

Eine engere Zusammenarbeit zwischen quantitativ und eher qualitativ arbeitenden Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftlern wäre im Hinblick auf weiterführende Erkenntnisse wünschenswert. Die prävalenten sozioökonomischen Schwierigkeiten der Bewohner eines sich rapide wandelnden Zentralasiens begründen jedenfalls noch auf unabsehbare Zeit weiteren Forschungsbedarf.

Matthias Schmidt

## **Methodology in Southeast Asian Studies: Grounding research – mixing methods**

Freiburg Southeast Asian Studies Program, Universität Freiburg, 29.-31. Mai 2012

How should research in Southeast Asian Studies be conducted? Are theory and methods universal or area-specific? What are appropriate practices of research? How can methods be mixed in order to mutually enrich each other? These were key questions of a BMBF-sponsored conference at the University of Freiburg which sought to cultivate a middle ground between area and discipline-oriented research and transcend the rift between positivist and hermeneutic approaches, while at the same time leaving room for diversity and productive disagreement. In their opening remarks, Jürgen Rüländ and Judith Schlehe (University of Freiburg) stressed that an active cooperation with the region and an interdisciplinary approach are vital to guarantee the context-sensitivity of area studies. In his keynote speech, David Szanton (University of California, Berkeley) described the origins, nature and challenges of area studies and pointed to central requirements for conducting research, among them the significance of language proficiency, collaboration, understanding, multiple sources, the question of who benefits from research, the limitations of theory as well as the imperative to take history into account.

In the first panel which focused on “Glocalized Knowledge Production”, Goh Beng Lan (National University of Singapore) described the challenges that arise from the project of recentring knowledge production back to regions. She pointed to the role of inter-referencing in Asian contexts as a means to decenter and diversify knowledge production. Shamsul Amri Baharuddin (National University of Malaysia) further elaborated on the process of constituting, reproducing and consuming knowledge and implications of this process for his dictum of SEA as a form of knowledge. The second panel provided an institutional as well as an empirical answer to the debate on “Disciplinary vs. Area Studies”. While Gerry van Klinken (KITLV Leiden) demonstrated the merits of an interdisciplinary research concept of corruption in Indonesia, Andrew MacIntyre (Australian National University) provided insights into institutional strategies for developing disciplinary and regional expertise.

In the third panel, “Enriching Research from a Quantitative Starting Point”, Krisztina Kis-Katos (Freiburg) discussed the context specificity of data collection methods by assessing the extent and determinants of corruption in SEA. Thomas Pepinsky (Cornell University) introduced the concepts of unit context and population context as parallel organizing principles in Southeast Asian political studies, thereby re-conceptualizing the respective concerns of area studies and comparative politics and focusing on the possibility of comparison. Edmund Malesky (University of California, San Diego) added to the discussion on quantitative methods by demonstrating the potentials of a quasi-experimental design to research the economic impact of recentralization in Vietnam.

Panel four shifted to an anthropological and qualitative perspective and provided different approaches to “Localizing Methodologies”, such as observant participation as presented by

Eric Haanstad (Freiburg University), ethnographic fieldwork in Indonesia by Nurul Ilmi Idrus (Hassanudin University, Makassar) as well as Paruedee Nguitrageol's (Freiburg University) account of the specificity of interviewing in SEA. The following panel then added a "Widening Historical-Comparative Research" perspective to the previous approaches. Vincent Houben (HU Berlin) demonstrated how Southeast Asian history is a vital component of the "new area studies", whereas Erik Martinez Kuhonta (McGill) established comparative historical analysis across the disciplines as crucial to study the concept of SEA as a region. Panel six gave insights into "Grounding and Situating Research": Judith Schlehe (Freiburg University) discussed the potential of collaboration and reciprocity in transcultural research and Kathryn Robinson (Australian National University) argued for the grounding of gender research in Indonesia. In the graduate panel Vissia Ita Yulianto, Melanie Nertz, Agni Malagina and Evamaria Müller (Freiburg University) showed how positionality and the possible variations of being an outsider/insider is a determining factor in fieldwork.

The last panel examined how "Mixing, Combining and Nesting Methods" may lead to new insights into questions of societal accountability in Indonesia, as presented by Christian von Lübke (Freiburg University), to innovative research on gender and electoral politics which Sarah Shair-Rosenfield (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) could persuasively show, and to a better understanding of the role of institutions for inter-communal order in Indonesia, as Yuhki Tajima (University of California, Riverside) explained. Donald Emmerson (Stanford University) wrapped up the discussions, balancing his account between "truth and reconciliation". He showed that "anything does not go" by delineating the limits of epistemological tolerance, thereby dismissing the concept of understanding as a matter of etiquette. Instead, he argued for "disunity in diversity" and highlighted the creative value of friction in SEA Studies. Edited by Mikko Huotari, the third conference organizer, the planned methodology handbook on Area Studies in SEA will synthesize and expand the results of the conference.

Mareike Well

## **Between Mumbai and Manila: Judaism in Asia since the foundation of the State of Israel**

Universität Bonn, 30. Mai - 01. Juni 2012

Die jüngere Geschichte jüdischer Gemeinden im süd-, südost- und ostasiatischen Raum stellt sowohl für die Asienwissenschaften, als auch für die anderen sich mit Religionen befassenden Fächer oft nur eine Fußnote dar, die selten im Detail betrachtet worden ist. Um diese Forschungslücke auszuloten und erste Ansätze zur Erforschung des asiatischen Judentums aufzuzeigen, versammelte sich die kleine Expertengruppe zu diesem Thema im Mai 2012 zu einem dreitägigen Fachsymposium in den Räumen der Abteilung für Religionswissenschaft der Universität Bonn.

Das erste Panel wurde von Ulrich Vollmer (Bonn) eröffnet, indem er die Geschichte der Erforschung des Judentums an der Universität Bonn erläuterte. Besonders ging er auf das Werk des 2011 verstorbenen Religionswissenschaftlers Karl Hoheisel ein, der einen Schwerpunkt seiner Forschung auf das Judentum entlang der Seidenstraße gelegt hatte. Die folgenden Vorträge des Panels beschäftigten sich mit politisch-diplomatischen und kulturell-religiösen Verbindungen der verschiedenen jüdischen Gemeinschaften im Asiatischen Raum, sowohl untereinander als auch in Beziehung zum Staat Israel. Den Anfang machte dabei Meron Medzini (Jerusalem), der über die Entscheidungsfindung der Asiatischen Delegierten bei der UN Generalversammlung 1947 referierte, in welcher über die Teilung Palästinas