zum Pilgergeschäft: Da rollt der Rubel. So verfügte im Jahre 2010 die indonesische Regierung über $ 2,4 Milliarden als Einlage von reisewilligen Hadschkandidaten (244). Über die lokalen professionellen Reiseführer (*mutawwif*) in Mekka heißt es, dass es für sie ein Privileg und eine Ehre sei, ihre ausländischen Glaubensgenossen betreuen zu dürfen (231), so dass man fast den Eindruck gewinnen könnte, es handle sich dabei bloß um eine ehrenamtliche Tätigkeit, *pro Deo*. Die vielbeschworene Egalität unter Pilgern in Mekka scheint jedoch eher symbolischer Natur zu sein: "Depending on the price the pilgrims are willing to pay, they can have five-star accommodation and service throughout the Hajj or they can perform the pilgrimage on a much lower budget. There are even provisions to pay the fees of the *mutawwif* on an instalment basis" (231 f.). Jeder Pilger ist verpflichtet, sich bei einem *mutawwif* zu registrieren, "indeed, every movement of the pilgrims, from arrival to departure, is controlled by the *mutawwifs*" (231). Alles ist natürlich nur gut gemeint: "Without a *mutawwif*, a pilgrim would be totally lost" (231). In einer indonesischen Hadschbeschreibung aus den 1980ern, die im eigenen Land zum Bestseller geworden ist, hat der Schriftsteller Danarto dahingegen eine wesentlich andere Schilderung seiner Erfahrungen mit einem *mutawwif* gegeben, nämlich als penetranter Abzocker und Nervensäge. Erfrischenderweise enthält Danartos nüchterne und humorvolle Erzählung nicht die gattungsüblichen Klischees der überschwenglichen frommen Begeisterung, ist leider jedoch nur teilweise auf Englisch zugänglich ("A Javanese Pilgrim in Mecca", übersetzt von Harry Aveling im Jahre 1989); in der Liste der "Hajj Travel Narratives" (282–283) bleibt sie unerwähnt.

Und was ist mit Religion und Politik? Die enge Kooperation mit den saudischen Behörden und Geldgebern war nicht gerade die ideale Voraussetzung für eine unverblümte Auseinandersetzung mit dem Gastgeberland der Hadschis. Eine gewisse Beschönigung der saudischen Rolle als "Hüter der heiligen Städte Mekka und Medina" lässt sich unschwer feststellen. Die Besetzung der Großen Moschee im Jahre 1979, die blutig niedergeschlagen wurde – mit westlicher Hilfe –, stellt eine große Peinlichkeit für die saudische Regierung dar, bleibt hier jedoch ausgeklammert. Auch ist nichts über die energische Vorgehensweise der berüchtigten saudischen Religionspolizei zu erfahren, die sich anstrengt, Abweichler, die sich aus wahhabitischer Sicht falsch verhalten, auf den Pfad der rechten Lehre zurückzubringen, unter anderem mit erzieherischen Klapsen. Die Darstellung der sog. Modernisierung der heiligen Orte unter den Saudis wird hier als eine Erfolgsgeschichte gefeiert, obwohl sie zugleich zur Zerstörung des historischen Erbes führte und deshalb nicht unumstritten ist. Es ist nicht von ungefähr, dass Kritiker über die Umwandlung Mekkas in eine Art Las Vegas sprechen. Nur nebenbei wird darauf hingewiesen, dass einige Muslime einen möglichen Spiritualitätsverlust wegen der Modernisierung befürchten, wofür Ziauddin Sardar allerdings keine Gründe sieht (249). Der wahhabitische Ikonoklasmus fand übrigens bereits lange vor dem enormen Zuwachs an Pilgerzahlen statt: Fig. 48 zeigt z. B. einen uralten Friedhof; die Bildunterschrift verschleiert jedoch,

dass er schon längst aus theologischen Gründen geräumt worden ist.

Karen Armstrong veröffentlichte in der englischen Zeitung *The Guardian* am 22. Januar 2012 einen Kommentar zur Ausstellung unter dem Titel "Prejudices about Islam Will Be Shaken by This Show", in dem sie unter anderem behauptet, dass "the ancient rituals of the hajj … have helped pilgrims to form habits of heart and mind that – *pace* the western stereotype – are non-violent and inclusive" (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jan/22/prejudice-islam-hajj-british-museum>). Abendländer, die jetzt, befreit von ihren Vorurteilen, nach Saudi-Arabien reisen möchten, können auf der Website des Flughafens Jeddah lesen, wie schön die Städte im Heiligen Land des Islams sind: "Travel to Saudi Arabia to view one of the most majestic and splendid cities in the world. Saudi Arabia travel gives tourists an opportunity to appreciate the beauty and excellence of Arabic architecture showcased by the splendid Saudi Arabia attractions" (<http://www.jed-airport.com/travel_reg.php> [6. 5. 2012]). Allerdings lohnt es sich, weiterzulesen, was daraufhin unmittelbar im nächsten Satz folgt: "If you are a non-Muslim traveling to Saudi Arabia, then do not even think of visiting Mecca and Medina, as death penalty is given all the non-Muslims who enter these holy Islamic cities".

Edwin P. Wieringa

Postill, John: Localizing the Internet. An Anthropological Account. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. 150 pp. ISBN 978-0-85745-197-2. (Anthropology of Media, 5) Price: £ 23.00

In the last couple of years, research on online media and the internet has taken a number of turns, spanning from rather optimistic to more sobering accounts, especially when it comes to the role that information and communication technologies (ICT) play in regard to social activism. Southeast Asia provides an interesting context in this respect, not only due to ambivalent approaches of the respective governments, most of which feature some degree of authoritarianism, but also because of the varied appropriations of new media by social activist groups. Especially in countries such as Malaysia – where the government in a nutshell tolerates the freedoms that come with ICT while at the same time maintaining a tight grip on "old" media such as newspapers and television – activism can hardly be imagined without a wide range of new media components, from SMS to blogs and web forums.

Despite the vast amount of multifaceted literature already available on this subject, John Postill's "Localizing the Internet. An Anthropological Account" provides important new insights and ideas. While written from an anthropological perspective, his findings are certainly valuable also to scholars from other disciplines as well as to who may not be attracted to this approach by default.

Postill points out that two aspects in researching ICT need to be investigated more thoroughly: On the one hand, the Internet has become more "local" than is often acknowledged. It is not so much the global impact of ICT on a seemingly static locale that affects social activist

work, but rather an entanglement of online as well as off-line domains which deserves closer examination. On the other hand, the role and use of ICT in social activism is usually focused on issues of national importance. "Banal activism," issues centered on local day-to-day affairs such as public transport or waste management, often escapes the researcher's eye when aspects of ICT are involved.

Based on Bourdieu's field theory as well as the Manchester School of Anthropology which contributed significantly to the development of social network theory, Postill frames his research around a "field of residential affairs": In this field – the Malaysian township of Subang Jaya, a suburb of the capital Kuala Lumpur – competition as well as cooperation exists between residents, journalists, local politicians, businesses and other social agents over local matters, often times by means of using ICT. Postill makes use of the field theory approach to examine this multi-faceted field of social action beyond the binaries of network sociality and community sociality. Sociality may take on multiple forms and is not necessarily limited to one domain, such as physically-localized collectivities or fleeting, network-based communities. In order to further examine the relationship between internet usage and the emergence of new and plural forms of sociality, Postill takes a closer look at what he terms "residential sociality" – engaging oneself in committees, neighborhood patrols, or discussion forums. In these case studies, ICT plays a significant role, yet it is not the central domain of interaction. Rather, the appropriation of the internet is done selectively for specific, localized purposes by local actors, both activists as well as politicians. Despite varying levels of success, however, his findings clearly show that the hierarchical structures of the "offline" world remains unchanged and local actors have no choice but to adapt their actions accordingly. The vision of flattened hierarchies through the use of ICT, therefore, continues to be a far distant one as activists remain embedded in the hierarchical structures which surround them.

Postill's contribution to the body of scholarly work on ICT is to break up static as well as homogenizing concepts and dichotomies usually associated with research on ICT, such as network/community or local/global. By acknowledging and examining new forms of internally differentiated fields of residential sociality and "banal activism" in a non-Western township, his work is truly "going local" on an issue that is all too often dealt with mainly from a global or nation-state perspective.

True to the subject matter, the book ends with a very typical internet genre: a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Here, the author compiles a set of questions and criticisms that have been brought up during his research and the discussions of his findings. This not only makes for an interesting approach for an academic "offline" publication but also provides the reader with insights into the debates that Postill's findings have evoked already and makes this work even more worth recommending.   Frederik Holst

Robins, Nicholas A.: Mercury, Mining, and Empire. The Human and Ecological Cost of Colonial Silver Mining in the Andes. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. 298 pp. ISBN 978-0-253-35651-2. Price: $ 45.00

This book contributes in important and novel ways to the understanding of the dramatic environmental and social consequences of silver mining as carried out from mid-16th century to late 18th century in the then Spanish viceroyalty of Peru. The core of the book focuses on two places: First, the city of Huancavelica and the Santa Bárbara mine, an important source of mercury; and second, the silver mine and city of Potosí. At the core of its analysis is mercury as it became fundamental in the process of silver amalgamation that started to be carried out in Potosí in the late 16th century. The book combines several disciplinary approaches and methods: Archival work as well as published primary and secondary sources, current medical knowledge regarding the effects of mercury on human health, and state-of-the-art air pollution modeling.

One of the important contributions of the book that innovates in historical environmental studies is the use of air pollution modeling. Building over a close understanding of the technologies for refining, storing, transporting and using mercury in silver production, the location of smelters and the population, the estimation of total production of mercury in Huancavelica and the amounts of mercury used in Potosí, as well as the physical characteristics of these places, the author is able to estimate the concentration levels of mercury in the air for Huancavelica and Potosí at different moments of the colonial mining cycle. The author analyses the documentary evidence in light of the multiple ways in which different levels of contamination affected the health of the populations. The forced indigenous laborers – the *mitayos* – were those who suffered the worst consequences of exposure to higher concentrations of vaporized mercury while working in the smelters. However, the levels of contamination were extremely high in general so that all the population in these cities suffered from mercury poisoning. For both cities, the concentration of mercury was many times higher than current US standards for maximum exposure. For example, the estimates for the city of Huancavelica in 1680 show that the concentrations of mercury in the air was 30 to 100 times higher than today's US maximum limit, while in the area next to the smelters it was 30,000. The corresponding modeling for the city of Potosí shows a very similar range of concentrations, while for the vicinity of the river course, where the mills and smelters were located, the concentration was about 300 times higher than the contemporary US standard. It would have been useful to include within the maps of the air quality modeling more information about the structure of the cities at the different time periods, in order to better grasp the social distribution of the different levels of mercury concentration.

Mining work inside the Santa Bárbara mine as well as work in the smelters of Huancavelica and Potosí was strongly associated with death by mercury poisoning. *Mitayos* who survived the *mita* of Huanvelica returned to their communities with a broken health, extremely weak-