

Sousa Pinto, while acknowledging his 'lack of familiarity with Dutch and an insufficiency in Malay [...] ventures to define the objectives and value of the book to be plugging the gap in the historiography of Melaka during the Portuguese period', as well as to 'enrich the Portuguese panorama of studies about Southeast Asia'. His intention is not always to present revelations, but to discuss approaches and problematic questions and freshly interpret materials already known (p. xxiii–xxiv).

A case in point of his approach to the reinterpretation of known materials is his nuanced perspective on the sociopolitical evolution of elite Malay groups in the Archipelago. Sousa Pinto sees the transformation of the two groups in this process — the elite, from administrative-political to mercantile-official roles — and the sultans, who became less rigidly constrained by adat — beginning as early as the sixteenth century (when the Portuguese conquered Melaka), as opposed to J. Kathirithamby-Wells and Barbara Andaya, who do not distinguish between the two processes and stress their maturation in the seventeenth century. Elsewhere Sousa Pinto combines a reading of the Portuguese sources on the Malay world (specifically, on the Johor sultanate), highlights and explains succinctly the genealogical problems and issues of the sultanate (p. 156–7). For somebody who professes unfamiliarity with the Malay language, Sousa Pinto's work certainly presents a clear explanation of the complex issues (although the author points out that a reliance on Portuguese sources could also deprive it of 'a critique that [...] should ideally be extended to the entire work', p. 237).

On the Portuguese fort and defences during the Portuguese period, Sousa Pinto reveals the evolution of the fortress of Melaka (A. Formosa); for instance, that up till 1610, 'Melaka continued to be a city unprotected on its inland side' and how 'the militarisation of Melaka's internal city space led to a disruption of civilian life; for example, the demolition of houses built over the fortified perimeter' (p. 213–19).

Overall, appended with detailed genealogies of the sultanates of Johor and Aceh, two lists of the (Portuguese) official-appointees at Melaka and in Goa/India, maps, a useful glossary and an updated bibliography (one is curious though as to why John Villier's comprehensive treatment *The Estado da Índia in Southeast Asia* is not included nor engaged in discussion in the main narrative), Sousa Pinto's work is a valuable addition to the field of the history of Melaka in the early modern period.

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The perfect business? Anti-trafficking and the sex trade along the Mekong

By SVERRE MOLLAND

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In the past decade the growing global concern with human trafficking — particularly of women and children into prostitution — has been matched by an

outpouring of policy and research reports about the phenomenon. Most generally, the research community has been divided between those who agree that trafficking is a problem that needs to be taken seriously and those who argue that trafficking is a moral panic largely constituted through the biases of governments and the anti-prostitution lobby. These debates are politically contentious, hinging primarily on the former's understanding of prostitution as exploitation, and the latter's claim that prostitution should be considered a form of labour.

Sverre Molland's book is an example of an increasingly sophisticated body of research that aims to move beyond this predictable and increasingly counterproductive divide. In a promising move, he compares the sex trade and the work of anti-trafficking organisations in the borderlands between Laos and Thailand. In order to grasp the complexities of the contemporary interest in trafficking as an ethical problem, it is critical, Molland argues, to focus not only on the sex trade, but also on the groups that lead the struggle against trafficking. The backdrop of the book is the author's initial experience of having worked as an adviser for an anti-trafficking program in Laos for several years and his subsequent doctoral research in anthropology.

Molland has an excellent grasp of the academic literature and policy concerning human trafficking and he spends the first part of the book carefully considering the discourse and multiple meanings and consequences of the term. The second and main ethnographic part of the book deals explicitly with the sex trade in Laos and Thailand. After a discussion of patron–client relations and kinship obligations in Southeast Asia, the stage is set for a move beyond the conceptualisation of agency that divides 'victims' from 'perpetrators', and which characterises trafficking discourse. We are introduced to a number of women working in bars and brothels on both sides of the border. Molland shows — in contrast to the general understanding within the anti-trafficking community — that most traffickers are not external perpetrators, but often prostitutes who are part of the same social networks as the women they recruit. A key paradox thus emerges: 'the trafficker embodies the very exploitative situation she leads others into' (p. 205). Paying close attention to the stories of women through ethnographic studies of bars and brothels, Molland not only illustrates how the distinction between trafficking and voluntary migration is nearly impossible to map onto the realities that he faces on the ground, but also more interestingly, that deception is rarely calculated in long-term market terms but are rather circumstantial or opportunistic. In line with the demands of success associated with familial obligations, it is the end-result of migration that is critical in ethical terms for the migrant rather than the question of whether entry into prostitution was voluntary or deceptive.

The third and final part of the book turns to anti-trafficking groups in the Mekong. Molland offers a brief history of anti-trafficking in the region and the evolving relationship with the Lao state. Using a series of case studies from his fieldwork on the sex trade, he approaches anti-traffickers hoping to discuss the process of victim identification. Molland tries to make sense of the radical disjuncture between the process of victim identification in anti-trafficking training manuals and the complex forms of recruitment that he encountered in his research on the sex trade. In keeping with the development sector's focus on cause–effect relationships and coherent

narratives, Molland argues that anti-traffickers are less concerned in engaging with complex realities than with finding cases that fit the realities they are constructing.

Molland's main argument in comparing traffickers and anti-traffickers is that both are acting in terms of what Sartre called 'bad faith'; that is they deny their own agency and complicity in their actions. While recruitment within the sex trade depends on the displacement of concerns with deception by the recruiters themselves, anti-trafficking depends on avoiding complex realities and focusing on simplistic program models. One effect of this is that the worlds of trafficking and anti-trafficking in an important sense have little to do with one another.

Molland's book is an excellent contribution to the critical literature on human trafficking. His approach and attempt to find a new angle from which to conceptualise trafficking is salutary. I would have liked to learn more about the anti-traffickers, however. Unlike those engaged in the sex trade we learn very little about the anti-traffickers — their careers, hopes, and social networks — despite the fact that the author had been a part of this world. Molland takes great care in developing a proper tone in his book. Although he is clearly critical of anti-trafficking programs and policy, he remains respectful of the work that his former colleagues are engaged in, while carefully attempting to understand the organisation of the sex trade. This tone allows Molland to move beyond the contentious divide that characterises ongoing debates concerning trafficking. From this perspective, this book will be of interest to a broad readership that should include not only academics and students in fields such as anthropology, gender studies, development studies, and Asian studies, but also among activists and policymakers who are concerned with reflecting upon the world in which they act.

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Melayu: The politics, poetics and paradoxes of Malayness

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Is Melayu (or Malayness) a category of ethnicity? Race? Nation? Politics? Culture? Language? Geography? The answer seems to be all of the above. Melayu signifies differently in different countries of Southeast Asia, and its meanings are constantly being redefined for various ideological purposes. It can only be explored, not comprehended or defined (Maier, p. 321). Due to the confusing nature of the term it is tempting to throw up one's hands (and some scholars have!). Nevertheless the field of Malay studies has expanded recently, with several books, articles, and special issues of journals published in the last decade. The difficulty of defining Melayu does not diminish its significance; rather, the problematic nature of the term is precisely the reason for its continued interrogation. To the scholars