**Tiedekunta-Fakultet:** Faculty of Social Sciences  
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The topic of this thesis is Palauan migrants on Guam and their conception of their own tradition. The thesis is based on fieldwork in the Palauan community of Guam from June to September 1996, and on ethnographic literature on Palau. The data consists of field notes and taped interviews.

The purpose is to describe the Palauan concept of siukang or custom, and the discourses and practices it consists of in the Patauan migrant community on Guam. Siukang/custom refers to customs, traditions and social exchange ceremonies, and in this work it is regarded as a representation of culture, a tradition. The aim has been to examine how Guam Palauans understand their tradition, the changes that have occurred in it, and their relationship to Palau. Also questions about the development, form and content of the Paluan tradition are addressed. The general theoretical background of this work is the discussion in the social sciences about modernity and tradition. The more specific frameworks concern (1) the processes of cultural objectification and (2) social exchange, where emphasis is on the idea of social reproduction. As a community maintaining connections to the home land, the Palauans on Guam can also be regarded as a diasporic community. After a brief history of the Paluan concept of tradition, custom is discussed as knowledge, as exchange practices, as communication with Palau, and as morality. The historical overview suggests that colonialism created a need for a different kind of cultural objectification than before. However, as the discussions about knowledge and social exchange in the traditional Palauan society attempt to show, the present reflections on elements of culture does not differ radically from the past. Moreover, the meanings of knowledge and exchange have had continuity over time.

Throughout the work changes and differences of the Guam Palauan custom in relation to custom in Palau, as well as the migrants' attitude to the them, are assessed. Regarding custom knowledge and custom exchange, it turns out that in many contexts the changes were accepted as inevitable consequences of circumstances or as positive proof of the Palauans' ability to adapt. Despite some negative views on the changes in practices, the most unacceptable were the changes in custom morality.

Palauan social exchange is examined by analysing two custom ceremonies, and their different practices connected to food and money. The ceremonies are seen to represent two forms of exchange, based on different social systems (kinship and migrant community) and forms of commumality, and belonging to different societies. It is argued that even though external circumstances of the Guamanian society were said to have caused the changes, the meanings and significance of the changes and the new practices are derived from certain Paluan cultural notions (hidden/public and open/closed).

In the relationships between Guam-based and Palau-based Palauans, custom is both a unifying and a dividing symbol. In the thesis it is suggested that the migrants' custom is a way of discussing cultural change, which the migrants have to face when they are living in foreign society. Custom is a way of discussing differences between Guam and Palau, the past and the present: for Guam Palauans, doing custom and talking about custom is a way of negotiating their ambivalent position in relation to both the society on Guam and their home island Palau.

**Avainsanat-Nyckelord:**
- representations - culture - immigrants - Guam
- traditions - migration - Palau - Guam
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