

Land Grabbing and Land Dynamics on Southeast Asian Frontiers

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The past decades have seen radical and unprecedented transformations in the frontier zones throughout Southeast Asia. Neoliberal financial flows, state-promoted development projects, and the expansion of boom crops production have profoundly transformed land dynamics in the margins. For people in the margins, land is not only a vital underpinning of everyday life bound up with personhood, kinship and identity, but also becomes an explicit political and cultural concern. This panel aims to investigate these unprecedented transformations and the complex array of forces, actors, and ecologies that constitute them. What are the commonalities and differences in frontier development and resource exploitation across different national borders in Southeast Asia? What are the impacts of the contemporary expansion of the so-called resource frontiers on the environment and on the people who live in these rapidly transforming margins? How do the local people engage with these transformations? Do they join the march of progress promised in development schemes or do they slide into destitution as new capitalist relations produce polarizing effect? What are the specific characteristics of land dynamics that emerge from the linkages of new capital flows, large-scale resource extraction and territorial politics in the frontiers of Southeast Asia?