



# Sociocultures and Milieux in Southeast Asia

Vincent Houben, Boike Rehbein

# Argument



- Social structures are transformed by the capitalist nation state.
- Earlier sociocultures and classes persist and are specific for each country.
- All capitalist social structures combine a reproduction of earlier classes with differentiation into milieux related to the capitalist division of labour.

# Structure



1. Explanation of the concept socioculture with regard to Indonesia
2. Explanation of the term milieu with regard to Thailand and Laos
3. Reproduction of inequality

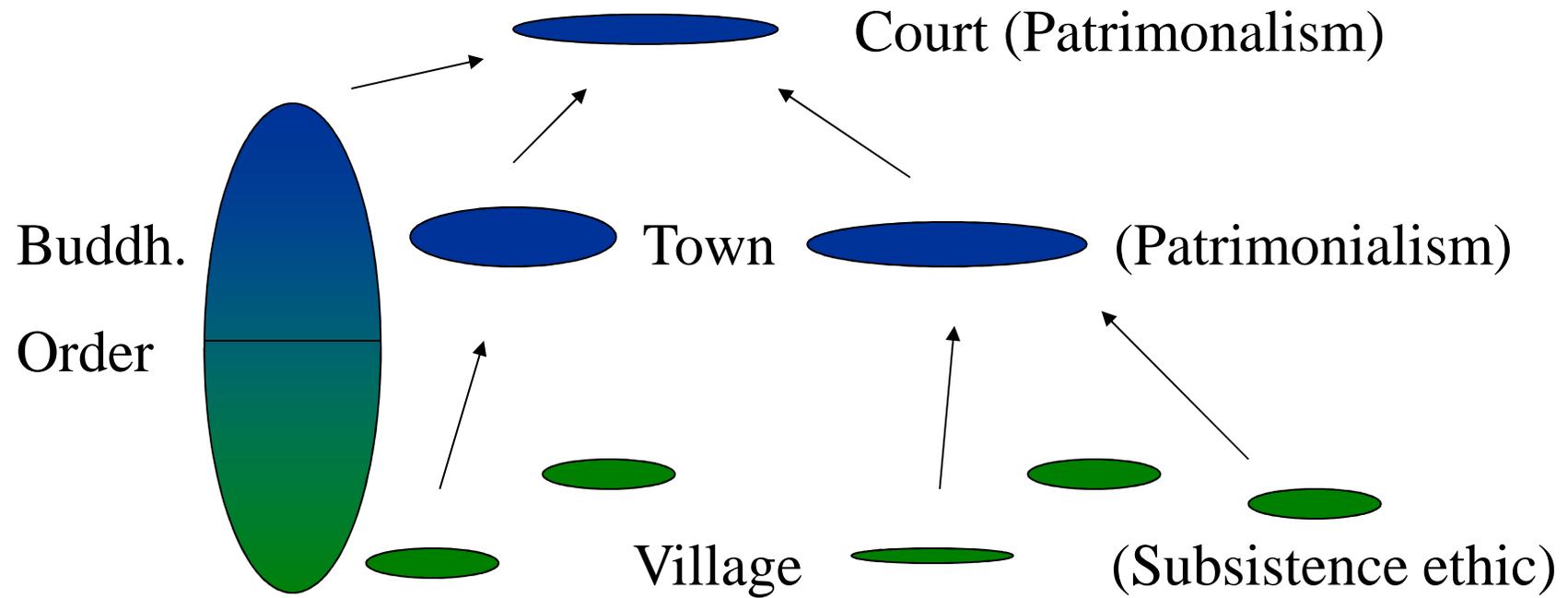
# Socioculture



A structure of inequality that developed  
in a certain historical phase and  
persists beyond that phase

(e.g. nobility in Europe or slavery in  
Brazil)

# Mandala



# Indonesian Coasts



- Trading centres
- Some independence from the mandalas in the hinterland
- Commercial Socioculture

# Impact of Colonialism

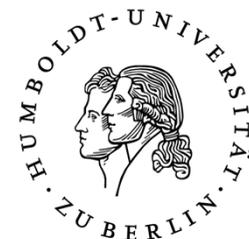


- Indonesia began to come under European control already in the sixteenth century but control only extended to a few coasts on a few islands
- In the nineteenth century, a colonial socioculture developed, especially in Java

# After independence



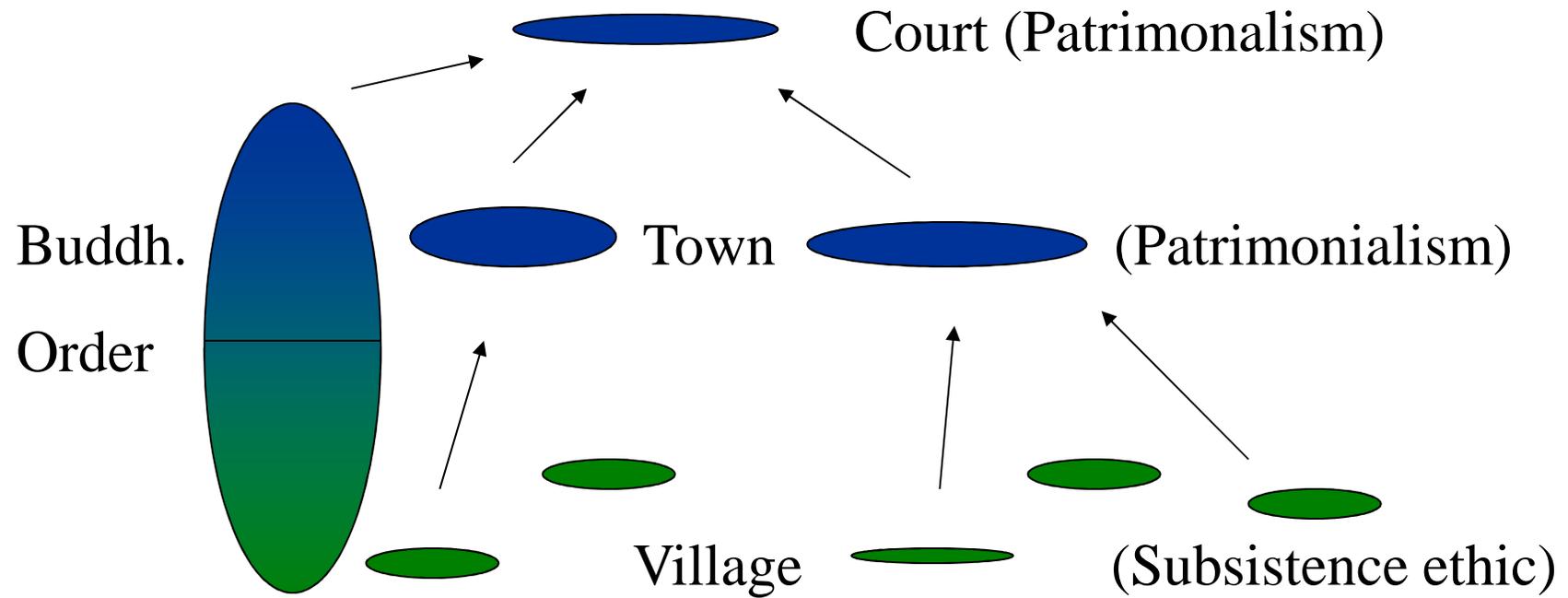
- Indonesian elites took control after the Second World War
- Mandala, commercial socioculture and colonial socioculture partly persisted but were transformed partly into four aliran (streams) and partly into milieux



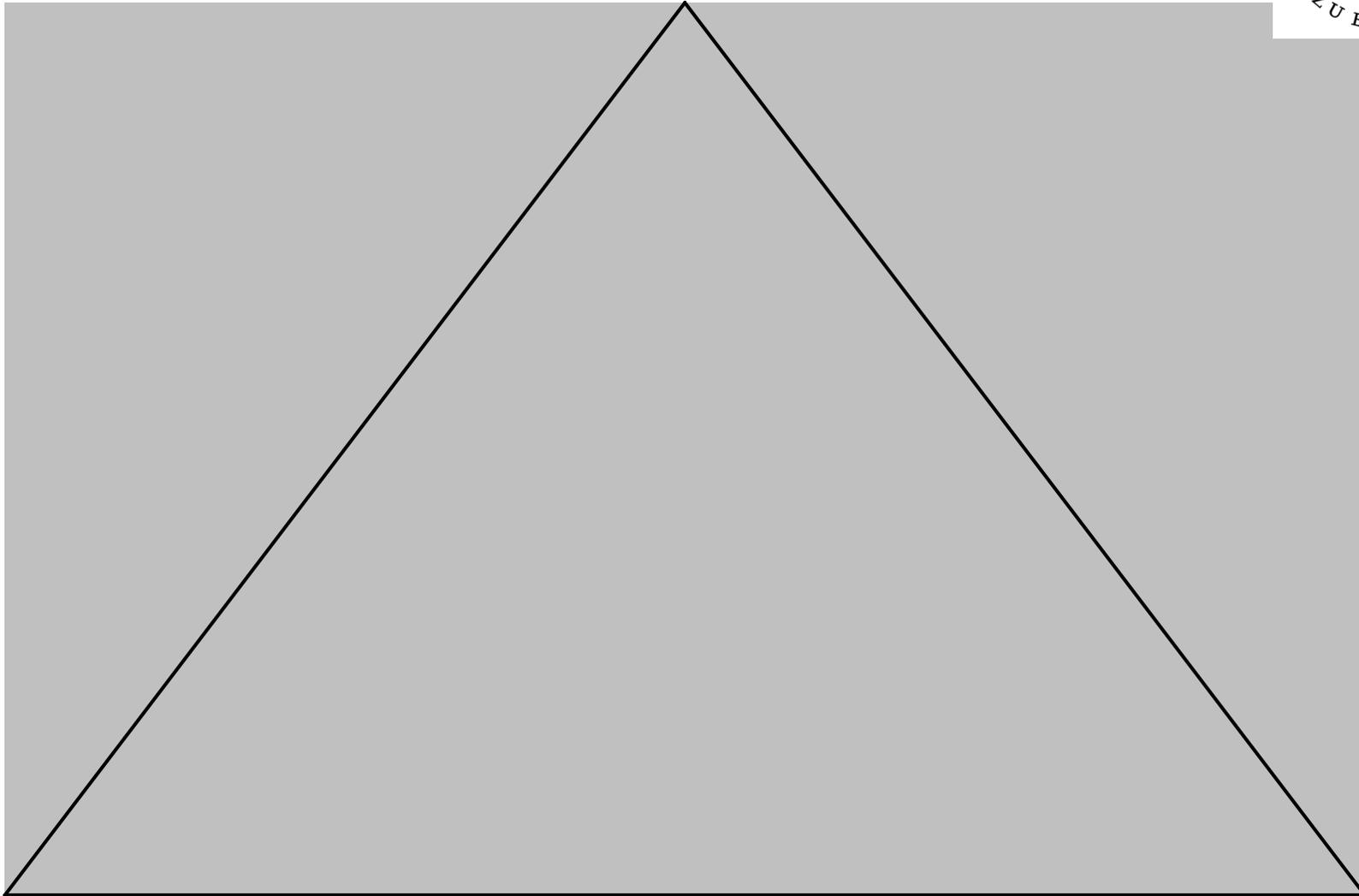
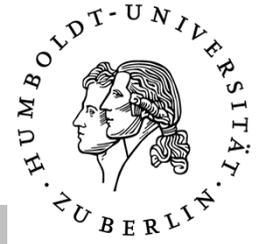
# Milieu

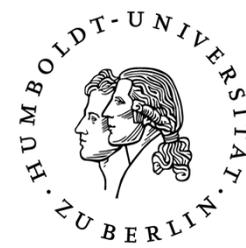
Social environment that links a class to a segment in the division of labour (including institutions) and entails specific habitus patterns

# Mandala



# Socialist Structure





Laos

Politbureau

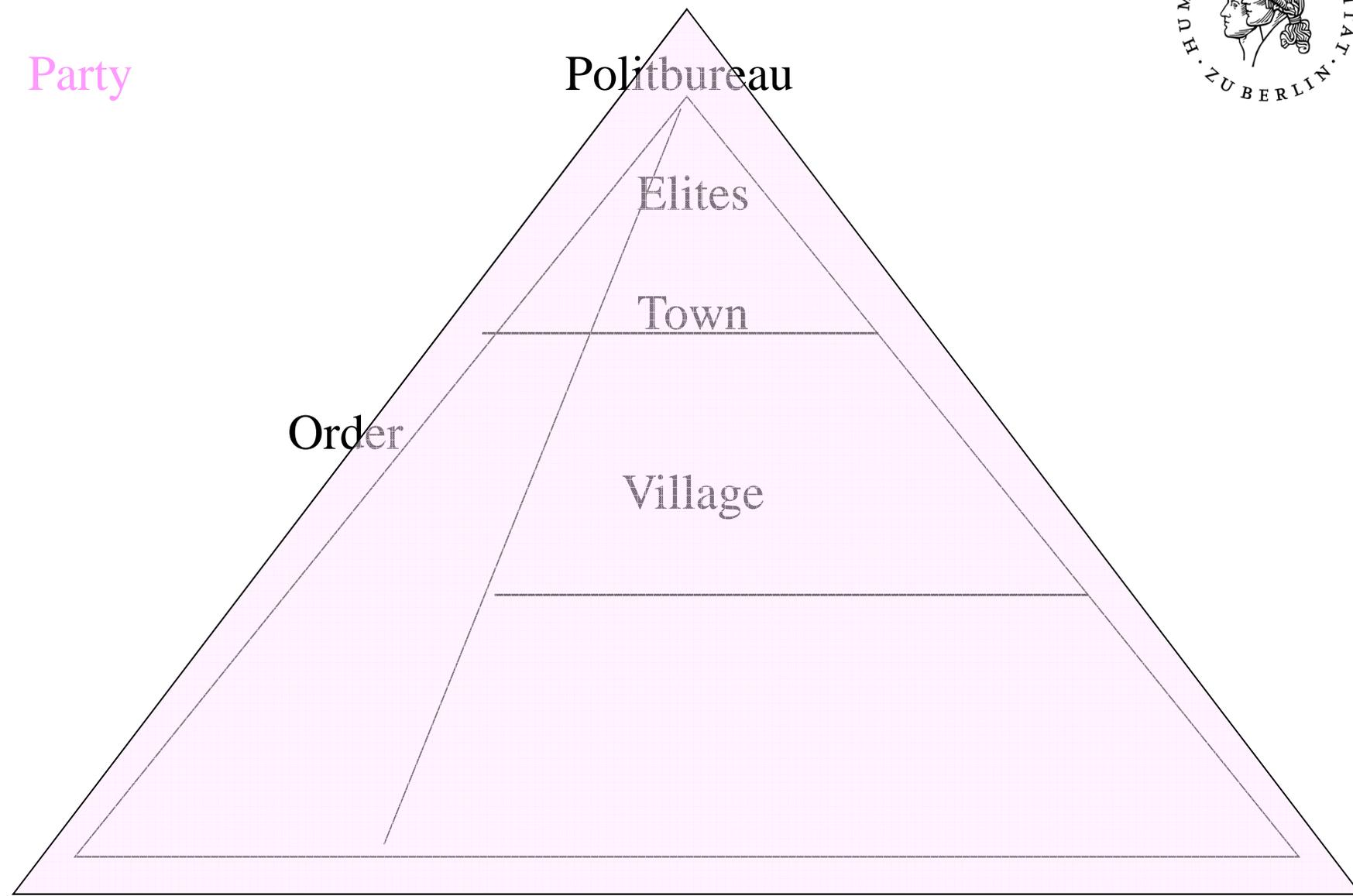
Elites

Town

Village

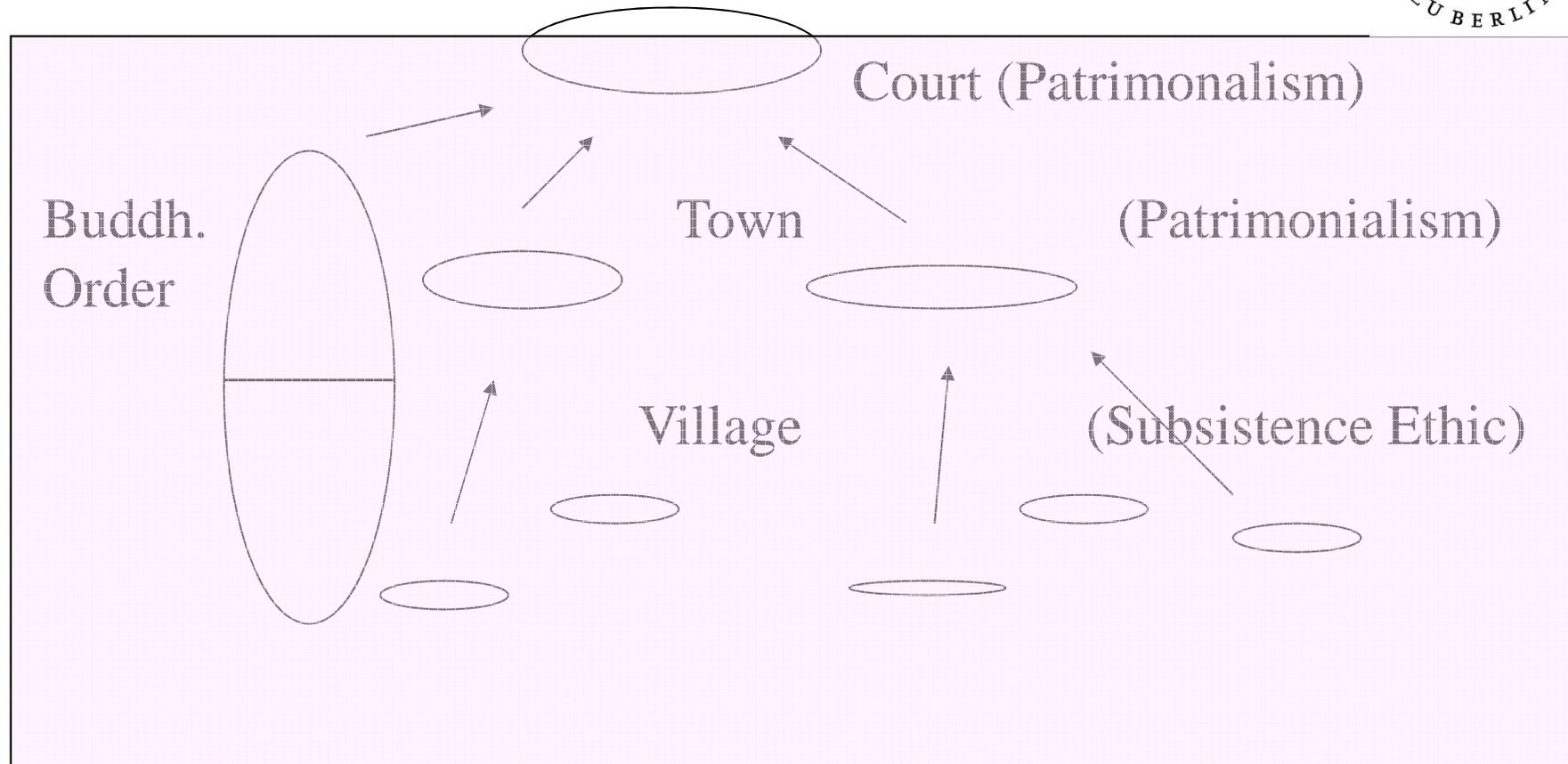
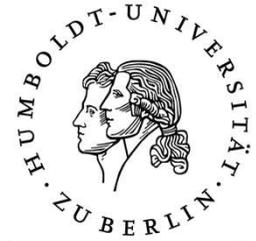
Order

Party



# Contemporary Thailand

Democracy



# Present time



The impact of capitalism establishes new social groups (a new socioculture) and transforms socialist structure and mandala (into older sociocultures). Each socioculture is differentiated into milieux.

# Contemporary Milieux in Laos



	Baan-müang	Socialism	Capitalism
Elites	Patrimonial elites	Party elite	Entrepreneurs
Established milieu	Urban patrimonialism	High officials	Middle class
Rural milieu	Wealthy subsistence	Low officials	Farmers
Marginalized milieu	Poor subsistence	Rural party	Migrant workers
	Minorities		Beggars

# Reproduction of inequality



- The division of socially relevant resources is reproduced in capitalistic society from one generation to the next.
- The formerly lower groups remain at the lower ranks of society because they have access only to non-capitalist or to the lower capitalist milieu
- Mobility takes place within the same class due to increase in capital

# Class



- Capitalism is a specific socioculture that dissolves the link between social structure and division of labour. It does not alter the class structure but makes it invisible due to the focus on mobility, merit and capital
- Capital (economic, cultural, symbolic etc.) enables mobility within a class but not into another class