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Katharina Schneider

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### Abstract

This paper discusses two differently gendered modes of evaluating the work of crewmembers in a Northern Javanese fishery, the first focusing on its outcome and the second on the work process itself. Both are familiar from the anthropological literature. In this literature, the relative weight attributed to each and the connection stipulated between them appears as a matter of theoretical choice. In a fishing village in northern Java, however, each mode of evaluating work appears as a gendered perspective, grounded in the different experiences and kinds of expertise acquired by male crewmembers on the boats and by their female relatives who manage household finances. The paper introduces each of these perspectives and then explores how they are shared through narratives and everyday interactions within crewmembers' households.

### Herausgeber:

Universität Hamburg  
Institut für Ethnologie  
Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1 (West)  
D-20146 Hamburg  
Tel.: 040 42838 4182  
E-Mail: lfE@uni-hamburg.de  
<http://www.ethnologie.uni-hamburg.de>

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## Gendered Modes of Evaluating Work in a Javanese Fishery

Katharina Schneider

### Introduction: Two modes of evaluating work

One night in 2014 at around 2a.m. at the fishing port of Kali Sambong, Central Java, short and stout crewmember Pak Maskom stood motionless in the center of the fish auction hall, unmoved by the flurry around him. 2000 baskets, or 45 tons of fish had been unloaded from six *cantrangan* (Danish seiners) anchored in front of the auction hall already. Those baskets were now being pushed, pulled, swung and swirled about on hooked iron rods by the crew and helpers, from each boat to its assigned area in the auction hall, in preparation for sale. At 25 degrees air temperature, the fish was thawing rapidly. Maskom's jaw, however, appeared to freeze as time passed. In the hall's neon tube lighting, he looked like a ghost, a ghost in a fisher's track suit. Maskom's eyes moved along his boat's rows of baskets, stacked hip-high, and his fingers were curling and uncurling. He was multiplying baskets by the price of fish that looked rotten even at a distance. His captain had miscalculated the amount of ice for the trip of 19 days, and the fish had spoiled at sea. Maskom knew that his boat would write losses. He and the other fourteen crewmembers would receive a perfunctory 500.000 rupiah each, barely enough for their wives to cover the vegetable debts incurred while the men were at sea. Around Pak Maskom, the buzz of moving baskets and of men shouting directions and slapping each other's shoulders continued. *Dangdut*, the *cantrangan* fishers' favorite musical genre was streaming from the boats' sound systems, several songs at a time. "Lively, eh", a boat owner greeted me, nodding along with the music. When I turned around, Pak Maskom had joined his fellow crewmembers in the hurling and swirling of baskets, shouting and pointing directions while claspings a plastic bag of hot tea with a straw inside.

The scene above may stand in for many that I observed during fieldwork, in which people switched back and forth between what Dobler (2016) has called the two faces of work, and what I call two modes of evaluating work. In the first mode, exemplified here by stone-face Pak Maskom counting baskets in the auction hall, work is evaluated by its outcomes. These outcomes are things and sometimes persons (Leach 2002) that the worker anticipates will be put to use in another sphere of action, often the sphere of exchange

(e.g. Strathern 1988), but here in the domestic sphere (see also Carsten 1989). Maskom explained later that he was thinking of his wife and daughter as he was counting baskets at the TPI. The two of them were still sleeping between the bare walls of the house that he had started to build several months earlier. He had hoped to continue the building process. However, his income from that trip's catch would be just enough to cover his wife's vegetable debts and perhaps some extra snacks for his daughter. His house-building ambitions would have to wait. Maskom was also thinking of Bu Ones, his older sister. She had paid for the cement for the house and had provided other financial and practical assistance. Now she was hoping for him to repay the cement, so that she would be able to sponsor her firstborn son's wedding. Maskom knew that on this score, too, his work had failed to yield the expected outcome.

Evaluations of work by an outcome that would be put to use in a different sphere of activity have been prominently discussed, in texts that are ostensibly about value and exchange, but that make an important contribution to understanding work, as well. Many of them come from the anthropology of Melanesia, among them two influential texts that I use to briefly demonstrate this point. One is Marilyn Strathern's (1988:145-167) argument with Josephides (esp. 1982) on alienation in the New Guinea highlands, the other, Nancy Munn's (1986) analysis of value transformation by Gawa Islanders in the *kula* area. In both ethnographic settings and arguments, the material outcomes of women's and men's work in the gardens provides the necessary material conditions for their husbands to engage in ceremonial exchange and "make a name for themselves", a wording that is quite close to local renditions of prestige or fame in Mount Hagen (Strathern) and on Gawa Island (Munn). Fame or prestige is acquired through participation in the exchange systems of the *moka* (Strathern) and the *kula* (Munn). Women rarely participate, but men depend upon women's work in the gardens for realizing their aspirations. In Mount Hagen, women and men jointly raise the pigs that men exchange. On Gawa, acts of hospitality that are important in *kula* exchanges likewise depend on the provision of garden produce, generated jointly by men and women in the household.

So far, Munn's and Strathern's respective arguments run in parallel. They differ, however, in their implicit response to the question of what makes women work as hard as they do, if they cannot gain fame themselves by transforming the outcomes of their work.<sup>1</sup> Strathern argues that a woman's contribution to her husband's exchange activities is never denied, and that it is eventually acknowledged when she receives either a live pig or pork from the exchange cycle in return for the pig that her husband took from them. Thus, women share in and appreciate the outcome that their work has had in the domain of ceremonial exchange, in a form that is different from but no

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1 The difference is linked to a difference between their respective notions of value (Graeber 2001: 35-47; see also Strathern 1992).

less valued than men's fame. In Munn's analysis, there is no such return. For Gawans, moreover, gardening and exchange are not only different but also differently valued types of action. Gardening, with its slow and downward oriented movements in the relatively dark, soft and heavy soil and yield of fast-rotting comestibles, is far less "spatiotemporally" expansive (or fame-yielding) than the light-weight, buoyant movements of *kula* travel in brightly decorated canoes that bear polished, hard, durable shells, whose exchange brings the owner fame. At the same time, however, from the perspective of expert gardeners, the very qualities that set *kula* trade apart from gardening – lightness, mobility, brightness, upward-outward orientation – are already bound up in gardening, and in the rooting and sprouting of the garden itself. Munn demonstrates this beautifully with reference to a particular kind of crop magic, in which a heavy stone wrapped with leaves that are bespelled with ginger is buried in the garden. The stone is charged with the creation of tubers and leaves that will sprout and multiply aggressively (induced by the ginger) and produce the moving, glistening foliage of a healthy garden (symbolized by the leaves wrapped around the stone). Gardening experts, then, perceive in magical implements as well as in the garden as it develops the set of contrasting qualities that, from another perspective, differentiates gardening and *kula* trading. Who could say, then, that gardening is less valuable than *kula*, work less valuable than exchange?

Munn's analysis effectively combines attention to the evaluation of work by its outcomes with attention to practitioners' evaluation of its "intrinsic" value as a process, often an energetic one (Harris 2007). This is the second mode of evaluating work that was in evidence at the scene at the auction place sketched out above. Unlike the Laymi peasants with whom Harris works, fishermen at Kali Sambong do not dress up, neither at sea nor when they go to sea.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, their work at the fish auction place has the qualities of a party, beginning with the *dangdut* songs that are otherwise played on public holidays, when live bands draw large crowds of people. Perhaps spurred by the rhythm, Maskom and his peers invested far more energy in this process than would have been necessary to get the job done. They worked in bouts, high-energy periods alternating with rest. They drank tea and ate together several times during the night, up in the prow of their boat and peering across the auction hall. Their sharing of meals, tea and cigarettes, but also their gesturing, joking, slapping of shoulders and vigorous pushing and pulling of

2 Young boys who do not go to sea yet, aged ten to fourteen, sometimes dress up and ride their parents' motorbikes to the auction place to gather there with friends. They watch the unloading from the sidelines while chatting, smoking and enjoying the *dangdut*. Dressing up for work can, of course, have other reasons than a celebration of an energetic process. Semedi (2010) suggests that for women tea pickers in the plantations of Central Java, who do lowly valued manual labor and are vulnerable to abuse by male foremen, careful make-up is a part of their struggle for dignity.

baskets created high levels of energy and exuberance, apparently regardless, or perhaps in defiance of their expectations of an insufficient income.

This mode of evaluating work “intrinsically”, as an energetic and aesthetic process, has been discussed in anthropology, as well. Researchers have drawn attention, among other things, to the sensuous qualities of work, and to the importance of skill (Ingold 2000; 2013) and bodily processes of en-skilment (Marchand 2010) that generate satisfaction. According to one genealogy (Dobler 2016), an important early contribution was that of national economist Karl Bücher (1899). With reference to African work songs and dances, Bücher argued that work rhythms make strenuous work bearable, including under conditions of alienation. Dobler (2016) argues that Bücher’s contribution deserves attention in its own right, apart from his influence on both Firth (1935) and Malinowski (1935). Firth’s economic formalism and Malinowski’s functionalism, argues Dobler, have unfortunately had the joint effect of diverting anthropological interests from the quality of work processes that Bücher uncovered. Harris (2007), however, adds a critical note. She argues that analyses of the “intrinsic” value of work must be extended toward (working) people’s evaluations of the social relations that their work sustains, lest the work processes be romanticized. Munn’s analysis, to my mind, achieves just that. She draws attention to different possibilities of viewing the relation between gardeners and *kula* traders, one emphasizing hierarchy, the other subverting it.

Among the many comparative questions that Munn’s account of the relational and intrinsic value of gardening on Gawa opens up for studying crewmembers’ fishing activities at Kali Sambong, I address here only one small but significant point. This is that the relative attention that people give to the outcomes and processes of work, respectively, depends on their experience and expertise acquired in particular activities. For instance, where newcomers to gardening experience a backache, an expert gardener perceives the entire Gawan value spectrum in the spell that he speaks over a magical implement. Moreover, access to domains of activity and to expertise are gendered. This is more obviously and rigidly the case for fishing at Kali Sambong than for gardening on Gawa. The relative attention given to one or the other mode of appreciating work, then, is gender-specific.

As I will show below, crewmembers’ wives, who have to make ends meet while their husband is at sea, evaluate his work by its outcome, that is, the monetary share of the catch that he brings home. Crewmembers themselves, by contrast, appreciate, first of all, the process of fishing. However, their perspectives are not fixed, isolated from each other or mutually incompatible. Within the household, men and women share their points of view and learn to appreciate one another’s perspectives. Examining both these gendered perspectives and the process of mutual learning promises a better understanding, both of crewmembers’ work and its value to different people, and

of the gendered relations that work sustains.<sup>3</sup> The ethnographic part of the paper aims to chart a course for such an effort, beginning with a discussion of moments when the outcome of work is displayed, and gradually shifting focus to a perspective that privileges processes. Fishers appreciate these processes, as I show, for their rhythmic qualities.

My argument about the benefits of a gendered analysis of evaluations of work draws upon, and aims to contribute to two larger debates, one anthropological, the other from fisheries research. Within anthropology, it often appears that the relative attention that researchers give to one or the other mode of evaluating work and the relation stipulated between them depend primarily on a researcher's theoretical preference, familiarity or association with a particular tradition of scholarship. However, if the relative attention that people at Kali Sambong – and, I suppose, elsewhere – give to outcomes and processes of work is gendered, then these theoretical decisions are not ethnographically (gender)neutral. They should include an attempt to clarify how the ethnography draws upon or extends differently gendered perspectives, as well as the ethnographically particular strategies that people employ for learning about one from the perspective of the other.

Second, I take inspiration from debates about job satisfaction in fisheries. High levels of job satisfaction have commonly been reported in fisheries research, including for Southeast Asia. Job satisfaction is a serious concern, especially to researchers who argue that pressure on resources can only be relieved if the number of people working in fisheries is reduced. Job satisfaction has been attributed to both economic and non-economic factors (Pollnac, Pomeroy and Harkes 2001), among them the high-risk nature of the work (Pollnac and Poggie 2008) and high levels of autonomy, especially in small-scale fisheries (Smith and Clay 2010). However, Pollnac, Bavinck and Monnereau (2012) end a comparative analysis with a set of questions that powerfully demonstrates the need for further research. On the background of my ethnographic observations at Kali Sambong and in the context of more recent calls for greater attention to women and their role in fisheries (e.g. FAO 2017), it seems useful to bring gender into these debates on job satisfaction. This paper aims to take a step in this direction. Of course, the discus-

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3 The crewmembers and their wives I refer to are not generic women or men, and not even generic husbands and wives in fisheries, even if the ethnographic focus is limited to Southeast Asian fisheries. They are men and women within nuclear families that occupy particular economic positions at Kali Sambong, and whose experiences and outlooks are correspondingly specific (see also Niehof 2007). They are poor, and they are not fish traders but fishers. Although there is an overlap in personnel between crewmembers' wives and (small-scale) fish traders, the richer ones among these traders, though predominantly female (see also Niehof 1985) perceive and evaluate work processes within the fishery from yet a different perspective.

sion of a single case, Kali Sambong, would be considered methodologically more than modest by fisheries researchers.

Before I begin, the setting should be introduced at least briefly. Kali Sambong (pseudonym) is a fishing port and village of the same name on the north coast of Central Java, where I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork in brief stints since 2013. According to oral histories, the ancestors of the inhabitants fled from interior Java some time in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. They took up fishing as an occupation of last resort. At present, roughly 2000 people out of a working population of 3000 are registered as fishers.<sup>4</sup> The number and size of the boats at Kali Sambong has grown rapidly, first after the motorization of the local fleet in the 1970s, and again since the early 2000s. The growth seems to be due to a combination of technological changes, market expansion, easier access to credit, and a growing international labor market for fishers that has opened up an additional path for crewmembers to become boat owners themselves.<sup>5</sup> Currently, about 130 active Danish Seinners are based in the port, owned and manned mostly by locals.<sup>6</sup> The Danish Seinners range between 10 and 80 gross tons in volume and spend 10 to 30 days at sea, with a crew of 12 to 22 men. In a good night, 80 tons of fish are landed in the port, for local consumption and processing as well as for sale to factories, urban whole sale markets and exports. With productivity, living standards have improved significantly, but the benefits have been distributed unevenly between boat owners and crewmembers.

### Evaluating work by its outcomes

For crewmembers, the primary outcome of their work is not the fish that travels up long and complex value chains and whose price is set by traders, but the money that crewmembers receive for this fish and that they hand over to a female family member, usually their wife. Women are in charge of household expenditures, at Kali Sambong as elsewhere in Java.<sup>7</sup> Men effectively lose control, both over their income and over the assessment of their

4 Followed by roughly 170 industrial (including fish) workers and just under 100 traders. Only about 30 people work in agriculture, according to the 2013 village statistics.

5 I have no reliable quantitative data on the prevalence of labor migration. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is very common for younger men to work on Taiwanese, and sometimes on Japanese or European boats for three years to gain experiences (*merantau*) and save money for establishing a family. If they then work abroad for another three to six years, they can save enough to buy a boat.

6 There are about 20 bottom long-liners, as well, and a changing number of purse seinners owned by fishers in East Java, who use Kali Sambong as a seasonal base for pursuing pelagic stocks on their migration along the Java north coast.

7 For example, Stoler 1977; Brenner 1998.

work, when women judge the money they bring home against the needs of the household. Moreover, when income is gradually transformed into more enduring forms that mark a household's economic standing, crewmembers' wives take the credit, while men's contributions drop from view. This gradual transformation, with its apparently disappointing outcome for crewmembers, will be charted below, through a discussion of three moments in which the outcome of work is revealed, or put on display.<sup>8</sup>

### Unloading: Recombinant Displays

The display of the catch at the auction hall is a dynamic assemblage of baskets of fish on a stop-over between boats and trucks or pick-ups to markets or processing sites. Witnesses are the captains, crew, owners and managers of the six or so boats that unload in a particular night, each in a different part of the auction hall; the poorly paid helpers who drag baskets (male) or slice plastic bags and sort fish (male and female); the fish traders, and finally, Bu Saroh, the owner of the largest and liveliest food stalls across the road, and her helpers, who cater to the fishers and take a keen interest in their affairs.

The smallest and cheapest species are unloaded first. They are sold through a single middle woman to a cartel of specialist traders and processors. The latter distribute the fish between themselves, each labels their baskets and then has them dragged to the edge of the hall and loaded onto trucks or pick-ups as quickly as possible. While the cheap species disappear toward local processing plants or foreign-run factories along the coast, larger, more expensive species, such as rays and snappers, take their place in the auction hall. Again, parts of this catch disappear rapidly to the pick-ups of traders who have special relations with particular boat owners, some involving the "tying" of boats through credits. The larger part of expensive fish, however, remains sitting in rows in the auction hall until five a.m., when the official auction begins. The auction is attended by sixty or so traders every morning and lasts for an hour or two, followed by another three to four hours in which individual traders load pick-ups for nearby processing businesses, or trucks bound for the urban markets of Bandung and Jakarta.

Outside the auction hall, beginning at around 4:30 every morning, approximately thirty small traders cater to bike or motorcycle peddlers who ply the coastal villages. They buy and re-sell the *lawuhan*, the fish angled by crewmembers during evenings and nights at sea that is kept separate from the boat's catch.<sup>9</sup> The *lawuhan* is unloaded last, is weighed individually on

8 "Revelation completes work", Leach (2003: 99) has argued in his account of aesthetically elaborate moments lodged between work and exchange on the Rai Coast in Papua New Guinea.

9 *Lawuhan* has different meanings on the Java north coast. It can also refer to a small share of the catch that is not sold but divided up among the crew for home consumption.



mobile scales on the edge of the hall and then usually handed over to the trader who provided the angling hooks and lines, as well as personal supplies such as cigarettes and snacks. These small traders also sell any fish that they can buy or beg from friendly boat owners, who are often distant relatives. Finally, a small volume of catch composed of cheap species, snatched by child workers between midnight and three a.m. and then sorted and re-sold by a middle woman behind the auction hall makes an unexpected reappearance in the small traders' buckets.

This dynamic display of the catch inside and outside the hall would lend itself to a structuralist analysis of the differently ranked and gendered trading niches.<sup>10</sup> With regard to crewmembers' evaluation of their work, however, it is most interesting for the option it forecloses. This is the option of evaluating one's work by comparing one's boat's catch – the outcome of anything between ten and thirty days of work at sea – to that of other boats that are being unloaded at the same time. While unloading, crewmembers take breaks to view and comment on the catch of other boats, but they do not attempt a systematic comparison. Interactions between crews unloading side by side at the auction hall, if they take place, are characterized by a hands-on egalitarianism, easy-going sociability and a sort of aloofness or disinterest, rather than by competitiveness.<sup>11</sup>

Pak Maskom's explanation of his concerns in the particular night mentioned above suggests why this may be. He was grumpy, not because another boat had caught more or better fish, but because he knew that the outcome of his past twenty days of work at sea would not be sufficient for him to enhance his house, and because he feared that he might not even be able to buy extra snacks for his daughter. Those were the relations that he pondered while

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10 These have undergone considerable change since the *cantrangan* fishery took off in the late 1990s. Fish traders, whose businesses hinge on their understanding of current configurations and their ability to predict future trends, are intensely interested in discussing these niches. Boat owners and managers, too, must have at least a working knowledge of them in order to sell their fish well. Captains may know a little, as the crew expect them to keep an eye on the selling practices of the boat owner. Crewmembers themselves, however, take little interest in these matters.

11 The same holds for the fish traders at Kali Sambong. Alexander (1987) observed the same quality of interaction among traders at markets in an agricultural area in the south-west of Central Java, though her interpretation is framed by theoretical interests that differ from mine.

counting baskets of fish; relations with those closest to him in space and time were relatively insignificant.<sup>12</sup>

### Handing over the share

The moment that Maskom was anticipating at the auction place, and that several crewmembers told me they anticipate at sea, as they watch the boat's storage spaces fill up during a trip, is the hand-over of a crewmember's monetary share to a female member of the family. This moment occurs about four days after their return from the sea, and just after another moment of display of the outcome of work that I do not discuss here for reasons of space, the division of the catch between owner and crewmembers at the boat owner's house. Only the crewmember and his wife will be present at this crucial moment, when he returns from the meeting at the boat owner's house and hands over the money he has received. My observations in this section therefore come primarily from the family I stayed with, Maskom's aunt Bu Ones (45), her husband Pak Arif (54), who had been working on the local fleet for more than thirty years, and their two sons. Toni (21) was away for most of the time as a migrant worker on a Taiwanese tuna boat. Faudi (14) was living at home while training to become a cargo captain at a private vocational school with a maritime focus nearby.

One hot afternoon, Bu Ones, Faudi and I were resting inside, while Pak Arif was making a net on the porch. Pak Arif spoke about the hardships of being a fisher twenty years ago, when boat owners had limited access to credit and would send the crew home empty-handed if the boat made losses. Suddenly he dropped the strings he was tying, unwound the toe that held the net tight, and jumped up to mime his younger self, coming home with close to nothing after ten days at sea and dreading the encounter with Bu Ones. Striding up the path toward the house, he mimed pasting a single (small) bill that he had earned to his sweaty forehead. Then he crouched down a little as he passed through the door, his imaginary bill up front, eyes cast down, hands open and empty. Bu Ones had rolled onto her stomach for watching him. Arif approached her to hand over his imaginary bill with an apologetic "just that, mother".<sup>13</sup> Bu Ones' response was surprisingly deft. She grabbed the

12 This point must be qualified in two respects. First, unlike crewmembers, captains and to a lesser extent boat owners do compete directly with each other. They compete for reputation, fiercely and in various ways that include the direct comparison of their catch to those of their peers after a trip. Second, crewmembers, too, keep track of the relative incomes of crew on different boats. However, the fish auction place would be the least convenient moment for doing so. I will say more later on about displays that facilitate such comparisons, and at what point exactly they enter into crewmembers' evaluation of their work.

13 When a child has been born, husband and wife in Java address each other as mother and father (Koentjaraningrat 1957: 67).

broom and hit him, jokingly but hard, crying and laughing at the same time. Arif made another round through the living room, back bent, eyes down and arms raised in despair, then dropped onto an armchair and broke into laughter. “Our work on the boats back then... a single banknote...”, he said and then joined Bu Ones, who had fallen silent. Eventually, she dispelled the moment by stretching her arm out and poking Faudi in the belly, who shrieked. “You were not born then”, she said gently, releasing us all from the spell of a past that Faudi and I had not been part of.

On other occasions, Bu Ones provided insights into what was at stake on such occasions. “If Pak Arif’s catch was good, all was well. But if the boat made losses, we would be crying. Once we had hardly any rice left, and Pak Arif’s share was insufficient for buying more. We boiled the remaining rice for Toni. He was three years old, poor thing. Pak Arif and I went hungry for two days. I made noise in the kitchen at mealtimes, so that the neighbors would not notice.” This story helps to understand her tearful laughter at Pak Arif’s re-enactment of very difficult moments, as well as the deep sorrow, indignation and perhaps shame that Arif hid behind drama and hilarity, both in the moment itself and when he recalled it almost twenty years later. By that time, the situation had much improved. Access to capital allowed boat owners to pay crewmembers at least the standard sum of 500.000 rupiah, enough for covering a household’s small debts for food during the trip, even if the boat had made losses on the operating costs. Moreover, as many young men chose to work on international fleets, where they earned salaries rather than shares, labor was scarce in the fishery, and boat owners made a great effort at paying more or otherwise supporting crew at times of poor catches. Those who didn’t could be sure that the crew would leave, jointly or singly (depending on different crewmembers’ loyalty to the captain), immediately or the latest after the yearly bonus distributed at Id-ul-Fitri. Nevertheless, although poor catches no longer immediately exposed a household to hunger, they still meant that women would have to default on repaying larger loans that most of them had and would not be able to meet social obligations. Pak Arif used the same strategy of drama and humor, though to somewhat less dramatic effects, in 2014 when he came back with disappointingly small sums of money.

Other crewmembers had other ways for managing such moments. Many simply postponed them by avoiding entering their house when they return from the division of the catch at the boat owner’s house. By remaining outside with children or neighbors, busying themselves cleaning the yard or finding some other reason not to cross the doorstep, they indirectly prepared their wife for bad news. Sometimes, a husband’s initial refusal to enter the house turned into a tactful game of avoidance between husband and wife that could last until the husband set off to sea again. A woman once told me she played along in this game because she feared that, if she encountered her husband

directly, she would yell all her frustration, anger and anxiety about his poor income straight into his face.<sup>14</sup>

It is no coincidence that I have concentrated on displays of poor catches, because given the costs that women have to cover while their husbands are at sea, even catches that are deemed average are a disappointment. Especially in families in which women's income was less secure than Bu Ones' or in which there were several school-aged children, incomes tended to be lower than expenditures, and many of these households were heavily indebted. Thus, the hand-over of a crewmember's income, though anxiously awaited by the women, was rarely a moment of celebration. More commonly, it posed serious strains on relations within the household. It was certainly not a moment that could explain the vigor and cheerfulness with which crewmembers worked.

## Houses

However, if one pursues the sequence of transformation of crewmembers' income further, something astonishing happens. Some crewmembers' households indeed seem relatively prosperous, compared to others. Bu Ones is one of those women who has a reputation for the determination and skill with which she has enabled her family to lead a lifestyle that she herself calls plain and simple (*sederhana*), despite her and Pak Arif's humble background and despite his low income. This lifestyle is significantly different from the situation of acute economic insecurity in the beginning of her marriage, and from whom neither Bu Ones' nor Arif's siblings had extracted themselves at the time of my fieldwork.

The icon of this achievement of a *sederhana* lifestyle, and Bu Ones' greatest source of comfort and pride was her house. In Janet Carsten's (1989) memorable phrase, the women in a Malay fishing village on Pulau Langkawi

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14 There is another dimension to this game of avoidance, to women's anger and men's shame. Crewmembers are categorically suspected of, and some of them admit to visiting the prostitutes working behind the auction place when they return to port, using the money "for food" that boat owners give them for unloading the boat. Some suggest that this money is a bonus and not part of their share, and that they are therefore free to spend it as they wish. However, most argue that this money should either be handed over directly, or kept back but then included with the share, or used as pocket money, so that the wife does not need to provide pocket money for coffee and cigarettes while the husband is on land. Women, too, are divided on the matter. Many state, defiantly and in a way that begs the question, that they do not care what their husband does, as long as he reliably gives his income to them and does not waste it on other women. In any case, Bu Ones' reaction to Arif's performance shows that even without this additional dimension, the handover of crewmembers' income is a tense moment in which financial and emotional concerns are densely entangled.

“cook money”. At Kali Sambong, fishers’ notoriously low and unreliable incomes are domesticated, and enduring, protective, nurturing and sociable domestic spaces are created as women transform their husband’s income, not only into food but also into furniture and, finally and most importantly, into (contributions towards) houses, first their own, then those of extended family members, and finally, those of their children.<sup>15</sup> The material difference between food and houses marks another one, that between highly egalitarian Pulau Langkawi and far less egalitarian northern Java. Houses are icons, not just of a household’s autonomy as a social unit (Jay 1969: 41), but also of its relative economic status in the village. Houses are typically financed partly by the owners and partly by their extended families. They are built by professionals, of which there are about 35 in the village, and often in a step-by-step manner, as money becomes available. Thus, the state of a house quite literally shows off the state of a household’s finances. It would be difficult to over-emphasize the salience of this point. Besides the apparently year-round relentless gossip among women concerning other women’s houses, lifecycle ceremonies and mutual visits at Id-ul-Fitri provided occasions for taking a good look at other people’s interiors.<sup>16</sup>

The economic status of a household, made visible by its house, was typically attributed, not to crewmembers’ work, but to their wives’ budgeting skills.<sup>17</sup> Bu Ones’ house looked better than the others in her neighborhood, others in the village informed me, because she was a good house-holder. Pak Arif’s work at sea was never even mentioned. The elision only became apparent to me when in 2014, Bu Ones gave me a highly unusual tour of her living room. Moving her finger around the room during one of those lazy afternoons, she introduced each piece of furniture by the name of the boat

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15 Janet Carsten’s (1989) analysis of the gendered transformation of money into the substance of kinship, and thus productive of a future, may be read as an ethnographic commentary on Hannah Arendt’s (1956) distinction between labor and work.

16 During mutual visiting at Id-ul-Fitri in 2013, men tended to stay in the front room (*ruang tamu*), but many women wandered freely through the hosts’ sleeping and other back rooms, as well, sometimes on the pretext of taking a plate to the kitchen in the back, but sometimes openly curious about the house and its contents. The hosts, of course, had previously removed or hidden whatever they did not want people to know about.

17 Budgeting is not linguistically marked as work, as is true for women’s manifold income-generating activities at Kali Sambong. I suspect that this is at least partly due to the bureaucratization of village life in New Order Indonesia. Professions of male family heads were registered by village officials. Women were assumed to be, and typically described themselves to me as housewives, even if their work as peddlers of food or second hand clothing, as owners of street corner shops or snack stalls covered the consumption requirements of their households and contributed significantly toward school fees and contributions to ceremonies.

owner whom Pak Arif had worked for when she bought the piece. She went backward in time. “This is Pak Kamto’s chair and table, from before his boat went bankrupt. Thank you, Pak Kamto. That closet over there comes from Pak Slamet – just one closet, that wasn’t a good boat. From Pak Mainar, we only have the new window frames; we needed the rest for school fees. Before that, it was Pak Haji Yono, the TV and the shelf. Thank you, Pak Haji Yono.” This tour occurred at the time when Bu Ones began to point out that my presence in the house came to feel more or less ordinary.<sup>18</sup> More generally speaking, insiders to a household were well aware of the contribution of crewmembers’ work to the house, while outsiders foregrounded the budgeting skills of women.

This appears reasonable insofar as differences between the shares that crewmembers bring home are not an outcome of the vigor or skill with which a particular crewmember works. They depend on the catch on the boat, and catches are only partly predictable or controllable. Those factors that can be controlled are, by general agreement in the following order of importance, the gross tonnage of the boat, its age and state of repair, and the skills of its captain in finding fish and managing the crew. The final factor is the spiritedness of the crew, to which individual working habits obviously matter, but that is assumed to follow from their expectations of a good catch and their treatment by the captain. The choice of the right boat was a matter on which women were supposed to support and gently direct their husband, as part of their role as the manager of household finances. They were expected to nudge him toward monitoring the catch of his boat over time, to remind him to prioritize income over other considerations, and to make discrete inquiries at the village about the incomes of relatives and neighbors working on different boats. Women who failed to do so were criticized. Bu Ones, for instance, grumbled about Maskom’s wife who, according to her, neither kept track of her own expenditures, nor actively sought out information about boats. No wonder Maskom had built no house yet, six years after getting married, said Bu Ones, and took it upon her to push him a little.

To sum up so far, then, if evaluated by its outcomes, crewmembers’ work on the boats does not show for much. It generates uncertain, insufficient and transient material outcomes (fish and money). The task of transforming money, into food for the family but most prominently into houses, belongs to women, and theirs is the credit for the outcomes achieved. Unlike fish at the auction place, houses seem to lend themselves to comparative appreciation. With this transformation, then economic distinctions are made visible, and are credited to women. Crewmembers’ contribution to them, by providing the money that flows into houses or their parts, is effectively eclipsed, though

18 Her broom, she remarked, was finally overcoming its surprise at being held by a white-skinned person and no longer zigzagged across the room in my hands. The soycake I fried no longer either burnt with excitement or remained pale with fright, but turned out alright.

– as Bu Ones’ tour of her living room shows – it can be retrieved, including by women.

A brief reference to some classical ethnographic writing on Java seems in order here. Ethnographers of Java have vehemently rejected Geertz’ (1956: 141) suggestion that in Javanese peasant communities, economic change has led to a “division of the economic pie into smaller and smaller pieces”, which Geertz called “shared poverty” (*ibid.*; see also Geertz 1963). Analysts of a Marxian bent have emphasized class divisions and their salience (e.g. Alexander and Alexander 1982; White 1983). Symbolic analyses, meanwhile, have highlighted hierarchy as a central organizing principle of Javanese society (Anderson 1990).<sup>19</sup> Brenner’s (1998) ethnographic material from a Solonese trading community suggests a possibility of combining both perspectives, through attention to gender. In Laweyan, economic distinctions are associated with women and their work in the house and the market place; differences in spiritual potency are the domain of men’s efforts. Crewmembers at Kali Sambong, unlike the husbands of wealthy Solonese batik traders and unlike some of the boat owners in the village, lack the time and money for enhancing their spiritual potency through ascetic exercises. With their apparently egalitarian work relations and disinterest in direct competition, certainly at the auction place and with the qualifications noted above, they neither participate in “conventional” (Wagner 1981) male status-seeking, nor in “conventional” female economic competition. From the perspective of either of these gendered forms of conventional forms of behavior, crewmembers’ work appears deficient. This may explain why, as fishers are painfully aware, their agricultural neighbors call them “stupid”. If ethnographers have so vehemently rejected arguments about egalitarian relations in Javanese peasant villages, one may speculate that they did so out of an understanding that the non-engagement in either economic or status competition does indeed exist in Java, as in the case of crewmembers in Kali Sambong. However, it makes for an odd and not particularly respectable position.

Crewmembers’ reputation among their agricultural neighbors is not unlike the one Bolivian highland peasants enjoy among Bolivian townspeople. As Harris vividly describes, the Laymi peasants are deemed hardworking, poor, and stupid (Harris 1993; 2007). In the following section, I take my cues from Harris’ analysis of the question what makes Laymi people work and describe the “intrinsic” value of work as an activity in which people expend

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19 For a critique even before this highly influential formulation of an older idea, see Hatley 1984. For a post-New Order critique and commentary on the literature that evolved from it, see Beatty 2012.

energy.<sup>20</sup> Working my way backward, and more speedily as I draw on material already introduced above, I begin with houses, move on to a brief reconsideration of the scene at the auction place, and then follow fishers' accounts of their work on the boats out to sea. Being a woman, I have not yet been able to convince them to take me out. Thus, I approach the intrinsic value of work as an outsider, working through their stories, much as the women do who listen to them when they return home. I also draw on footage shot with smartphones, both by crewmembers themselves and by a male student who accompanied me to the field and who was allowed to join them. While obviously imposing obvious limitations, this ethnographic position allows me to trace gendered transformations of evaluations of work that occur on land, in spaces that I had immediate access to.

### Evaluating Work as an Activity: Bodily Rhythms

Besides status markers, pieces of furniture act as mnemonics for periods of work on particular boats, each with its own qualities and memories. When Bu Ones had completed the abovementioned tour of her living room, Pak Arif, who had been listening, told Faudi and me at some length about his work on each of these boats. Seating himself sideways on one of "Pak Kamto's" chairs, he began by speaking of melons. He demonstrated how they used to cut and shared melons on Pak Kamto's boats, two slices for each. Fruit are a luxury at crewmembers' households. At sea, said Pak Arif, the crew had fruit every day, besides other high-quality food, as much as they wanted. Working hard felt good if one's belly was full, and eating as much as one wanted was great after working hard. Moreover, after eating a sumptuous dinner, the crew of several vessels fishing around the same spot would sometimes join their boats, sing karaoke and have a party. The next morning the sequence started over again: plenty of good food, hard work, more food, fun and rest. When he was finished, Bu Ones reminded him to tell me and Faudi that they could also choose among three types of instant coffee on board. Moreover, they were given various kinds of snacks that Bu Ones considered an extravagance and would never indulge in.

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20 As Harris notes, this question is especially important when work sustains relations in which the workers themselves are subordinate to others. It is also important where either the products or the process of work is deemed disgusting or ethically dubious, as is the case, for instance, for work in slaughterhouses (e.g. Pachirat 2013). Crewmembers' work at Kali Sambong sustains relations in which they themselves are subordinate. Ethically dubious, however, is not their work but that of boat owners, who are seen to make profits from products infamous for their stench and low quality. Accusations of black magic that follow from this accusation do not affect crewmembers' work. They are therefore not discussed here.



Shopping lists and receipts for the supplies of a boat, and even more so, the heaps of food that boat owners assemble in their front yard before departure are impressive indeed, compared to the short lists and the minute quantities in which crewmembers' wives buy their rice or cooking oil. Moreover, one sees types of food, such as corned beef, that one does not come across at all in crewmember's homes, and brand names that are likewise out of reach for their non-fishing relatives. As noted above, labor is short in the fishery, as many of the young men have chosen work on international fleets, where incomes are higher and more secure. Boat owners thus have to compete for crewmembers. Their captains are responsible for assembling their crew, primarily from among their neighbors, friends and distant relatives.<sup>21</sup> Captains have impressed on me, time and again, that ample and high-quality, diverse food is the first condition for retaining a crew, and for keeping them spirited during the work process.<sup>22</sup> The second important factor is a good sound system. Larger boats may have as many as four stereos with speakers, so as to give the crew a choice regarding their entertainment.

However, Pak Arif did not recall rich food and music per se, as he was dangling legs on Pak Karto's chair. He recalled the alternation of hard work, plenty of tasty food, and entertainment in his work on the boats. These rhythms, closely tied to the human body and its requirements, were central to other crewmembers' accounts of their work at sea, as well. I use the term rhythm, in Deleuze's (1994: 21) sense of repetition (or cadence-rhythm) with a difference (an intensity, or tone), and as always already poly-rhythmic. This not only permits, but prompts an investigation into the ways in which this human bodily rhythm is linked to other rhythms at sea, including machinic and environmental rhythms. In exploring this rhythmic assemblage, I take inspiration from Harris (2007), who notes that people's satisfaction with work as an energetic process cannot be understood apart from the particularities of their social and other environments, in this case, the boats and the sea. At the same time, and with reference to the longstanding German tradition of studying work rhythms, I draw on Dobler (2016), who extends Bücher's (1899) focus on regular work rhythms to an investigation of the combination of more and less regular rhythms. Both, he argues, are neces-

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21 If nuclear family members are recruited, people fear that work-related conflicts may spill over into family life, and vice versa.

22 Carsten (1989) emphasizes that snacks are shared among Malay fishers but rice (real food) is only shared among family members. Kali Sambong's crewmembers happily shared rice, as well as other types of food, with their peers. On land, the sharing even of snacks with non-relatives is hedged with precautions, for fear of black magic. If food is shared as part of the work process, however, such precautions apparently do not apply. One might, again, see a contrast between egalitarian relations among crew and hierarchical village relations at play that is absent from Carsten's ethnography of Malay fishermen.

sary for understanding how rhythms energize people at work<sup>23</sup> and how they both facilitate and signal enskilment. The relevant other rhythms, though different in many more ways than just their relative regularity, in fishers' cases were the rhythms of other crewmembers' bodies and of the machines on board, and thus of currents and fish at sea. An in-depth "rhythmanalysis" (Lefebvre 2013) of Danish Seiner fishers' work at sea would exceed the scope of this paper. I only investigate these maritime rhythms as far as necessary for sketching out the very different, and differently gendered evaluations of fishers' work that they facilitate.

### Bodily and other rhythms at sea

When explaining their work, both to me and to their family members, crewmembers noted both the challenges and the energizing effects of coordinating their own bodily rhythms of work and rest, the ups and downs of their energy, and the speed and strength of their physical movements with those of others in the work process. Moreover, when lowering and pulling up the net, they must coordinate their bodily rhythms with those of the hauler, as well as the currents and fish. The overall responsibility for all these alignments lies with the captain. Captains reinforced crewmembers' statements about the centrality of food, music and rest, in order to keep the crew spirited. A hungry, poorly rested crew, they said, would be almost impossible to coordinate. This would not only affect catches, but also put people's safety at risk. During a four-month' period in 2013-14, I counted three deaths at sea and heard about various minor accidents. Deaths are typically deaths by drowning. They occur when crewmembers are in the way of the heavy net when it is lowered and are swept overboard. Not all of them can swim, and even if they can, they may not be able to save themselves if their limbs are caught in the net. Minor, and sometimes major accidents, such as facial injuries and losses of limbs, are usually due to crewmembers falling into the sharp teeth of the wheels of the hauler. Both types of accidents can occur due to human error, if the crew is in the wrong place in the process of lowering or pulling up the net, respectively.

They can also be due to engine failure. Engines and their rhythms are the second set of rhythms that captains must coordinate, and they are notoriously the weakest link in the rhythmic assemblage of humans, boat, gear, currents and fish. Besides endangering the crew working on board, a failure of the engine running the boat puts the entire boat at risk, especially in poor weather conditions. Moreover, catch may be lost if either of the two machines is unresponsive. Therefore, the engines receive great attention and care, from the captain, the machinist who is the second in command and responsible for their maintenance, and from the boat owner, whose finances will be

23 Rhythms play a similar role in dance. For relevant ethnographic explorations, see for example Henriques 2010, Plancke 2014.

called upon if repairs or replacements are needed. It is not unusual to find all three, boat owner, captain, and machinist, as well as the crew standing around an engine sitting on the ground for testing, listening with their heads inclined and trying to come to a shared understanding of whether its rhythm is 'strong' and 'spot on' or whether a specialist needs to be called.

Because the task of coordinating all these different rhythms lies with the captain and not the crew, captains have a more expansive, and a more in-depth knowledge of these rhythms, besides many others that I omit here. The readiness with which crewmembers described such rhythms to me differed, and the differences appeared to correlate with their work experiences and skills acquired in sensing and creating alignments between these rhythms. Younger crew emphasized the processes in their immediate surroundings. Older, more experienced fishers appeared to pay more attention to the rhythms of the machines and of currents and fish, as well. While not all of them move up to the rank of engineer or captain – and not all of them would want the responsibilities that promotion brings – most of the older crewmembers were occasionally called upon to cover for either of those two, because they were trusted to know the relevant rhythms just as well. Although they received no special benefits, they were known and lauded for the contributions they made, not only by working hard, but also by supporting the work of others through cheerfulness, humor, by setting a good example, looking out for them and setting and maintaining a lively rhythm.

Maintaining one's own bodily rhythms at sea is, of course, foundational to playing such a role. Conversely, people who cannot do this will never be able to work vigorously at sea. It is telling, perhaps, that men from crewmembers' households who had not taken up fishing themselves all cited me the same reason. They got seasick. Seasickness is not only unpleasant. It renders people definitely and unquestioningly unfit for fishing. A fisherman who gets seasick cannot eat, rest or work. He endangers himself and, at worst, the entire crew. When the male student who accompanied me to the field and went fishing with the men from his host family got sea-sick, they sent him back after two days on another boat, arguing that they worried too much about him. If a man cannot adjust to the conditions at sea on his third fishing trip the latest, he must find another source of income – which isn't too hard for people at Kali Sambong, as there are several towns with work opportunities nearby.

Fishers with experiences on different gear types, including those who had worked as migrant fishers on foreign fleets, often compared the rhythmic requirements of working with each. These included day-time versus night-time sleeping times, the vicissitudes of working with foreign and powerful as opposed to local and breakdown-probe machines. In addition, while local fishermen stressed the discomfort of cooperating with people who were too closely related, migrant fishermen's stories highlighted the challenges of working in mixed-language international crews who could barely commu-

nicate, and who came from different fishing and occasionally non-fishing backgrounds. When telling stories about their time on foreign boats, they recreated complex rhythmic spheres through sound, gestures, and mimicry. For instance, migrant fishers on Taiwanese tuna boats imitated the swishing of lines, the “kkrrring” of wresting hooks out of fish, the slapping of the heavy fish onto the deck and its rattling down to storage room, the roaring of engines, and above all, the angry yells of Mandarin-speaking captains. Bu Ones’ older son Toni, thinking of his own first months on such a boat, enacted for his brother Faudi his situation as a poor, polite Javanese newbie on board who got caught for a mistake by the captain. The captain would shout at him in staccato Mandarin. Toni, thinking of his father as a role model, would muster whatever self-restraint he could and utter a slow, soft and calm “iya, iya”, in Indonesian. Seeing a smiling face and hearing “iya, iya”, however, would only further enrage the captain, who expected a frightened, ideally panicked crewmember to hyper-actively correct his mistake. And so the two of them performed a classical Batesonian figure of complementary schismogenesis, whose end Toni wisely left in the vague so as not to upset his mother. Eventually, a well-meaning peer suggested that Toni try a brief “sh” or “hai” and just get back to work.

Toni was lucky. Several men who had returned from Korean boats years ago recalled a much harsher treatment. One recounted a combination of foul language, excruciatingly long work ours, too many men on board for doing the work well, and thin rice soup thrice a day for meals. Their passports had been taken off them, and they were not allowed on land when the boat entered a port. Eventually, the man and two other Indonesian crewmembers saw land that they thought could belong to Indonesia. They jumped overboard and swam ashore, found themselves in the Malaysian part of Borneo and managed to return home, with the help of Indonesian officials. Such stories indicate the multiple challenges of eating well, having fun, resting enough, and working hard on board. On land, such bodily rhythms tend to go unnoticed. At sea, fishers must learn anew to maintain them, amidst the rhythms of machines as well as humans different from themselves in language and habits and not always well-meaning, let alone the rhythms of fish and currents.

### Food, music and work on land

Crewmembers carried their attention to the proper alteration of food, music and work over to their work on land. Whether they were unloading fish at the auction place, repairing a net stretched out along the roadside under the glistening sun or replacing planks in the body of the boat anchored in front of the owner’s house along the river, they worked in bouts that alternated with sharing meals, coffee, tea, snacks or cigarettes. They worked in sync

with each other, vigorously, and amidst jokes. When they were not working in the noise of machines, crewmembers were usually engulfed by *dangdut* streaming from music boxes. Moreover, during their five days or so between fishing trips, crewmembers also carried their bodily rhythms over into their domestic life. This generated frictions with their families. One source of conflict concerned the amount and quality of food they demanded. Many crewmembers judged their families' daily meals against the standards they were used to from the boats, found them deficient, and boldly occupied the kitchen and set about changing them. Replacing the eggs or soycakes that their wives were used to with fish and meat, Maskom, for instance, finished his wife's food budget for a month in five days. Bu Ones routinely put aside household money for the days between Pak Arif's arrival and the hand-over of the catch for just this reason. Arif was fully aware of the troubles he was causing her but insisted on the importance of proper food. To make up for the extra expenditure, he saved the bonuses and any money "for food" or "for cigarettes" that the owner paid them during unloading for this purpose. The arrangement could not entirely smoothen over the differences, however. Bu Ones was split between wanting to treat Arif well and upbraiding him for his extravagant demands. Arif grumbled that she was "a nice person, but not in the kitchen".

Besides food, his music was a bone of contention. Like many older fishers who had worked amidst engine noise for decades, Pak Arif had hearing problems.<sup>24</sup> Even distant neighbors knew when he was home, by the loud music coming out of the house. Sometimes, family members tried to very carefully suggest that he lower the volume; more commonly, they fled and spent their free time elsewhere. The west monsoon, when most boats stayed in port for four to six weeks, depending on the weather, was especially difficult, rhythmically as well as economically. Crewmembers tended to be in an increasingly foul mood, for the lack of decent food, fun and work, they said. They felt lazy and listless and grew increasingly quick-tempered as the season progressed. Their wives and children often preferred to brave flooded roads and schedule visits to distant relatives rather than sustain protracted contestations over deeply engrained bodily rhythms at home.

However, not all encounters of different bodily rhythms were conflictive. In some cases, crewmembers' families appreciated learning about and participating, briefly and imperfectly, in some of the habits that crewmembers had acquired on the boats. For instance, Pak Arif introduced regular breakfasts that he bought for everyone during his stints on land, and Bu Ones, who usually did not bother to spend time or money on her breakfast, was pleased. Arif also insisted on everyone resting after their first spell of work over mid-day and going to bed early in the evenings after watching TV for a while. This

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24 The problem is exacerbated in fishing villages where men dive for fish with compressors. Many of them are deaf.

gave the day a structure that it did not have. Sometimes, we spoke about this when he was at sea, or one of us spontaneously bought breakfast for everyone, “as if Pak Arif were here”. Crewmembers also brought leftover snacks home that the boat owner handed out after trips. Their families were delighted to try them, being instructed by the crewmember how to open this or that container or cut this or that fruit. Thus, their families directly participated in some aspects of crewmembers’ work, while learning about others through crewmember’s narratives.

### Gendered evaluations of work

Appreciating work for its outcomes and as a process, respectively, are differently gendered modes of evaluating work at Kali Sambong. From one perspective, crewmembers’ work yields dissatisfying outcomes, and a household’s economic performance is credited to women’s work of budgeting rather than men’s work of fishing. From the other, fishing is a challenging, dangerous, but also energizing and deeply satisfying effort at sustaining one’s own bodily rhythms – and, one might add, the rhythms that mark human life – under unusual circumstances. Crewmembers must learn to eat, work hard and rest well amidst the rhythms of other (non-kin, and sometimes not Javanese) people, as well as those of different types of machinery and equipment, each posing challenges of its own. Thus, while women create and manipulate economic distinctions that are crucial to social life at the village and in highly status-conscious lowland Java, crewmembers manipulate differences of a different kind. If work, as Olivia Harris (2007) suggests, is crucial to people’s sense of what it means to be human, then crewmembers’ work makes them human in the “inclusive sociality” (Palmer 2015: 21) of a maritime workspace in which not physical objects, but rhythms are the primary focus of attention.

If one starts from this “rhythmic” perspective, then crewmembers participate in an innovative form of generating distinctions, one that is different both from conventional male forms of generating status distinctions in Java. Conventionally, men seek to enhance their spiritual potency, refinement and self-control through ascetism, including abstention from food, rest, and work. In practicing self-control, they train themselves to be able to engage in interactions with a broad variety of social and spiritual others, both superior and inferior to them, without losing countenance, and thus without surrendering their peace of mind. Fishers, though apparently doing quite the opposite in insisting that one must eat well and regularly, enjoy music and rest and work hard, nevertheless achieve similar effects. Food, rest and hard work enhance their ability of engaging with various others, including other crewmembers, captains, machines, and eventually, though beyond the scope of this paper, fish. What we learn from their mode of sensing and manipulating differences through rhythms, is that status manipulation needn’t take

the form of competition, but may also take the form of establishing a fragile, temporary balance with people and things whose vital rhythms do not match one's own.

This, in turn, also provides a new perspective on women's budgeting efforts, one that focuses on processes rather than outcomes. If one privileges outcomes, houses are the domesticated, relatively stable material forms that women create out of the slippery, fishy and monetary outcomes of a crewmember's work. This, however, tells us little about these processes of domestication, or in Arendt's (1998) terms, of "worlding", the creation of a relatively enduring, material and social lived space. Does worlding take particularly maritime forms among fishers? From a perspective informed by crewmembers' "intrinsic" evaluation of their own work, women's budgeting efforts align the rhythms of irregular and low incomes with those of both regular and irregular, small and large expenditures. Worlding, or "cooking" money (Carsten 1989) is a rhythmic process, although the rhythms handled by women are different from those that men engage at sea.

Concentrating on one or the other perspective on work is not a neutral theoretical choice. It implies privileging one or the other starting point for perception, action and mutual engagement. At Kali Sambong, these starting points are gendered. I have aimed to direct attention at the processes of mutual learning that men, women and young people are involved in, within the lived spaces of their houses that objectify both men's experiences of their work at sea, and women's efforts at turning the outcomes of men's work into an enduring space for human sociability. Here, people learn to appreciate one another's perspectives, not by physically assuming one another's point of view, but through the use of drama, humor, and narratives evoked by furniture. Women at Kali Sambong make the effort of joining in crewmembers' bodily rhythms, and crewmembers stand still amidst the buzz of the auction place and attempt to calculate if their share will be sufficient for covering the planned expenditures on a house. Their strategies for switching back and forth between differently gendered perspectives deserve further attention. Anthropologists interested in evaluating work – their own, and work that they are not "native" to – might draw inspiration from them.

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Katharina Schneider holds a PhD in anthropology from Cambridge University. She has conducted ethnographic field research in Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, with a thematic focus on fishing and human-environment relations in coastal and small island settings.