



Álvaro Martínez, Thomas Stodulka

Orders of Feeling and Falling in Line

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Abstract: Dieser multimodale Beitrag verwendet Metanarration, um die zentralen Schritte der Übersetzung anthropologischer Forschung in grafische Form als Untersuchungsform nachzuzeichnen und betont dabei Reflexivität, Positionalität, Co-Autorschaft, visuelles Denken und Repräsentation. Er bringt die Arbeit des Grafik-Anthropologen Álvaro Martínez mit jener des Sozial- und Kulturanthropologen Thomas Stodulka zusammen, dessen Konzept der „Gefühlsordnung“ aus kollaborativer Aktionsforschung mit Straßencommunities in Indonesien hervorgegangen ist. „Gefühlsordnungen“ analysieren wie Emotionen innerhalb spezifischer kultureller, moralischer und politischer Kontexte hervorgebracht, ausgedrückt und reguliert werden. Über individualisierte Perspektiven hinausgehend zeigt das Konzept, wie das Gefühlsleben durch historische und soziale Ordnungen strukturiert ist, die bestimmen, was gefühlt werden kann, von wem und wie Gefühle in alltäglichen und institutionellen Interaktionen zirkulieren. Es bietet einen analytischen Rahmen, um Affekt sowohl sozial und politisch strukturiert als auch dynamisch-transformativ zu begreifen. Die grafische Form liefert Einblicke in dieses Konzept und wirkt dabei nicht nur als illustratives, sondern auch als analytisches Werkzeug.

Keywords: Gefühlsordnungen, Emotion, Straßengemeinschaften, Indonesien, Grafikanthropologie

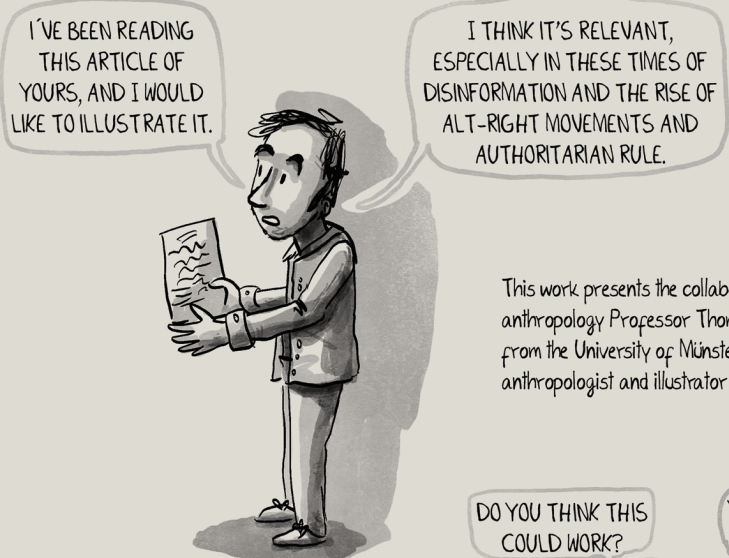
Berlin, April 2nd 2025

Anthropology is deeply rooted in the academic world. Many of its findings – the product of intense work involving encounters between anthropologists, communities and environments as well as lengthy processes of analysis and academic writing – tend to stay within university walls, rarely reaching non-academic audiences.



To bridge this gap the practice of combining comics and anthropology has emerged, as both share a passion for storytelling and critical analysis. Anthropologists and comic artists alike have long used this narrative form as a central method within their respective fields.

Graphic anthropology presents itself as a multimodal approach in three key ways: as a tool for data collection during fieldwork, as an organizer of ideas in academic writing, and as a form of public anthropology, allowing engagement with readers beyond academic circles. The use of a visual language distinct from photography or film enables possibilities for collaborative reflection between the researcher and illustrator, as what is chosen to be drawn undergoes a process of dialogue and debate.



This work presents the collaboration between anthropology Professor Thomas Stodulka from the University of Münster and anthropologist and illustrator Álvaro Martínez.



It showcases different possibilities for communicating ideas through graphic language, including illustrations that accompany written texts and comics.

Orders of Feeling and Falling in Line

Álvaro Martínez and Thomas Stodulka

One of my (Thomas) most immersive collaborative action research projects was based on long-term fieldwork with marginalized communities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, where I lived and worked for a total of four years between 2001 and 2015. I collaborated with street-related communities, solidarity networks, doctors, nurses, activists, and artists.

WE SHARED LIVES, MOURNED DEATHS, AND CAME OF AGE TOGETHER.

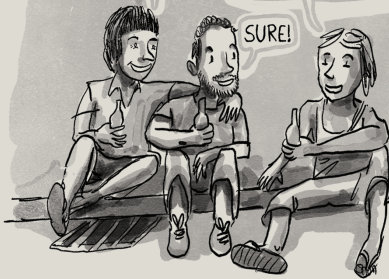
WE CARED FOR EACH OTHER.



COME ON THOMAS, LET'S HEAD FOR THE FOOD STALL AND GET MORE SNACKS AND DRINKS!

TOMORROW WE WILL GO BUSKING AT THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS, WILL YOU JOIN US?

SURE!



The ethnography elucidates practices of coping with stigmatization and marginality and follows the coming of age of street-related persons and communities. I was particularly interested in practices of community care and the role of emotions and feelings in fostering social, economic, and spatial mobility. The study contributed to anthropological theory on emotion and economy, health and illness, and the coming of age at the margins (Stodulka 2017).

THE TIME WE SPENT TOGETHER STIRRED UP FEELINGS OF COMPASSION, ADMIRATION, BUT ALSO FRUSTRATION AND DISAPPOINTMENT.



MOURNING THE DEATH OF MANY FRIENDS, WE ESTABLISHED THE CITY'S FIRST SHELTER FOR HIV-POSITIVE AND YOUNG ADULTS IN 2006.

AN ANTHROPOLOGIST SHOULD ALSO BE ENGAGED!



WHAT IS THAT BANNER!

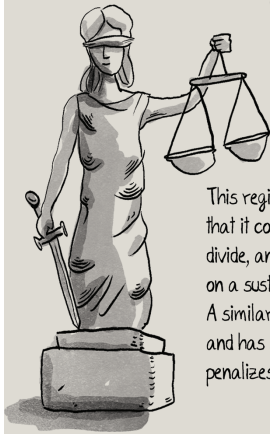


THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO CONDITION THE PEOPLE'S FEELINGS OF SOLIDARITY, SYMPATHY AND CARE!

HOW IS THAT?



TO ILLUSTRATE THIS, LET ME GO BACK TO 2014, WHEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE AUTONOMOUS SPECIAL REGION YOGYAKARTA ADOPTED A BY-LAW PUBLICLY REFERRED TO AS PERDA GEPENG No. 12014.



Situations of prohibited actions

This regional law targets the social welfare of citizens, stating in its opening paragraph that it concerns "vulnerable social groups living in poverty, lack, limitation, and a social divide, and who lead a disorderly and unworthy life [...] in effective, rigorous ways based on a sustained legal basis and human dignity, to ensure social welfare and public order." A similar regional law was first introduced in the capital autonomous region of Jakarta and has since been passed in all the Javanese provinces of Indonesia. Perda Gepeng penalizes "begging via street music" or busking (ngamen) in public places.

FROM NOW ON, NO MUSICKING, BEGGING, AND LOITERING AT THE CROSSROADS AND PUBLIC SPACES ANY LONGER!

Article 5 prohibits "being a homeless person, defined as someone with no ID card, no fixed abode, no steady income, and no plans for themselves or their children's future." Article 6 forbids being a beggar, defined as someone "whose income generation depends on the sympathy and compassion of others and exerts pressure or induces anxiety and fear in others, wears dirty and disheveled clothes, loiters in busy or strategic places, and applies these and similar practices to induce sympathy and compassion in others".



BEGGAR

- WEARS DIRTY AND DISHEVELED CLOTHES
- LOITERS IN BUSY OR STRATEGIC PLACES
- INCOME GENERATION DEPENDS ON THE SYMPATHY AND COMPASSION OF OTHERS

HOMELESS

- NO ID CARD
- NO FIXED ABODE
- NO STEADY INCOME
- NO PLANS

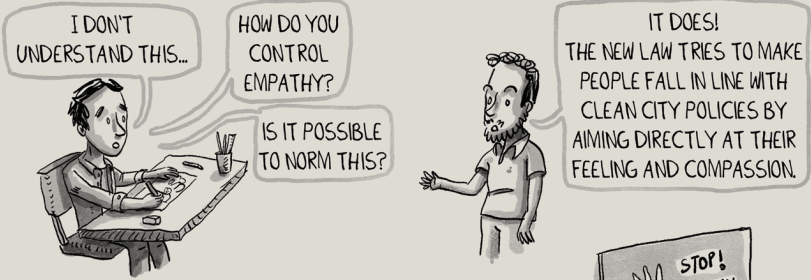
ANOTHER ATTEMPT AT GETTING RID OF US.



After nearly ten years of negotiation between NGOs, CBOs, street-related communities, lawyers, ombudspersons, and various local government departments, the Yogyakarta administration translated social stigma into a legal document that criminalizes street-related communities under the new term gepeng, an acronym for "homeless" (gelandangan) and "beggars" (pengemis).

Banners and Billboards

The increased regulation of public spaces is not surprising, but it is striking that the law directly targets the feelings and emotive practices of street-related workers, pedestrians, motorcyclists, and car drivers. It is prohibited to work at strategic locations if wearing inappropriate clothes and trying to evoke sympathy or compassion. Offenders are arrested and taken to camps where they are observed and categorized as "homeless", "psychotic (psikotik) homeless", or "beggars" based on their behavior, local origin, social provenance, age, and gender.



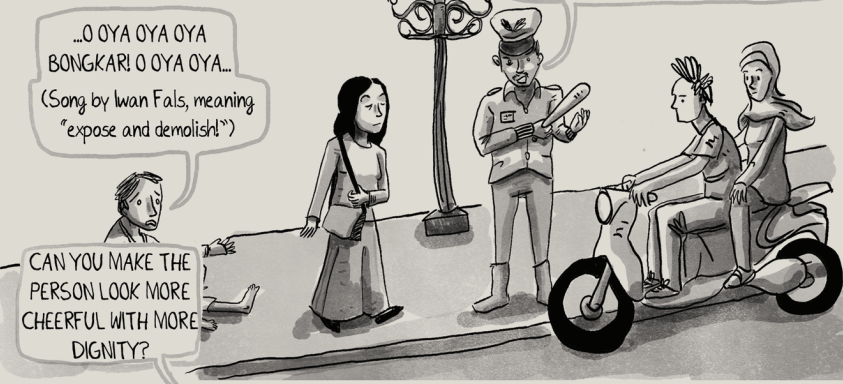
Warning signs at road junctions remind motorcyclists and motorists not to give money to the gepeng but to transfer money to the administration's social welfare office (Dinas Sosial) instead.



Other signs are less subtle and directly refer to the fines and charges established in Article 24, paragraphs 1 to 5 of the by-law.

The last paragraph of Article 24 targets not only "beggars" and "homeless" persons but also regulates how passersby should not be affected by "illegal"-ized emotive practices aimed at evoking sympathy and compassion.

"ANY PERSON (INCLUDING NGOS AND LEGAL ENTITIES) WHO VIOLATES THE REGULATION NOT TO GIVE MONEY AND/OR OTHER GOODS TO THE GEPENG PUBLICLY [...] IS SENTENCED TO UP TO TEN DAYS OF PRISON AND/OR A MAXIMUM FINE OF RP 1000.000,00."





WHAT DO YOU MEAN WITH MORE DIGNITY?



WELL, THEY ARE STRUGGLING BUT DESPITE OF THAT, THEY MANAGE TO CARRY THEMSELVES WITH DIGNITY AND PRIDE IN WHO THEY ARE.



THESE ARE THE CHALLENGES I NEED TO OVERCOME WHEN WORKING ON YOUR IMAGES.



IS IT BETTER LIKE THIS?

YES, MUCH BETTER, THANKS.

EVERY ILLUSTRATION I CREATE BASED ON YOUR STORIES OR VISUAL REFERENCES WILL INEVITABLE PASS THROUGH THE FILTER OF MY EXPERIENCES, MY IMAGINATION, MY PRECONCEPTIONS, AND POSSIBLY EVEN MY PREJUDICES.



THIS COLLABORATION ISN'T JUST ABOUT REPLICATING MY RESEARCH, IT'S SOMETHING WHERE OUR SUBJECTIVITIES ALSO MATTER.

IN ORDER TO TRULY UNDERSTAND AND SINCE I'M CREATING IMAGES, I NEED TO BE THERE AND SEE IT FOR MYSELF.



TO AVOID PRESENTING SOMETHING BIASED.

I'LL PREPARE MY LUGAGGE.

OH! OH! WAIT WE HAVE NO FUNDING FOR THIS.



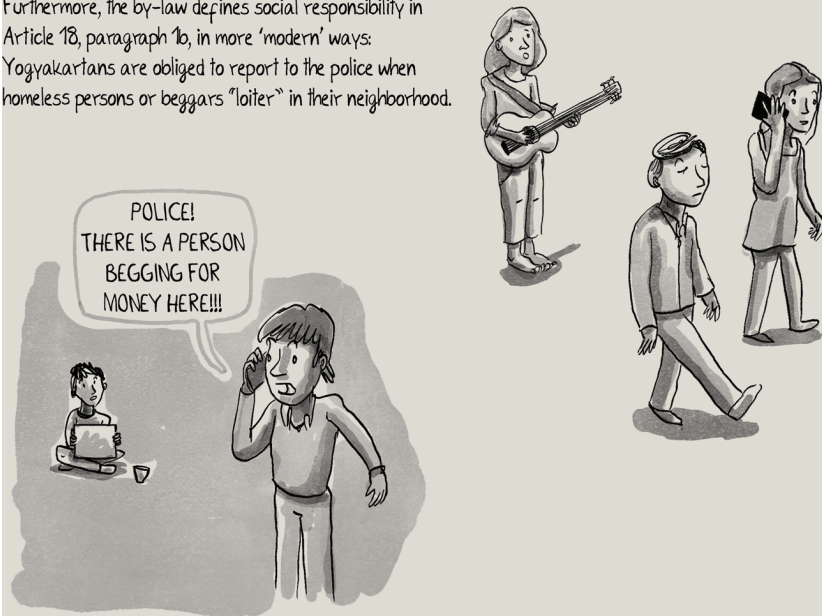
ANOTHER FUNDING APPLICATION TO WRITE JUST TO BE REJECTED AGAIN!?

Sympathizing “illegally” and giving a few coins, bills, or small gifts to the *gepeng* at street intersections is now considered a criminal act. The local government has curtailed street-related communities’ participation in the city and regulated ways of publicly sympathizing with and supporting them with money. The Perda *Gepeng* controls citizens’ actions at street junctions and alters prevalent local norms of compassion and care.



Ignoring street musicians and beggars is no longer an individual choice but a legally prescribed ‘good practice’ of civil obedience. Ignorance is now legally endorsed. The good and obedient citizen has no reason to feel compassion or sympathy for street-related persons, or even guilt about ignoring them any longer—the state has taken care of it.

Furthermore, the by-law defines social responsibility in Article 18, paragraph 1b, in more ‘modern’ ways: Yogyakartaans are obliged to report to the police when homeless persons or beggars “loiter” in their neighborhood.



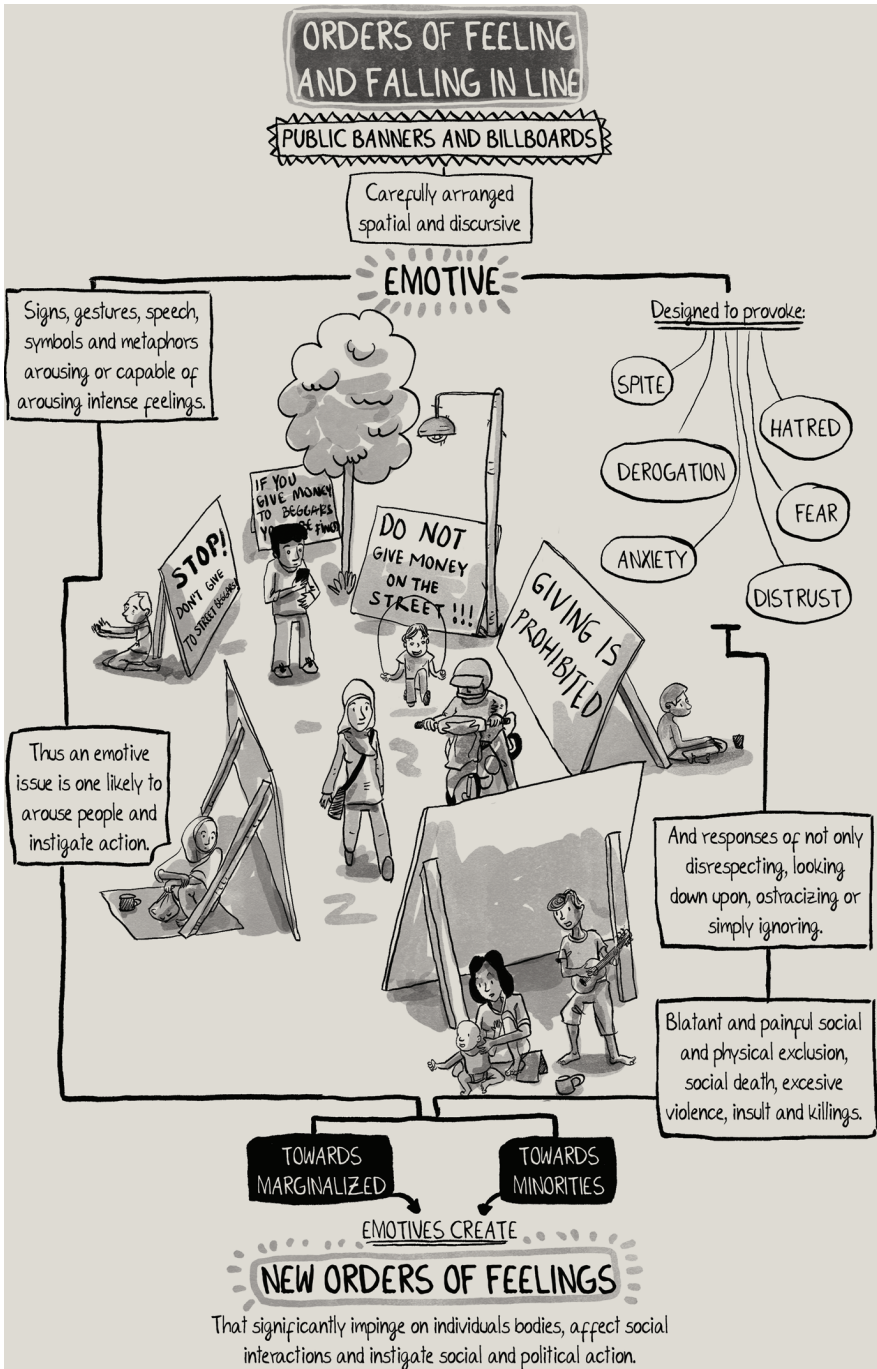
Street-related communities’ opportunities to generate income have been continuously curtailed by the government over the last decade, with no meaningful alternatives provided.

Many public spaces and empty land lots once belonging to the Sultanate of Yogyakarta have been sold, privatized, and transformed into shopping malls, hotels, restaurants, or fun parks. In its aspiration to promote Yogyakarta as a Southeast Asian hub of cultural tourism, the local administration has been issuing licenses for hotels and leisure parks since 2012, contributing to water scarcity and pollution which impact local residents and farmers. From a broader perspective, the rigorous application of the Perda Gepeng in 2015 feeds into Yogyakarta's neoliberalization, which aims to clear the city of the non-normative and that which is presumed 'dirty'. Today, street-related communities and their art have almost disappeared from the public eye.



From a broader perspective, considering the legal practices and related curtailing of free speech, regulations of public spaces, disciplining of gender identities and sexualities, and other politics of "care," the Yogyakarta Peraturan Daerah Gelandangan dan Pengemis No. 1 of 2014 hinted at a national movement of disciplining and punishing non-normative citizens.

To make sense of these and similar developments of cleansing public spaces and disciplining public behavior in cityscapes of Southeast Asia and elsewhere, I came up with the theory and concept of 'orders of feeling' (Stodulka, 2019, 2022) which combines emotion and affect studies, with political and engaged anthropology.



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