

# C02 Political and Institutional Impacts on Cultural Landscape Transformation



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## Summary

Since the Indonesian reform era (1999) the natural resource governance in Indonesia has been transformed fundamentally, leading to ongoing political struggles for access to land and forest resources. Various interest groups claim resources for exploitation or protection. These processes lead to land use change accompanied by opportunities as well as threats, forest degradation, livelihood insecurity and exclusion, determining new politics of dynamic transformation processes.

## Methods

Qualitative research methods applied (Faust et al. 2013):

- semi-structured interviews on different levels and sites (village and household case-studies, expert interviews);
- focus group discussions and participatory methods.

## Research aims

Our working group explains conditions, causes and consequences of historical and current landscape transformation processes in Jambi's frontier and post-frontier areas. Using a political ecology perspective, we draw on access and property rights theories as well as on informality concepts.

We investigated:

- (1) the impacts of historical layers of land tenure regulations;
- (2) the effects of current political patterns on the appropriation of natural resources;
- (3) effects of transnational governance arrangements for mitigating climate change on access to land.

## Results

### (1) Historic Geographical Analysis of Cultural Landscape Transformation

Human environment relations need to be seen in their historic and institutional context. Landscape transformation is driven by a complex network of rules and actors. Rules are open to various interpretations and actions. Multiple, unreconciled layers of land tenure regulation and the various ways in which local actors respond to them favor a rapid exploitation and thus transformation of landscapes (Kunz et al., submitted). Long-term consequences of conflicting land regulations remain. They create uncertainty and the tendency of local actors to negotiate around rules leading to ambivalent natural resource usage (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: Truck loaded with furniture passing the main gate of a Protection Forest

### (2) Geographical Analysis of the Current Cultural Landscape Transformation

Jambi Province is characterized by a dynamic transformation process, resulting in an overlapping mosaic of resource governance and territorial control. This transformation process is accelerated by newly emerging social and environmental relations. Today's land contestations evolve around access and property relations (Beckert et al. 2014). Due to competing institutional regimes and power asymmetries disputes arise. People's agency to respond to changes in the politico-legal and social framework is thereby strongly affected. Local actors thus often engage in discourses at different scales in order to enhance their agency (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Villagers claiming land within an oil palm plantation

### (3) REDD+, Transnational Conservation and Access to Land in Jambi, Indonesia

Local land disputes are increasingly influenced by transnational governance arrangements for mitigating climate change (Hein 2013; Hein et al. 2014). The emergence of REDD+ leads to a new transnational scale of forest governance altering dialectical relationships between structure and agency. The International negotiations on climate change provide new voice for peasant farmers and at least theoretically new legal opportunities for defending their rights (Fig. 3). Positions within scales and scalar networks of power are important explanatory factors for accessing land and property in Jambi (Hein et al., submitted).



Fig. 3: Members of Serikat Petani Indonesia (SPI) building a mosque within Harapan Rainforest

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