Thomas Stodulka, Birgitt Röttger-Rössler (eds.)

Feelings at the Margins

Dealing with Violence, Stigma and Isolation in Indonesia

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Feelings at the Margins

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Birgitt Röttger-Rössler is Professor at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin. *Thomas Stodulka* works there as a Lecturer and Senior Research Fellow.

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Introduction—The Emotional Make-up of Marginality and Stigma

Birgitt Röttger-Rössler and Thomas Stodulka

From the Dutch East India Company to the Republic of Indonesia: Marginality as colonial and post-colonial heritage

With its almost 250 million inhabitants, the Republic of Indonesia is the world's most populous archipelago, which as a nation is only outnumbered by China, India and the United States of America. Indonesia consists of more than 17,000 islands that spread across the equator, of which only around 6,000 are inhabited. Some of these islands are just small spits of sand, while others are large and densely populated, like Sumatra and Java, the latter being the most populous island with around 130 million inhabitants. The archipelago comprises more than three hundred ethnic groups, over seven hundred spoken languages, and stands out due to its variety of autochthonous and world religions. This variety seems surprising at a first glance, considering that 90 percent of the population officially identify themselves as Muslim.

Before many parts of what is now called "Indonesia" converted to Islam, mainly during the fifteenth century, Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms dominated the archipelago. There are still significant minority groups who adhere to these belief systems, like the Balinese or the Tengger in East Java. Protestants and Catholics comprise around eight percent of the population and are mostly located in Eastern Indonesia and in cities all over the archipelago. As a secular nation, political elites stress religious tolerance among believers of different faiths, but this attitude has significantly changed, at least in some parts of the archipelago. Religiously, ethnically, and socio-politically motivated atrocities in Sulawesi, Kalimantan, Java, Maluku, Sumatra, Papua and also the former province of East Timor (the now independent nation of Timor Leste) have seriously clouded the Indonesian ideal of archipelagic harmony. When considering the question of marginality, one has to keep in mind that beyond its religious, ethnic and

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societal diversities, which bear great potential for conflict, oppression and discrimination, Indonesia's extensive geography of over 5,000 kilometers from West to East (about the distance between the West coast of Portugal to the Ural mountain range in Russia) must also be taken into account. Moreover, what is today defined as "Indonesia" did not exist before the young nation's declaration of independence on August 17, 1945.

The Dutch instigated the potential for geographic marginality from the onset of their colonial endeavor to construct the archipelago as a trade and commerce union called the Netherlands East India Company (Vickers 2005, 10). Batavia, present-day Jakarta, was founded in 1619 and became the center of the Dutch-Asian trade networks; it has remained the political, economic, and business center of the Republic of Indonesia until today. Dutch colonial indirect rule created a Javanese class of collaborators, who profited from Batavia's geographic centrality in a flourishing colonial trade, that weaved the so-called "outer islands" (a label given to the islands east of Java by the Dutch colonizers) into their continuously expanding self-understanding of Batavia as the center of the vast archipelago. Batavia's increasing commercial influence undermined the power of former political centers at the newly constructed geographic and commercial peripheries in the archipelago's eastern islands. This hegemony also manifested in Java's central role in the struggle for independence, when former political alliances with the Dutch colonizers were cut and turned against them in the wakening of a national consciousness. Japanese occupation during the Second World War, which ended Dutch rule, encouraged the previously suppressed Indonesian independence movement. Two days after the surrender of Japan in August 1945, Sukarno, an influential nationalist leader, declared independence and was appointed President. "Bung Karno" maintained his power base by balancing the opposing forces of the military and the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia; Communist Party of Indonesia), which was supposedly the biggest communist party outside The Soviet Union and China. This policy, also described as NASAKOM: an acronym based on the Indonesian words *NASionalisme* (nationalism), *Agama* (religion), and *KOMunisme* (communism), kept the increasingly authoritarian President Sukarno in power until an attempted coup to kill leading army generals on September 30, 1965 was countered by the army. What followed was a nation-wide massacre against alleged communists during which the PKI was blamed for the coup and destroyed. During the subsequent years of institutionalized genocide, the head of the military, General

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Suharto, outmaneuvered the politically weakened Sukarno and was formally appointed president in March 1968.

The introduction of the lingua franca *Bahasa Indonesia*[1] as national language and Sukarno's declaration of the young nation's *Pancasila* ideology in 1945 marginalized local languages (Kuipers 2001) and customs (*adat*) in their aspiration of a shared national identity. Indonesia's national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which translates as "Unity in Diversity" from Old Javanese, highlights both the nation's desire for unity and the high potential for separation and marginalization. The *Pancasila* ideology is deeply ingrained into the Indonesian constitution and the everyday lives of Indonesian citizens by means of state performances, public monuments, and decrees. The ideology is taught from the onset of children's schooling in national school curriculum and consists of five founding principles, namely: nationalism (*kebangsaan*), humanism (*kemanusiaan*), rule of the people (*kerakyatan*), social justice (*keadilan sosial*), and belief in one God (*ketuhanan yang maha Esa*). In the realm of neighborhood and community life, the philosophy of mutual respect and cooperation in achieving a collective goal (*gotong royong*) is highly emphasized.

Indonesia's current striving to foster democracy and abolish corruption, collusion, and nepotism needs to be regarded in relation to the turn of events resulting from the era of Indonesia's second president Suharto, who ruled the country for over 30 years, from 1968 to 1998, in a rather absolutistic style. The president, his family, and their cronies (also referred to as the "Suharto-Clan" or "Suharto *dan kronco-kronconya*") monopolized political and economic power, administered foundations (*yayasan*), controlled the media, and staged tainted myths on Indonesia's history of nation-building. Regarding the nation's economic development plans, the government and its technocrats, who mostly held diplomas and degrees from overseas universities, intended to accelerate the national economy by attracting foreign investment and establishing a labor-intensive industrial production. This "New Order" (*Orde Baru*) was publicly promoted by the prospective rhetoric of "progress and development" (*kemajuan dan pem-*

1 *Bahasa Indonesia* is an extension of classic Malay, which was spoken not only on the Malay Peninsula but also served as lingua franca that was mostly spoken in the archipelago's ports of colonial trade for centuries. *Bahasa Indonesia* is an extremely dynamic language, comprising terms, which stem from Javanese (*Basa Jawa*), Indo-Aryan Sanskrit, Arabic, Chinese languages, Dutch, and English is continuously expanded by neologisms and acronyms.

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bangunan). Suharto promoted himself as the "father of development" and promised his children—the Indonesian citizens—a prosperous future if they followed his orders. Contrary to his predecessor Sukarno, Suharto targeted a reduction of the population growth rate in order to foster the nation's market economy. As early as 1968 he founded a national institute for family planning that promoted a policy of *Dua anak cukup* (Two children are enough) in nationwide propaganda campaigns that was part of an institutionalized *State Ibuism* (Suryakusuma 1996; Brenner 1998; Robinson 2007). The term can be translated as "state-mother-ism" or "wife-ism" in which the mother or wife (*ibu*) was discursively framed as follower and servant of the father (*bapak*). *State Ibuism* was supposed to discipline women and hierarchically position the mother below the father. Regarding its powerful social force, this national policy did not only promote gender inequalities between men and women, but implicitly advocated a heterosexism that marginalized and stigmatized "deviant" forms of companionship, intimacy, and relationship. In order to promote national education while at the same time strengthen a national Indonesian identity through the national language, the "New Order" government introduced and implemented a compulsory program of nine years schooling. Compared to 1968, when only 41 percent of Indonesia's children attended grammar school (Booth 1999), today statistically almost every child between seven and twelve years of age is endowed with basic school education.

Although Suharto had economically and logistically neglected the vast northern and eastern islands, towards the end of his rule around 56 percent of the population living below the poverty line were still found in Java and Bali—where development was supposedly centralized. In the aftermath of the economic crisis that hit Southeast Asia in 1997 and Indonesia in particular, food prices sky-rocketed and the poverty rate rose from 15 to 33 percent, equaling to around 60 million people living in absolute poverty. Economic instability, high food prices, a drastic rise in unemployment among the new middle class, and rumors of Suharto's systematic and large-scale corruption led to a climate of fear and rage, which ultimately unloaded in mass demonstrations against the government, primarily organized by student movements. The president's re-election for another five-year term by the National Assembly in March 1998 elicited protest from a number of universities in Java and Sulawesi and quickly spread to a nationwide discontent. This led to mass violence instigated by both police and protesters and incited a severe state of chaos throughout the archipel-

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ago. Suharto was finally forced to resign on May 21, 1998. Vice president B.J. Habibie took over in the first critical post-Suharto year, before the Muslim liberal intellectual Abdurrahman Wahid was appointed president. In 2001, Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of Indonesia's independence proclaimer, was elected as the first female president for a three-year term. Former army general Susilo Bambang Yudyohono (popularly abbreviated SBY) is the current and first directly elected president of the Republic of Indonesia. SBY is serving his second and final five-year term (until 2014), where he continues to lead the era of the so-called *reformasi* with some main agendas including the arrestment of corruption, establishment of a democratic political system, and the advancement of decentralized regional governments and jurisdictions that were first initiated in 1999.

Taking in mind the ongoing rural exodus, the radicalization of politico-religious hardliners, striving separatist movements, and the increasing intolerance towards religious, political, and sexual minorities, it seems pivotal who will be elected as the seventh Indonesian president in October 2014. Another equally open question remains as to whether the number of people who live in absolute poverty can be reduced beyond the 2011 official record low of 12.5 percent. Besides looming presidential challenges to navigate the national economy and appease rivaling political fractions, the Indonesian population faces perturbing ecological, political, and socio-economic developments, which particularly affect those communities who live at the archipelago's margins and the niches of Indonesia's big cities.

The scope of this volume is not to point at oppressing political elites, but to highlight the practices and counter-discourses of individuals and communities in dealing with marginality, stigma, isolation, and related violent acts. To set the authors' various perspectives within this common frame of interest, we shall first theorize the underlying core concepts of marginality, stigma, and emotion, before releasing the reader into a series of vivid ethnographic and historical case studies.

Marginality and Stigma: Two Sides of one Coin?

According to social geographers, "marginality is a complex condition of disadvantage which individuals and communities experience as a result of vulnerabilities that may arise from unfavourable environmental, cultural,

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social, political and economic factors" (Mehretu et al. 2000, 90). Marginality is defined as a universal phenomenon that differs in type and intensity. Alluding to its theoretical roots in social geography, marginality is conceptually divided into the disparate, yet overlapping frameworks of societal and spatial marginality. Both indicate an exclusion from a socio-cultural mainstream or a geographic political center. Gurung and Kollmair, also social geographers by profession, highlight that marginality is a dynamic concept: it ultimately refers to a process between a marginalizing center and a marginalized periphery. Marginal living conditions are not considered to be fixed states, but possess an innate potential for social change (2005, 11). The authors argue that societal marginality alludes to social conditions in terms of lacking opportunities, resources, and skills compared to a real or imagined hegemonic mainstream society. These social inequalities are equally related to restricted participation in public decision-making processes as well as low self-esteem. As we shall see in this volume's subsequent chapters, the discrimination of marginalized people frequently arises from ascribed markers related to ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social rank, political attitude or religion. Spatial marginality delineates geographical disadvantages, "A marginal region is defined as an area lying at the edge of a system" (Gurung and Kollmair 2005, 13). This includes a geographically obstructed accessibility to economic centers, lacking infrastructure, or an exclusion from technological advancements.

The social geographical concepts are helpful in distinguishing between two fundamental marginality dimensions. But from anthropological, historical, and political perspectives, whereas the intersections and frictions of marginalities' various facets are of particular interest, they seem rather one-dimensional. Anthropological explanations stress the situated contingencies of marginality: it is defined as a constantly shaped asymmetric power relationship between an often self-claimed center and a (constructed) periphery (Tsing 1993; Li 1999; Haug 2010). Veena Das and Deborah Poole (2004) describe margins as a space where power is exercised but where its implementation cannot be ensured. As an inherently anthropological topic, it is surprising though that marginality has rarely been scrutinized conceptually beyond the particularities of its respective ethnographic settings.

The authors in this volume address marginality's manifold facets from historical, political, religious, sexual, psychological, ethnic, and social perspectives. Despite their diversity, the chapters can roughly be grouped into two blocks. Michaela Haug, Martin Ramstedt, and Nils Bubandt elaborate

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the effects and the practices of coming to terms with adversities that are rooted in communities' spatial marginalities from geographic, political, and ideological centers. The articles by Thomas Stodulka, Eric Anton Heuser, Tom Boellstorff, Ferdiansyah Thajib, Boryano Rickum, and Baskara Wardaya, as well as the piece by Joshua Oppenheimer and Victoria Sakti, show that marginalization does not necessarily require any geographical or spatial isolation, but can be first and foremost a societal phenomenon. The authors demonstrate that the stigmatization and marginalization of individuals and communities are closely related phenomena. It is particularly these chapters that call for a theoretical perspective that manages to link the concepts of marginality and stigma in analyzing the effects and the responses to discrimination and violence. Such an integrated perspective promises an enhanced understanding of the experiential dimensions of how it feels to live at the societal margins of a system one aspires to or is expected to belong to.

In his seminal book, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Erving Goffman defined stigma as an "attribute that is deeply discrediting" (1963, 12). Although the author advised us to focus on the relational aspect of stigma[2], subsequent approaches defined stigma as a mark *in* the person. Only during the last years, social psychologists (Crocker et al. 1998; Lewis 1998; Heatherton et al. 2000; Major and O'Brien 2005) and social medicine scholars (Sayce 1998; Corrigan and Watson 2002; Yang et al. 2007) have begun to theorize stigma as a social construction, relational to the socio-cultural, political, and historical context and its local hierarchies. Without further notice, this constructivist turn, which relates stigma to its socio-cultural environment and power asymmetries between stigmatizers, bystanders, and the stigmatized, actually adopts the anthropological marginality framework. This sets the ground for our scope to conceptually integrate the dimension of interconnected embodied agents that is so dominant in stigma theory into the analysis of marginality.

The medical sociologists Bruce Link and Jo Phelan (2001) argue that a stigma can be identified when particular "others" are distinguished and labeled "different", their "difference" is associated with negative attributes,

2 "The term stigma, then, will be used to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting, but it should be seen that a language of relationships, not attributes is really needed. An attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither creditable nor discreditable as a thing in itself" (Goffman 1963, 13).

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"they" are separated from "us", and finally ascribed a status loss that results in "their" discrimination. In an extension of their decidedly cognitive perspective, epidemiologist Lawrence Yang and anthropologist Arthur Kleinman (2008) advanced a stigma model that is more sensitive to cultural and moral dimensions. It elaborates how the negative changes in a person's ascribed moral status result in the deprivation of an essential social position by limiting his or her ability to mobilize social capital. The authors define stigma as a consecutive chain of changes (of a person's ascribed moral status based on local models of morality), deprivations (of essential social esteem leading to social inequality), and limitations (of social mobility, which includes a high potential for marginalization). A stigma never exclusively affects individuals, but stigma-related emotions dissolve into the social network of one's family and community. Regarding the transition of stigma-related emotions from the stigmatized individual to the collective, Veena Das emphasizes that stigma should not be treated as an individual affair, but "as a matter of connected body-selves" (2001). At the interpersonal level, a stigma comprises all social interactive forms of discrimination, distancing, rejection and marginalization. In other words, stigma is contagious in terms of the shared emotions between the stigmatized person, her or his partners, friends, family, and community. Stigma does not only affect the stigmatized person but also those associated with him or her. Depending on the visibility of the stigma, the fear of transmission and contagion often leads to hiding behavior and silencing by the affected and co-affected persons, and their marginalization, isolation and exclusion by opinion-leaders and the wider public.

Although stigma and marginality often coincide in what is loosely defined as "societal marginality", the articles of this volume reveal that they cause different emotional experiences and produce distinct strategies for coming to terms with resulting adversities and violence. Stigma has a very strong moral and an intensified emotional component compared to marginalities that are not stigma-related. The articles by Thomas Stodulka, Eric Anton Heuser, Tom Boellstorff, Ferdiansyah Thajib, Boryano Rickum, Baskara Wardaya, and also Joshua Oppenheimer and Victoria Sakti demonstrate that contesting a stigma is particularly arduous since it deprives persons or whole communities of their social positions as moral beings and most likely triggers rather paralyzing shame-like emotions. By contrast, Nils Bubandt, Michaela Haug, and Martin Ramstedt elucidate that marginalities that result from adverse geographical center-periphery re-

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lations are by no means less poignant, but they can be overcome through collective actions targeted directly at identifiable political or ideological centers of power.

Since both stigma-related (societal) and geographical (spatial) marginalities are processes and relations between people—groups, individuals, institutions, or any combination thereof—they can be contested, negotiated and resisted. The authors of this volume underscore that the practices of coming to terms with adversities aim at the establishment of justifiable living conditions, a better life for oneself or one's community, and the amplification of the affected persons' subjective wellbeing. The articles demonstrate that a systematic focus on individual and collective emotions is a valuable approach to explore affected communities' and individuals' practices, strategies, and tactics in dealing with marginality, stigma, and related violent acts. Since there is considerable debate about the nature, culture, and definition of "emotion", we will outline this book's perspective first before presenting an overview of the chapters enclosed in this volume.

Emotions and Emotional Climates: Intersubjectivity, Belonging and Subversion

The social and cultural studies of emotions (mostly anthropological) in non-European cultures have produced deep insight into the cross-cultural variation of human affectivity (Heider 1991; Leavitt 1996; Reddy 2001; Boellstorff and Lindquist 2004; Fessler 2004; Röttger-Rössler 2004; Beatty 2005; Milton and Svašek 2005). Anthropologists, influenced by psychology (particularly evolutionary and developmental psychology, and psychoanalysis) highlight the complex interplay between the body, emotion, and culture (Briggs 1970; Levy 1973; 1984; Hollan 1992; Wikan 1992; Hollan and Wellenkamp 1993; Röttger-Rössler and Markowitsch 2009; Throop 2010). "Constructivists" have scrutinized the relationship between language, feeling, and culture (Rosaldo 1980; 1984; Averill 1985; Abu-Lughod 1986; 1991; Lutz and White 1986; Lutz 1988; Lynch 1990; Ahmed 2004; Gould 2009), whereas cognitive anthropologists shed light on the mutual influence between human cognition and emotion by means of cultural schemata and models (D'Andrade and Strauss 1992; Strauss and Quinn

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1997). Furthermore, medical anthropologists have explored the interrelations between illness, health, emotion, and culture (Kleinman and Kleinman 1991; Good 1992; Young 1995; Jenkins and Barrett 2003; Good et al. 2007; Kirmayer et al. 2007), and critical anthropologists have inquired into the interrelations between illness, emotion, and social inequality (Rebhun 1993; Scheper-Hughes 1993; Bourgois 2010).

Both anthropological and historical perspectives on emotions that predominantly focus on cultural modeling and individual experience (in terms of a subjective "being-moved" or an "emotional quale") of emotions have long been subject to controversies between so-called "universalists" and "constructivists". Whereas the first argued for the universal existence of basic human emotions (see Heider 1991), the latter advocated for emotions' radical particularity and the uniqueness of local and culture-specific experience (see Lutz 1988). Contemporary anthropology combines these paradigms. Resulting from their interdisciplinary collaboration, anthropologist Birgitt Röttger-Rössler and biological psychologist Hans J. Markowitsch write,

> the emotions felt by an individual in a given situation depend on several factors: the particular social context and the corresponding cultural models of interpretation and behavior, the biography and psychological structures of the single individual, and innate physiological processes anchored in human biology ("bodily reactions") and their subjective perception ("feeling"). The latter, in turn, is partly shaped by culture, just as the expression of emotions is molded by culture specific display rules. (2009, 3–4)

Drawing upon this processual understanding of emotions we focus here on the relational dimensions of emotions. As social and cultural scientists we are mainly interested in how emotions unfold in social interactions, that is how they are produced, expressed, regulated, and reciprocated in communicative acts. Actors share and exchange information through their emotional displays in terms of unconscious, learned (habitualized) behavior and the more intentional and purposeful staging of emotions. Sometimes behavior, which is perceived as "emotional", can simply be strategically performed as emotional display without being "really felt" by the actors involved. Thus, "deliberation, rehearsal, and requirement are as integral to emotion as spontaneity and do not render it any less 'true'" (Rebhun 1993, 137). In other words, even staged emotional performances carry important social messages. Within the daily politics of social life they can make up powerful tools in order to manipulate others for one's own gain. However,

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another important aspect concerning the communicative qualities of emotions relates to their potential to create and maintain social communities. Through the sharing of emotions or the collective production of emotional atmospheres and climates, actors establish, emphasize, and negotiate social belonging and affiliations. In short, as "embodied social glue", emotions play a crucial role in building and perpetuating social collectives, movements, and communities.

In the literature, *collective emotions* are conceived as affective phenomena that are shared by large numbers of individuals within a certain group or society (Stephan and Stephan 2000; Bar-Tal et al. 2007; von Scheve and Ismer 2013). Some scholars distinguish between collective emotions and *group-emotions*, defining the latter as emotions felt by individuals as a result of their membership in a certain group or society (Smith 1993; Bar-Tal et al. 2007). Both concepts suggest that individuals may experience emotions, not necessarily as a response to personal life events, but also in reaction to collective experiences. While the concept of collective emotions suggests that individuals may share the same emotions for a number of reasons, the concept of group-emotions refers only to emotions that individuals experience as a result of identifying themselves with their fellow group members. Because the entanglement of collectives, groups, and emotions as communicators and shared experiences is of utmost importance in the context of this book, it seems worthwhile to elaborate further on this notion. The psychologist Joseph de Rivera (1992), who has been working on social collectives for many years, differentiates on the basis of the temporal duration between (1) *emotional culture*, (2) *emotional atmosphere*, and (3) *emotional climate*. *Emotional culture* refers to the emotional codes or repertoires as they are expressed in the symbolic systems of a particular culture (for example in rules, narratives, scripts, arts, performance patterns, habits etc.). They are acquired and embodied by individuals during socialization and are thus considered long-lasting phenomena. In contrast, *emotional atmospheres* arise when various (also randomly associated) actors jointly focus their attention on a specific short-term event (for example the public viewing of a political speech), while the term *emotional climate* refers to the collective emotions experienced by a social group or a whole society in response to particular socio-political conditions (for example corruption, collusion, nepotism or social inequity, but also marginalization and stigmatization). Emotional climates constitute *transitional* phenomena that can last for a few months or even many years (for example within and in the aftermath of conflicts,

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natural disasters, wars, revolutions, economic crises, but also peace building processes, times of economic growth, and welfare). Within the context of the following chapters it is paramount to pay attention to the emotional climates that emerge within marginalized and stigmatized groups. The authors' focus on marginality, stigma, and violence related emotional climates promises a proficient understanding of how whole communities are affected by and deal with adverse life conditions. By also acknowledging the social suffering of communities, this volume highlights emotions as crucial forces of resistance and contesting adverse power asymmetries and their negative effects. The articles denote that the articulation, expression, and suppression of emotions are crucial in communicating economic, political, and social needs. As embodied experiential dimensions of marginality and stigmatization they motivate or discourage mutual engagement in contesting these.

In summary, emotions are considered in this volume as (1) culturally embedded intersubjective processes that are (2) fundamental in motivating and creating a sense of belonging to social communities and (3) constitute crucial communicative forces through which adverse power asymmetries, memories, and traumatizing past experiences can be negotiated, contested, subverted, and changed on the socio-political as well as on the socio-psychological level.

The Chapters

The first three articles by Michaela Haug, Martin Ramstedt and Nils Bubandt address recent developments in local communities of the so-called geographical "outer islands". The social anthropologists Haug and Ramstedt focus on the social and political transformations in East Kalimantan and Bali as they were triggered by Indonesia's national project of political administrative decentralization. Haug (Chapter 2) examines whether the enlarged regional autonomy and the emergence of new political centers has led to increased subjective wellbeing among the formerly marginalized Dayak Benuaq. Her study elucidates that the cultural, political, and economic self-determination of the Dayak population in East Kalimantan has substantially improved under regional autonomy and generated a climate of pride and cultural self-esteem among newly emerging and profiting Dayak

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