

Roundtable

Anthropocenes@Southeast Asia – Localized Narratives of Global Change

Convenor

Christoph Antweiler, Prof. Dr. phil., Dipl.-Geol.
Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies (IOA), University Bonn, Germany
Christoph.antweiler@uni-bonn.de

Topic Urgency

Global change is more than climate change. Public awareness about humanity as a principal geo-factor and the interest in the “age of man” (*Anthropocene*) can be seen as environmentalism writ large. Societies in monsoonal Asia historically had intensive long-term experiences with irrigated rice agriculture that is particularly anthropogenic in its effects to the environment. In view of the fact that Southeast Asia is of greatest importance for the Anthropocene (climate change, soils, resource extraction) the low level of local response to this concept is surprising. To people in Southeast Asia other conceptualizations may be felt as more suitable due to the fact that the Anthropocene is perceived as a ‘Western concept’ by some politicians and other decision-makers. Thus, in contrast to the homogenizing concepts of global change and sustainability – rooted in the dichotomy between humans and nature – alternative, heterogeneous approaches are discussed and employed. Thereby, the reference to a ‘Southeast Asian’ way of responding to global change might stress ‘own’ values and traditions by referring to religious or nationalist framings. Through the lens of the Anthropocene, we will discuss the localization of a predominantly Western environmentalist concept in Southeast Asian conceptualizations of global change.

Presenters

3 yet tbn: one from Europe, one from SEA, one from China
CA, convenor