

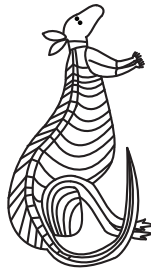


Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici

Laboratorio demo-etno-antropologico

Lab



Dea

Lunedì, 6 FEBBRAIO 2023 ore 14.30-16.30

Palazzo Marcorà Malcanton, III piano, Aula Milone

JUDITH BEYER

(Universität Konstanz),

terrà una conferenza su:

Rethinking community in Myanmar.

Practices of we-formation among Muslims and Hindus in urban Yangon

Abstract

In my talk "Rethinking Community in Myanmar: Practices of We-Formation among Muslims and Hindus in Urban Yangon", I will introduce the concept of "we formation" as a fundamental yet underexplored capacity of humans to relate to one another outside of and apart from demarcated ethno-religious lines and corporate groups. We-formation is intended to complement the established sociological concept of community, which suggests shared origins, beliefs, values, and belonging. Community is not only a key term in academic debates; it is also a topic among my interlocutors in urban Yangon, who draw on it to make claims about themselves and others. Invoking "community" is a conscious and strategic act, even as it asserts and reinforces stereotypes of Hindus and Muslims as minorities. In Myanmar, this understanding of community keeps self-identified members of these groups in a subaltern position vis-à-vis the Buddhist majority population. I demonstrate the concept's enduring political and legal role since being imposed on "Burmese Indians" under colonial British rule. But as individuals are always more than members of groups, I draw on ethnomethodology and existential anthropology to reveal how people's bodily movements, verbal articulations, and non-verbal expressions in communal spaces are crucial elements in practices of we-formation. My fieldwork in Yangon (from 2013 - 2020) in mosques and temples, during rituals and processions, and in private homes reveals a

Partecipazione libera - Seminario valido per il tirocinio DEA/ACEL. Coordinatrice: Franca Tamisari: tamisari@unive.it

sensitivity to tacit and intercorporeal phenomena. I thereby develop a theoretical and methodological approach that reconciles individuality and intersubjectivity and that is applicable far beyond the Southeast Asian context. The focus on we-formation also offers insights into the dynamics of resistance to the attempted military coup of 2021. The newly formed civil disobedience movement derives its power not only from having a common enemy, but also from each individual's determination to live freely in a more just society.

Nota biografica

Judith Beyer specializes in political and legal anthropology. She conducts long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan) and Southeast Asia (Myanmar) and increasingly in Europe (multisited). Her research focuses on the anthropology of law, the anthropology of the state and statelessness, and theories of sociality and social order. Her current thematic interests are: the concept of community, activism, practices of traditionalization, and common sense. Theoretically, she draws on ethnomethodology, existential anthropology and the work of Jacques Lacan.