insecurity that accompanied urban jobs in the cities left little hope that they would be able to provide much financial or other support for their elderly parents. Even fewer could hope to bring their parents to live with them in the city.

Given the local conditions, a share in the family patrimony was hardly an attractive asset in the intergenerational contract. The otherwise precarious intergenerational bond was strengthened, however, through constant efforts to evoke in pupils and students feelings of gratitude and obligation towards parents who worked hard and skimped on their own daily expenses to pay for their children's education. Feelings of gratitude were amplified by recurrent references to the claims parents had on the future reciprocity of their children for their own present sacrifices.

Education-based mobility to the cities had different effects on the lives of young men and women, specifically with reference to their obligation and capacity to provide care for their elderly parents (Brandtstädter and Santos 2009). By the early 2000s, the strict family planning policy of the early 1980s, coupled with traditional preferences for male children, had led to a distorted gender ratio in the generation approaching marriage. Particularly men from poor rural regions thus faced increasing difficulties in attracting a marriage partner. In China, the marriage market is structured hierarchically according to each partner's socio-economic status, place

of origin, and level of education. Thus supporting a son's education had the additional advantage of enhancing his chances of finding a marriage partner. This was particularly true for young men from economically deprived regions such as rural Huining County. A son's marriage, however, presupposed high costs for his family, because they were expected to provide housing for the newlyweds. Rural families therefore had to cope with the skyrocketing prices of urban real estate when a son succeeded in graduating, obtaining urban employment, and marrying. If they also took into account the future expense of educating grandchildren, parents of a successful male graduate could hardly expect a net surplus of resources to flow back from his budget into their own (Obendiek 2016b).

Preparing for national college entrance exams (gaokao) at high school (2007).

In comparison, a daughter who attained higher education was likely to enhance her parents' future status and care. The conventional notion persists that the obligations of elderly care rest with sons and not with daughters. Female graduates thus feel especially grateful for their parents' support in education. As these women argued, their parents' support was much less instrumentally motivated by expectations of future reciprocity, and thus deserved even deeper gratitude than the support given to a male child. Educated daughters thus had a strong motivation to reciprocate the help they received with emotional, financial, and practical support to their parents at a later point in life (Obendiek 2017). Moreover, the increased earning power of female graduates and their financial contributions to their marital family *empowered* them to support their own parents, and not only their in-laws.

Socialist and early reform socialist policies strengthened conventional notions about the intergenerational transmission of 'cultural capital' (in Bourdieu's sense), as revealed by education-related flows of support within extended families. Graduates of the early reform socialist period who had benefited from the state job allocation system often turned into the main supporters of their nieces' and nephews' education. These graduates passed their education-related benefits to the next generation with the expectation that their nieces and nephews would reciprocate upwards by providing support to their own parents (i.e. the siblings of the first generation of graduates). This diagonal intergenerational support thus provided indirect intra-generational support (Obendiek 2013).

Announcement of the village government: 'Children from households with a one child only certificate and children whose parents were sterilized after haven two daughters are eligible for 10 extra points in the national college entrance examination if they plan to enrol at a provicial university' (2007).

Compared with the graduates of the previous generation, more recent graduates from poor rural backgrounds face quite different circumstances. The challenge of securing one's own future is starkly evident (with employment a 'private' matter of individual responsibility and urban living costs rising so dramatically), and the net of obligations has widened. Recent graduates still shoulder the obligation to care for their elderly parents, and many feel the burden to help them before old age, especially by contributing to costs for the education, marriage and property endowment of their siblings. Often, labour migrant siblings have supported the education

of their brothers and sisters with complex motives: not only out of the shared (but gendered) obligation to provide care for elderly parents, but also as a hedge against the insecurities of their own future. Because sibling support is still considered a kind of 'gift', (albeit one that entails a claim to future reciprocity), labour migrant siblings may later benefit directly from an early 'investment' in a potentially successful graduate. Thus the balance of generosity has shifted, and recent graduates often feel that they owe significantly more than they can bestow.

In contrast to Yunxiang Yan's (2003) diagnosis of "uncivil egotism" among rural youth in north-east China, this project has shown that in impoverished Gansu even the youth tend to value family as the main source of current and future support. This is demonstrated in the flow of education-related resources between and within the generations of local family networks. It is relationships of "base", as opposed to those of the market, that sustain the option to enter market society (Gudeman 2009). Living at the bottom end of China's vast spectrum of socio-economic disparity, family support is decisive for individual as well as familial advancement. Certainly, mutual dependency does not inhibit family conflict; it amplifies the multiple pressures faced by rural youth and their parents. Yet, in view of the insecurities and competitiveness of contemporary Chinese society, investment in family relatedness through the 'gift' of educational support reflects more than egotism in emotional and material terms. Critically, the dividend expected from educational support is not conceived of in terms of a direct return of the monetary value of the initial gift. Rather, it is the relatedness engendered by support, people hope, that will lead to a pay-off in the future.

The project also scrutinized how 'educational migrants' from impoverished family backgrounds dealt with various forms of disadvantage during and after their studies. Students from the region coped with manifold experiences of social and economic inferiority on their campus by taking pride in an ethic of hard work and by temporalizing their lack of economic means with the hope to surpass others in the future. However, cultural inferiority expressed in the terms of so-called comprehensive quality (*suzhi*) – an ill-defined notion that includes ideas of communication style, bodily comportment, and consumption habits – turned out to be much more difficult to address. When they entered the labour market, these graduates were confronted with their structural exclusion from the benefits and resources that arise from the administrative divide between rural and urban residence rights (*hukou* policies). Even though county fellowship (*laoxiang*) could serve as a resource to make up for a lack of other effective relations (*guanxi*), *laoxiang* relationships seldom proved strong enough to provide support in crucial matters, such as finding qualified employment.

In sum, the power of hope for a 'change of fate' made people at the bottom of Chinese society invest all their efforts in securing education-based upward mobility for at least one family member. Unlike labour migration, which is often accomplished through a thin network of social relations, education-based rural-to-urban mobility is dependent on extended family support networks, with parents, siblings, and

uncles and aunts all supporting the educational achievers. While supporters hope for a share in the 'returns' of educational success, recent developments in reform socialist society have made it increasingly doubtful that the plight of rural families will improve as a result of the increased education of one or more members. Even though the desire for educational success may deplete family resources and fail to bring secure urban living conditions, it nonetheless allows people the hope that a 'change of fate' is possible. And, that if not in this generation, then the change will occur in the generations to come.

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Love, Family, and Gender in Twenty-first Century China

Gonçalo Santos

Gonçalo Santos is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Hong Kong. Prior to moving to Hong Kong in 2013, he was an LSE Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science (2007–11) and a Senior Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (2011–13).

Theorists of globalization have drawn attention to dramatic changes in intimate practices around the world, highlighting an overall trend towards the increasing salience of romantic love, free partner choice, and coupledom (Giddens 1992). The emergence of comparable policies and legal frameworks of marriage, family, and sexuality in different parts of the world certainly seems to support the idea of a global convergence. But, as many anthropologists and historians have shown (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006), the genealogies of phenomena such as love marriage, companionate marriage, lower birth rates, and politicized sexualities are very diverse and subject to significant variations. This heterogeneity is not just historical and cultural; it is also profoundly personal and political. Whatever changes are occurring globally across North–South and East–West divides, they are taking place in the context of increasingly entangled intersections between private negotiations and public dialogues at various levels in law, state policy, science, technology, and the media.

My project was concerned with such intersections, and in particular those between micro-historical experiences and macro-structural processes. In contrast to other social science approaches that only highlight the increasing salience of individualization in contemporary societies (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995), I developed an approach to marriage, family, and intimate life that emphasizes also the continuing importance of collectivities, ties of sociality, and networks of social support. The starting point of the "intimate choices approach" (Santos 2016c) is the idea that people everywhere are confronted with pressing choices when it comes to intimate practices such as childbearing, sexuality, marriage, childcare, parenting, or eldercare. These choices are not just the outcomes of acts of individual agency (as when a wealthy consumer chooses the most adequate purchase from a long list of product brands and price ranges), but are shaped by complex processes of negotiation that take place in particular social, political, economic, and material environments. The intimate choices approach acknowledges the increasing centrality of individual agency, confessional and affective modes, and personal autonomy in the age of neoliberal globalization, but it also emphasizes the continuing significance of broader moral and normative structures, including not just state policies and national laws but also the institution of the family, larger kin groups, neighbourhoods, caste, and other associational identities (Santos 2013, Santos 2016c, Donner and Santos 2016b). Ethnographic research developed along these lines emphasizes the collective nature

of decision making and the limits of individualized notions of self-realization (Donner and Santos 2016a, Santos and Harrell 2017a).

This approach was developed in the context of a series of publications focusing on China alongside other Asian countries such as India. Anthropologists working in Asian contexts are uniquely positioned to open up crucial debates on how seemingly related 'global forms' of romantic courtship and companionate marriage are emerging and how such transformations are not homogeneous but are shaped by contextually specific historical processes of cultural creativity. In the introduction to our edited volume *Transforming Patriarchy*, Stevan Harrell and I show how marriages and families in China today are being pushed and pulled by conflicting signals that would seem to herald the decline of earlier traditions of patriarchal organization (Harrell and Santos 2017b). Whereas people's identity used to be linked to membership in a collective, be it family or work unit, and intimate relations were largely mediated by parents and elders, today individualization has taken hold – young people, for example, have more freedom of movement and more say in their lives. Defining patriarchy as a historical system of family and social life built around a particular set of intersecting gender and generational hierarchies, we argue that patriarchy in twenty-first century China is not entirely dead, but it is no longer the default arrangement for Chinese families.

Young mother teaching author to tie a baby sling local style, northern Guangdong (2012).

There is some disagreement in the volume over whether the changes observed represent a form of progress, regress, or both, but there is broad agreement on the conclusion that we are dealing with an increasingly individualized system in which a single individual might be oppressed in some relationships and dominant in others. Stevan Harrell and I analyse this shift towards a more individualized system of inequality as a move away from 'classic forms of patriarchy' (what Max Weber called *Patriarchalismus*), but we continue to use the term patriarchal for the new system in order to highlight the ongoing effects of deep-seated gender and generational hierarchies. This point is not a mere terminological detail; it highlights the paradox at the heart of the volume. On the one hand, present-day China resembles in many ways the industrial societies of North America and parts of Europe, in which patriarchy in Weber's sense no longer exists, while male dominance remains. On the other hand, family relations in today's China display many unique features, including the continuing importance of values associated with the patriline, filial duty, patrilocality, and the joint family ideal. The volume proposes a model of patriarchy and social change that is better suited to making sense of the social and cultural complexities of the Chinese family system. Patriarchy is not a historical constant and political action is crucial to maintaining or transforming specific patriarchal configurations. Our approach has much in common with earlier feminist historical approaches to patriarchy (as a system of domestic inequality) in that we envision global modernity not as the end of patriarchy but as its transformation.

This is not the view of global modernity put forward by theorists of individualization, such as Giddens, for whom global modernity entails a large-scale process of democratization and de-traditionalization of intimate life. Along the same lines, Yunxiang Yan (2009) highlights the growth of affective individualism in Chinese family relations, and Davis and Friedman (2014) focus on the privatization of marriage and sexuality, pointing to trends such as higher age at first marriage, fewer barriers to divorce, declining marital fertility, and greater social acceptance of premarital relationships. These authors are surely right to highlight the growing importance of affective ties and partner choice, but there is no sign that the institution of (heteronormative) marriage is weakening, or that it has been decoupled from broader patrilineal family ideals (cf. Davis and Friedman 2014: 26-27). While the increasing importance of individual choice and consent in spouse selection together with a rise in nuclear residential patterns may fit the ideal of intimate life put forward by globalization theorists, the same cannot be said of other processes such as the continuing emphasis on marriage and childbearing as a filial duty, or the continuing involvement of close and extended kin in the process of spouse selection.

My empirical research on rural families in Guangdong Province highlights some of these tensions (Santos 2016c, 2017c). I have shown, for example, how labour migration to the Pearl River Delta region from the 1980s onwards has generated new childcare arrangements that reveal an important intergenerational shift of power within families (Santos 2017c). As middle-generation mothers and fathers started

to redefine their parenting duties primarily in terms of the 'masculine' work of earning income outside the village, they turned senior generation grandparents into full-time baby-sitters of 'left-behind children'. This transformation has contributed to the empowerment of the middle generation, but it did not result in the collapse of the intergenerational contract. Rather, it led to the emergence of a new patriarchal configuration in which middle-generation mothers and fathers have more bargaining power in the negotiation of gendered generational interdependencies. My analysis shows that patriarchal bargains are not timeless immutable entities, but are susceptible to historical transformations that open up new areas of struggle and renegotiation of the relations between genders well as between generations. These struggles do not always lead to dramatic changes, but they tend to reveal the existence of contradictory positions and tendencies in society. Similarly, my account of rural experiences of love, marriage, and family life in Guangdong Province shows how highly restrictive birth planning regulations and related biomedical reproductive technologies remain a central component of the Reform era shift towards a more sentimental, more individualized regime of intimate life (Santos 2016c). The Revised Marriage Law of 2001 continues to refer to birth planning as a national duty, making it quite clear that individualization does not necessarily mean less state monitoring.

Babysitting grandfather holding migrant son's daughter, northern Guangdong (2012).

Theorists of globalization would approach such tensions as symptomatic of an incomplete process of individualization. The intimate choices approach developed in this project offers a way out of this Western-centric vision of global transformation, showing how the Western project of individualization is ultimately based on late-twentieth century large-scale infrastructures of welfare provision aimed at securing individual autonomy. In most Asian societies, by contrast, welfare systems have been largely built around the assumption that in both income distribution and care provision the family will be responsible for the welfare of its members (Ikels 2004). There were, of course, several attempts in Asia to break away from welfare familialism, but these attempts had limited success and were always marked by tensions between individual and collective aspirations, familial and societal interests. Such tensions are becoming increasingly visible in Western societies today, at a time when welfare provision is facing significant retrenchment pressures due to population ageing and increasing public expenditures. As we move further into the twenty-first century, it will become increasingly clear that the growing importance of romantic love and individual partner choice in both Eastern and Western narratives of global modernity should not be read as evidence of the weakening of the institutions of marriage and family, but rather as a context-specific reworking of these institutions and the way they connect to larger infrastructures of social support and welfare provision.

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Everyday Ethics in Rural China

Hans Steinmüller

Hans Steinmüller obtained an MSc in Anthropology and Development (2004) and a PhD in Social Anthropology (2009) at the London School of Economics. He joined the Max Planck Institute as a Research Fellow in 2009 and took up a lectureship in Anthropology at the London School of Economics in 2010.

In the last two decades many observers of Chinese society have spoken of a moral crisis. Large-scale social, political and economic transformations have gradually changed every aspect of everyday life: work teams, brigades, and the work units in the city have been abolished, the planned economy has been replaced by private enterprise, millions of labour migrants have arrived in China's megacities, and consumerism and new lifestyles have taken root even in remote places in the countryside. In the context of urbanization, individualization, and commercialization, moralities and values have also changed substantially. But rather than revealing declining public morality or moral crisis, as decried by many observers (e.g. Yan 2003, 2009, Liu 2000, 2009), my ethnographic research shows transformation. Ordinary people do have an increased sense of moral challenge and uncertainty, and sometimes feel caught between the different moral frameworks of capitalism, Maoism, and Chinese tradition. But they creatively combine these frameworks, and morality retains its central importance in the mobilization of social support in families and local communities.

My earlier doctoral research was based on 18 months of participant observation in the village of Zhongba (Hubei Province, central China). During my time at the Max Planck Institute in 2009–10, I prepared for further fieldwork, completed several publications, and finished work on my monograph *Communities of Complicity: everyday ethics in rural China* (2013a). My focus was on family, work, ritual, and the local state, and I analysed how ordinary rural people confront moral uncertainty. I was struck by the fact that, as people creatively harmonize public discourse and local practice, they sometimes resolve incoherence and unease through the use of irony. In so doing, they perform everyday ethics and re-create moral communities, no matter how transiently, at a time of massive social dislocation.

The notion of "communities of complicity" describes senses of belonging that are based on shared local practices and local knowledge that are denigrated in public discourse. The concept is akin to what Michael Herzfeld (2005) calls "cultural intimacy". In Greece, "cultural intimacy" arises around similar practices in rural communities which contradict the modernist ideals of the nation-state; Herzfeld describes how people resolve such contradictions by making use of "social poetics". More importantly for my purposes, the notion of "cultural intimacy" uncovers an apparent duplicity between normative moral orders and ethical practice.

In the last two decades cash crops (such as tea, pictured) have replaced staple crops such as rice and potatoes in the Wuling Mountains (2007).

Communities of complicity are based on local knowledge and practices such as geomancy (*fengshui*), various rituals, gambling, gift-giving, and several forms of 'corruption'. These practices are central to local sociality, yet they carry a sense of embarrassment vis-à-vis outsiders, because they seem to contradict the modernist self-presentation of official discourse. Such practices are also directly relevant for practices of social support, in particular when linked to kinship. Money-gifts, for instance, are an essential part of the incomes and expenses of most rural households – comprising up to one-third of household expenses for farmers in Zhongba in 2007. This gift economy is informal and takes place largely outside the regulations and recordings of the local state. Most money-gifts are made to neighbours, relatives, and friends. They are crucial to sociality. Yet they are condemned by the local government, and participation in these exchanges is thus to build a community of complicity.

The fine line between appropriate gift-giving and corruption is of crucial importance to the local political economy. For instance, with the introduction of cash cropping in 2000, most farmers in Zhongba turned to planting tea instead of the staple crops of rice, corn, and potato. The promotion of a uniform cash crop (some villages specialize in tea, while others grow tobacco or some other crop) by the local government sometimes turns into 'face projects' (*mianzi gongcheng*) that serve

only to please higher officials in the party hierarchy. The efficacy of such projects (and of party policies) thus requires managing the tensions that arise between official presentations and local practice. In such conflicts, the complicities of insiders are of decisive importance. An ethnographic focus on different forms of complicity provides a corrective to analysis (common in political science, for instance) that interprets official corruption in China as 'neo-traditionalism'.

Farmhouse and corner shop: many farmers, in particular those situated along public roads, have opened shops for additional income (2012).

In further publications (Steinmüller 2010a, b, 2011a, b, c, 2015) I have focused on different aspects of everyday life and ethics in rural China, including ancestor worship, gambling, and memory discourses. The practice of ancestor worship brings with it potential embarrassment because of the attacks made on popular religion during the era of Mao (Steinmüller 2010b). Even though religious practices have been revived widely in many regions of China, there is often a potential awkwardness (given that they can still be labelled as 'feudal superstition'). Throughout my work, it has been important to understand how people remain moral actors, even as they recognize their participation in dubious activities. My analysis of the use of irony and cynicism to engage indirectly with politics and the state (e.g. Steinmüller 2011a) was extended comparatively in the volume *Irony, Cynicism and the Chinese State* (co-edited with Susanne Brandstädter 2016).

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In Search of Social Support beyond Kinship

Xiujie Wu

Xiujie Wu studied Chinese language and literature, folklore and ethnology in China and Germany. She obtained her PhD from the Free University of Berlin in 2007. Since the end of her Research Fellowship at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in 2012 she has been translating academic works from German and English into Chinese.

When I began this project in 2006, the leading question in my mind was: how compatible are rural traditions of family life with the institutional arrangements of a modern welfare state that provides basic social security to its citizens? China since it opened up around 1980 has been striving to establish such a welfare state, at least on the rhetorical level. I had observed in earlier fieldwork that some peasants were beginning to work out new mechanisms of social support beyond kinship. Issues concerning the 'deterioration' of peasants' living conditions (*nong min*), agriculture (*nong ye*), and the rural environment (*nong cun*) – abbreviated in the term 'triple *nong*' (*san nong*) – were a matter of shrill public concern in the early 2000s. The central government had implemented huge investment projects for promoting rural infrastructures – notably electrical grids, mobile telecommunication networks, and digital highways for internet access – and had offered subventions for building rural roads within and between villages. Undoubtedly, many rural residents profited greatly from these projects. But they remained under-privileged in comparison with their urban counterparts when it came to healthcare, insurance, and old-age pensions. There was an apparent income gap between urban and rural residents, exacerbated because the latter had to pay the same fees for educating their offspring – of whom they had more as a result of the one-child policy in the urban sphere. Without underestimating the state's accomplishments in rural development, I asked: to what extent does the reform socialist state provide a reliable basis of support for peasants confronted with drastic social transformations? My goal was to observe how villagers coped with their new circumstances, and how they pursued their rights both against the authorities and within their own kinship circles. My fieldsite was the large village of Cheer with over 1,000 households and a population of more than 5,000 Han Chinese residents, situated in Hebei Province, on China's northern plateau. For most of my fieldwork I concentrated on middle-aged men and women who faced competing demands on their limited material resources from their parents and their children.

Building on my previous research, I approached the theme of conjugal solidarity (Bray 2008) by investigating notions and practices of social support through decisions concerning the adaptation of electric appliances (lights, water pumps, washing machines). Such new objects serve as powerful symbols of being modern and their adaptation follows the general pattern of "men purchase, women use". Although it

is as true in rural China as elsewhere that the introduction of new technical appliances in the domestic sphere shifts or reshapes gender relations (Cowan 1983), this process in Cheer depends mainly on mutual support. Technical adaptations within the house are rarely seen as means for the redistribution of power. Rather, they are expected to enhance the conjugal solidarity necessary to fulfil support obligations towards the older and younger generations.

A family photo (not all family members are present). The advertisement for mineal water on the sunumbrella reads, 'A little more, life will be healthier' (2007).

Solidarity beyond the family is expressed mainly through mutual exchanges of manual labour and through physical attendance and monetary contributions at lifecycle rituals for birth, marriage, and death, as well as congratulatory banquets for university enrolment. The last should be understood as a new lifecycle ritual rather than merely a fund-raising event (although it may also have this function). Fellow villagers are reluctant to feel a responsibility of solidarity to help each other meet the high costs of medical treatment and university education. The logic of local solidarity is based on a principle of "giving a helping hand for emergency but not for poverty" (*jiu ji bu jiu qiong*). Urban philanthropists and organizers of charitable associations, including local university graduates, attempt to promote the living conditions of rural people by stimulating material contributions. While their focus on improving

opportunities for youth may be applauded on moral grounds (see Fleischer 2013b), their calls for donations rarely succeed.

Solidarity within the extended family, especially among siblings, is complicated because it has to be balanced against the principle of fairness (often expressed with the term *gong ping*, literally 'public balanced'). In her pioneering study of practices of supporting the rural elderly, Yuhua Guo (2001) was the first to identify a crisis in intergenerational fairness. During the collective era, old peasants could not accumulate significant property to transmit to their offspring. They therefore felt unjustified in claiming comprehensive support in old age. For my focus group of middle-aged villagers, duties to support parents generate conflict among male siblings and between their nuclear families, which the elderly cannot mediate through distributions of property. Conflict may continue into a subsequent generation, in which case the concept of fairness is extended beyond the material level into discourses about bloodlines and even citizen rights. Often, disputes that are not resolved within the family are not resolved at all: state laws have supplanted some traditional modes of dispute settlement, but cadres hesitate to arbitrate conflicts, supervise agreements, or even execute customary regulations, for fear of becoming embroiled in further legal conflict. Sometimes, disputes over their support bring the elderly to commit suicide (Wu 2010).

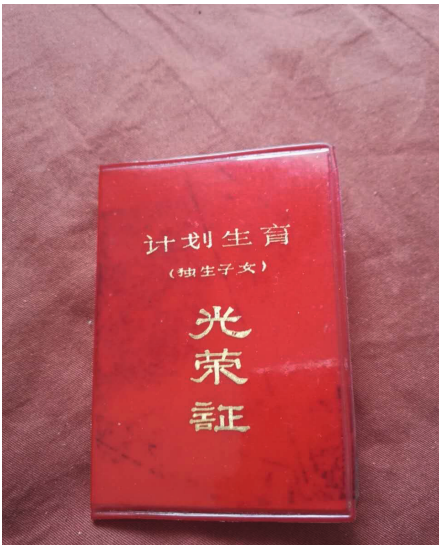
The traditional network of social support faces challenges from both the market economy and the modern welfare state. The market economy favours young, well-qualified workers, while new visions of the modern state encourage the rise of the individual and the individualization of society. In this sense, China is by no means an exception (Yan 2009). Especially for younger people, engaging with extended kinship networks is not a self-evident obligation but one potential choice among others, with ambivalent characteristics. Community life is maintained through reciprocal interactions accompanied by money-gifts. In principle, such gifts should represent human effort and commitment, but the circumstances in which cash is obtained in the market economy now vary so greatly that it is not easy to reach consensual judgements about its value in human terms. This is disturbing for villagers.

For people in the countryside, to earn money usually requires the acceptance of significant uncertainty and sacrifices in terms of family life and health. Excluded from the state social security system, rural people have to invest in reserves in case of illness or inability to work. When family members (especially siblings) pursue different strategies for arranging their existence, their resulting financial situations vary and tensions arise. Tradition justifies both the sharing and the withholding of financial resources. Proverbs like "uneasily obtained property is also uneasy to give away" (*shan cai nan she*) are used by the 'rich' to justify what is perceived as 'stinginess' by the 'poor'. They are met with reproachful proverbs, such as "being rich but without benevolence" (*wei fu bu ren*).

Some state efforts to provide welfare have consequences for local support networks. For example, in 2007 the state provided monetary support provisions to

those elderly who had no children. In rural contexts, childless elderly are – with rare exceptions – among the less respected community members. They are considered bad characters: lazy and self-indulgent, having lacked responsibility in their youth. When the state supported these 'undeserving' elderly, other villagers in Cheer reacted with even less readiness to integrate these 'eccentric' or deviant co-villagers into their own social networks.

The image of an efficient social support network through extended family members and within a village community was an ideal in the past and is a utopia in the present. In practice, sources of social support beyond kinship are often preferred. With the rapid developments of digital technology, rural residents can now access virtual communities through the internet to obtain support, in particular to solicit donations for medical treatment. Decade-long efforts by the government to establish state-run institutional arrangements in health insurance and other forms of social support are welcomed, even though these new impulses disturb the old balances. Within the foreseeable future, rural residents will still depend upon the reliable social support pillars of both state *and* family. Under the family planning policy, rural couples that had only one child were awarded a red-covered certificate. In 2015 it was announced that such elders over the age of 60 could claim a monthly allowance. This policy might be interpreted as indicating that the state is offering a substitute for the support provided by the conventional family; but it is also possible to see this provision as confirmation of the fact that the nuclear family remains the most resilient institution of all, a reliable 'lifeboat' for everyone, young and old, as rural Chinese society sails forward into uncertain waters.



The honorary certificate for having only one child.

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CHINA'S BORDERLANDS

Feudalism, Socialism, and the Present Mixed Economy in Rural Eastern Xinjiang

Ildikó Bellér-Hann and Chris Hann

Ildikó Bellér-Hann (MA Budapest 1980, 1981; PhD Cambridge 1989; Habilitation Humboldt University 2005) is Associate Professor at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies at the University of Copenhagen. She has carried out extensive fieldwork in Anatolia as well as Central Asia (especially Xinjiang). Chris Hann (BA Oxford 1974; PhD Cambridge 1979) is a Founding Director of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. From 1992 until 1999 he was Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Kent, Canterbury. He has conducted fieldwork in Hungary, Poland, Turkey, and Xinjiang.

Background

Since 2000 the western provinces of China, where many of the country's numerous ethnic minorities are concentrated, have been targeted by a massive campaign to correct the growing regional disparity with eastern China (Bellér-Hann 2014c). This project to develop and bring progress to minority regions is ideologically linked to a long tradition of affirmative action which stretches back to the Mao era. The *Open Up the West* campaign aims to secure stability by promoting economic growth and prosperity. However, some members of the 10 million strong Turkic speaking Muslim Uyghur minority in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) interpret development as a threat to their identity and as a strategy to assimilate them into the Chinese polity (Millward 2007). Uyghurs are in fact disadvantaged in the reform socialist mixed economy that places more emphasis on the market, and their resistance has been firmly repressed (Hann 2011). The ensuing political tensions provided the backdrop to our enquiry into social support mechanisms among contemporary rural Uyghurs. The project was carried out in cooperation with various units of Xinjiang University as well as local authorities.

Our point of departure was our long familiarity with the XUAR, including extended periods of fieldwork in the south of the province in the 1990s (Bellér-Hann 2015a). This time the location was the prefecture of Hami (Uygh.: Qumul) in eastern Xinjiang. Although the Han are now the largest group in the city, the project focused on two rural communities that remain almost exclusively Uyghur. One is an upland village of 70 households in Tianshan township, some 50 kilometres north of the oasis centre, where land cultivation and animal husbandry have approximately equal economic weight. The other is a much larger community situated just outside the boundary of the modern city. Until the 1930s this was the historic town of the

local powerholders, the Wangs, a Muslim dynasty that maintained local autonomy by paying tribute to the Chinese Emperor in Beiing. Here, small-scale farming was the principal means of subsistence. Fieldwork was carried out in both locations between September 2006 and August 2007, and followed up with shorter visits in 2009 and 2013.

An upland village in winter (2006).

The emphasis of our investigation was on the opportunities and constraints which shaped the ways in which rural residents meet their basic human needs. Social support includes new forms of provision initiated by the state. It changes dynamically with changing political, economic, and ideological conditions and is embedded in complex social relationships of many kinds, including intangible emotional needs related to mutuality and identity (F. and K. von Benda-Beckmann 1994). On the basis of this very broad definition, we probed into strategies for coping with both everyday and extraordinary adversities, paying equal attention to adaptations of old practices and the emergence of innovative mechanisms to meet new challenges.

History

Our project was conceptualized as both synchronic and diachronic. The questionable traction of the term 'feudalism' in China has been discussed by Sinologists (Dirlik 1997). We use it to designate pre-socialist (pre-1949) Hami for two reasons. First, due to Marxist ideology, it has become standard in local usage (Uygh.: *feodalizim,*

feodalliq tüzüm). Second and more substantively, until the recent past our fieldwork sites displayed a number of characteristics associated with the era of feudalism in Europe: land was the supreme good; political and economic power were concentrated in the hands of a hereditary nobility; agricultural production was carried out by serfs whose surplus labour was exploited through labour services; the rural economy was primarily subsistence oriented. The oasis-based hierarchy of the Wangs in multi-ethnic and multi-religious Hami/Qumul came under Chinese overlordship from the mid-eighteenth century until 1930, when the local dynasty finally lost its power. Under socialism, in the XUAR (formally created in 1955), as elsewhere in China, the term 'feudalism' served as shorthand to denote the backwardness of pre-socialist lifeways against which the achievements of socialist modernity were to be measured.

In the central oasis fieldsite, historical topics were raised frequently by local people. We paid attention to oral tradition as well as to the textual production of historical knowledge by local elites, available partly in print and partly in manuscript form. Our concern was not to reconstruct history *"wie es eigentlich gewesen"* but to understand emic constructions of the past and its mobilization to speak to the present. Local reminiscences (in both textual and oral transmissions) were dominated by two topics: evaluations of different periods of Wang rule (1697–1930) and the three major peasant insurgencies that shook the oasis in the first half of the twentieth century. Individual rulers were evaluated in terms of Islamic and Central Asian legitimation criteria, which highlight social justice and the redistribution of resources among the poor and needy. Such top-down reactions to poverty and need were doubtless motivated by the fear of riots and rebellion in both town and countryside (Bellér-Hann 2016a). The salience of these protests in local lore testifies to the use of history to vent discontent in the here and now. All forms of resistance are difficult in the charged political atmosphere of today's XUAR, but the contradictions inherent in Chinese national historiography leave local intellectuals some room to manoeuvre (Bellér-Hann 2012f). According to these narratives, peasant insurgencies occurred as extreme responses to the consequences of 'feudal' exploitation perpetrated by both local (Uyghur) and alien (Chinese) rulers.

In addition to top-down support and bottom-up remedial measures, rural reminiscences invoked the importance of social institutions that had religious underpinnings. For example, the payment of alms *(zakat)* – one of the five pillars of Islam – was probably commuted into an obligatory tax. Other forms of ritualized almsgiving took place during religious festivals and on other days of religious and communal significance. Major events of the lifecycle and other communal rituals in Hami functioned as occasions for charitable redistribution. At weddings, death rituals, and also in healing rituals, provisions were made for the poor in the form of a free meal, small gifts, fruit, bread, and/or barbers' services. These occasions also featured horizontal reciprocal exchange, reinforcing communal ties; they gave participants a sense of belonging and security in the present, and the promise of support in the future. Traditional labour cooperation (Uygh.: *lapqutlishish*) between households

was also remembered by some peasants, who contrasted it with the absence of such cooperation in the early socialist decades or today.

Pre-socialist units for reciprocal labour cooperation formed the basis for the organization of the first Mutual Aid Teams in the era of Mao. But when recalling the Maoist decades, virtually everyone emphasized the massive rupture which brigade and commune structures entailed for the traditional peasant society (Bellér-Hann 2016b; see Pawan, this volume). There was an understandable reluctance to discuss the most difficult years of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, although experiences of hunger and violence were modest in comparison with other parts of China.

Contemporary Sources of Social Support

Economic liberalization began in the early 1980s and accelerated in the 1990s. It has transformed the region's political economy, while large-scale Han immigration has changed its demographic profile. The modern city of Hami is predominantly Han. Some urban Uyghurs have profited from new opportunities to generate wealth, but others bemoan the fact that (as in other regions) college graduation no longer guarantees the allocation of a public sector job (Obendiek 2016a). The rural population enjoys more existential security than it experienced in the era of Mao and agricultural intensification is supported by the local government, as are forestation schemes. But those lacking support through urban networks and without much competence in Mandarin feel trapped and experience an increasing sense of relative deprivation. Concepts such as help, support, and cooperation carry both negative and positive connotations, depending on whether the speaker wishes to stress the negative aspects of collectivization and the benefits brought by reform socialism, or to critique the conditions brought about by the new market economy. Older patterns of mutuality or reciprocity are giving way to wage labour. Principles of rigorous calculation and monetized equivalence are now well-established, even in relations between siblings in relatively remote settlements (Hann 2009a, Bellér-Hann 2013).

While religious institutions do not play a conspicuous role in current support patterns, the significance of Islam has persisted in local discourse, which delineates who should receive alms – that is, what has remained of the religious tax. Recipients of this charity cannot be close relatives; a man cannot donate voluntarily to his parents, siblings, or children, since he is in any case obliged to provide for them. Not fulfilling one's religious duties is a sin, while additional voluntary almsgiving generates religious merit. Annual mosque-based rituals function to cement a sense of cohesion in the *mahalle* (Bellér-Hann 2013, Hann 2013). Even at this level, however, religious activity is subject to stringent state controls (Hann 2012). The state also intervenes in determining which traditional activities can be tolerated as expressions of minority folklore (Bellér-Hann and Hann 2017).

This old-town imam and his wife married recently. Both were widowed and would otherwise have had to face living alone (2006).

The state remains a major actor in the provision of social support, but at the same time the principle of the market has steadily expanded. Key sectors such as health and even education nowadays demonstrate a mix. Public provision is available to all, but supplements from private assets are increasingly needed to access high quality services. The "Five Guarantees" system introduced by the state in the early 1950s to counter poverty was still in place at the time of our fieldwork. People deemed 'needy' are provided with help in kind, which includes grain/flour, meat, cooking oil, and fuel, delivered at the time of the Islamic religious holidays. New institutions have been opened to cater for the old and sick who have no close kin able to provide care, but the proportion of elderly Uyghur living in such *sanatoriyä* remains low in comparison with the Han majority.

At the time of fieldwork, public medical insurance and the introduction of a universal pension were welcomed by Uyghur villagers. Kin-based support remained crucial in addressing sudden emergencies (such as flooding) as well as for countering 'ordinary adversity'. Such 'bottom-up' strategies of social support were numerous. Some represented a perpetuation of pre-socialist practices, such as a relatively wealthy widower remarrying to ensure his future care, or the help given freely by the women of a community on the occasion of a wedding. Others were responses to new conditions, such as sharing information via mobile phone messages about job opportunities in the city or in the provincial capital. Large-scale state interventions in the form of reclamation projects and resettlement schemes are explicitly aimed at the elimination of poverty, but there is grave concern about the environmental risks of expanding the irrigated surface. Urbanization is an ongoing process in the

context of the *Open Up the West* campaign. Though welcomed by many, it brings risks of dislocation, especially in minority regions on the periphery of the state (Gladney 2004). Upland villagers have mixed feelings about the closure of village schools and their substitution with dormitory arrangements in the city. We found that concepts of remedial solutions to need (such as charity and generosity) continued to permeate everyday discourse, and contributed to the shaping of regional as well as Uyghur ethnic identity. Discourse and practice merged ideas about the role of the state, religion, morality, and kinship.The complex interconnectedness of different forms of support in the era of the socialist mixed economy will be analysed further in the monograph we are currently preparing.

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'Peasants Stagger, but Do not Fall' – Social, Economic, and Religious Investments in Support in a Uyghur Village

Ayxem Eli

Ayxem Eli obtained her PhD degree in Asian Studies from Melbourne University in 2006, following which she spent three years as a research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. She then worked as a lecturer at the University of Tasmania until 2012 before taking up a position as Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales.

In rural China, the once egalitarian spirit promoted in the era of Mao through wealth redistribution has been eroded through an economic ideology that encourages the accumulation of private wealth. One effect of this transformation has been a strengthened concept of the self-sufficient household economy vis-à-vis both the new market economy and the state (cf. Gudeman and Hann 2015). Elsewhere in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, the model of household economy has different forms reflecting differences in micro-governmentality, locally-available resources, and pre-socialist social conditions. I carried out fieldwork between September 2006 and August 2007 in Bäshkerem, a county under the administration of Kashgar Prefecture in southern Xinjiang. The location presents a microcosm for exploring the revival of pre-socialist traditions in fruit production and trade ranging from local to transnational levels. In just two decades, Bäshkerem has generated an image of prosperity, which is, however, embedded in the (re)creation of a social hierarchy directly linked to wealth disparity. My project grappled with everyday economic life. I analysed the manifold strategies adopted by villagers seeking to increase their economic gains, whilst attempting to safeguard against risk and caprice.

"*Dehqan serilidu, yiqilmaydu*" (peasants stagger but do not fall) is a proverb often cited by older peasants during conversations about the changes and uncertainties they have endured over the course of their lives. They contrasted the hardships of their lifestyle, limited life choices, and uncertain economic conditions with the manifest opportunities of city-dwellers. However, the proverb was also invoked to reference a unique solidarity enacted by the community and neighbourhood in times of crisis, the invocation of which cemented given social and political conditions. I explored several interrelated matters pertaining to state welfare (re)distribution, Islamic almsgiving, ritual economic exchanges through gifting between households, and interest-free loans given to individuals identified as needy, deserving, and trustworthy. I anchored my observations in questions of entitlements to care and other forms of support.

Due to its advantageous geographical location, Bäshkerem once marked the passageway for ancient caravan routes through the Tianshan Mountains that connected Kashgar to Narin, in modern-day Kyrgyzstan. Older generations still vividly recall

how they, their fathers, and neighbours engaged in trade with *Sevit* (the Soviet Union) until the mid-1950s. In the course of the political turmoil that followed the 1949 revolution, many natives of Bäshkerem migrated to northern Xinjiang, where it was easier for them to maintain private business despite official prohibition (see Pawan, this volume). From the mid-1980s, these migrants could rebuild ties with kin and friends back home, often providing financial support by remittances.

The advent of the Reform era in the early 1980s opened up new economic possibilities for Bäshkerem inhabitants. Farming did not suffice even for subsistence, due to an extreme shortage of land. Many households therefore diversified their economic structure and the dominant mode of production within the township changed rapidly. The local government instigated villagers to develop large-scale fruit production on the land they were allocated, thus reviving the pre-socialist fruit trade and ancillary production. Since 2005, grapes and pomegranates have been exported as far as Pakistan and India. Successful traders have consolidated businesses in the restaurant sector of the regional capital Ürümchi as well as inland Chinese cities. Scores of individuals from the township have engaged in foreign currency trading (*dollarchiliq*) in these cities, a pattern which has given rise to rags-to-riches legends that function to trigger further out-migration on the part of male villagers. The cosmopolitans of Bäshkerem present an alternative image of life in southern Xinjiang – so often associated with abject poverty and isolation from the outside world – but the image has its limits. While the status of being a farmer (*dehqan*) was considered backward, occupations based on *höner* (craftsmanship) or *sodigerchilik* (trade) were considered by men as inherently positive and 'progressive' (*ilgharlik*), as they pursued better living conditions for themselves and their extended families.

Wealth accumulation stimulated by trade enabled some 'old rich' from the pre-socialist period to regain their economic and social positions. It also helped create 'new rich' families. The new social hierarchy shaped care and support, especially through the practice of *zakat* (Islamic almsgiving), which emerged locally as a palpable form of material support, filling the gaps left by the state's failure to establish an all-encompassing social security system. Modes of conduct perceived as exhibiting excessive links with Islamic behavioural and moral codes are questioned and curbed in line with general political controls of religion in Xinjiang. This constraint is counterbalanced by exaggerated emphasis on the 'redistribution' of wealth through *zakat*, which is approved of as a culturally specific form of community help. The practices of Islamic charities and welfare institutions are thus endorsed by the state as local tradition, so long as the state's benevolent image and paternalistic power is not tarnished. Apart from functioning as a means for wealth redistribution, the revival of *zakat* in Bäshkerem accords with the essence of this practice, which is to enhance the benefactor's social prestige. It is also an endeavour to purify wealth, to bring inner solace, and, to some extent, it can be instrumental in enhancing religious and ethnic solidarity (Kuran 2003: 288). Remittances in the guise of *zakat* are particularly prevalent from those who have attained financial success in the

big cities. Such transfers also foster patron-client relations (where by the receiving individual or household is expected to render some form of reciprocal services or homage to patron).

State welfare is also omnipresent. It is most conspicuous in the redistribution accomplished through the 'minimal allowance'. The presence of a strong state is also acutely felt in the politicization of the material support it offers. State welfare, analogous to private *zakat* transfers, puts recipients into a contractual relationship based on reciprocal obligations. If villagers are considered not to have met expectations, their benefits are withdrawn. For example, those who perform the *Hajj* (the pilgrimage to Mecca) without permission will lose all entitlements to social welfare (including pensions), as will members of their extended families.

An elderly couple's collection of documents from the Mao era, including the 'Medicare Card' and certificates of labour achievements (2006).

Uyghurs say that a mother only breastfeeds a baby when it cries (*bala yighlimisa ana ämchek salmaydu*). This, say villagers, is why they 'cry' to the local government, demanding discretionary benefits, even at the risk of rejection or humiliation by cadres. Residential proximity to village headquarters improves access to information concerning the distribution of resources. Village cadres are viewed with suspicion. Their power is said to be exercised either corruptly, or through a network of connections (Uygh.: *munasiwet,* or *guanxi* in Chinese). Some villagers therefore

resort to investing in contacts with village cadres through gifting and hospitality (cf. Steinmüller, this volume).

Unlike a direct act of crying for state help, asking for *zakat* is a more subtle, muted, and indirect way to articulate need. According to Islamic doctrine, *zakat* is the right of those who are in need (Dean and Khan 1997: 198). For a well-off relative not to offer financial help, especially during Ramadan, is considered a disgrace. However, to confront a potential donor directly still results in a 'loss of face'. Need is therefore conveyed in an oblique or rambling way, sensitizing public opinion and sometimes even the village cadres, and thus mobilizing the sanction of gossip. Misfortune and even financial devastation are considered as the probable outcomes of a failure to share. The proverb *teng yigen teng singidu*, "the food eaten together can be digested together", exemplifies the spirit of sharing in the community.

Plates on the gate indicate that the owner of this house is a recipient of the state's minimal allowance (2007).

Another component of this research was the analysis of newly developing neighbourhood relations through *nisih*, interest-free credit that should be repaid over a fixed term. It is based on the provider's trust. The contract, which remains verbal, plays an important role in supporting impoverished families or widows to establish household businesses, such as hand-processed smoked apricots for regional and national distribution. Access to all forms of aid – whether through *nisih*, state

welfare, or religiously-based charity – is challenging because concepts of shame and prestige are unavoidably evoked, together with social memories and, in some instances, ideological and political constraints. *Nisih* is contract-bound, while state support and *zakat* are often patchy and erratic. In contrast to all these forms, the emotional and material care provided by close kin and neighbours is considered to be much more reliable. But even this support is fragile in certain circumstances. For example, when an aged and widowed parent is left in the care of a child who is a farmer, conflicts emerge when siblings who are salary-earning cadres or traders fail to play their part in providing support for the parent.

Villagers deal with these existential uncertainties by intensifying their network-building through ritual economy and other forms of reciprocity. As Cynthia Werner found in rural Kazakhstan after socialism, in ritual celebrations "both host and guest households have the opportunity to demonstrate their generosity and thus build and maintain social networks which provide them with material benefits in the non-ritual economy" (Werner 1997: 248). To investigate the complex forms of the gift economy in Bäshkerem, I focused on the *dastixan* (lit. table- or food-wrapping cloth) as a symbolic institution for expressing hospitality, gift-giving, and mutuality. Practices associated with the *dastixan* serve to calibrate a great variety of social interactions and network-building. They highlight the unique role of women in maintaining the social relations that provide the deepest bedrock for care and social support.

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Kinship and Cooperation among the Uyghur of Xinjiang, 1950–1980

Sawut Pawan (Shawuti Pawan)

Sawut Pawan was born and raised in southern Xinjiang and educated in Ürümchi. He obtained his BA and PhD, both in history, from Xinjiang University, and has taught this discipline at his alma mater, integrating anthropological approaches in both his teaching and research. He was a doctoral student at the Max Planck Institute in 2008–9 and prior to this received support from the Gerda Henkel Stiftung (2006–7).

Xinjiang is an arid region of north-west China which nowadays has an international border stretching 5,600 kilometres along eight countries. Once an important section of the ancient Silk Road, it nowadays figures prominently in China's efforts to promote new routes of communication across Eurasia, both by land and by sea. Contemporary Xinjiang has a population in excess of 20 million people, approximately 60 per cent of whom belong to 12 officially recognized minority groups. The largest of these minorities is the Uyghur, historically dominant but today comparable in size to the presence of Han Chinese in the region.

The aim of my doctoral project, supported by the Max Planck Institute, was to investigate the nature of kinship and the role of family networks as sources of social security among Uyghur villagers during the period 1950–1980. In most human societies, the family is the primary provider of physical and emotional care, financial support, and help in securing a source of livelihood. As in other pre-industrial agrarian societies, the Uyghur peasant family (even in socialism) assumes a wide variety of responsibilities throughout the lifecycle: finding marriage partners, organizing weddings, providing accommodation and work for the young couple, offering support at times of crisis (such as divorce, which is relatively frequent compared with other Muslim societies) and care for the very young as well as the old and the sick. The family is also a key site for the transmission of knowledge and skills.

I conducted my fieldwork in two villages, one in the prefecture of Kashgar in southern Xinjiang, and the other in Ili in the north. Kashgar is the largest oasis of southern Xinjiang. Its high population density is enabled by irrigated farming. Fertile land is scarce, but the climate is warmer than in northern Xinjiang and Kashgar peasants are able to harvest twice annually. By contrast, the Ili Valley has abundant water resources, and farming is possible without investment in irrigation. In pre-socialist times, the peasant who owned 40 *mu* (15 *mu* = 1 hectare) in Kashgar was classified as a landlord, but the threshold in Ili was set at 400 *mu*. The better farming conditions in the Ili Valley attracted migrants from the south (see Eli, this volume), and villagers had more scope for leisure and cultural activities such as the celebrated all-male gathering of the *meshrep* (see Dautcher 2009; public observance was proscribed by the authorities in 1997, but small-scale private *meshrep* celebrations still

occur in homes, especially on the Spring Equinox). Nor, according to the memories of elderly people, was the class struggle campaign as strong as it was in Kashgar. Migrants from the south with a bad class background could be registered as citizens in Ili and spared harsh discrimination. Before the socialist era, the indigenous Turkic speakers were classified as a distinct ethnic minority, the Taranchi. They referred to the immigrants as *Kashgarlik*. In the socialist era all have been classified as Uyghurs, but many Kashgarians in the Ili region still prefer to find their marriage partners among relatives in southern Xinjiang.

I focused, in both locations, on the first three decades of the socialist era. More specifically, I probed villagers' recollections of four political campaigns during this period: the land reform; the people's commune; the Four Clean-ups campaign (subsuming the socialist education movement); and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. These campaigns constituted national upheavals. At times, the changes they inaugurated followed the directions promoted by the government. But at other times, peasants reacted to government policies in ways substantially different from what China's leadership could have expected or desired (cf. Brown 2015).

Host family in the countryside, southern Xinjiang (2006).

Any project engaging with the period defined historically as the Mao era or Maoism is bound to tackle questions of class stratification and class identity. The Chinese Communist Party classified the rural population into various categories, and transformed interpersonal relationships within village communities. Peasants were taught how they should relate to others, especially those who had an ideologically superior class identity. The consequences of one's *terkip* (class identity) are still prominent in the recollections of those who experienced this history personally. Apart

from separating peasants from their landlords, ideological *terkip* and the degree of a family's impoverishment harboured potential for social capital and political status.

Drawing on unpublished research as well as fieldwork data, I found that the land reform of 1950–52 was significant not only for the actual transfer of land ownership, but also for the impact it had on villagers' concepts of kin and communal relationships. The idea of "giving land to the tiller" was a mirage rather than a viable long-term policy, since the land distributed to the peasants was collectivized barely five years later during the Great Leap Forward (1958–62). Nevertheless, the land reform campaign played a crucial role in the formation of class identity and subsequent transformations of traditional social structure.

Women of the neighbourhood help each other in preparing for a wedding, northern Xinjiang (2007).

Class belonging depended not only on the size of one's acreage but also on whether or not one exploited the labour of others (and thereby mistreated them). The dramatic alteration of traditional property relations through collectivization meant an unprecedented intrusion of the state and its agents into people's daily lives. From 1958 onwards, the state presumed the role of primary provider for social security. This might in principle have rendered traditional kinship networks redundant. But although some minimal security was assured through membership in a people's commune, public provisions were often insufficient for complex reasons (including

natural disasters as well as misguided economic policies). Because the economic activities that enabled such support were often pushed outside the boundaries of legality, my informants were reluctant to furnish many examples of how kinship and kin-like ties were mobilized during these decades (cf. Thaxton 2008).

I paid close attention to normative ideas of kinship cooperation and the extent to which these ideas underwent changes or remained constant throughout the period under investigation. For example, brideprice was still practised. Although the sums transferred were low in comparison with the amount paid in the subsequent Reform era, this marital payment could still be the equivalent of an entire year's income. During this era, housebuilding was still organized according to traditional patterns of mutual aid; all neighbours and kin were expected to participate.

Traditional village society can be understood as a community lacking 'strangers'; various long-term reciprocities permeate social life (Fei 1984). Even though the pre-socialist period has been subsequently characterized as a period of stagnation and 'feudal' exploitation (especially in Communist historiography), many older persons recall the significance of mutual aid and support as a moral foundation of village society (cf. Scott 1976). Reciprocity characterized relations within and outside one's kin networks, and many villagers described their relationship with their previous landlords in terms of reciprocity rather than exploitation.

Redistribution of the landlords' property benefited the poor and the landless. Even if collectivization soon removed the land from their direct control, the poorer sections of rural communities continued to benefit from their 'good class identity' throughout the era of Mao. They showed reciprocity toward the state and their beloved helmsman Chairman Mao by organizing their kin networks and communities in accordance with their class identity. Of course, economic shortages during the commune period limited the resources available for mutual aid. Nonetheless, the pre-socialist principle of reciprocity persisted in new forms.

The elimination of class identity and decollectivization in the early 1980s brought many more changes. Some villagers were able to become rich while others were confused by the 'reversal' of policy. While some villagers who became rich speak enthusiastically about the new policies, those who lost the political capital they had enjoyed through the commune feel nostalgia for the days of Chairman Mao (cf. Chan 1992).

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Eldercare in North-West China: The Case of Bingtuan

Heila Sha (Saheira Haliel)

Heila Sha (Saheira Haliel) was born and raised in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. She was educated at the Minzu University in Beijing, where she obtained her BA in 2006 and MA in 2009. After completing her PhD at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in 2015, she was awarded a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Sussex (UK).

This project was an ethnographic exploration of practices and ideologies of eldercare within a highly specific community in the north-western frontier province of Xinjiang. Bingtuan, known in English as the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, is a paramilitary organization with deep roots in frontier history. I studied the elderly population of one regimental farm with reference to China's successive socio-economic transformations from the era of Mao to current market reforms. My work shows how social, cultural, and economic changes have shaped experiences over time. Adapting insights from researchers such as Croll (2006) and Zhang (2017), who have emphasized the emergence of new forms of intergenerational contract in other Chinese contexts, I argue that the traditional culture of filial piety is not being eroded so much as reinterpreted and renegotiated. There has been a shift away from children's absolute obligation to elderly parents, patriarchal bias, and the unquestioned authority of the old over the young. In the domain of eldercare, these changes mean that self-reliance and peer ageing strategies are increasingly common among the elderly. Intergenerational reciprocity is now more balanced and exhibits less gender bias in expectations concerning the provision of care, though a greater concern for emotional attachment between the cared for and carer tends to privilege care provided by females. Above all, more consideration is given to the 'situation' of individual family members in determining their obligations.

Field research for this study was carried out between September 2012 and October 2013 in one of the regimental farms of northern Xinjiang. The Bingtuan has facilitated the immigration of millions of ethnic Han into Xinjiang since the 1950s. In recent years, state-led programmes of urbanization mean that most Bingtuan elderly have moved to central settlements. Unlike so many rural Chinese, the Bingtuan's members have access to modern pension systems, health insurance, and other benefits. Certain lifestyle changes have accompanied modernization and urbanization. My research tracks these changes, as the elderly create new models of living that break with traditional norms. I combined various methods in different stages of my fieldwork, including multi-sited participant observation (three months in two outlying villages, and ten months in the town of the regimental centre), semi-structured interviews, and a random-sample survey.

A retired son takes his mother for a walk in the urban headquarters of a regimental farm (2013).

According to a widespread and well-known tradition rooted in Confucian norms, children, particularly sons, are expected to provide both material and emotional support to their elderly parents. Other scholars (e.g. Yan 2009) have pointed to trends of "individualization" that would appear to disrupt patterns of eldercare. Evidence of "individualization" is present in Bingtuan, and not only among the youth. I found that the elderly too have developed lifestyles that foreground their independence from their children. With respect to care, elders emphasize their own obligations and the importance of self-reliance. As in many parts of the world, the elderly recognize physical deterioration as the main indicator of 'being old'. They do not fatalistically accept disease and deterioration but engage actively in various health promotion activities to prolong life and vitality. The marketization of the medical system, the lack of comprehensive healthcare institutions, and the potential unavailability of family care – all of which can be linked at least partly to market-oriented economic transformation – create uncertainty for the elderly about their ability to access care and motivate their engagement in self-care practices.

Despite its enhanced importance, individualization has not replaced the central role of family ties and intergenerational relations in eldercare. Care is socially constructed and embedded in particular socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts. In addition to the cultural traditions which shape care commitments, state policy

and ongoing socio-economic transformations also contribute to shaping care needs, expectations, and practices. Rather than expecting children to fulfil an absolute duty towards their elderly parents, care arrangements can now be seen as a product of "negotiated commitments" (Finch 1989; Alber and Drotbohm 2015).

Interdependence is the most salient feature of intergenerational care in contemporary China. Taking care of one's elderly parents is still recognized as a form of long-term reciprocity for care received during childhood, but contemporary forms of care for the elderly appear increasingly as a form of balanced reciprocity. Entitlement to a pension and health insurance prolongs the elderly's capacity for self-sufficiency, and enables them to continue to offer extensive support to their children. New patterns of intergenerational reciprocity are visible in financial transactions, complex living arrangements, and childcare. Indeed, property broadly construed – housing, pensions, and sometimes other resources – is a key element in the negotiation of eldercare. It can play a key role in maintaining family solidarity and creating positive care relationships, but it may also be a source of family conflict. The elderly have to strike a balance between their own need for security and a fair division of resources among their children. Those who do not own houses, whether they rent accommodation or live with children, find themselves in relatively vulnerable positions, particularly vis-à-vis in-laws. When elderly continue to mobilize their own resources and networks to assist their adult children, they engender a renewed sense of indebtedness in their children, strengthening the desire of the latter to reciprocate.

My findings nuance the common view that Chinese "intergenerational reciprocity has clearly moved from the logic of delayed and generalized exchange to a much shorter-term, and more calculated, pattern of balanced exchange" (Yan 2013: 279; cf. Guo 2001). Intergenerational reciprocity is not the result of simple rational calculations: rather, it is a complex negotiation of ethics, obligations, emotions, economic situations, and practical conditions. Values particular to the Chinese extended family remain strong, but the implementation of these values is increasingly undertaken through a process of negotiation. Family members struggle to balance normative commitments with their actual capacity to provide care as well as their self-interest.

The ethical dilemmas that arise in assessing that capacity are a challenge for Chinese families. Market-oriented reform has undoubtedly created a care gap. Reform has encouraged rural-urban migration and led to an insecure job market; fewer adult children have remained 'at home' to care for elderly parents and the loyalties of most are divided between retaining a job and providing care. At the same time, reform has contributed to rising costs due to the marketization of healthcare, education, and housing. Reform has increased the financial burden faced by families, leading them to feel that earning money is a prerequisite of care. How, then, should an adult child be filial – by pursuing success in the national job market, or by staying at home to provide physical care? This dilemma makes decisions concerning long-term care extremely challenging.

Elders doing gymnastics (jianshencao) in the town square (2013).

A commitment to family solidarity does not mean that all children are perceived as having the same capacities or obligations within the web of family care. As local people say, "five fingers are not the same length". Obligations are assessed according to an individual's work and other family commitments, emotional attachments, and resources of time and money. Traditional gender roles remain relevant and exhibit change: daughters are considered to be emotionally closer to their natal family than sons. While men are torn between being good sons and good husbands, there has been a significant rise in daughters' support for their elderly. In contemporary China, many men are "afraid" of their wives and "a good daughter is not necessarily a good daughter-in-law".

In fact, most care work in the urban Bingtuan, as elsewhere in China, is carried out by spouses. Aware of their children's divided loyalties, elderly Chinese are reluctant to seek help from them. Thus, their first choice of a caregiver as health declines is normally the spouse. Widowed elders may pursue remarriage or cohabitation in order to stave off loneliness, but this is a minor consideration compared to the desire for care. In comparison with their counterparts in Western societies, most old people in China prefer to counter loneliness with communal activities and a high level of peer-group interaction. Late-life partnerships secure care, but they are typically marked by disparities in age and economic status, difficult relations with a new spouse's

children, the contestation of property, and divergent expectations. Remarriage is often opposed by children who fear that the new spouse will redirect inheritances; those in late-life remarriages often consider them to be only 'half-marriages'.

To sum up, the provision of eldercare in Xinjiang's Bingtuan takes place in multi-layered webs of care. Care provision involves individual effort, intergenerational and intra-generational support, and significant contributions from the state. Who will provide care and how always has to be negotiated, primarily within families, with consideration for 'traditional' ethics, emotional and relational aspects, and material and practical realities. The outcome of such family negotiations always links intimate relations with multiple institutional dimensions.

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Kinship, Cosmology, and Support: A Holistic Approach to Childcare among the Akha of South-Western China

Ruijing Wang

Ruijing Wang completed her BA in 2007 and her MA in 2010, both in the School of Sociology at China University of Political Science and Law, Beijing. Her interests include support, kinship, children, ethnicity, and religion. After completing her PhD at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in 2015, she took up a position at Chongqing University in 2016.

This research project addressed social support with reference to childcare, in particular the healthcare given to children from gestation to preschool age (0–6 years). Among the Akha, a transnational ethnic group found in Yunnan and several neighbouring states of South East Asia with a total population of about 650,000, uncertainties and insecurities concerning children's survival and health must be addressed with regard to the traditional cosmology of the people as well as new secular institutions. My field research was conducted in 2012–13 in Menglian Dai, Lahu, and Wa Autonomous County, a mountainous, impoverished, and multi-ethnic frontier region. Located along Myanmar's north-east border, this region remains a war-free zone offering a stable peaceful social environment to its ethnic populations.

Inhabiting low hillsides rich in natural resources, the Akha villagers formerly practised a mixed agricultural subsistence. They combined slash-and-burn agriculture, gardening, raising livestock, hunting, fishing, gathering, handicrafts and trade to enable a lifestyle of relative self-sufficiency in food. Due to rapid socio-economic development and increasing financial support from state-run projects in recent decades, they have gradually switched to the cultivation of cash crops like tea, coffee, and sugar cane. Consequently, most households had access to cash and could afford modern products like motorbikes, refrigerators, mobile phones, and televisions. Some villages have moved lower into the valleys to grow and market crops more easily.

Regarding the medical environment, biomedicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine have been gradually introduced to this region since the foundation of the PRC, adding more diversity to local herbalism and healing rituals. While the local medical institutions stressed the leading role of biomedicine, the Akha I studied were loyal to their healing rituals, which are profoundly entangled with their cosmology, village organization, kinship system, natural surroundings, life-course, space division, and household economy. Although villagers have varied levels of traditional knowledge according to age and personal interests, all of them are obliged to take part in healing rituals.

The Akha village studied in this project, Menglian County (2009).

Healing rituals and the cosmological ideas behind them are tolerated by the state because they fall into the vague domain in which so-called primitive religion overlaps with feudal superstition and with ethnic customs and habits. Though the state has consistently denounced feudal superstition, attitudes and policies towards ethnic customs have changed repeatedly. During the Cultural Revolution, ethnic customs and habits were forcibly repressed. In 1982, the state officially admited previous mistakes and acknowledged that traditional rituals, ceremonies, and festivals of ethnic groups, despite being influenced by religion, had become integrated into ethnic customs and habits. For the sake of ethnic solidarity, the state decided to show respect for such customs and habits provided that they did not harm life or health. Today, ethnic customs and habits are tolerated so long as they do not violate state laws. The contemporary state prefers to emphasize economic development and political stablity rather than to direct cultural change, and ethnic culture is now recognized as a potential economic resource (Liang 2013).

Akha life is heavily influenced by the national political environment and economic development, but the core part of their tradition – the *Akha Li* – continues to define many aspects of life, including patterns of childcare and social support. The Akha cosmological world is perceived as a reservoir of life-threats as well as blessings to the human world (King 1999, Kammerer and Tannenbaum 1996). Human behaviours invoke either benevolent or malevolent reactions. For instance, wronged spirits cause pain and illness which can only be healed by ritual sacrifice. The supreme God and ancestors also punish improper behaviours with misfortune and illness.

Gods, spirits, and ancestors bestow favours, blessings, and support when pleased by sacrifices. Akha children are considered more vulnerable to the whims of the spirit world because their personhood is not yet fully developed. Until the age of thirteen, normal children are considered half-human and half-spirit (*Naevq*). In extreme cases, *Tsawrpaeq* children (twins or deformed infants) are considered to be spirits (*Naevq*) who have intruded into the human world. Their birth is seen as the result of cosmological disorder, and brings contamination and danger to the immediate family, the community, and even neighbouring villages. These beliefs shape numerous practices: infanticide of *Tsawrpaeq* to return their bodies to the territory of *Naevq* and restore the normal division of the human and spirit worlds; naming children quickly before the *Naevq* can; and never scolding children as 'Naevq children' lest the *Naevq* claim their lives. Infanticide was officially abolished by Akha elites and the local government quite recently. To some extent, willingness to forego infanticide can be linked to prenatal examinations in hospitals which enable the selective abortion of deformed infants.

The bundle of lucky charms that protects Akha children from hostile spirits (2013).

Two pairs of divinities protect children from dangers, such as falling from balconies, but sometimes cause illnesses which can only be cured through healing rituals. The influence of these gods has declined in recent decades, however, as policies related to family planning have addressed the quality of children's health as well as the number of children born to each family. In a sense, due to its influence in the field of family planning (cf. Mueggler 2001) the Chinese state has become a new divinity for Akha children.

Ritual life, encompassing that related to children, is linked to kinship and a political system of Big Men. The Akha have a patrilineal kinship system. Their lineages proliferate and fission by generations, developing into three descent categories at different levels: *AqGuq*, *PaqSsaq*, and *PaerSsaq*; of these, *PaqSsaq* is the exogamous unit. Through a system of asymmetrical alliance, the divided exogamous

units reconnect as wife-takers and wife-givers. In rituals, the importance of each group varies with respect to its closeness to the sponsoring Ego's *PaerSsaq*, but all are obliged to play a role. Interdependence among lineages is further strengthened through Big Men. These two systems weave the Akha community into a collective support network with obligations of mutual aid.

Kinship matters for the protection of children because the maternal uncle and both sets of grandparents are considered to possess special powers to bless and cure. Children come from the seed given by the maternal uncle and depend on him for their wellbeing. When their health is jeopardized, the maternal uncle can help by giving them new names, special garments, iron bracelets, or silver objects. The blessing power of this uncle is always a steady source of support to children. Grandparents, like the elderly in general, possess the power to bless children. Children in turn have the power to bless the elderly, especially their grandparents. It is through the birth of grandchildren that grandparents achieve the social and ritual status of full elderhood. Through initiating and officiating rites and rituals to bless each other, these two generations form a mutually supportive relationship. In short, when a child becomes ill, an entire village may be mobilized for its care and healing through the combination of kinship relations and the prescribed rituals.

Indeed, so extensive is the *Akha Li*, that efforts to heal (and prevent illness) depend upon the contributions of ancestors and spirits as well. Behind living healers stand their respective ancestors, who are always addressed and summoned on ritual occasions. These dead and invisible beings are regarded as the main sources of healing power, without which the sickness cannot be cured. As the process of a ritual healing unfolds, a network interwoven by social organization, the kinship system, and religious ideas comes to the fore. Each ritual reinforces the mutual interdependency of the dead and living, humans and spirits, near and distant kin – to create what can only be described as a socio-cosmic support network.

Cosmological responses to insecurity are well known to scholars of religion and to medical anthropologists, but so far they have been surprisingly ignored in social support studies. I have sought to bridge the two fields of religious studies and support studies so as to broaden the definitions of both insecurity and support (von Benda-Beckmann and von Benda-Beckmann 2007, Schlecker and Fleischer 2013). By stressing ritual care, I aim to contribute to the debate over 'what is care?'. Through exploring a field in which the Chinese state opts for a less intrusive presence, this research examines the relationship between state and society from an angle that remains unfamiliar.

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VIETNAM

Care and Migration in Northern Vietnam: Migrant Family Strategies, Gender Relations, and Intergenerational Exchanges

Minh Nguyen

Minh Nguyen was educated at the Vietnam National University of Hanoi, the University of Queensland, and University of East Anglia. She was Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology between 2011 and 2016. Her research interests include migration, care and welfare, and waste economies.

Three decades have passed since economic reforms were formally adopted to end Vietnam's four decades of state socialism. Under what is now commonly referred to as market socialism, there has been extensive privatization and liberalization of the economy and social services. Urbanization and labour-intensive industrialization have drawn massive flows of migrant labour towards urban and industrial centres. In the meantime, agrarian restructuring, rising living costs, and changing social aspirations make it necessary for peasants to seek livelihoods and income opportunities beyond the boundaries of their village. Millions of rural people have joined the migrant labour force as factory workers, while millions of others have pursued self-employment in informal urban economies. The combination of declining welfare provision and the ever increasing drain on household labour by migration prompts the question of how rural households address the issue of care. Focusing on the Red River Delta region, this project studied how such households organize, strategize, and negotiate immediate and long-term care duties and the impact of care arrangements on social relationships within and beyond the household. Of particular importance are exchanges between genders and generations; and relations between the household, state, and other institutions.

Conceptually, the project draws on both feminist theorization of care and anthropological concepts of social support and social security (Tronto 1993, Borneman 2001, Read and Thelen 2007). Care is defined as a process that encompasses the organization of labour, resources, and the multiple social relations and institutions accessed and negotiated by migrant households to ensure wellbeing. The study asked: *How does the organization of care by migrant households in northern Vietnam recreate social relations within and beyond the household?* There were three levels of empirical investigation: 1) actual organization and negotiation of care between genders and generations; 2) local ideologies and morality of care, including local constructions of care needs; 3) interrelationships between institutions of care, including the household, kin, neighbourhood, market, and state.

The fieldwork for this project was carried out in Hanoi and in the Red River Delta's rural Spring District, from August 2011 to July 2012. In addition, I conducted two

months of follow-up research in 2015 during which I also visited migrant households from the district in Ho Chi Minh City. The study employed mixed methods with a qualitative emphasis. The qualitative methods included participant observation, in-depth interviews, the Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method, and focus groups. A household survey was conducted among 300 households in Spring District to gain understanding of the local patterns of mobility and migrant livelihoods. During fieldwork, I stayed with two host families in Spring District and was able to connect with their migrant family members, relatives, and neighbours in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. The opportunity to observe the interactions and behaviour of the same people in different social spaces of the city and the country allowed me to identify important translocal dynamics of social performativity and connectivity that are central to the mobility of local people.

Two women from Spring District in the Red River Delta pack waste paper they have purchased from an office in Hanoi (2012).

Through this research I identified complex patterns of mobility that are mutually constitutive with migrant livelihoods and the organization of household care and labour. Recycling and waste processing were central activities for these migrant households. Urban waste trading has a long tradition in Spring District, and over time it has transformed significantly the local economy and social life. Waste trading is not just the main generator of livelihood, but also an activity that local people identify as their 'craft trade' (*nghề*), something that contributes to the formation of local identities and gendered personhood. Within one or two decades, waste trading has grown to become a vast network: it spans major urban centres, involves tens of thousands of itinerant traders, and thousands of waste depot owners and waste transporters. In Spring District, waste trading has replaced rice cultivation as the

central social and economic preoccupation for local families. Instead of giving land as inheritance, families now strive to open an urban waste depot for their sons. Waste trading is seen to produce wealth more quickly than farming: people say that it allows them to "transplant in the morning and harvest in the afternoon" (*sáng cấy chiều gặt*). While waste trading is a stigmatized occupation, the wealth generated from it has enabled local people to embrace changing aspirations and the desirable lifestyles of the new economy. At the same time, it has brought about fraught social relations and moral anxieties, both of which feed into household organization of care. Waste, both in its material and symbolic significance, has come to shape all three levels of social relations investigated in the project.

At the level of the household, the organization of care is affected by the gendered division of labour within the waste trade. The mobility of men and women within a household changes over the lifecycle, and is linked to care needs as well as economic goals. For example, migrant itinerant waste traders are typically women whose husbands stay at home to look after children and family matters, while the women work. In contrast, because household waste depot operations require the joint labour of both spouses, the couples who migrate to the city to undertake such work tend to leave young children with grandparents in the countryside. Although caring roles are somewhat reversed when a woman works as an itinerant trader, they return to 'normal' when she returns; when couples live together at urban waste depots, it is the woman who assumes most care duties within the household. Of course, the care of children and ailing parents, as well as the care of ancestors and social relations, changes with the developmental cycle. Care needs are central to decisions concerning household participation in the waste trade.

Regarding local ideologies of care (Rydstrom 2003; Gammeltoft 2014), waste and the social status implications of migrant waste trading have brought about much moral uncertainty and anxiety. In Spring District, there abound discourses of children of waste traders turning bad (*hỏng*), and of ailing parents being abandoned by migrant waste traders who are uneducated and greedy. Waste traders protest that they labour in the lowliest of urban professions precisely to care for their children and family. This work is lucrative: many traders have bought urban properties and planned for the higher education of their children so that the latter can move away from waste work and its social stigma. Social mobility, however, is not always possible. The waste market fluctuates and the institutional conditions within which rural migrants labour are precarious. The informal nature of the waste economy attracts the attention of both state agents and swindlers, who seek to extract rent from traders. Many waste traders return to the village, with the desire to raise their children themselves in a good social environment. Yet such returnees do not rule out a return to the city. The productive conditions in the countryside are becoming much more embedded in the market and susceptible to its fluctuations, and thus no less precarious than urban waste trading.

At the institutional level, the study identifies a politics of care that emerges from relationships between the family, community, market, and state, encompassing a broad spectrum of activities and processes. As rural religious, market, and social institutions identify the care needs that emerge from precarious migrant livelihoods, their operations become increasingly conditional and commodified. The party-state, in the meantime, propagates an ethics of self-care and self-responsibility through a discourse on 'socialization' (*xã hội hóa*), diverting the responsibility to provide care and welfare away from the state. Such institutional practices tap into the desires, aspirations, fears, and anxieties generated by mobility and waste work. At the same time, the institutions of market, religion, and state retain their moral authority because individuals and households continue to rely on them for care and protection.

One of the many houses in Spring District built with money earned in the urban waste trade (2012).

As seen through the lens of care, social support in Vietnam is being reconfigured in the context of high population mobility and changing ideologies of development (Schwenkel and Leshkowich 2012). The dynamics of care and migration exhibit a number of parallels with those in market socialist China. Firstly, rural households are reorganizing labour and care relations to accommodate the increasing mobility of household members. Secondly, means and expectations of social support have shifted to match new aspirations and economic practices that are connected with increasingly complex forms of social differentiation. Thirdly, discourses and practices of development by the party-state to devolve responsibility for welfare and economic development to local people and communities have reshaped citizens into enterprising actors who must strive to make the most of the market economy for their own wellbeing. All these dynamics have profound implications for what

it means to be a man or a woman, to be children or parents, and to be an individual or a community member in market socialism. They contribute to a redefinition of the social contract between the people and the state, increasingly one in which the care bestowed by the state is cast in terms of enabling citizens to embrace private responsibilities.

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Mutuality: Social Support in the Background

Markus Schlecker

Markus Schlecker has conducted research in northern Vietnam since 1998 with a special focus on imaginations of the social in the Reform era. Schlecker obtained his PhD from the University of Cambridge in 2002 and was subsequently awarded a British Academy postdoctoral Research Fellowship, which he took up at Brunel University. He was a Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute from 2006 until 2011. In later research as an Associate he has explored how local notions of memory become inscribed in material artefacts.

Research undertaken by members of the Department "Resilience and Transformation in Eurasia" has shown that many issues with a direct bearing on social support are not particular to the Vietnamese setting: the urban-rural wealth divide and labour migration; a widespread sense of uncertainty and dislocation, along with searches for sources of identity (ethnic, religious, or other); a strong reliance on personal ties rather than institutions; and, not least, the common legacy of a one-party "supplier state" saturated in ideology that meddled unpredictably in citizens' everyday lives.

There are, however, significant features particular to Vietnam, where two wars of independence took a tremendous toll on local communities (Malarney 2002). Large war-martyr cemeteries attest to the sacrifices made by families, which the state continues to compensate with regular allowances for widows, orphans, and war invalids. Especially in rural communities, these payments constitute an important source of income for the recipients' families. This form of state support is on the wane, however, as this generation is now dying out. Official commemorations of heroic family sacrifices persist, but these have become mere gestures in the eyes of locals. The leadership's attention has shifted to markets, foreign investments, joint ventures – to the future of a modern Vietnam. In the process, villagers feel abandoned by the state as it transforms itself from a pervasive ideological presence to a more distant, Western-style welfare administration.

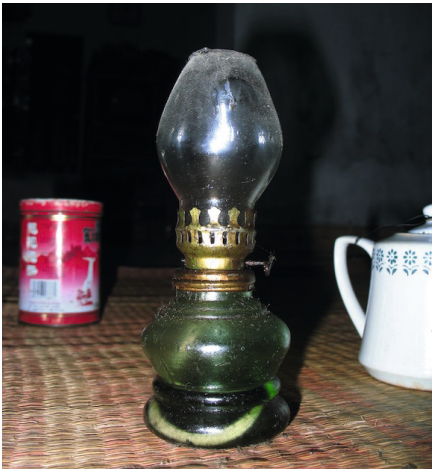
My research set out to investigate numerous support arrangements in rural northern Vietnam (Kerkvliet and Marr 2004). They included patrilineal groups with hardship funds, state benefit schemes, loans from the state bank, loans and practical assistance from relatives, various state and state-endorsed associations, religious groups, and rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs). Among these, the last provided a significant impetus for me to conceptualize support in relation to mutuality. Before reform, ROSCAs *conjoined* the pooling of money (or rice) and convivial events for the sake of togetherness. By the time of my fieldwork in 2006–07, against the backdrop of far-reaching changes brought about by the economic reforms, ROSCAs had either dissolved or differentiated into two fairly distinct types. Some – organized mostly by traders, often anonymously and for large amounts – focused exclusively

on the monetary side, while others were convivial get-togethers of friends and relatives who made relatively small contributions to the common fund. Neither type can be said to play a major role in contemporary support arrangements, but the distinction between them spurred my thinking about the relationship between support and mutuality.

Social support often takes the form of purposive action, that is deliberate efforts to secure or provide benefits and assistance. Certainly, this is the normative understanding in the anthropological literature. Support, however, always involves another process with an almost opposed directionality: *mutuality*. Support as mutuality is a temporally unbounded and little reflected on process of sharing in each other's presence. It is quite literally a bodily presence (see Nancy's [2001] attempt to fuse a phenomenology of the body with Heidegger's concept of *Mitsein*).

Mutuality does not refer simply to a conscious understanding that one can rely on others who are physically close. Rather, the point is that every sensory impression, thought, movement, and action is *a priori* structured (and thereby made possible) by way of a bodily directedness toward others' physical presence in a common space. To be able to think and feel means that one is already receiving support from others who are co-present. Actor-Network theorists might argue that even artefacts provide support, inasmuch as they have been inscribed with others' bodily presence.

Particular acts of support (even if they fail) emerge from mutuality through a selection of elements. Momentary situational boundaries and divisions between people are established; intentions, wishes, and claims are verbalized. The way acts of support make explicit particular elements from mutuality also render them subject to manipulation. Actors in a particular support situation may try to delineate a context narrowly around a certain set of actions and their intended outcome. Others may try to undermine and oppose this process, thereby de-emphasizing roles and situational boundaries.



For villagers, the kerosene lamp in this picture is a souvenir of the pre-Reform era when there was no electricity and kerosine was tightly rationed. The lamp today facilitates a nostalgic look back to a time of hardship when people supported one another. It is also suggestive of a local proverb about neighbourly help: '[When] the fire and light goes out, [neighbours] have each other' (2007).

This social enterprise (furniture weaving for export) was started by a young woman with the aim of helping local women escape poverty. Unlike most of her generation, she returned to her native village after studying in the city (2007).

The idea of mutuality was explored in the edited volume *Ethnographies of Social Support* (Schlecker and Fleischer 2013), which resulted from an international conference in Halle in 2008. In it, the contributors conceptualize support as encounters in which the specific nature of support, its degree of purposiveness, participants' motivations, entitlements, and obligations all have to be negotiated.

My own research was situated in Thanh Ha, a poverty-stricken rural commune in the north-eastern province of Hai Phong. The area is surrounded by three rivers. Villagers depend mostly on unprofitable wet-rice cultivation for their livelihood, but typically augment their income with work as hired labourers, sideline businesses, growing more profitable crops, and breeding poultry or shrimps. As of 2007, over 15 per cent of households had registered with the Poor Household state benefit scheme. During 12 months of fieldwork I participated in all major events in the commune, and collected biographical and socio-economic data on all families in the most populous hamlet, comprising 1,000 inhabitants in 350 households. I conducted two-hour interviews with members of over 150 households in this hamlet.

Gradually I came to consider mutuality in terms of a Vietnamese leitmotif. It is said that human existence constitutes – from the outset – a fundamental debt (*on*) and that one continues to incur additional debts through life itself. To live means to depend on others. Indeed, Vietnamese spend a good deal of their time pondering the degree to which an action will incur debt. Debt tends to have negative connotations, but it can also imply the positive quality of a strong and significant relationship. The findings can be broadly grouped under four headings.

Memory

Social support is often tied to claims about the past. Those who solicit assistance frequently refer to previous actions to legitimise their request. In response, those whose help is requested may also point to the past to argue that sufficient assistance has already been returned. Remembering the past, whether matters of small financial transactions or the lifetime achievements of the deceased, ensures the well-being of both sides and thereby affirms an existential connection between them. From this perspective, the revival of many commemorative rituals in contemporary Vietnam can be seen as having a very practical side: they pressure well-to-do villagers who have moved to cities to return regularly and make generous donations to honour their debts to their home communities.

Truth

Truth becomes a central concern when social support involves claims about past actions that they have incurred or settled a debt. Moreover, the elicitation of truth can itself be an act of support, as in the case of spirit mediums and psychics. Findings from Thanh-Ha as well as collaborative work with Kirsten Endres (Schlecker and Endres 2011) highlight how the evaluation of truth claims has a local vernacular. Claims are often evaluated not in absolute terms, but in view of their potential ramifications. They are judged as 'true' or 'false' according to their potential to cause a rift within the community and in line with the moral status of the persons involved in determining the truth. Persons of distinction, such as psychics, are indebted for their outstanding skills and thereby considered to have special responsibilities to serve the community. Debt, of course, cannot be separated from power.

Power

Power and support are linked, not least because power is required to ensure the effective delivery of support. In Vietnam, power and support are further linked in the display of empathy. Effective leadership involves a careful balancing of charismatic qualities – great wisdom and outstanding achievements – with a non-elitist display of modesty, fellowship, and empathy. A good leader acknowledges debts to

the community and continued belonging. I have termed such an orientation toward power "sapiocracy" (Schlecker 2012). Communal action can be inspired even by invoking the memory of well-known 'good leaders', as occurred in Thanh-Ha, when a spirit medium claimed possession by the still revered Chairman Ho Chi Minh, who publicly denounced a local villager for his immoral behaviour.

Value

While most studies pay attention to insecurity and risk only to the extent that they motivate social support arrangements, I found the uncertainty of support itself to be of intrinsic interest. Actors must always ponder whether or not support will bring the desired outcome and what unwanted ramifications may ensue. Uncertainty engenders value because an actor experiences strain between his desire to realize an intention and resistance to that realization on account of uncertainty. Acts of sacrifice (e.g. destroying or giving away hard-earned resources, self-imposed restraints) are efforts to compel a resolution of this value tension and to achieve temporary certainty (Schlecker 2011). Inhabitants of Hai-Phong province are known throughout the country for their propensity to be ostentatious in ritual matters. Once one focuses on support's uncertainty, lavishness can make sense, even in conditions of tremendous poverty.

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II TRADERS, MARKETS AND THE STATE IN VIETNAM

Map of Minerva Research Group fieldsites

Introduction

Kirsten W. Endres

In the current, globalized world, markets no longer seem to be tied to a certain place – they are "nowhere in particular and everywhere at once" (Bestor 2001: 78). The rise of industrial capitalism and modern market economies has effectively changed the meaning of the term 'market' from its original understanding as a particular market*place* into an exceedingly abstract idea. This, however, does not mean that physical marketplaces have ceased to exist. Nor does it mean that they are fossilized remnants of a pre-modern era, although governments in many parts of the Global South today, including Vietnam, tend to perceive them as such. The mushrooming of modern department stores and luxury malls that has been taking place in conjunction with the marginalization of small-scale traders is part of a worldwide trend that has been accelerating in the past decades. Concomitantly, the proliferation of an informal sector in market activities has emerged as a phenomenon that not only pertains to economically poor or developing countries grappling with the effects of macroeconomic forces and policies (such as globalization, deregulation, and structural adjustment), but also reflects the dramatic shifts that have been occurring in the world economy as a result of neoliberal policies.

Vietnam's overall socio-economic achievements are without doubt impressive. In the three decades since the launch of the Đổi mới reforms (literally 'renovation'), Vietnam has transformed itself from a poor and war-ravaged country to a middle-income country with a dynamic 'socialist-oriented' market economy that attracts significant inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI). Notwithstanding the adverse effects of the global financial crisis and domestic volatility, Vietnam's annual growth rate averaged 6.16 per cent between 2000 and 2016. The incidence of people living in poverty has dropped from nearly 60 per cent in the early 1990s to less than 5 per cent in 2015. While 70 per cent of Vietnam's population of 93.4 million still live in rural areas, rapid urbanization has accelerated villagers' migration to the cities in search of economic opportunities. Many migrants engage in small-scale trade for a living, but they are not the only ones for whom local marketplaces continue to play an enduring, vital role in daily lives and livelihoods.

My Minerva Research Group investigated local markets and other sites of small retail trade in different locations across contemporary Vietnam: the capital city Hanoi (Lisa Barthelmes), a peri-urban village in the Red River Delta (Esther Horat), the north-western uplands (Christine Bonnin), and two trading hubs on the Vietnam–China border (Kirsten Endres, Caroline Grillot). By looking at various types and places of small-scale trade, group members examined how Vietnamese traders and market vendors experience, reflect upon, and negotiate current state policies and regulations that affect their lives and trading activities. The projects show how trading experiences shape individuals' notions of self and personhood, not just as economic actors, but also in terms of gender, region, class, ethnicity, and age, and

how these forms of personhood in turn work to challenge or, alternatively, to naturalize aspects of a market economy. The Group's results highlight how Vietnam's shifting political economy is constructed through quotidian interactions among traders, suppliers, customers, family members, neighbours, and officials at various levels – in contested spaces, through expanding and contracting circuits of mobility, and across physical and conceptual borders that are fixed, yet porous.

Market (Re)development and Privatization

The modernization of marketplaces is high on the Vietnamese government's agenda of national economic development. Since the central government issued its first detailed decree on the development and management of marketplaces in January 2003, the relevant ministries (the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the Ministry of Finance) have issued numerous decrees and regulations with regard to distribution network planning; investment into the construction, repair, and upgrading of marketplaces; and general market management. In 2007, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce approved a first master plan oriented towards the year 2020. It targeted over 900 markets throughout the country for 'development', including both the upgrading of previously existing marketplaces and the construction of new ones. Regarding the funding required to achieve the plan's objectives, the ministry called for additional private investment into local market renovation and upgrading. In order to elaborate and implement these central policies, provincial and municipal people's committees were instructed to formulate their own market development projects (*quy hoạch phát triển chợ*) as an integral part of their local-level socio-economic development strategies.

The results of these projects paint a highly uneven picture. Whereas many newly built market structures in Vietnam's upland region have been "left fallow" because planning did not pay sufficient attention to local needs and conditions (Bonnin and Turner 2014a, b), market renewal in urban areas has sparked numerous protests and discontent among vendors. In Lào Cai City, stallholders in the central state-run market were forced to contribute a significant amount of money to the construction costs of a market building, to be set off against the rent for the next ten years. In this case, the local state shifted the responsibility for realizing its ambitious urban development plans to the people, at their own risk. In Hanoi, a number of long-standing public retail markets have been demolished and rebuilt as multi-storey trade centres by private sector contractors. As a result, many small-scale market vendors, after years of struggling for economic survival in temporary markets awaiting relocation, now suffer the consequences of higher monthly fees, inadequate spatial conditions, and the loss of customers (Endres 2014a). In addition, since the mid-1990s, other 'disorderly' forms of commercial activity, such as street vending and hawking, have been banned repeatedly in government efforts to bring order to city streets and discipline citizens into becoming modern urban subjects (Barthelmes forthcoming). In

the village of Ninh Hiệp, conversely, the construction of two new privately owned commercial centres offered many families a welcome opportunity to expand their businesses, which subsequently led to intensified competition and greater social inequality among villagers (Horat forthcoming monograph).

Moral Identities and *Tình Cảm* Relations

As inherently social constructs, markets and marketplace activities are inextricably bound up with issues of morality. The commercial principle of "buying cheap and selling dear" has been debated in moral terms since the days of Aristotle. Moral views about how things should be done, and for what purpose, inform notions of just prices, fair competition, and proper conduct of social relations in marketplaces around the world. In Vietnam, as in many other societies, commerce has been viewed as a greed-driven occupation based on fraud and deceit. Market traders are vilified as selfish profiteers who tamper with their weighing scales, lie about the origins and quality of their goods, and overcharge their customers in order to increase their gains. Disputes and conflicts naturally arise when social, moral, or religious value systems clash with the realities of life in the marketplace. The Research Group sought to understand how social and moral dilemmas emerge and play out in contemporary Vietnam, where economic actors need to reconcile their 'moral economies' with changing market and political economy forces.

While Vietnamese economic organization remains deeply entrenched in prevailing social norms and values emphasizing filial obligations and family cohesion, neoliberal 'market governmentality' has become a prime mechanism for producing and organizing self-reliant subjects. Small-scale traders deal with the resulting ambiguities and contradictions through the performance of moral identities that invoke their right to make a viable living (Endres 2014b, Horat forthcoming). In the streets of Hanoi, itinerant vendors exaggerate their rural origins in order to elicit moral sentiments of compassion for their plight as hard-working peasants (Barthelmes forthcoming). In Lao Cai City's central market, Confucian notions of fate, fortune, and luck intertwine with moral ideas expressed in economic choices and ethical conduct (Endres 2015a). In Vietnamese society, building relationships based on *tình cảm* (sentiment) are an essential part of being a moral person (Leshkowich 2014). This highly valued and constitutive element of social relationships is perceived by many Vietnamese market traders as lacking in Chinese business relations. At the Vietnam–China border, differences in trading practices therefore tend to contribute to the construction of the cross-border Other as morally aberrant or inferior (Endres 2015b, Grillot 2016c). Whereas Vietnamese traders tend to complain that their Chinese business partners are not putting as much emphasis on *tình cảm* as the Vietnamese, Chinese suppliers often perceive their Vietnamese customers as untrustworthy, especially with regard to their debt repayment practices.

Risk and Uncertainty

Two major currents can be identified in socio-cultural studies on risk and uncertainty. One focuses on the ways in which groups and individuals cope with vulnerability and potential loss. The other raises questions of planning and control in dealing with the uncertainties that have emerged from the disjuncture between past and present (Endres and Six-Hohenbalken 2014). The Research Group approached these issues from a micro-level perspective, thus providing insights into the ways in which Vietnamese traders anticipate and deal with risk and uncertainty in the contemporary 'market-socialist' era. Issues of supply and demand, fast changing trends and fashions, fickle regulations, and unpredictable governing practices are among the most common uncertainties in the small-scale trading sector. Following Zaloom (2004), Horat emphasises the productive dimensions of uncertainty in the lives of Ninh Hiệp traders. This dimension becomes most apparent in the creation and cultivation of personal networks and relations of trust with trading partners and informal credit suppliers. These forms of social support contribute not only to the success of Ninh Hiệp family businesses, but also to the social and economic vitality of the village community at large.

Regulatory uncertainty has evolved as an efficient means for the Vietnamese state to exercise power over its citizens (Gainsborough 2010). Barthelmes found that, for itinerant street vendors in Hanoi, the looming threat of police controls is the most stressful part of their daily routine. The lack of predictability as to when and where a mobile law-enforcement team will chase after them, and what kind of treatment and penalty they can expect if caught, accentuates their precarious economic situation. The tactics and strategies that mobile vendors employ to deal with the risks and uncertainties of itinerant trade in the streets of Hanoi include spatial and temporal avoidance, moral claims to livelihood, and the performance of 'ruralness'. Moreover, legally ambiguous contexts offer room for extralegal (and illegal) manoeuvring. One way of negotiating legal restrictions and ambiguities is through petty bribery. Small-scale traders commonly justify their resort to such "exchange practices" by declaring them to be an essential means of economic survival (Endres 2014b). Their arrangements with local state officials, however, also expand the "gray space" (Yiftachel 2009) of risk and uncertainty that lingers between the 'lightness' of free trade, economic opportunity, and self-advancement, and the 'darkness' of illegality, corruption, and arbitrary exercise of power.

Markets in anthropology

Markets and marketplaces have long captured the interest of economic anthropologists because of the insights they offer into the embeddedness of economic activity within wider societal, cultural, and political contexts. Not only are they sites of economic exchange, they are also thriving social spaces where networks are forged, identities are shaped, and power relations are negotiated. In many regions of the

world, economic organization remains deeply entrenched in social norms and values regarding kinship obligations and family responsibilities. Anthropologists therefore study how different modes of sociality and relatedness are created, negotiated, and instrumentalized in the context of economic and political changes. They look at how participation in economic life is shaped by gender ideologies concerned with ideals of femininity/masculinity and with men's and women's role in family livelihood strategies. Anthropologists also examine the culturally and politically specific ways in which markets are embedded in state regulation under changing configurations of political economy.

The findings of the Minerva Research Group reveal remarkable similarities between market dynamics in Vietnam and in other world regions, irrespective of political system. And yet, the 'market economy with socialist characteristics' that has emerged in Vietnam over the past 30 years since Đổi mới has brought forth unique features that defy a singular notion of 'the market' even within one particular country. Its diverse logics and modalities emerge out of complex interlinkages between global challenges and local dynamics of economic transformation that are subject to equally diverse forms of encouragement, regulation, and policing at national and local levels.

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Peddlers and Peasants – Itinerant Street Vendors in Hanoi

Lisa Barthelmes

Lisa Barthelmes obtained her MA degree in Anthropology from the University of Heidelberg in 2010. She was a PhD student at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology from 2011 until 2015 and defended her thesis in 2016 at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg.

Vietnam's capital Hanoi has been undergoing profound changes in the last two decades: private investments, gated communities, high-rises, and huge infrastructure projects are shaping the capital's future. Traditional markets are being replaced gradually by supermarkets and shopping malls. In this context, itinerant street vendors are considered residual, non-productive remnants of a backward Vietnam and an undesirable past. Itinerant street vendors in Hanoi are predominately women who come to the city from the surrounding provinces to earn money much needed to pay for tuition, healthcare, and other formerly state-subsidized services. The Đổi mới reforms in 1986 led to the privatization of the health and education systems, and the gradual withdrawal of state services led to high rural-urban migration – just as occurred in most other postcolonial and postsocialist countries when they embraced a market economy (cf. Hart 1973). Most of the first migrants coming to Hanoi took whatever jobs they could find, and in subsequent years introduced their family members and friends to the urban labour market. Nowadays most rural-urban migrants work as porters, domestic workers, drivers, waste pickers, or as itinerant street vendors. In the wake of political and economic reforms former 'peasants' have become urban 'peddlers'.

My PhD project focused on itinerant street vendors in the context of Hanoi's urbanization process. During 16 months of fieldwork between July 2012 and November 2013 I conducted in-depth fieldwork with 5 key interlocutors and 34 other vendors. I visited vendors' families in their hometowns and attended weddings and family dinners. I also interviewed their spouses, children, parents, and parents-in-law whenever possible. In the beginning, I casually 'hung out' at the market and built rapport with vendors. During this initial phase I only engaged in informal conversations. Once I had established relationships, I used semi-structured interviews, group interviews, biographical histories, time allocation studies, and daily routine protocols. I also did a survey with Hanoi residents to find out how itinerant street vendors were perceived in the urban environment. Additionally, I conducted semi-structured interviews with investors, government officials, and social scientists regarding their visions of urban planning and their perceptions of itinerant street vendors. Moreover, I drew upon data from media sources such as local newspapers, government resolutions, and other legal documents in order to scrutinise the state's perception of itinerant street vendors.

An itinerant vendor selling fruit from bamboo baskets pauses on a sidewalk in downtown Hanoi (2013).

Urban Governmentality

During fieldwork I observed that when a police car approaches, itinerant street vendors hastily pack their goods and move a few metres up the street or retreat into a back alley. They resume work as soon as the car disappears. Vendors who are not fast enough might be fined and the officer in charge might even confiscate their goods. These controls, although unpleasant, have become routine for everyone involved. Nevertheless, these random controls are powerful spectacles of state power; by harassing vendors, the authorities send a signal to residents indicating both their willingness and ability to crack down on any form of unwanted public behaviour. By shifting between tolerating and fining itinerant street vendors, local officials define the boundaries of what is legal and illegal on a case-to-case basis. Itinerant street vendors thus serve as a scapegoat for the state in its fight against uncivilized behaviours.

Extracting rents from below in order to advance within networks of power is a common practice among state officials in contemporary Vietnam. Itinerant street vendors are easy to integrate into these networks due to their ambiguous legal status. In Hanoi, vending laws are implemented at the lowest level of local government, the ward (*phường*). When implementing laws, ward officials consider the needs of local residents as well as their own personal interests. The resulting oscillation between tolerance and discipline leads to a political environment that is characterized

by uncertainty (Harms 2011, Herzfeld 2013). The lack of transparent information about the legal framework and the incoherence of police controls further perpetuate this uncertainty, which in turn serves as a powerful instrument of rule.

The uncertainty experienced by itinerant street vendors is of a particular kind. It is not a general, all compassing uncertainty; traders know when the police are nearby and they react in the routinized manner described above. Nor is it an existential uncertainty as vendor incomes are relatively stable. Rather, it is an uncertainty that evolves in the context of urban governing practices. Due to the contradictory implementation of regulations as well as a lack of information, local officials produce an uncertain political environment.

Itinerant street vendors deal with this uncertainty by employing various tactics and strategies including complicity, evasion, the issuing of moral claims, and performances of ruralness (Scott 1985). Itinerant street vendors also seek to establish informal networks with police officers. Confronted with uncertainty as the primary instrument of rule, vendors engage with and thus reproduce 'corrupt' practices as well as their own ambiguous status in the urban environment.

Performances of Ruralness

The legibility practices (Scott 1998) of the Vietnamese state work through direct control in the form of legislation, but also include more subtle and indirect mechanisms. Vietnam's household registration system makes it difficult for rural residents to move officially to urban areas. Additionally, negative discourses and pejorative narratives about the countryside and rural-urban migrants proliferate in contemporary Vietnam. In discourse, the city is portrayed as the place for civilization and modernity, while itinerant street vendors are depicted as embodying the uncivilized, unmodern part of Vietnam.

At the same time, the countryside is perceived as the site of pure and autochthonous Vietnamese culture and identity. This romanticization of the countryside as a site of harmony and wholesome pure cultural values is quite common in art and literature. Processes concerned with distinguishing the rural "Other" are thus closely related to defining a Vietnamese or Hanoian identity. I argue that more than one form of ruralness exists in the collective Vietnamese imagination. On the one hand, there is 'countryside-ruralness' – where authentic Vietnamese culture and beautiful landscapes are located. Countryside-ruralness consists of hard-working, brave peasants; it is a place of revolution and the courageous expulsion of invaders; and it is heavily associated with the past. This nostalgic version of ruralness is profoundly constructed and produced by the government as a central feature of Vietnamese identity. In history books, museums, and mass media the conflation of pure landscapes and historic victories provides a powerful unifying source for the whole nation. Countryside-ruralness is a source of pride for almost every Vietnamese person, irrespective of social status or place of residence.

On the other hand, there is 'city-ruralness' which emerged in the course of the 1986 reforms. Whereas ruralness associated with the countryside is considered overall positive, in the urban realm this ruralness turns into a projection surface for ideologies of 'civilization' and development. Migrants and itinerant street vendors may come from a place that is associated with 'countryside-ruralness', but on the streets of Hanoi their ruralness immediately becomes an index of backwardness. Through the dichotomous construction of the city as the site of modernization and the countryside as underdeveloped, city-ruralness is despised and considered out of place. Itinerant street vendors therefore shift between identities of 'city-ruralness' and 'countryside-ruralness', depending on their location and the people with whom they interact. Their original occupation as farmers is directly connected with a nostalgic countryside-ruralness, but their manual labour on the streets of Hanoi takes part in city-ruralness. Itinerant street vendors embody features that a middle-income country should overcome: non-motorized manual labour, bargaining, and a chaotic distribution of goods in public space. The making and unmaking of essential categories such as rural and urban is thus intertwined with reconfigured work relations.

This ambiguous role and the negative narratives attached to itinerant street vendors also influence how Hanoians perceive them. Because they are stigmatized as distributors of unsafe food; accused of bringing social evils to the city; and considered to lack the civilized behaviour of Hanoians, itinerant street vendors are increasingly condemned. During my time in Hanoi I experienced how vendors actively play on dominant stereotypes and essentialisms by ways of dress and speech acts. In response to the dominant narrative of the capital as the site of modernization and development my interlocutors painted a rather negative picture of Hanoi. When they label the city as dirty, noisy, and dangerous, and describe their hometowns in the countryside as clean, quiet, and safe, my interlocutors produce counter-narratives to the dominant discourse. Furthermore, through dress and public self-presentation they perform ruralness (Goffmann 1956) in a way that highlights their inferiority. In wearing the conical hat, carrying shoulder poles, and pushing bicycles, they conform to stereotypes of countryside-ruralness. In speech, they play on their city ruralness, by proclaiming themselves to be backward manual labourers working in the city only to provide for their families.

When visiting my interlocutors in their hometowns, I realized that the closer I looked the less defined became the distinction between the 'rural' and the 'urban'. Most families have large houses, access to communication technology, and own one or two motorbikes. Countryside-ruralness is no longer a reality; vendors' families and fellow villagers do not live a reified rural life, but work as wage-labour in nearby factories or in the city. In fact, the ruralness displayed by itinerant street vendors exists exclusively in the urban realm. Itinerant vendors' livelihoods in the countryside are far from backwards or poor, but in the city they are perceived as such – and vendors actively keep up this image. The streets of Hanoi then become spaces of contestation in which vendors' self-presentations play on urbanites' feelings of

countryside nostalgia and peasant solidarity. These displays allow street vendors to present themselves as under-privileged women on the margin.

While carving out a space for themselves through what I call bluffs of ruralness, itinerant street vendors also reproduce their marginality in the urban realm. Hence, the way they are perceived by urbanites and outsiders remains one-dimensional. These self-aware self-presentations create opportunities but also perpetuate pejorative stereotypes. Ultimately their ruralness constitutes both an obstacle and an asset.

A female vendor selling shoes from a pushcart in front of St. Joseph's Cathedral, Hanoi (2012).

Conclusion

Itinerant street vendors provide a fascinating window onto the complex processes of socio-economic transformation that shape contemporary Vietnam. My research has revealed that the intersection of neoliberal processes with socialist modes of governmentality forms new patterns of exclusion and inclusion. In addition to producing a new category of people (migrant workers in the city), governing practices in contemporary Hanoi are uneven and partly paradoxical. In my thesis I show that the lives of itinerant street vendors are characterized by a range of ambiguities. These ambiguities ultimately stem from the predicament of Vietnam's socialist market economy: trapped between a socialist ideology of equality and the desire to realize a 'modern' capital, the state's management of itinerant street vendors oscillates between tolerance and discipline while its ideological narrative shifts between nostalgia and disgust. By performing their ruralness on Hanoi's streets, itinerant street vendors carve out a space for themselves but also reproduce their

inferior position in the urban realm. The study illuminates itinerant street vendors' experiences and subjectivities in the context of Vietnam's contemporary political economy, characterized as it is by both late socialist and neoliberal features.

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Market Transformation and Trade Dynamics in the Peri-urban Village of Ninh Hiệp

Esther Horat

Esther Horat graduated from the University of Zurich in 2010 with an MA in Social Anthropology and obtained her PhD in 2016 from the same institution. She was a PhD Candidate at the Max Planck Institute from 2011–15. She is currently a Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Zurich.

The launch of the economic reforms (Đổi mới) in the second half of the 1980s is seen as a key event in recent Vietnamese history. Among the most noticeable changes were the creation of a private sector, the dissolution of cooperatives along with the decollectivization of land, and the opening of the economy to foreign investments. As the economy was restructured, many people lost jobs that had been provided previously by the state; others shifted voluntarily to the private sector. As a consequence, small-scale trade has mushroomed in post-reform Vietnam. The lifting of trade restrictions with China in 1994 was another important factor for the surge of trade, especially in northern Vietnamese villages, which had historical trade relations with China.

One of these villages is Ninh Hiệp, an ancient trading commune in the Red River Delta some 18 kilometres north-east of Hanoi. While villagers engaged in trade secretly before the reforms, Đổi mới has enabled these activities to be conducted openly. In addition to cloth, traders now sell ready-made clothing, some produced in local workshops, but most imported from China. Between 2001 and 2010, Ninh Hiệp's economy experienced strong growth; the market area expanded greatly and the number of households in established trade businesses increased. Stories abound of villagers who became traders in those years of market boom and made a fortune in just a few years.

My project explored the reorganization of small-scale trade in northern Vietnam, uncovering the various factors that have enabled Ninh Hiệp to transform into a regional trading hub in cloth and clothing, as well as the social consequences of this development. I was particularly interested in the social organization of trade, the crucial role of trust, and the notions of morality that shaped traders' behaviours. In using the term 'morality' rather than 'ethics', I follow Monica Heintz (2009: 4) who argues that 'ethics' refers to more codified and elaborated judgments whereas 'morality' evokes a general discourse of what is good and right. The concept of moral economy as elaborated in the work of James Scott (1976) is important to my project, especially regarding the shared norms of villagers and their sense of justice. The research, which lasted from October 2012 until September 2013, was conducted against the backdrop of what has now been decades of economic reform. Ninh Hiệp served as a site for understanding some of the major structural changes

in the region's formal and informal labour markets and their impact on the lives of traders. At the time of my research, it counted approximately 16,700 inhabitants, most of whom were engaged in the textile and clothing trade. The data I gathered is mainly based on observations of daily market life and conversations with traders of all ages and both sexes. In addition, I gained insight through a market survey as well as life story interviews with market vendors.

Entrance of the old village market (2013).

The fact that Ninh Hiệp is a village with long-standing trading experience is crucial for understanding its current position. While a few villages in the Red River Delta have managed to thrive in the aftermath of Đổi Mới by reviving their previous specializations or by adopting new trades, many have failed and instead provide cheap labour for nearby industries. Ninh Hiệp has succeeded because of the existence of particular trading skills and knowledge among its inhabitants, and because of the ways in which they have explored novel situations and learned from others. Furthermore, a determining factor for Ninh Hiệp's success was its continuous engagement with commerce during the high socialist period and the dense social networks that traders cultivated. These close social bonds with one another, and especially with local officials, were established as a way to cope with the many uncertainties of pre-reform trade. Drawing on Cooper and Pratten (2015), I thus argued that uncertainties can be seen as productive: they lead traders to adapt resourcefully to changing economic structures, and merchants tend to deepen their social relations when confronted with uncertainties. My work demonstrates that in the aftermath of Đổi mới, it is by having a diverse social network of family members, relatives,

friends, and acquaintances that traders participate successfully in the market. Social networks are critical especially because it is trust-based relations that structure the informal banking and credit systems fundamental to the functioning of the market. In addition to allowing for transactions in conditions of scarce capital, social networks ensure the circulation of valuable information and provide traders with access to both producers and markets. Other factors crucial to traders as they attempted to 'catch up' with the marketization process were the possession of land, skills, and luck. The most economically successful traders were not necessarily those with the most experience, but those who were well-connected and possessed strong entrepreneurial skills. Thus, the cultivation of social relations in Ninh Hiệp proved to be conducive to the cohesion of the community and to the development of the local economy.

Marketplaces in Vietnam are not only sites of rich social life, but also of contestation often imbued with a moral character. In the context of changing political and economic relations, marketplaces become sites of fierce contestation between various levels of government, private investors, and traders. Although petty trade was accepted as a means to develop household economies by the end of the 1980s, it still carries some of the historical stigma attached to traders and commerce in official discourse. In the attempt to modernize the country, the Vietnamese state issued decrees to upgrade existing marketplaces or build new ones. Ninh Hiệp's most recently constructed markets are but one example of the nationwide modernization process. Not only do they look like commercial centres rather than traditional marketplaces, but they are owned by private investors rather than the state. Implicit in this development of marketplaces is also the idea that traders are uneducated spendthrifts who require some 'civilizing' to become modern subjects. While the government thus legitimates the marketization process, research with traders draws attention to the ambiguities produced by the mix of socialist and neoliberal economic orders shaping the process. These ambiguities consist of the propagation of a modern egalitarian nation at the very same time that important deals are struck between public and private actors over new infrastructure projects, many of which result in the marginalization of traders.

In my analysis, I draw mainly on insights from Danielle Labbé's (2014) observation that actors take advantage of unclear state regulations, and from Alan Smart and Filippo Zerilli's (2014) concept of extralegality, which stresses the room for action in a legally ambiguous context. In the face of moral and legal ambiguity, traders employed a variety of strategies to turn situations to their own purpose. For instance, when authorities inspected traders randomly or kept them in the dark about market renovation projects, traders used the vagueness of the rules to thwart state authority. Although ambiguity and uncertainty can have destructive effects in other contexts, my findings suggest that such situations also inspire the creativity of actors to develop ways to benefit from unstable and ambiguous arrangements.

In the project, I also looked closely at the operation and complexities of family businesses, particularly at the dynamics involved in shaping relations and ex-

pectations across divides of gender and generation. While petty trade is seen as a female occupation in Vietnam, a remarkable number of young men have become marketplace vendors in recent years in Ninh Hiệp. In contrast to older generations of men who worked for the local state farm, or supported their wife's business in the background, many young men are attracted by the advantages of selling at the market. This trend may indicate changing notions of masculinity and a new set of priorities – rather than a stable and prestigious job in the public sector, earning money to afford a certain lifestyle now seems important. Unlike in the high socialist time, when wealth was suspicious, being rich is now considered a mark of success and a precondition for a good life. Gone are the times when men were not supposed to handle money in the domestic sphere; household budgets have risen significantly and their management is no longer considered a trivial affair. Quite the opposite: as making money becomes an important benchmark of masculinity, running a market stall seems like a logical step for men, and the cultural obstacles that kept men out of trade have melted away fairly quickly in Ninh Hiệp. Now, the increased involvement of men is connected to the expansion and diversification of businesses. Nevertheless, women and men describe their relation to trade differently: women continue to describe trade as a side occupation only undertaken to bring in sufficient income to feed the family, while men emphasize the financial aspect of trading.

The street leading to the old market (2013).

With regard to the rapid marketization process, older generations sometimes bemoan the devaluation of social relations due to commercialization and less free time. Yet, they also appreciate the freedom to do business and enjoy the enhanced living standards made possible through the growth of the market. While for most people in Ninh Hiệp the market is a lucky chance to make a living, many also praise it for being a social space. Tending a stall at the market allows vendors to spend many hours a day with relatives and friends. Overall, rather than poisoning social relations, my data suggests that shared economic activities actually sustain intimate relations and sentiments.

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New Markets in Upland Vietnam: State Agendas and Ethnic Minority Traders in Lào Cai Province

Christine Bonnin

Christine Bonnin completed her PhD in Geography at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She was a Research Fellow at Max Planck Institute from 2011–12, before being appointed Assistant Professor in the School of Geography at University College Dublin in Ireland. She currently teaches development and human geography and has conducted research on marketplaces and trader livelihoods in the context of Vietnam, the Philippines, and Ireland.

Vietnam's northern border uplands represent a multi-ethnic space that is home to a diverse population of officially-recognized ethnic minority groups. As of the mid-1990s, following Vietnam's broad shift to a liberalized economy (Đổi mới), both international and domestic 'cultural tourism' (*du lịch văn hóa*) to upland ethnic minority areas has flourished. As partly an outcome of this, the Vietnamese state has started to reconceptualize minority cultural distinctiveness as an economic resource for the northern uplands that are perceived as otherwise being stuck in a rut of poverty. The uplands lag far behind the economic growth witnessed by the lowlands over the last two decades (Koh 2004, Messier and Michaud 2012). To a significant degree, then, 'culture' provides a comparative advantage for this region's economic future, and the commoditisation of ethnic minority specialty products, material objects, and sites for cultural tourism is a key element in securing this future.

For this project, I undertook three months of fieldwork in Vietnam, building on my earlier work on upland marketplace transformations and the livelihoods of ethnic minority traders. My research explored how cultural distinctiveness in upland northern Vietnam is entering the marketplace, and in particular, the implications of this for ethnic minorities engaged in trade. Conceptually, the study is informed by recent literature on the commodification of culture and "ethno-preneurship" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009), debates on spaces of resistance in the uplands (Scott 2009), and critical approaches to commodity chains (Leslie and Reimer 1999, Cook et al. 2004).

I focused on the 'cultural marketplaces' (*chợ văn hoá*) in the uplands, as well as on broader circuits of the production, trade, and consumption of speciality products associated with Hmong and Yao ethnic minority groups. While the commoditisation of upland specialty goods for wider commercial markets is opening new market opportunities for a range of local, private, and state stakeholders, I examined how it was also leading to tensions amongst different groups of social actors, particularly in terms of struggles over authenticity and access to markets.

My fieldwork was based in the upland province of Lào Cai, which shares a 203 kilometre-long national border with China's Yunnan Province. Here, the landscape and agro-ecology limit large-scale agriculture and household farm production; only

one yearly harvest of staple crops (rice and maize) is possible, unlike in the lowlands where two or even three harvests is normal. The province is among Vietnam's six poorest. Lào Cai reflects a social environment of complexity. Sixty-five per cent of its population are members of 34 ethnic minorities, while the Kinh ethnic majority accounts for the remaining 35 per cent of the provincial total. Hmong and Yao minorities are among the larger ethnic groups in Lào Cai.

Hmong and Yao were traditionally horticulturalists who practised shifting agriculture, but today most households in the northern uplands are centred on sedentary, semi-subsistence agriculture; rice and maize are the predominant crops. Agricultural production is complemented by petty trade, closely tied to the local periodic marketplace. Hmong and Yao residents in Vietnam's northern uplands have had a long association with upland markets and trade for social and economic purposes, and also have maintained vital economic ties and social affinities with kin across the border in China. The uplands have been the source of precious commodities (e.g. forest products) since ancient times, and the Hmong and Yao have benefited – although often not on terms that could be considered fair – from their access to these domains. Some of the older, highly lucrative niche trades (such as those in opium and coffin wood [*pơ mu*, bot. *Fokienia hodginsii*] have been banned officially by the state since the 1990s, cutting off these groups' access to important sources of cash. A number of new trade opportunities, however, have emerged since the 1990s in the context of Đổi mới's open cross-border trade policies and the normalization of economic relations following the Sino-Vietnamese War. Small-scale trade has progressively become a more significant activity for Hmong living in areas near urban centres, marketplaces, tourist towns, and national border areas. Key goods being traded include forest products and herbal medicines, livestock, artisanal liquors, handicrafts and textiles, and ethnic minority-oriented cultural items including factory-manufactured textiles, ornaments, musical instruments, silver jewellery, minority films, and music videos.

Ethnic Kinh form the majority population of Vietnam, but their populations in the northern uplands remained marginal until state-sponsored migration programmes in the 1960s. However, especially following economic reforms, and with independent migration now more possible, ethnic Kinh have transformed and dominated upland trade. Their strong social networks with the lowlands, greater power of influence with state agents, and relatively higher levels of financial capital have enabled Kinh traders to become the main economic players in upland market arenas. Since Đổi mới, Kinh in the highlands have developed more extensive regional and upland-lowland trade linkages, created new market opportunities, and also entered into trade domains that were performed almost exclusively by upland minorities in former times. This social control of accumulation by Kinh residents within the broader setting of upland development and market integration is very significant, and the dynamics of inter-ethnic trade relations in the context of minority cultural commodification were an aspect to which I devoted close attention.

One of the upland specialty commodities that I focussed on was artisanal liquor distilled by Hmong and Yao from rice and maize in home-based production processes that have remained largely the same as they were reported in French military archives from the 1800s. For Hmong and Yao – as well as for many other ethnic groups in Vietnam, including the Kinh – these traditional alcoholic spirits occupy an important place in numerous ritual and social contexts. Since Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2007, the state has encouraged branding as a way of marketing local specialties to support tourism and exports. This is often done at the village level and centres on the idea of village-based specialization.

Although village specialization is fairly common in lowland Vietnam, for Hmong and Yao localities in the northern uplands it is a new concept. In any given village, specialization in alcohol production has been undertaken customarily by particular families, who exchange their product with kin and neighbours or trade or sell it in the market. Local knowledge of the craft is handed down and valued as a household asset; the ability to specialize also reflects on a household's wealth, as alcohol producers must have enough land to produce a surplus of grain for distillation. The current branding and investment in products associated with particular villages are recent efforts by the state and other external actors to market upland regions in ways that are quite distinct from previous local initiatives.

Yao research assistant in upland Lào Cai showing distillation equipment (2012).

Upland alcohol specialty villages in Lào Cai first materialized in the 2000s with provincial- and district-level backing by the state in conjunction with the expansion of tourism in the province. Such specialty villages were popularised subsequently through the media. The liquor trade has created new livelihood opportunities for diverse groups of actors, including Hmong producers and traders and Kinh traders and wholesalers. The growing market for these liquors consists mainly of middle-class Kinh consumers, and reflects a clear shift in 'taste', as these spirits were previously considered far inferior to lowland rice alcohols. Trade networks now connect remote producer locales to upland tourist towns, to lowland markets throughout Vietnam, and to specialty websites. Upland liquors are displayed as part of Vietnam's national cultural heritage at trade fairs, and their appearance in international forums signals entry into global markets. The House of Sơn Tinh – a company that derives many of its product recipes from traditional ethnic minority spirits – won a gold medal at the 2012 World Spirits Awards in Austria and featured in the Berlin International Spirits Competition in 2016.

Yao distillers completing a transaction with a Kinh alcohol wholesaler, Lào Cai (2012).

Although rice and maize alcohols are produced by ethnic minorities throughout the uplands, the provincial and district governments have nominated only a handful of individual villages as specialty producer localities. Nomination is made through a state marketing strategy of certification that brands products with specific geographical indicators, linking commodities to source localities and associating them with narratives about purity, authenticity, and inherited traditional knowledge. The approach aims to harness village-level production and to shape existing practices into profitable ventures. In the process, new opportunities have emerged for well-placed upland producers who are keen to expand their activities. Such livelihood opportunities have become essential given the mounting costs of modern agricultural production based on hybrid seeds; Hmong and Yao households must find ways to earn cash in order to sustain their agricultural production.

The Vietnamese state's decision to market a select number of upland localities for their speciality alcohols to Kinh consumers has led to new interest groups competing for their share in the emerging business sector. In their attempts to control the market and protect their interests, various social actors exploit a range of old and new claims to knowledge, authenticity, and tradition. They construct novel trade and marketing strategies to gain or sustain a foothold in the sector. At the same time, the entry onto the scene of powerful new actors like wholesalers and investors – almost all of whom are ethnic Kinh – has, in some cases, constrained the participation of other groups of ethnic minority producers and small-scale traders in alcohol trade networks. This has driven marginalized groups, such as distillers not living in fa-

mous alcohol producing villages, to develop a host of astute tactics that enable them to resist being excluded. Such tactics include remaining in the informal economy, counterfeiting, and using the media and reputation of traditional liquor aficionados to help cast doubt on the quality of the products made by speciality villages.

Newly certified brands create opportunities for some Hmong and Yao producers. They also give rise to strategies for naming products and negotiating among different markets and wholesalers. However, not everyone can benefit from the new opportunities. Alcohol producers who live in uncertified villages, for example, would find it very complicated and costly to relocate to one of the certified villages; the socialist administration requires formal residence registration, which is almost impossible to change, and one would weaken or lose long-established neighbourhood and kinship networks. Such a big gamble hardly appeals to most Hmong and Yao who still view distillation as a complementary activity to agriculture.

The benefits too are relatively small: Hmong and Yao producers capture the smallest economic benefit among all the actors in the new commodity chains. It would therefore appear reasonable to conclude that minority distillers lose out in the new trade. However, from the perspective of those villages who are involved, the alcohol trade is an important cash-earning activity that meshes well with local custom.

I observed that consumer demand by Hmong and Yao for their own local spirits continues to flourish, and many individuals greatly prefer the taste of rice and maize liquors distilled from their own localities. Beyond the new trade, local alcohol production is sufficient for meeting the desires of community consumption. Thus while the recent efforts of the Vietnam state and external stakeholders have resulted in reshaping and circumscribing the upland alcohol trade, community-oriented systems based on local preferences, demands, and exchange practices continue to flourish. This is so despite alterations caused by land shortages and new agricultural technologies.

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Differences in Perceptions of Business Ethics between Chinese and Vietnamese Trading Partners

Caroline Grillot

Caroline Grillot graduated in Sinology and Social Anthropology in France (INALCO, Paris Ouest Nanterre-La Défense University) before staying in China for a decade. She obtained her PhD in 2013 from both Macquarie University (Australia) and the Free University of Amsterdam. From 2013–16 she was a Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute. She is now a Research Associate at the School of Social Sciences of the University of Manchester.

Vietnam and China reopened their border in 1991 with the normalization of their diplomatic relations which had been suspended following the exodus of a large part of the Chinese community of Vietnam, and the short war that followed in 1978–79. Since then, the two countries have endeavoured to overcome historical conflicts and remaining resentments (Chan 2013). One sign of this new era is the establishment of free trade zones in the borderlands. Despite evidence of successful economic development in the region, various issues still slow down the initial impulse of commercial exchanges that marked the 1990s. This research project explored how this vast programme of establishing free trade is implemented by local border-traders and their various partners – especially in view of the unevenness of state policies regarding market regulations and restrictions of transaction flows.

Fieldwork totalling four months was conducted in the Sino-Vietnamese borderlands during different periods of the years 2013 and 2014. My established network of acquaintances in Dongxing and Móng Cái allowed me to talk to a large number of entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, businessmen, translators, transporters, smugglers, state officers, and local residents of both cities, and to observe everyday practices of commercial activities that were taking place inside the trade-related vicinities of markets, warehouses, ports, truck stations, border gates, riverside quays, and smuggling passes.

Although it would have been ideal to pursue a comparative perspective on cross-border trade, this research focused mainly (although not exclusively) on the perspectives of Chinese traders and their direct associates among the Vietnamese (e.g. interpreters, money changers, transporters). That is to say this was primarily a study of the Chinese chain-operating in a Vietnamese environment. Taking this perspective allowed me to concentrate on Chinese perceptions of their Vietnamese counterparts and to compare my results with Kirsten Endres's observations amongst Vietnamese traders selling Chinese goods in Lào Cai City, another Vietnamese border town dedicated to cross-border trade (Endres 2015b).

In Móng Cái and Dongxing, the informal economy is an integral part of the economy in which each actor plays a particular role to make the whole system func-

tion. Cross-border trade relies on various informal commercial exchanges that resort to mobile networks and extensive bribery. Arbitrage represents a large part of this multi-layered economy, involving an extensive range of actors using complex tactics to adjust to or to circumvent the regulations of the Vietnamese and Chinese states; the (in)formal rules established by local powerholders are equally important points of reference for the actors involved. The current system has emerged in response to the call for a liberalized economy. The idea of a liberal economy is praised by local and national governments, and investors and entrepreneurs have cooperated willingly with various state agencies and local actors to pursue economic development in a globalized environment. Although such movements and activities are clearly built against the background of an old historical and cultural setting that both oils and impedes trade dynamics, their dynamic is not pre-determined but depends on other factors.

Vietnamese porters getting ready to transport Chinese goods to Vietnam, Móng Cài (2014).

Against this background, three aspects of cross-border trade generate frictions among traders and are sources of resentment on both sides of the border: the financial transactions between Chinese sellers and their Vietnamese customers; the transportation of goods across the border; and relationships between small-scale traders and state officials or administrators in the marketplace. These aspects relate to three themes that lie at the core of interactions between economic actors, and that consequently remain hindrances to the efficiency of their commercial transactions: (dis)trust, commitment, and instability. I have analysed these different issues against the background of the ongoing diplomatic disagreement, in terms of the hierarchy of economic power, and through the lens of social representation.

Financial Transactions in Small-scale Trade

Chinese traders often complain about the modalities of payment of their Vietnamese customers. The Chinese perceive Vietnamese forms of payment as irregularities in business ethics, but the Vietnamese see their procedures as a strategic method of establishing sustainable business relations. The banking system used in small-scale trade operates alongside and sometimes together with the conventional banking industry to sustain international import-export exchanges. But operating a business using regular bank accounts implies that one must comply with administrative procedures, submit to official currency exchange rates and fees, and record money transfers for the scrutiny of tax institutions. Therefore, similar to other sectors belonging to the informal economy, many small-scale traders rely on the more flexible and faster underground banking system available at every corner of Móng Cái City. To Chinese traders, operating financial transactions without the safety net provided by the formal banking institution requires them to establish and maintain relations of trust with money-changers; more generally, it requires them to adopt the business rules and ethics of their Vietnamese customers – a requirement that they constantly renegotiate.

The discourse on trade ethics elaborated on both sides of the border is raised regularly as a safeguard against breaches of trust. Traders suspect that they are frequently victims of such breaches. To the Chinese, the dynamism of their own economic activities is a sign of the prosperity of China's economic development and ambition; they consider their own business practices to be a successful and efficient model that should be followed by others. But when it comes to working with Vietnamese partners, Chinese traders operating in Móng Cái face a challenging mode of business operation involving practices they find problematic such as systematic on-credit purchase orders, delayed debt payments, return of unsold goods, lack of loyalty, cheating, threats, and so forth. Irregularities in the process of financial transactions become a sensitive site for grievances and a way to question Vietnamese business skills.

My materials suggest that, rather than being the 'rule breakers' depicted by Chinese traders, the Vietnamese simply act according to a different set of rules. Unable to compete with the same capital resources as their neighbours, and needing to maintain control over economic exchanges in their own country – the ground for mutual benefits and sustainable cooperation – the Vietnamese build their business strategy on a strong ability to negotiate their resources (material and financial) under their own conditions. The feeling of mistrust towards commercial partners emerges from this inadequate combination of two sets of business rules, which is exacerbated further by uneven commercial experiences, communication misunderstandings, rumours, and competitive pressure. Therefore, financial contentions on the ground actually illustrate the economic hierarchy at stake in this highly competitive and insecure marketplace (Bruns and Miggelbrink 2012).

Cross-border Shipping Logistics

Another source of friction in border-trade involves the dynamics of shipping goods – both within national boundaries and across the border – from Chinese factories to Vietnamese retailers and customers. Global economic crisis, fast-changing markets, and disparate political attitudes regularly reshaped the inherent risks of undertaking Sino-Vietnamese cross-border trade through the informal paths and across the fragile links made between local economic actors. In this field more than in the financial sphere, recurrent diplomatic crises impact law-enforcement at the ground level as state agents endeavour – although differentially – to implement strict regulations without disturbing the mechanism that maintains border-trade dynamism.

Many of the traders informing this research are involved in informal cross-border trade. Informality is not chosen *per se* by many of these traders who in fact invest immense efforts and capital into their business. Rather, import-export ventures conducted through the official border are required to comply with restrictions on the nature and quantity of goods transited, more control at various stage of shipment, regular taxes and extra formalities that slow down the whole process of commercial transaction. For most Chinese small-scale traders, the informal path offers a competitive and efficient alternative, despite being a risky choice that is subject to unexpected upheavals (van Schendel and Abraham 2005).

Vietnamese porters preparing red wood furniture cargo for China at the trading port of Móng Cài (2014).

Practices of the small-scale traders who carry out arbitrage activities in the markets of Móng Cái – whether in the re-selling of low quality clothes or in the negotiation of seafood – illustrate the delicate balance. The first group must cope with invisible and 'slippery' partners who take responsibility to transport commodities from one point to another. Lacking direct control over shipping, the wholesalers must com-

promise to maintain the trust that keeps the flow going. The second group is directly affected by issues of timing and sudden changes in market prices; those trading in fresh products, especially, cannot bear any delay in the trading chains. Both sides avoid administrative constraints, but they also work without the safety net that could protect them from losing their investment due to upheavals in the shipping process, intermediaries' priorities, market rates, and various stages of border control.

Relationships with State Officials in a Marketplace

Another sensitive issue relates to the infrastructure of the market itself and the nature of mutual relations established between Chinese traders and the Vietnamese state. The state is embodied in the person of border officers, tax collectors, and market management staff; it is also present in the guise of various national policies meant to safeguard foreign trade, and procedures for monitoring traders' daily activities in the market. State representatives carry the burden of finding a balance between official state regulations and the economic interests of traders, the state, and themselves.

Commercial practices reveal an obvious antagonism between border control, and regional economic well-being. Border control is needed to guarantee state authority over commercial movements, but local economic development requires flexibility and tolerance of illicit practices. The uneasiness and insecurity that already frame business are exacerbated by uneven and (so-perceived) unfair attitudes among the local authorities. Chinese traders highlight the blurry aspect of Móng Cái's market management for instance. Most of the commodities offered for sale in the local marketplace have been smuggled across the border before being openly offered to customers. In exchange for their tolerance of smuggling, the state agents who operate the market space itself (tax collectors, border guards, managers, shipping supervisors) exert financial pressure on traders, who in turn feel unprotected because they have no control over the trading environment.

The degree of familiarity of Chinese traders with the institutions, business rules, local commercial logistics, and key-officers in Vietnam emerges as a key factor allowing them to guarantee their business collaboration with local partners (Tong 2014). Yet, in this highly competitive environment organized by a mixed population of workers, adventurous entrepreneurs, and experienced traders, the fragile balance of powers must be renegotiated regularly. Positioning themselves as victims of a corrupted and outdated system, partial state agents and challenging local partners, Chinese small-scale traders deliver a discourse that, combined with evidence of project failures, questions the efficiency of a system operating under uneven conditions.

Conclusion

Cross-border trade is characterized by the interaction of various forces. While one might expect that China's trade influence on the Vietnamese economy would allow Chinese traders to enjoy the space and means to implement commercial projects according to their rules, the reality on the ground presents a different picture. Chinese traders become creditors of Vietnamese customers who, in turn, become debtors to the Chinese. But capital circulation, investment, and management practices among the Vietnamese reverse the balance of power between the suppliers of goods and their buyers. Rather than acquiring power over their customers, Chinese traders find themselves trapped by invisible clients and slippery intermediaries whose strategy is to manoeuver between their own investment projects and the securing of their business sources and networks. Government agents – local market management board officers, border security officers, and trade regulation officers from both sides – all play an ambiguous role in trade. Because their role is to protect national interests, state officials alternately threaten and encourage traders according to fluctuations in geopolitical relations.

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Small Trade, State Regulation, and Social Exchanges at the Vietnam–China Border

Kirsten W. Endres

Kirsten W. Endres obtained her PhD in Anthropology from the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. She has conducted research in northern Vietnam since 1996, focusing on processes of socio-cultural transformation that arise from the dynamic interplay between state, society, and market. In 2009, she joined the Max Planck Institute as a Senior Research Fellow in the Focus Group "Kinship and Social Support in China and Vietnam". From 2011–16, she headed the Minerva Research Group "Traders, Markets, and the State in Vietnam".

"If South East Asia would open its borders like Europe, we would have no way of earning our food." For the middleman Mạnh and many of the traders at Lào Cai's central market, the border between Vietnam and China is a vital economic resource on which they draw to sustain their livelihoods. More often than not, however, their economic transactions fall into the realm of the subversive economy, for example by way of evading (or negotiating) customs duties or by smuggling goods that the state prohibits from being imported (Endres 2014b). Although the border regime between the two countries imposes certain constraints on cross-border trade, small-scale traders like Mạnh consider this trade a necessary precondition for securing a living in the region. For them, as well as for their Chinese counterparts, the border between their two countries constitutes a zone of ultimately uncertain, oftentimes risky, but potentially highly profitable economic opportunities (Endres 2015b). These opportunities are facilitated by a range of social exchanges and relationships between wholesalers, retailers, transporters, intermediaries, market vendors, clients, market management functionaries, customs officers and other border officials, border patrol police, market control officers, tax inspectors, and many others.

This research project started out as part of the Focus Group "Social Support and Kinship in China and Vietnam" with the aim of inquiring into the webs of social relations and support networks of Vietnamese market vendors, as well as the sentiments intrinsic to them. Following my appointment as Head of a Minerva Research Group, its focus widened to encompass the numerous entanglements between the legal, the illegal, and the informal that characterize cross-border trade and marketplace-based commerce at the Vietnam–China border. I approached this issue from the perspective of Kinh (ethnic majority) small-scale traders in the border city of Lào Cai, whose overall participation in Vietnam's market-oriented economy is increasingly being marginalized by recent government policies geared towards modernization, industrialization, and urbanization. The unevenness with which these policies and their related regulations have been implemented and enforced at various levels of authority has contributed to the emergence of what Aihwa Ong has termed "zones of

exception" (Ong 2006: 118). Ong applied the concept of the exception to neoliberal strategies of governing that rely on "differently administered spaces of 'graduated' or 'variegated sovereignty'" (ibid.: 7), such as free trade zones in border areas and other economic and administrative enclaves. These spaces of neoliberal exception offer economic opportunities to certain segments of society but not to others. In line with this conception, the Lào Cai–Hekou border gate provides small-traders and migrant citizens with opportunities for economic self-advancement that are not readily available in Vietnam's lowland regions. In contrast to the chances offered by the neoliberal exception, however, these opportunities are only considered viable if tariff regulations and other legal provisions can be circumvented. This is routinely achieved by colluding with corrupt state officials.

Traders and transporters at the Vietnam-China crossing point, Lào Cai (2012).

Although I had been expecting to hear about ways of fostering trust relations with trading partners and customers, the issue of corruption had not been part of my official research agenda – it would have raised concern among those for whom the mere presence of a foreign anthropologist in town already posed a potential threat to border security. My official research permission was therefore limited to Lào Cai's largest marketplace, and this is where my assistant and I conducted the bulk of our research from October 2010 to March 2011 and in August/September 2012. During peak hours, vendors were inevitably busy attracting customers to their stalls, and much of our daily routine consisted of 'deep hanging out' in the market's various sections, observing the ebb and flow of trading activities and social interactions with fellow vendors, market administration personnel, and law-enforcement officials. We engaged in casual conversations and idle gossip with vendors during the less busy hours. From time to time, we ventured to the border gate to watch the loading and unloading of goods, observe customs procedures, and to chat, as inconspicuously

as possible, with transporters and trader-intermediaries who crossed the border on a regular basis. Occasionally, I took day trips to Hekou on the Chinese side (using a multiple-entry visa) to observe activities and meet with the mobile Chinese cross-border traders with whom I had become acquainted at the Lào Cai market, as well as with some of the shop owners from whom middlemen like Mạnh obtained their wares.

When I embarked on fieldwork in Lào Cai in October 2010, the market was already buzzing with rumours about the local government's plan to demolish and reconstruct the main market building. When I set out to conduct an initial survey among the vendors, many saw me as a potential investor. "Is it really true what many people say that you came here as an investor for the new market?" asked one of stallholders in the clothes section. After again explaining the purpose of my study, I asked her how she felt about the plans for the new market building. "We would have to sell in the streets or return to our homes to starve [during the time of construction]", she said. "We worry because we are already many traders, and building a new market means there will be even more competing for customers", another vendor offered. "Business is already difficult enough these days."

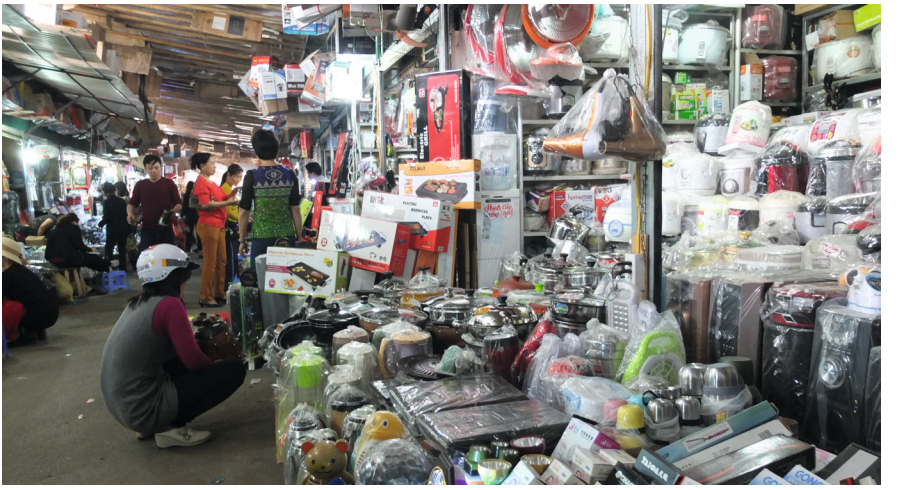
Vietnam's current national and provincial market redevelopment policies aim at improving the network in a civilized, modern direction with the overall goal of ensuring social security and stable livelihoods. Like many other cities, Lào Cai's history has been marked by repeated episodes of urban destruction and renewal (Schwenkel 2012). During the brief but violent border war with China in early 1979, the town was bombed to the ground and left largely abandoned and derelict for years. When bilateral relations normalized in the late 1980s, Lào Cai was rebuilt from scratch. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the growing economic opportunities for cross-border trade attracted new waves of Kinh migrants from the lowland regions and fuelled the rapid transformation of Lào Cai's urban landscape. Upon its merger with the district-level town of Cam Đường in 2004, Lào Cai was recognized as a grade-3 city (*đô thị loài III*). Ten years after its elevation to grade-3, in 2014, Lào Cai sought official recognition as a grade-2 city. Given the city's efforts at urban development and beautification in order to attain this higher status, Lào Cai's central market, built in 1996, seemed incongruous and out of date.

My research took a major turn when in April 2014 the People's Committee of Lào Cai City officially announced to the traders its plan to reconstruct the market. Whereas the old market had been built with public funds, a government decree issued in 2009 stipulated that only class-2 and class-3 markets could be financed through the state's development investment budget. The new Lào Cai market, however, was now planned as a class-1 showcase market for which the city had to mobilize private investment. When efforts to this end proved unsuccessful, it was decided to impose the costs of the new market building on the traders. Each stallholder was expected to pay a total sum of 240–290 million VND (8,000–10,000 EUR) to be set off against the rent for the next ten years. In effect, this meant a three-and-a-half-fold

increase per square metre per month. The traders thought that this price was "way above the sky" (*giá trên trời*), closed down their stalls in protest, and went on a two-week strike. During the following months, they submitted a total of nine petitions, requests, and denunciations to the municipal and provincial governments. Adding to their grievance, the traders complained about a number of irregularities with regard to the unofficial selling of so-called ghost spaces by the market management board and demanded further investigations into this matter. When all their pleas for fair treatment and justice at the local level had been rebuffed, a group of trader representatives went to Hanoi in order to protest in front of the Government Inspectorate. They signed a petition to "complain and denounce" the abuses they had faced and implored that the central government take action and bring all irregularities before the law, "so that we, the people, can firmly believe in the leadership of the Party and in the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam".

I followed the course of events through online media reports. When I returned to Lào Cai in December 2014 on my annual research follow-up visit, the old market already had been demolished and the traders had been moved to a temporary location. They remained there until the opening of the new market in June 2016. My inquiries about the protest proved difficult because the dust stirred up by the controversy between traders and city officials had started to settle and nobody wanted to be held responsible. I was, however, able to obtain recordings of various meetings held between May and September 2014 during which traders were given the opportunity to voice their concerns to local state officials. These recordings provide a rare glimpse into the discursive interaction between state agents and citizens in the context of Vietnam's unremitting efforts to achieve its urbanization goals as a crucial condition for successful economic development.

"Marketplaces should be built with the aim of advancing culture and improving peoples' lives", a vendor of beauty products opined in December 2014. "Yet what they do is build markets that make peoples' lives more miserable." The changes brought to Lào Cai City by the planning assemblages behind market development policies indicate that the position of small-scale market traders is likely to become more vulnerable in the future. It is too early to tell whether the promised benefits for both vendors and populace will materialize. During my last visit to Lào Cai in March 2016, many traders seemed surprisingly confident. "Other markets may be deserted, but [this one] will always be full of customers", one of my interlocutors said. The temporary market was indeed bustling with domestic tourists arriving in busloads after a trip to the nearby tourist town of Sapa and its recently inaugurated three-rope cable car up Vietnam's highest summit, Mount Fansipan. Some vendors said their sales were even better now than at the old (demolished) market. They were, however, well aware that the market upgrade will accelerate ongoing processes of retail gentrification whereby less affluent vendors are gradually displaced from the market and replaced by those who are able to pay off their bank loans and afford higher rents while still making a decent living.



Chinese goods at the temporary market, Lào Cai (2016).

'Market socialism' has not prevented neoliberal ideas from penetrating the lives of Vietnamese small-scale traders, be it in Lào Cai City, in Hanoi, or elsewhere in the country (Leshkowich 2014). In line with global trends over the past decades, Vietnam's adoption of neoliberal-informed practices and strategies has proved a key mechanism for producing and organizing self-reliant subjects whose "will to improve" (Li 2007) entails a willingness to sacrifice for the common good and national development. On the other hand, as Elyachar (2005) has shown in the case of Egyptian craftspeople, the new economic subjectivities engendered by neoliberal values of competition, self-advancement, and the privatization of public goods also have the potential to eventually transform existing norms of sociality and mutuality into sources of social capital and profit-making. How these dynamics will play out in the new Vietnamese marketplace remains an important question for future research.

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III CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND PANELS

Workshop, 29 June 2006
Social Support and Kinship in China
Organizers: Chris Hann and the 'East Asia Group'
Papers presented by: Ayxem Eli, Friederike Fleischer, Chris Hann, Helena Obendiek, Sawut Pawan, Sarah Schefold, Markus Schlecker, Xiujie Wu
Discussants: Ildikó Bellér-Hann (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany), Anna Boermel (University of Oxford, UK), Mareile Flitsch (Technical University Berlin, Germany), Frank Pieke (University of Oxford, UK), Yang Shengmin (Minzu University, Beijing, China), Guo Yuhua (Tsinghua University, Beijing, China).

Workshop, 21-22 January 2007
Fieldwork workshop in Beijing (Minzu University)
Organizers: Yang Shengmin, Chris Hann
Papers presented by: Ildikó Bellér-Hann (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany), Ayxem Eli, Friederike Fleischer, Helena Obendiek, Sawut Pawan, Sarah Schefold, Markus Schlecker, Xiujie Wu
Discussants: Chris Hann, Yang Shengmin (Minzu University).

Members of the original Focus Group convening in Beijing, January 2007.

Workshop, 20 June 2008
Who Are the Modern Uyghurs? Ethnicity, history and heritage, in Xinjiang and beyond
Organizers: Chris Hann, Ildikó Bellér-Hann
Papers presented by: Ildikó Bellér-Hann, David Brophy (Harvard University), Ayxem Eli, Nathan Light, Sawut Pawan, Ablät Sämät (Free University, Berlin) Äsäd Sulaiman (Xinjiang University).

Conference, 3–5 July 2008
Who cares … and how? An anthropological inquiry into support
Organizers: Markus Schlecker and Friederike Fleischer
Participants: Heath Cabot (University of California, Santa Cruz), Melissa L. Caldwell (University of California, Santa Cruz), Heide Castañeda, (University of South Florida), Manuela da Cunha (University of Minho), Ayxem Eli, Friederike Fleischer, Stephen Gudeman (University of Minnesota), Seethu Kakotth (Kannur University), Andrew Kipnis (Australian National University), Susana Narotzky (University of Barcelona), Frederique Pagani (University of Paris 10), Rosie Read (Bournemouth University), Emilia Salvanou (Foundation of Hellenic World, Athens), Markus Schlecker, Alan Smart
(University of Calgary), Josephine Smart (University of Calgary), Dorota Szawarska (University of London), Tatjana Thelen (University of Zurich).
Discussants: Franz von Benda-Beckmann, Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, Chris Hann.

Participants in the first major conference of the Focus Group in Halle, July 2008.

Franz von Benda-Beckmann (right) and Patrick Heady during a coffee break, July 2008.

Panel (American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco), 20 November 2008
Social Support in East Asia – Practices, Ideologies, Issues
Convenor: Friederike Fleischer
Papers presented by: Jason Danely (University of California, San Diego), Friederike Fleischer, Markus Schlecker, Dorota Szawarska (University of London), Discussants: Charlotte Ikels (Case Western Reserve University), Yunxiang Yan (University of California, Los Angeles).

Panel (6th EuroSEAS Conference, Gothenburg, Sweden), 26–28 August 2010
Managing Social Relationships in Southeast Asia:
Friendships, Business Contacts, and Support Networks
Convenors: Kirsten W. Endres and Eric A. Heuser (University of Freiburg)
Papers presented by: Elin Bjarnegard (Uppsala University), Anne-Meike Fechter (University of Sussex), Eric Heuser (University of Freiburg), Erika Sörensson (Umeå University), Thomas Stodulka (Free University, Berlin).

Workshop, 31 May–1 June 2012
Approaching Research in the Marketplace
Organizer: Kirsten W. Endres
Papers presented by: Regina Abrami (Harvard Business School), Lisa Barthelmes, Christine Bonnin, Kirsten W. Endres, Esther Horat, Gustav Peebles (The New School for Social Research, New York), Sarah Turner (McGill University).

Workshop (Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi, Vietnam), 12 April 2013
The Transformation of Public Markets in Contemporary Vietnam: anthropological perspectives
Organizers: Vuong Xuan Tinh (Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences) and Kirsten W. Endres
Papers presented by: Nir Avieli (Ben Gurion University), Lisa Barthelmes, Michael DiGregorio (Consultant and Filmmaker), Kirsten W. Endres, Caroline Grillot, Chris Hann, Esther Horat, Tran Huu Son (Department of Culture, Sport, and Tourism, Lào Cai Province).

The Minerva Research Group with Vietnamese partners, April 2013.

Conference, 26–29 June 2013
Is Chinese Patriarchy Over? The decline and transformation of a system of social support
Organizers: Stevan Harrell (University of Washington) and Gonçalo Santos
Papers presented by: Melissa Brown (University of Minnesota and Harvard University), Elisabeth Engebretsen (Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies), Harriet Evans (University of Westminster), Sara Friedman (Indiana University), Suzanne Gottschang (Smith College), William Jankowiak (University of Nevada), Andrew Kipnis (Australian National University), Kerstin Klein (Barts Health NHS Trust, UK), Xuan Li (University of Cambridge), Helena Obendiek (Konstanz University of Applied Sciences), Gonçalo Santos, Lihong Shi (Case Western Reserve University), Charles Stafford (London School of Economics and Political Science), Rubie Watson (Harvard University), Xiujie Wu, Roberta Zavoretti, Hong Zhang (Colby College). Discussants: Francesca Bray (University of Edinburgh), Janet Carsten (University of Edinburgh), Deborah Davis (Yale University), Henrike Donner (Oxford Brookes University), Stevan Harrell (University of Washington), Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University).

Participants in the conference 'Is Chinese Patriarchy Over?', June 2013.

Panel (7th EuroSEAS Conference, Lisbon, Portugal), 2–5 July 2013
Traders and Peddlers in Southeast Asia Today: Confronting Risk, Enhancing Luck
Convenor: Kirsten W. Endres
Papers presented by: Nir Avieli (Ben Gurion University), Kirsten W. Endres, Gertrud Hüwelmeier (Humboldt University Berlin and Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity), Busarin Lertchavalitsakul (University of Amsterdam), B. Lynne Milgram (OCAD University, Toronto), Misael Racines

(Australian National University), Edyta Roszko (Humboldt University, Berlin), Joefe B. Santarita (University of the Philippines), Alexander Trupp (University of Vienna), Chang Wen-Chin (Center for Asia-Pacific Area Studies, Taipei).

Workshop (collaboration with the Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna), 4–6 December 2013
Anthropological Atelier: Risks, Ruptures, and Uncertainties: dealing with crisis in Asia's emerging economies
Organizers: Kirsten W. Endres, Maria Six-Hohenbalken (Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences)
Papers presented by: Lisa Barthelmes, Kirsten W. Endres, Caroline Grillot, Esther Horat, Stephan Kloos (ISA, Vienna), Minh Nguyen, Jakob Rigi (Central European University), Sarah Schefold, Leonardo Schioccet (ISA, Vienna), Martin Slama (ISA, Vienna), Maria Six-Hohenbalken (ISA, Vienna), Mélanie Vandenhelsken (ISA, Vienna), Roberta Zavoretti.

Participants in the Vienna 'anthropological atelier', December 2013.

Conference, 10–12 July 2014
Beyond the Global Care Chain: boundaries, institutions and ethics of care
Organizers: Minh Nguyen and Roberta Zavoretti
Papers presented by: Hanna Brown (University of Durham,), Daniele Cantini (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg), Heike Drotbohm (University of Freiburg), Kimberly Kay Hoang (Boston College), Lan Anh Hoang (University of Melbourne), Matthew Kohrman (Stanford University), Catherine Locke (University of East Anglia), Joseph Long (University of Aberdeen), Chen Meixuan, Minh Nguyen, Melissa J. Pashigan (Bryn Mawr College), Anita von Poser (Free University, Berlin), Rosie Read (University of Bournemouth), Tatjana Thelen (University of Vienna), Liu Xiaoqian, Roberta Zavoretti, Li Zhang (University of California, Davis).
Discussants: Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, John Borneman (Princeton University), David Napier (University College London), Joan Tronto (University of Minnesota), Katie Willis (University of London).

Roberta Zavoretti making her presentation, July 2014.

Conference, 25–26 September 2014
Traders in Motion: networks, identities, and contestations in the Vietnamese marketplace
Organizer: Kirsten Endres
Papers presented by: Lisa Barthelmes, Christine Bonnin (University College Dublin), Gracia Clark (Indiana University), Annuska Derks (University of Zurich), Kirsten W. Endres, Caroline Grillot, Tran Hoai (VASS, Hanoi), Esther Horat, Gertrud Hüwelmeier (Humbold University Berlin), Ann Marie Leshkowich (College of the

Holy Cross), Binh Nguyen (VASS, Hanoi), Minh Nguyen, Allison Truitt (Tulane University), Hy Van Luong (University of Toronto).
Discussants: Regina Abrami (University of Pennsylvania), Chris Gregory (Australian National University), Erik Harms (Yale University), Linda Seligmann (George Mason University), Sarah Turner (McGill University), Tinh Vuong (VASS, Hanoi).

Workshop, 29–30 September 2016
Mobility in Contemporary China: imaginaries, technologies and power
Organizers: Meixuan Chen, Li Zhang (University of California, Davis)
Papers presented by: Carlo Inverardi-Ferri (University of Oxford), Adam Liebman (University of California, Davis), Cangbai Wang (University of Westminster), Shuli Wang (Academia Sinica), Yongming Zhou (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Meixuan Chen, Anne-Christine Trémon (Université de Lausanne), Roberta Zavoretti, Eona Bell (SOAS, University of London), Yuhua Guo (Tsinghua University), Jianhua Wang (Tsinghua University), Agnieszka Joniak-Lüthi (Ludwigs-Maximilians-Universität München), Solange G. Chatelard (Sciences Po, Paris), Ka-Kin Cheuk (Leiden University).
Discussants: Matthew Kohrman (Stanford University), Susanne Brandtstädter (University of Cologne), Frank Pieke (Leiden University), Li Zhang (University of California, Davis), Shengmin Yang (Minzu University, Beijing).

Frank Pieke making his presentation, September 2016.

IV PUBLICATIONS

Note: the listings which follow are necessarily provisional. They do not include relevant work published before the researcher joined the Max Planck Institute, nor recent publications unrelated to the Max Planck Institute research groups. For the items described as 'forthcoming' and 'in preparation', we have reproduced the information supplied by individual researchers.

Barthelmes, Lisa

2013. 'Dort gibt es nichts zu sehen': Shoppingmalls, Supermärkte und Stadtplanung in Hanoi. *Südostasien* 1: 8–10.

2014. Những người bán hàng rong tại Hà Nội: nét dặc trưng và tính năng động của một nhóm kinh tế - xã hội riêng biệt. [Mobile street vendors in Hanoi: features and dynamics of a distinct socioeconomic group]. *Dân Tộc Học* [*Anthropology Review*] 3(186): 50–60.

forthcoming. Dealing with uncertainty: itinerant street vendors and local officials in Hanoi. In: Kirsten W. Endres and Ann Marie Leshkowich (eds.). *Traders in motion: networks, identities, and contestations in the Vietnamese marketplace*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications.

Bellér-Hann, Ildikó

2007a. (with Cristina Cesàro, Rachel Harris and Joanne Smith Finley [eds.]). *Situating the Uyghurs between China and Central Asia*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

2007b. Situating Uyghur life cycle rituals between China and Central Asia. In: Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Cristina Cesàro, Rachel Harris, Joanne Smith Finley (eds.). *Situating the Uyghurs between China and Central Asia*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 131–147.

2007c. 19 äsärningaxiri 20 äsärning başliridiki uyğurlarning mixmandarçiliq qa'idä-yosunliri. [Uyghur hospitality customs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries]. *Miras* 4: 36–42.

2008a. *The Past as Resource in the Turkic Speaking World*. Istanbuler Texte und Studien 8. Würzburg: Ergon.

2008b. *Community Matters in Xinjiang 1880s-1940s: towards a historical anthropology of the Uyghur*. Leiden: Brill.

2008c. Strangers, guests and beggars in Xinjiang: the ambiguity of hospitality among the Uyghur. Études *Orientales* 25: 145–164.

2010. Towards a historical anthropology of the Uyghur of Xinjiang in the 19th and 20th centuries. In: James A. Millward, Yasushi Shinmen, Jun Sugawara (eds.). *Studies on Xinjiang historical sources in 17-20th Centuries*. Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, pp. 239–256.

2011a. Crafts, Entrepreneurship and Gendered Economic Relations in Southern Xinjiang in the Era of "Socialist Commodity Economy". In: Colin Mackerras (ed.). *Ethnic minorities in modern China*. London: Routledge, pp. 120–139.
2011b. The mobilisation of tradition: localism and identity among the Uyghur of Xinjiang. In: Robert L. Canfield and Gabriele Rasuly-Paleczek (eds.). *Ethnicity, authority, and power in Central Asia: new games great and small*. London: Routledge, pp. 39–57.
2012a (with Zsombor Rajkai, eds.). *Frontiers and boundaries: encounters on China's margins*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
2012b. (with Zsombor Rajkai). Introduction. In: Zsombor Rajkai and Ildikó Bellér-Hann (eds.). *Frontiers and boundaries: encounters on China's margins*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 1–10.
2012c. The 'gateway to the western regions': state-society relations and differentiating Uighur marginality in China's north-west. In: Zsombor Rajkai and Ildiko Bellér-Hann (eds.). *Frontiers and boundaries: encounters on China's margins*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 203–222.
2012d (with Svetlana Jacquesson, eds.). Local history as an identity discipline. Special Issue of *Central Asian Survey*: 31(3).
2012e (with Svetlana Jacquesson). Introduction. *Central Asian Survey* 31(3): 239–50.
2012f. Feudal villains or just rulers? The contestation of historical narratives in Eastern Xinjiang. *Central Asian Survey* 31(3): 311–26.
2013. Strategies of social support and community cohesion in rural Xinjiang. *Asien* 129: 7–21.
2014a (with Trine Brox, eds.). *On the fringes of the harmonious society: Tibetans and Uyghurs in socialist China*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.
2014b (with Trine Brox). Introduction. In: Trine Brox and Ildikó Bellér-Hann (eds.). *On the fringes of the harmonious society: Tibetans and Uyghurs in socialist China*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, pp. 1–28.
2014c. The bulldozer state: Chinese socialist development in Xinjiang. In: Madeleine Reeves, Johan Rasanayagam and Judith Beyer (eds.). *Ethno-graphies of the state in Central Asia: performing politics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 173–97.
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2015b. Uyghurlardiki chach örüsh än'änisi [The hair-braiding ritual among the Uyghur] In: Aysima Mirsultan, Mihriban Tursun Aydın (eds.). *Eski Türkçeden* Çağdaş *Uygurcaya. Mirsultan Osman'ın Doğumunun 85. Yılına Armağan* [*From old Turkic to modern Uyghur. Festschrift to mark the 85th birthday of Mirsultan Osmanov*] Konya, 2014: Kömen Yayınları, pp. 75–87.
2015c. Islam og Muslimer i Kina. *Religion. Tidsskrift for Religionslærer-foreningen for Gymnasiet og HF* 4, pp. 10–20.

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Bonnin, Christine

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2013. Doing Fieldwork and Making Friends in Upland Northern Vietnam: Entanglements of the professional, personal and political. In: Sarah Turner (ed.). *Red stamps and gold stars: fieldwork dilemmas in upland socialist Asia*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, pp. 121–142.

2014a. Những trao đổi địa phương và buôn bán trâu tại chợ vùng cao Việt Nam(tỉnh Lào Cai) [Local exchanges and marketplace trade of water buffalo in upland Vietnam (Lào Cai Province). Đan *Tộc Học* [*Anthropology Review*] 3(186): 72–83.

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Chen, Meixuan

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Eli, Ayxem

2010. Donkey bazaar, a bazaar of hell: an investigation into donkeys and donkey trading in Kashgar, Xinjiang, China. In: *Research in Economic Anthropology* 30: 159–185.
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2011a. *Performing the Divine: mediums, markets and modernity in urban Vietnam*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) Press.
2011b (with Markus Schlecker). Psychic experience, truth, and visuality in Post-war Vietnam. *Social Analysis* 55(1): 1–22.
2014a. Making law: small-scale trade and corrupt exceptions at the Vietnam–China border. *American Anthropologist* 116(3): 611–625.
2014b. Downgraded by upgrading: small-scale traders, urban transformation and spatial reconfiguration in post-reform Vietnam. *Cambridge Anthropology* 32(2): 97–111.
2014c. (with Maria Six-Hohenbalken). Introduction to Risks, ruptures and uncertainties: dealing with crisis in Asias emerging economies. *Cambridge Anthropology* 32(2): 42–48.
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2015a. 'Lộc bestowed by heaven': fate, fortune, and morality in the Vietnamese marketplace. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 16(3): 227–243.
2015b. Constructing the neighbourly 'other': trade relations and mutual perceptions across the Vietnam – China border. *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 30 (3): 710–741.
2016. Neighbourhood bargains: small-scale trade and mutual perceptions at the Vietnam-China border. In: Thomas Engelbert (ed.). *Vietnam's ethnic and religious minorities: a historical perspective.* Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, pp. 203–219.
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2007. 'To choose a house means to choose a lifestyle': the consumption of housing and class-structuration in urban China. *City and Society* 19(2): 287–311.
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Grillot, Caroline

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2014a. L'Autre, ce voisin. Remarques sur les perceptions chinoises des Vietnamiens, frein au développement des échanges commerciaux. In: Danielle Tan and Caroline Grillot, *L'Asie du Sud-Est Dans le «Siècle Chinois» (Cambodge, Laos et Viêt Nam)*. Bangkok: IRASEC, pp. 44–55.

2014b. 'Làm kinh doanh không dễ': Những thay đổi thất thường của buôn bán ở vùng biên giới theo cách nhìn của người bán buôn Trung Quốc ['Business is not easy to do': the bagaries of border trade from the Chinese wholesalers' perspectives]. *Dân Tộc Học* [*Anthropology Review*], 186(3): 16–25.

2015. The challenging integration of Sino-Vietnamese marriages in mainland Chinese borderlands. *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, special issue: Governing marriage migrations: perspectives from mainland China and Taiwan Rationale 4(2): 439–467.

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2016b. (with Zhang Juan). Ambivalent encounters: business and the sex markets at the China-Vietnam borderland. In: Pál Nyíri and Danielle Tan (eds.). *How Chinese engagements are changing Southeast Asia: people, money, ideas, and their effects*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, pp. 97–115.

2016c. 'Trust facilitates business, but may also ruin it': the hazardous facets of Sino-Vietnamese border trade. *Asian Anthropology* 15(2): 169–85.

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Ortis (eds.) *Les institutions de l'amour: cour, amour, mariage. Enquêtes anthropologiques en Asie et à Madagascar*.
in preparation. *The Fringes of Conjugality. Sino-Vietnamese encounters in borderlands* (monograph).
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in preparation (with Elena Barabantseva). Family visitors: myths and realities of 'foreign brides' in China. (submitted to *Cahiers du genre*)
in preparation (with Elena Barabantseva) Changing infrastructure of marriage migration in the Chinese borderlands: a comparative overview of Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Russian cross-border marriages. (journal article)

Hann, Chris

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2014. Harmonious or homogenous? Language, education and social mobility in rural Uyghur society. In: Trine Brox and Ildikó Bellér-Hann (eds.). *On the fringes of the harmonious society: Tibetans and Uyghurs in socialist China*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, pp. 183–208.
2015. *Renleixue de quewei* (The theft of anthropology. Selected contributions on post-socialist transformation from anthropological perspectives). Beijing: Minzu University Press.
2017 (with Ildikó Bellér-Hann). Magic, science and religion in Eastern Xinjiang. In: Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Birgit Schlyter and Jun Sugawara (eds.). *Kashgar revis-*

ited: Uyghur studies in memory of ambassador Gunnar Jarring. Leiden: Brill, pp. 256–274.

in preparation (with Ildikó Bellér-Hann). *Five Towns, Twelve Mountains: civilisational encounters in eastern Xinjiang.* (monograph)

Horat, Esther

2014. Tư nhân hóa và tính năng động của thị trường mang tính chất giới ở Ninh Hiệp, Gia Lâm [Privatization and gendered market dynamics in Ninh Hiep, Gia Lam]. *Dân Tộc Học* [*Anthropology Review*] 3(186): 26–6.

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