

(1) Abstract—I seek a SOAR Grant Development Appointment to prepare a proposal for external funding to build on my long-term research in a Balinese principedom. Through detailed local ethnohistory and ethnography the proposed research will address key issues in anthropology, including the question of the relationship between material realities and the symbolic communities created through ritual; the formation of subjects in hierarchical relationships; relationships with minority Muslims in Hindu Bali, located within Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation; and the role of traditional institutions in an era of both globalization and decentralization (word count: 92)

(2) Project Description and Scholarly Significance and (2a) Merit—(Please note that in this case the items required under (2) and (2a) overlap, so I will address them in one place). I am applying for a SOAR to prepare a proposal for funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF). I aim to continue my work on a Southeast Asian Principedom nestled in a fertile valley of Bali, Indonesia. As published in my book (2006), my first long-term research in the area (1997-1998, 2000, 2003, and 2005), takes its point of departure in a royal ancestral ceremony, the preparation of which coincided with the fall of President Suharto’s regime in 1998 and the momentous transition to a new era in Indonesia. At this historical juncture, I found that descendants of subjects to the local princes, as they dedicated months of labor toward the ritual, in effect re-created the social structures of the ancient principedom, bringing into play relations of hierarchy and power that were believed to have disappeared following the Dutch conquest of Balinese kingdoms. I analyzed the structures of the principedom and developed a preliminary assessment of its role in the contemporary world. One reviewer writes: “Drawing on rich data...Pedersen has produced a compelling account of the daily functioning of a

princedom whose power is rooted in history and in a rich set of cosmological understandings. Paying particular attention to the motivations of followers, Pedersen compellingly argues that the ability of the princedom to reassert its power was linked to the sense of chaos that followed Suharto's ouster" (Robbins 2006). My book has been received as an important theoretical contribution (Parker 2006, Robbins 2006) and "a key contribution to the regional literature" (Robbins 2006), which will "inform debate for some time to come" (Howe 2007: 259). That said—It only scratches the surface of this interesting case, which has broader implications for our understandings of the Southeast Asian state. I will therefore now seek funding for a second round of research in the area.

Through the case of the princedom we can engage questions that have been debated concerning Bali and Southeast Asia (SEA) for decades, but not yet resolved, including (1) the question of the relationship between material realities and the symbolic communities created through ritual (Marx 1859, Durkheim 1912). In Bali this question has played out in regard to our understanding of the material realities of land tenure and irrigated rice management, including the relative role of royalty, farmers associations, and various deities and temples associated with each (Christie 1992). Briefly, the Marxist-positivist connection between control of irrigation and royal power (Wittfogel 1957) was long refuted by scholars of Bali, who emphasized instead the autonomous role of farmer's associations and water temples with no connection to royalty (Geertz 1980, Lansing 1991), yet Häuser-Schaublin has recently renewed the debate (2003). I was already invited to contribute my preliminary observations to this well publicized debate, suggesting that it sets up a false dichotomy (Pedersen 2005), and the major proponents on either side

acknowledge that my future findings from the princedom may bear significantly on the issue (Lansing personal communication; Häuser-Schaüblin 2005: 307).

(2) My proposed research will also more fully include the perspectives of low caste followers, who continue to define themselves as the descendants of former slaves and subjects of the princes. My first work was frankly situated in the noble house (Pedersen 2006: 44), even as I strove to include a wide range of perspectives. Howe is right to identify this as a slant (2007: 258), which I intend to address by situating my ethnography of the princedom also in follower communities. Butler (1997) draws attention to the paradoxical process of “subjectification,” whereby people become subjected to an external power as well as becoming constituted as personal subjects. Through the Balinese example, in which the process of subjectification continues after the external mechanisms of control are gone, I will provide new insight into the relationship between “external” production of hierarchy and the mechanisms by which hierarchy has been and continues to be produced “internally” by the subjects themselves. (3) I will also address another gap in my work, a glaring gap as well in the literature (Barth 1993), by expanding my attention to the minority Islamic settlement within the princedom, eliciting its history also from its own perspective, and its relationships and roles within the princedom (their forefathers arrived as slaves to priests of the princedom). This will address pressing issues concerning changing ethnic relationships in Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation (Erb et al 2005).

(4) The princedom is of ongoing interest also because all of the above questions extend into the present. It thus allows us to query the role of traditional elites and institutions in the modern and global era. Indonesia is a particularly interesting case because, following Suharto’s fall, in an age characterized by decentralization in many

postcolonial and postimperial parts of the world, it inaugurated a radical form of autonomy (Erb et al 2005), and Bali, especially the area I work in, stands out for its continuity of traditional institutions (Howe 2007:258). My most recent work (in review) concerns the princedom's initial response to the decentralization of governance, a process that will require ongoing attention as policy implementation unfolds. This intriguing Balinese princedom, in short, warrants in-depth investigation, with thorough ethnohistory, modeled on Schulte Nordholt's work in Mengwi (1996), but extended to contemporary ethnography.

(2b) Impact—On the discipline and scholarly community is indicated by the interest generated by my first study of the princedom, including from leading scholars, such as Howe (Cambridge, UK) (Howe 2007) and Lansing (U. of Arizona & Santa Fe Institute). I have spoken with Lansing about my research plans, and he comments, in a letter of support for my personnel file, that “What’s at stake is the question of what, in the end, anthropology can learn from the Balinese case. The most interesting questions are still open; what we need is not more speculation but some first-rate, long-term ethnographic research,” which he believes I will accomplish (to Dr. Barlow, 1/7/2007). On the local communities: The communities within which I work are extremely interested in their own history and are eager to bring it to light. Moreover, the local prince is helping farmers shift back to organic farming. I have already linked them up with Balinese colleagues in the agricultural extension service in support of these efforts. As I study the agricultural systems of the princedom, I will, as I have before, work with all of the above to document their efforts. I will also develop an integrated educational component to my research, which will involve pairing up CWU students with Indonesian students to work with mapping & interviewing. I have already spoken to professors at Bali’s University, who are excited

about this possibility. In addition to bringing CWU students to Bali, I will pursue the possibility of recruiting one or two well-qualified Indonesian students to come to CWU.

(3) **Action Plan/Methods**— I will devote all my time until the NSF CAREER deadline 7/19 to developing a CAREER proposal, following which I will reshape the proposal for submission for a senior award, target deadline 8/15. In this period I will also prepare the required Human Subjects Review application. The Action Plan & Methods for the proposed research will combine archival and fieldwork methodologies, the details and logic of which I will put great care into developing. I offer the following only as a preliminary glimpse: To approach the question of 1) the symbolic and material organization of the Southeast Asian princedom, I will A) “Map” the princedom. The SEA “state” is defined by social connections not territory (this princedom consists of ca. 10,000 people). Using a Global Positioning System receiver, I will map the location of the princedom’s constitutive social groups: villages, royal and commoner kin groups, irrigation associations, and temples onto existing maps (available from the regional Public Works at a scale of 1:25,000). I will then plot (adapting Lansing 1987) their symbolic connections (ritual ties) as elicited through interviews, during which I will also elicit what farmers and royalty, respectively, say about their roles. B) Document the history of the arrival of the different groups into the area and of the development of temples, as well as changes in land tenure over time. C) Document and analyze negotiations over rituals and land & irrigation over time. B&C will involve archival research in Holland as well as locally (e.g. the Dutch controller’s reports, transfers of landholdings & tax records), as well as interviews, 2 & 3) I will complete ethnohistories and ethnographies of what I have identified as the three most significant subject

communities (the selection will be explained in the full proposal) as well as the minority Islamic settlement within the princedom (ca. 500 people), documenting the relationship between this settlement and the local Hindu Balinese institutions. Ethnohistory is “the study of especially non-Western peoples from a combined historical and anthropological viewpoint, using written documents, oral literature, material culture, and ethnographic data” (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000), while ethnography, the hallmark of cultural anthropology, involves “the study of people in their natural settings; a descriptive account of social life and culture in a defined social system, based on qualitative methods (eg detailed observations, unstructured interviews, analysis of documents)” (www.sachru.sa.gov.au/PEW). Through these standard methodologies (see also Bernard 2005), I will pursue all of the above questions into the present, to also examine more closely 4) The role of traditional institutions in the era of globalization. Continuing analysis of the princedom in relation to the resurgence of local institutions in the Indonesian nation-state will contribute to debates in Indonesia and beyond concerning state-society relations and ethnic relations in the context of decentralization policies. In this context, I also will continue to follow how the local institutions (the princes along with village and irrigation associations) are strategizing for agriculture and tourism in the area, addressing wider debates concerning how to proceed with less vulnerability to the tourism economy.

(4) **Extramural Potential**—I believe the proposed research holds high potential for funding. Dr. Winslow, the NSF Cultural Anthropology Program Officer, has encouraged me to apply for multiyear funding. She also has invited me to evaluate NSF dissertation proposals this spring, which culminates in 2 days in Washington DC, discussing

proposals with her and a panel of colleagues. This should yield helpful insight into the evaluation process and enhance my likelihood of success. I intend to continue to discuss my ideas with Dr. Winslow, who welcomes interaction in the proposal development process. In the event that my proposal is not funded following first submission, I will revise and resubmit it. I will also pursue the Wenner Gren Foundation as an alternative funding source (www.wennergren.org). Eventually this research will lead to peer-reviewed articles and, I expect, a book. Likelihood for success may also be assessed on the basis of my record of procuring competitive funding for my earlier fieldwork and of bringing research to dissemination.

(5) References Cited—may be single-spaced, Times New Roman 10 pt.

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(7) Funding Source— National Science Foundation Cultural Anthropology Program.

http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5388&org=BCS

(8) Name of program officer contacted: Deborah Winslow, dwinslow@nsf.gov.

As requested, see the appended summary of the exchange and email confirmation.

(9) Proposed grant budget range—\$400,000-500,000 (for five years of funding).