

Title: Refugees in Indonesia: Comprehensive discussions on perception, reception, and coping mechanisms.

Convener: Realisa Masardi

Brief description of panel

Indonesia has traditionally been a popular country of transit for the thousands of refugees passing through on their journey to reach Australia or other countries of resettlement. In November 2014, Australia announced that refugees registered after 1 July 2014 in Indonesia would be ineligible for resettlement to Australia. Approximately 14,000 refugees are currently ‘stuck’ in Indonesia, unable to return to their countries of origin, integrate locally in Indonesia, nor move on to resettle to a third country. As a result of declining opportunities for refugees’ resettlement, Indonesia has been forced to transform from being a country of transit to a country of containment.

This panel will address the phenomenon of refugees ‘stuck’ in Indonesia from three different approaches: multi-sited ethnography, individuals’ life stories, and Discourse Historical Approach (DHA). Together, these three papers offer a comprehensive study on refugees living in Indonesia, a country strategically situated on emerging refugees’ migratory trajectory in the Asia Pacific region. They offer important insights into the variety of living experiences that refugees face in detention centres, shelters, and self-funded accommodations located in different urban settings across the archipelago. This panel will contribute to an understanding of how international refugee regimes are domesticated, particularly in the context of Indonesia, a country that continues to abstain from signing the 1951 Convention of Refugee Protection and its 1967 Protocol. Moreover, it furthers a better understanding of movement, stuck-ness, and temporality as experienced by refugees currently living in the Global South.

Presenters:

1. Realisa Masardi

Through a multi-sited ethnography in Jakarta, Bogor, Medan, and Pekanbaru, Realisa Masardi discusses strategies and tactics of independent refugee youths while living in Indonesia. Her research problematizes politics of age and vulnerability, and highlights youths’ agentic action and self-representation facing the international refugee regime as well as Indonesian local systems.

Realisa is in her 4th year of PhD trajectory in the Department of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam. Back in Indonesia, Realisa works in the Department of Anthropology Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta. Her research interests include children and youth studies, human rights, and migration studies.

2. Nur Isdah Idris

Nur Isdah Idris uses people's life stories to study interactions between refugees and host society in Makassar, South Sulawesi. She highlights refugees' experiences of adapting to life in Makassar through marriages, religious practices, and social exchange, as ways to understand what it means to be living in temporal time.

Isdah is in her 2nd year of her PhD programme in Department of Anthropology University Amsterdam. Isdah is currently back from fieldwork in Makassar focused on refugees, host communities and refugee policy in Indonesia. Isdah is a lecturer in International Relations Department, University of Hasanuddin.

3. Mahardhika Sjamsoe' oed Sadjad

Applying a Discourse Historical Approach, Mahardhika Sjamsoe' oed Sadjad combines media and policy analysis with ethnographic research on local inhabitants' responses and reactions to the presence of refugees in the sub-districts of Cisarua and Kalideres. Her research illustrates how the discourse of refugee reception in Indonesia must be situated in broader discourses of the state, the citizens, and the boundaries between the citizen and the refugee "other".

Mahardhika is an Indonesian PhD researcher at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam. Currently in her 2nd year, she is part of the Governance, Law, and Social Justice research group. Her research interests include young people, identity discourses, movement and mobility.

Discussant:

Dr. Antje Missbach, is a senior lecturer and research fellow at the School of Social Sciences, Monash University, and author of *Troubled Transit: Asylum seekers stuck in Indonesia*, ISEAS, Singapore, 2015.

Single session