

KONFERENZBERICHTE

Environmental Transformation, Ethnicity and Gender in Kalimantan, Indonesia

Workshop at the Chair of Comparative Development and Cultural Studies – Focus Southeast Asia, University of Passau, June 10–12, 2015

The workshop, which brought together 20 researchers from Indonesia, Germany and England, covered four topics: 1. Development and natural resource use in Indonesia, 2. Ethnicity and identity politics in the context of ecological transformation, 3. Gender in the context of socio-ecological change, and 4. Transdisciplinarity in socio-ecological research.

The workshop was funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) as one module in the Grant to Support the Initiation of International Collaboration and by the University Passau.

In her key note speech, Suraya Afiff (University of Indonesia, UI) focused on Indonesia's presidential government agenda related to land and forest issues and the difficulties in implementing the policy to improve the land tenure security for rural communities.

In the cluster on development, Adiwibowo (Bogor Agricultural University, IPB) talked about territorialization and its effect on land use changes and rural differentiation in Kalimantan. Land use change was also the topic addressed by Heiko Faust (University of Göttingen) who presented results of the Collaborative Research Centre 990 on socio-cultural and institutional transformation processes in rural Indonesia. Katriani Puspita Ayu (University of Palangkaraya, UNPAR) gave insights into her research on the political ecology of deforestation in the district of Kota Waringin Timur, Central Kalimantan. Suraya Afiff dealt in her talk with new emerging forms of control over large tracts of land for environmental purposes in Indonesia — “green grabbing”. Satyawan Sunito (Bogor Agricultural University, IPB) sees the need to support strategies of self-development of villages that refuse to be integrated into the system of large scale corporate activities. Local level responses to changes in national politics were addressed by Semiarto Aji Purwanto (University of Indonesia, UI) through an analysis of the changing trend of artisanal gold mining activity in Kalimantan, characterized by a move from the riverbanks to the forest areas. Oliver Pye (University of Bonn) presented key findings emerging from research on the political ecology of the Kapuas River.

In the cluster on ethnicity, a case study presented by Stefanie Steinebach (University of Göttingen) displayed the limits of indigenous land titling as means to regain authority over customary land. Marko Mahin (Christian University Palangkaraya) provided insights into his research on the construction and transformation of identity of the Dayak in Central Kalimantan associated with the change of ownership and spatial territory. Kristina Großmann (University of Passau) presented results of her research in two villages in the district of Murung Raya, Central Kalimantan. She argues that government, environmental organizations, and companies use essentialized constructs of an “indigenous nature-close villager” in order to push their political and economic agenda. The study is integrated in a planned transdisciplinary research project on ethnicity, gender and environmental transformation in Central Kalimantan (University of Passau) which was briefly introduced by Katharina v. Braun (University of Passau), who subsequently presented a sub-project on Central Kalimantan coal mining governance.

In the cluster on gender, Michaela Haug (University of Cologne) talked about the impacts of environmental and economic changes in Kalimantan on gender relations among the Dayak. Drawing on her research among the Dayak Benuaq in East Kalimantan, she identifies growing inequalities among men and women. Rebecca Elmhirst (University of Brighton) adopts a “material feminist political ecology” framework to analyze gendered impacts of the oil palm industry in East Kalimantan. Her proposition is that these impacts reflect the interplay between historically and ecologically-embedded gender norms and the ways in which communities have been incorporated into oil palm systems. These gender norms and inequalities are given little attention in most Civil Society’s Organizations working on environmental issues, as Melani Abdulkadir-Sunito (IPB) explained in her talk. She proposes a plan of activities called “Gender and Resource Use Learning Circle” which aims to make members of local communities perceive and understand persisting inequalities. Siti Amanah (IPB) also addressed the question of how to enhance gender equality in environmental management. Focusing on coal mining in Central Kalimantan, she identifies the need to put effort into the promotion of a better understanding from the side of investors and operators in the field of gendered impacts of mining.

In the final cluster on transdisciplinarity, Yunita T. Winarto (UI) presented a joint research of agrometeorologists, anthropologists and farmers that aims at agrometeorological learning through “Science Field Shops”. Marion Glaser (University of Bremen) shared experiences of inclusive transdisciplinary knowledge generation based on field work in the Spermonde Island Archipelago of South Sulawesi. The talk by Martina Padmanabhan (University of Passau) focused on intercultural and interdisciplinary work within research teams. Arahmaiani Feisal contributed to the discussion on transdisciplinarity with a very unique approach as an artist. In her presentation, she gave insights into her work in Indonesia and Nepal, where she worked in villages on different ecological topics such as water use.

An initial outcome of the workshop will be a special issue with the tentative title “Contested Development. Environmental Transformations, Ethnicity and Gender in Indonesia and Beyond” published by the Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies (ASEAS).

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Food Safety and Consumer Advocacy in Japan and East Asia

Japanese–German Centre Berlin, May 18–19, 2015

On 18 and 19 May 2015 an interdisciplinary group of scholars met at the Japanese–German Centre Berlin (JDZB) to discuss food safety and consumer advocacy in Japan and East Asia. The symposium was organised and opened by Cornelia Reiher (Graduate School of East Asian Studies, Free University of Berlin) and included presentations and panel discussions by renowned international scholars, as well as young researchers. Food issues assume a prominent position in many research areas, demonstrated by the plethora of publications concerning food safety and hygiene, international trade negotiations and other contentious issues relating to dynamic local, national and global agri-food systems. The two-day symposium attempted to bridge boundaries between different disciplinary approaches and to shed light on “politics of food”.

The first day of the symposium was opened by Kazuhito Yamashita (Canon Institute for Global Studies, Tokyo). In his keynote speech, he addressed the changing relations between food safety and international trade negotiations in line with scientific and technological