

SOUTHEAST ASIA RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

SEARC-LECTURE

by

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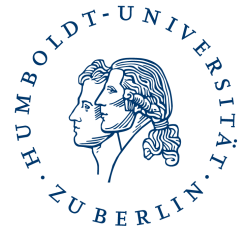
GLOCAL SPACES LOST IN TRANSLATION

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC READING OF DESERTED GENOCIDE MONUMENTS IN CAMBODIA

When: 09 December 2014 / 6:00 pm

Where: Room 117 – IAAW – Invalidenstr. 118 (1st floor)





Abstract:

Recent decades have witnessed the circulation of Euro-western commemorative forms in non-Western post-genocide societies. Be it genocide museum exhibits or commemorative monuments, architects and museologists have attempted to syncretically weave local culturally particular symbolic motifs with Euro-Western aesthetic commemorative forms. The outcome often appears at first glance to represent a hybrid product of glocalization in the global commemorative landscape, effectively translating particular local conceptions of loss, mourning and collective memory into a universally shared semiotics and mnemonic aesthetics. However echoing the challenge of other forms of cultural translation, Euro-Western commemorative forms of representation may be incongruent with culturally particular worldviews and the way in which local ethos objectify (or resist objectifying) the past. The scholarship on genocide commemoration, primarily in the fields of culture studies or museology, has explored the crisis of representation, the re-presentation of absence or national hegemonic politics of memory. This lecture will suggest that in contrast, anthropological perspectives may isolate the limits of translation pointing to local ethos that may have been lost in translation. Moving beyond questions of design, ethnographic research may also evaluate local responses to commemorative sites in order to determine if and how these 'traveling' models of global of commemoration have been effectively grounded in the local cultural terrain. This lecture will present ethnographic data on communal sites of genocide in Cambodia. Moving off the beaten track, commemorative 'stupas' located in village Wats (Buddhist compounds) will be discussed as potentially incongruent hybrid cultural products of glocal memorialization.

Bio:

Carol A. Kidron is senior lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Haifa, Israel. Kidron has undertaken ethnographic work with Holocaust descendants in Israel and children of Cambodian genocide survivors in Cambodia and in Canada. Her research interests include personal, communal and collective Holocaust and Genocide commemoration, and the way in which therapeutic discourse and particularly trauma constructs have informed contemporary subjectivities. Kidron's publications include: "Toward an Ethnography of Silence: The Lived Presence of the Past in the Everyday Life of Holocaust Trauma Survivors and Their Descendants in Israel" (Current Anthropology 2009), "Embracing the Lived Memory of Genocide: Holocaust Survivor and Descendant Renegade Memory-Work at the 'House of Being'" (American Ethnologist 2010) and "Alterity and the Particular Limits of Universalism: Comparing Jewish-Israeli Holocaust and Canadian-Cambodian Genocide Legacies" (Current Anthropology, 2012).