

Nordic Indonesia Studies Network (NISN) inaugural workshop NIAS, Copenhagen, May 13-15 2009

ACTIVITY REPORT

Introduction

The Nordic Indonesia Studies Network (NISN) Inaugural Workshop was held at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen from May 13 to 15 this year. The workshop included lectures by Indonesia experts and researcher training of Indonesia students at master and PhD levels.

The main theme of the workshop was “Ten Years of Democracy in Indonesia (1998-2008)”. The legislative and presidential elections in 2009 are the third democratic elections to take place in Indonesia since the fall of the authoritarian regime of former president Suharto in 1998. This common focus allowed for a variety of social scientific perspectives to contribute to a deeper understanding of Indonesian politics, society and culture after Suharto. The workshop was open to all scholars and students with an interest in these topics.

We had planned for a maximum of 25 participants, but due to a high level of interest, we ended up being 40 participants in all.

Aims and organisation of the workshop

The workshop aimed to facilitate discussion of research on or relating to Indonesia within the social sciences in the Nordic countries. The bulk of participants was from the Nordic countries, but we also had participants from Indonesia, the Netherlands, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

We planned to alternate between keynote speakers and presentations in smaller groups. And in order to facilitate much informal discussion, we had plenty of breaks.

We received generous economic support for the workshop activities from the Danish Development Research Network, the Swedish School of Advanced Asia-Pacific Studies, the Graduate School of International Development Studies at Roskilde University, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies in Copenhagen, and the Department of Anthropology at Århus University. Finally, we received a similarly generous and friendly invitation from the Indonesian Embassy in Copenhagen. His Excellency Abdul Rahman Saleh, former Attorney General of Indonesia and current ambassador to Denmark hosted a dinner for all workshop participants at his residence.

Content of the workshop

The workshop lasted two and a half days. The first day consisted of presentations by keynote speakers. The first session began with a short introduction by the organisers, and a welcome speech by the Indonesian Ambassador to Denmark, Abdul Rahman Saleh. The ambassador sketched the experiences with democracy so far in the country’s history, and the difficulties faced in consolidating democratic institutions, and combating problems of corruption among other things of the justice system.

The ambassador’s speech was followed by a round of short introductions of each participant. To some amusement, and unheard of in academia, we finished the introduction session ahead of schedule! The lengthy discussions later in the day, however, ensured that we more conventionally did fall behind schedule again.

Anne Booth opened the keynote speeches with a presentation on “The Indonesian Economy Ten Years After Suharto”. Booth reviewed the economic achievements of the Suharto decades and offered some comments also on the performance of the shifting governments after 1998. She began with an observation on the economic status of Indonesia before the Suharto-era. In a widely-used economics

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textbook from 1968, Indonesia was labelled “the number one economic failure among the major underdeveloped countries”. In 1993 by contrast, it was characterised as one of Asia’s ‘miracle’ economies by the World Bank, with a GDP per capita growth little short of five per cent per annum over a 25 year period. Booth argued that as regards the economy this characterisation was correct; however, already by the early 1990s the economic achievements were beginning to dwindle.

In his presentation, Mason Hoadley took up a theme also present in the ambassador’s welcome speech. Hoadley asked participants to imagine themselves in the shoes of the bureaucrat who is offered a bribe, and presented a simple model of the interconnectedness of civil servants and their access to bribes. Variations to the model were applied to the vast problems of corruption in the country. Hoadley’s presentation also spurred intense discussion not only about mechanisms and explanations, but about applications of these insights to address corruption.

Olle Törnquist presented findings from a collaborative research project between Oslo and Gadjah Mada universities. His presentation focused the options facing what he labels pro-democracy activists; civil society activists and leaders among ‘floating democrats’. Based on regular surveys among this group of actors, Törnquist and collaborators provide a multi-dimensional account of the trajectory of Indonesian democracy.

Cynthia Chou’s presentation moved the discussion of democracy ‘to the margins’. She offered an anthropological account of law and society in insular Riau. Chou focused her discussion on territorial rights, and how these are viewed through the lenses of state institutions (an administrator’s map) and community-level (*adat*) institutions.

The second day was the researcher training day. The day began with a presentation by Pujo Semedi. Semedi’s presentation focused on developments at the micro-level from an anthropological perspective. Where Chou’s discussion had looked into the clash between state and community-level institutions, Semedi focused on developments within a small upland community in Central Java. More specifically, Semedi gave an illuminating and amusing account of changes in socio-economic conditions, social rituals and perceptions of selfhood (in particular manhood). The field site of Semedi has traditionally been matrilinear, and women have played the strongest economic role in households. Recently, the traditional role of men being economically dependant on women has changed, due to the availability of paved roads and affordable motorcycles that allow men to seek work not in agriculture controlled by women, but in factory work in urban areas. These changes affect not only cultural rituals, but also conditions of political leadership and competition.

Semedi’s talk was followed by group discussions of participants’ papers. 23 papers submitted papers were discussed, covering a wide variety of topics, from the peace process in Aceh to Syariah banking, from decentralisation in agrarian development to changes in the political party system.

The training day was completed with a thought-provoking talk by Nils Bubandt. Bubandt discussed for how long we may label the present era ‘post’-Suharto, and if so, what we mean by the use of this term. This spurred a discussion about what is taken for granted in different social scientific disciplines used in the study of Indonesia.

The third day consisted in a broad panel discussion, followed by evaluation and discussion of future organisation and activities of the network. The evaluation was very positive. In particular the researcher training element, with group discussions of ‘work-in-progress’, was stressed by participants as a new and valuable element to the workshop.

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The discussion of the future of the network was lively and promising. Next year, NISN will organise another workshop, hosted by Lund University. This will in part work as preparation for next year's EUROSEAS conference in Göteborg. Other activities, both smaller and larger events, were proposed, and several participants have now joined the organising group. The theme for next year's workshop will be *Development*. The planning process has already started, and four new members have been recruited for the organising group. In sum, a very good start for the new network.

As regards outreach, two Asia correspondents, Jørgen Siegumfeldt and Torben Brandt of *Danmarks Radio*, joined the workshop as participants. Since then, Siegumfeldt has broadcast three interviews with members of the organising group, and Brandt has made use of the network for his recent research trip to Indonesia.

The organising group has constructed a weblog that will work as a forum for exchanging research ideas and preliminary analyses.

How to join?

Members of DDRN who would like to join the network are most welcome to contact:

Nordic Indonesia Studies Network
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e-mail: norindostudies@gmail.com

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Programme

Day 1

- 10.00-10.30 Welcoming address by H.E. Abdul Rahman Saleh, Indonesian ambassador to Denmark
Welcome and introduction by the organising committee
- 10.30-11.00 Introduction of participants
- 11.00-11.15 Coffee
- 11.15-11.45 *The Indonesian Economy Ten Years After Soeharto*
Anne Booth Professor of economics (SOAS)
- 11.45-12.15 Discussion
- 12.15-12.45 *Corruption - Good Governance: False Antonyms*
Mason Hoadley Professor emeritus, Lund University
- 12.45-13.15 Discussion
- 13.15-14.15 Lunch
- 14.15-14.45 *Democracy Building on the Sand? Major results from the national resurvey on democracy and the role of democracy in Aceh*
Olle Törnquist, Professor, University of Oslo
- 14.45-15.15 Discussion
- 15.15-15.30 Coffee
- 15.30-16.00 *From the Periphery*
Cynthia Chou, Copenhagen University
- 16.00-16.30 Discussion
- 19.00 Dinner at Indonesian ambassador's residence
(Leaving NIAS 18.00)

Day 2

- 09.15-09.45 *Wild Boar and Honda: Petungkeriono in the last two decades*
Pujo Semedi, UGM
- 10.00-10.15 Coffee
- 10.15-10.45 Discussion
- 11.00-12.00 Parallel sessions group 1-6 (see separate plan for details)
- 12.00-13.00 Parallel sessions group 1-6 (see separate plan for details)
- 13.00-14.00 Lunch
- 14.00-14.30 What comes after "Post"? Indonesia and anthropology in the new millennium

Nils Bubandt, Associate Professor Department of Anthropology and
Ethnography, University of Aarhus
- 14.30-14.45 Break
- 14.45-15.15 Discussion
- 15.15-15.30 Coffee
- 15.45-16.45 Parallel sessions group 1-6 (see separate plan for details)
- 16.45-17.45 Parallel sessions group 1-6 (see separate plan for details)
- 19.00 Dinner at NIAS

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Day 3

- 09.00-11.00 Panel discussion: Ten Years of Democracy in Indonesia
- Pujo Semedi, Gajah Mada University
 - Mason Hoadley, Lund University
 - Anne Booth, School of Oriental and African Studies
 - Nils Ole Bubandt, University of Aarhus
 - Cynthia Chou, University of Copenhagen
- 11.00-12.00 Evaluation/ planning the future NISN
- 12.00 Lunch and farewell

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Plan for parallel group sessions

Parallel sessions						
	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6
	Anne Booth	Mason Hoadley	Pujo Semedi	Eva-Lotta Hedman and Nils Bubandt	Timo Kivimäki	Cynthia Chou
11.00-12.00	Amalinda Savirani Fading even before blooming: Regional business associations among medium-scale batik business in the City of Pekalongan, Central Java	Emilie Wellfelt Processes of History Formation in Alor, Indonesia	Jakob Trane Ibsen How new political parties enter the village: The case of the Prosperous Justice Party in West Java.	Jörgen Hellman, Leadership in Times of Transition: Establishing legitimacy through pilgrimage	Knut Asplund Resistance to Human Rights in Indonesia: Asian Values and Beyond	Delsy Ronnie Transition of Democracy in Indonesia and Peace Process in Aceh 1998-2008
12.00-13.00.	Marie Ryan Syariah Banking and Finance Legal and Regulatory Developments in Indonesia: Past, Present, and Future	Mikko Marttinen Ethnicity, the Press and the Indonesian state	Bente Wolf It's actually much more difficult working in an existing system!" Nias after the tsunami and earthquake	Ann Kull Islam and Gender in Indonesia	Marjaana Jauhola Fantasizing the Adolescent Girl as the Future Hope – Reading Normativity in Gender Equality Advocacy in Post-Tsunami Aceh, Indonesia	Lili Yulyadi Arnakim Islam in Democratic Indonesia's Foreign Policy, 1998-2008

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Parallel sessions						
	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6
	Anne Booth	Mason Hoadley	Pujo Semedi	Nils Bubandt	Timo Kivimäki	Cynthia Chou
15.45-16.45	Tobias Axelsson Axel Fredholm Decentralisation and agrarian development, The case of agricultural extension in Indonesia	Nicola Colbran Indonesian Judicial Commision: Towards Reform in a Democratic Indonesia	Milja Rantala Social meaning of waste, A case study from a Central Javanese neighbourhood in West Java	Anu Lounela Contesting sovereignty and nature in Java	Mette Lykke Knudsen Securitization and the democratic transition in Indonesia – a new method of military intervention?	Vera Altmeyer Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Indonesia
16.45-17.45	Deasy Simandjuntak Navigating Democracy and Elites Competition in North Sumatra: Decentralization Ten Years After	Erwan Purwanto State Illegality: Strategy to Elude Laws and Regulations Among Indonesian Local Bureaucrats	Maj Nygaard Christenssen Reluctant Leaders and Dirty Politics: Election time in Timor-Leste	Michael Eilenberg Agrarian expansion and the politics of territoriality on the Indonesian-Malaysian frontier. The case of West Kalimantan, Indonesia	Gyda Marås Sindre Conflict transformation and democratization: Manifestation of new political cleavages in Aceh?	Santos Winarso Conflict as blessing in disguise for Indonesia

List of participants

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1	Gyda Sindre	Oslo University
1	Abdul Rahman Saleh	Indonesian Embassy
2	Alice Andersen	Copenhagen Univ.
3	Amalinda Savirani	UGM/Amsterdam
4	Ann Kull	Lund University
5	Anne Booth	SOAS
6	Anu Lounela	University of Helsinki
7	Bente Wolff	Nationalmuseet, Cph.
8	Cynthia Chou	University of Copenhagen
9	Deasy Simandjuntak	University of Amsterdam
10	Delsey Ronnie	NIAS
11	Emilie Wellfelt	Växjö University
12	Erwan Purwanto	UGM
13	Eva-Lotta Hedman	Oxford University
14	Jakob Trane Ibsen	Roskilde University
15	Jörgen Hellman	Göteborg University
16	Jörgen Siegumfeldt	Danmarks Radio
17	Knut Asplund	NCHR, Oslo
18	Lili Yulyadi Bin Arnakim	University of Malaya
19	Maj Nygaard-Christensen	Århus University
20	Marie Ryan	Lund university
21	Marjaana Jauhola	Aberystwyth
22	Mason Hoadley	University of Lund
23	Mette Lykke Knudsen	University of Copenhagen
24	Mette Skriver	Copenhagen Univ.
25	Michael Eilenberg	Roskilde University
26	Mikko Marttinen	Leiden University
27	Milja Rantala	Tampere University
28	Miriam Zeitzner	University of Copenhagen
29	Nicola Colbran	Norwegian Centre for Human Rights
30	Nils Ole Bubandt	Århus University
31	Novrizal Gani	Indonesian Embassy
32	Nyoman Sudira	Parahyangan Catholic University
33	Pujo Semedi	UGM
34	Santos Winarso	NIAS
35	Thommy Svensson	SSAAPS
36	Timo Kivimäki	NIAS
37	Tippe Eisner	University of Copenhagen
38	Tobias Axelsson	Lund university
39	Torben Brandt	Danmarks Radio
40	Vera Altmeyer	Passau University