

C03 - Culture-Specific Human Interaction with Tropical Lowland Rainforests in Transformation in Jambi, Sumatra



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This subproject deals with the dynamics and diversity of the rural population in relation to rainforest transformation systems in the Harapan and Bukit Duabelas areas of Jambi Province. In both research regions land has become a scarce and contested resource sought after by various actors. At the same time population density in rural Jambi is constantly increasing due to unassisted in-migration which is closely intertwined with land use change and cash crop economy. Migrants originate from different parts of Sumatra and other Indonesian islands; accordingly, the cultural background of the inhabitants of these areas has become more and more variegated.

There exist differences in land use and social structures between the Bukit Duabelas and Harapan research regions. These differences have their origin in pre-colonial socio-political regulations and have resulted in different developments of access to land and land use transformation.



Forest garden with cassava, vegetables and fruit trees



Indigenous graveyard within oil palm plantation



Illegal land clearing within a plantation area after dispossession of the indigenous population



Peasant activist demonstration



Indigenous ritual dance performed at a demonstration



Sign indicating indigenous land rights

Important results:

- Local people's environment has been transformed from a religious and socially imbued *Lebenswelt* into a merely material resource and means of production as a reaction to demands of the national and global market.
- Choices for land use are impacted and restricted by governmental land use policies and corresponding spatial planning
- The transformation of land use system and socio-cultural transformation (community structures and values, livelihood systems in general) are closely interconnected and interdependent processes.
- The relationships between different socio-cultural groups take place in a power context; social inequality has an impact on land use systems and land use transformation.
- The identification with particular types of communities ("autochthonous") takes place in a contested space between conservative state policies and global activist movements (Agrarian Movement, Indigenous Peoples Movement and Human Rights).
- Cultural / ethnic membership is a crucial resource for actors' access to land and land tenure security.