

Konferenzberichte

ASEAN Inter-University Seminar on Social Development

Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, 12-15 November 1993

This seminar, the first in a series, was jointly organised by the Faculty of Development Science, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Sabah Campus and the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. The seminar had the aim of promoting common explorations in social issues in the ASEAN region, and of facilitating collaborative research. The 51 papers read at the congress were grouped according to the following broad topics:

Globalisation and Modernity; Culture, Religion and Ethnicity; State, Society and Development; Family, Gender and Socialisation. These areas do indeed reflect current research interest in the ASEAN countries. Despite the wide-ranging themes discussed in the papers, a common trend can be observed. In line with the current rapid economic development of the region, most papers focused on the social consequences. It was therefore no longer the question of the social preconditions but rather of the social outcome of rapid economic growth that occupied the attention of ASEAN sociologists.

As a theoretical base, theories of globalisation were summarised by Habibul Khondker (National University of Singapore) and their application to the ASEAN region tested. Diana Wong (ISEAS, Singapore) drew attention to the growth of post-modernist scholarship on Southeast Asia. She emphasised that European post-modern theory is firmly based in the changing social and economic conditions of the 1970s and 80s, when consumption rather than production seemed to be an issue. As conditions in Europe have changed and most Southeast Asian states have not yet solved problems of poverty and underdevelopment, the use of post-modern theory should be treated with caution. On the other hand, the deconstructionist trend in post-modern scholarship should be utilised in social research by Southeast Asian scholars to counteract overly positivist and uncritical studies.

Tentative but highly original pieces of sociological theory were presented by Geoffrey Benjamin (National University of Singapore) and H.M. Dahlan (National University of Malaysia, Sabah). Benjamin proposed a mode-of-orientation theory to explain long-term trends in state formation and political civilisation by contrasting transcendental and immanent types of orientations. Dahlan used the concept of village explosion to draw attention to the dissolution of Southeast Asian rural communities.

These topics were also discussed in a number of theoretical and empirically rich papers, among others by Fernando Zialcita (Ateneo de Manila) and Muhammad Ikmal Said (Universiti Malaya) on national identity in the Philippines and Malaysia; by Hing Ai Yun and James Jesudason (National University of Singapore) on state and ethnicity in Malaysia; by Hans-Dieter Evers (Gadjah Mada University and University of Bielefeld) on the social transformation of Indonesian society; and by Hamzah Jusoh (National University of Malaysia) on the impact of globalisation on the population of the newly created financial centre of Labuan off the coast of Sabah.

The papers read were of exceptionally high quality, the discussions were vivid and reflected the sociological competence of the participants and, last but not least, the conference was very well organised. In view of the fact that most departments of sociology and anthropology in the region are fairly new, the congress provided a promising outlook for the further development of the social sciences in the ASEAN countries. The second seminar in the series will take place in the Philippines.

Hans-Dieter Evers

International Seminar on Bajau Communities

Jakarta, 22.-25. November 1993

Auf Initiative des Indonesischen Institutes der Wissenschaften, *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia/LIPI* fand Ende November letzten Jahres die erste internationale Tagung über Seenomaden in Südostasien (Bajau/Bajo in Ost-Indonesien, Ost-Malaysia und den Süd-Philippinen sowie Orang Laut in West-Indonesien und Südwest-Malaysia) statt. Mit