

Panel EuroSEAS 2019

Title: Grounding “alternative ontologies”: towards a political ecology of animism

Conveners: Timo Duile, Annina Aeberli, Christoph Antweiler,

Discussant: Michael Kleinod

Contact: tduile@uni-bonn.de, christoph.antweiler@uni-bonn.de,
annina.aeberli@graduateinstitute.ch, mkleinod@uni-bonn.de

Description: Our panel seeks to bring into dialogue two popular approaches in Southeast Asian studies which do not talk much to one another, at least conceptually: materialist-oriented political ecology and, recently blooming, “new animist” studies focusing more on ontological approaches. Such a dialogue is all the more necessary for its potential to turn into a powerful conversation on a common denominator of both approaches: a more or less explicit concern with the disruptive implications of capitalist modernization and alternatives to it. We invite contributions which further the discourse on how “animism” and other non-naturalist ontologies like analogism can be cast in political ecological terms with regard to Southeast Asia. Papers may be empirical and/or conceptual in nature but should *explicitly* address the political-economic implications of ontologies or the impacts of ecological, political and socio-economic changes on ontologies; they might choose to deal with the following questions:

- How do recent studies on animism in Southeast Asia fit into a political-ecological, historical-materialist frame of reference? E.g.: How do alternative ontological concepts of the environment relate to issues of enclosure, primitive accumulation, resettlement, migration, urbanization, commodification or class struggle?
- How are Southeast Asian animisms *actively* involved in processes of “modernization”? How do they further – or undermine – specific hegemonic projects?
- How do changes in the physical landscape such as mining or logging and related political and socio-economic processes affect and interact with ontologies? How do ontologies interplay with changing physical landscapes over time? How do people maintain and renegotiate their relationships with the non-human world under change?
- Are there potential alternative trajectories, or “concrete utopias”, arising from an integration of both perspectives, e.g. when looking at a specific empirical case, or by comparison?

An outcome of this panel should be a joint publication as special journal issue or anthology.

Double session