

Navigating Values on Capital

Conceptualizing Trajectories toward Alternative Modernities in Indonesia

*An International Conference Programme
Palu, Central Sulawesi Indonesia, 15-17 December 2016*

A. Rationale

The economic, political, and social transformation of Indonesia since decolonization, especially in recent decades, has been massive. Linked to these processes numerous parameters crucial to guaranteeing a humane and dignified future require in-depth examination: self consciousness and otherness, citizenship and community, the effects of the neoliberal capitalist turn in development and conservation, among others. Such issues are linked to the expansion of governmentality across various agencies tied to the expansion of the global market and concomitant agendas. Reacting to such trends has been the political resurrection of various symbolic vehicles of socio-cultural identity in endeavors that seek to make claims on various resources through revitalization of traditions in the context of new political engagements and more pragmatic projects. Such phenomena are expressions of the various global forces interacting with local aspirations and actions leading to diverse trajectories toward various forms of modernity. Analyses of just how such interactions have arisen and are playing out in a context. It requires not just commentary on the overt politics of such transformative confrontations, but also deeper examination of the epistemological bases of action of the contending participants.

Anthropologists among other social and humanist scientists who have confronted these issues in their field research often have found themselves confronted with various dilemmas in their analytical work: How is the analysis of the social and cultural repertoires of Indonesia a distinctive endeavor? How do the social phenomena analyzed in this nation represent unique constellations and how are they variants of other examples of the effect of such social forces and transnational networks? What is it that makes ethnography of Indonesia, among other forms of sociocultural analysis, possible in the contemporary situation? Alternatively, other possible questions include: How can the social scientist working in Indonesia begin to critically explore the “saturations and meaning impasse”¹ occasioned by the ontological and ethical turns in development discourse and practice? And, in a more practice sense with interventionist implications: how can the environmentalist and historians, as well as the anthropologist and the economist begin understanding values in inclusive ways that enable development and its agencies to fulfill its transformative potential? These challenges are deeply embedded in political conditions that inflect how those parties produce their vantage points in the quest to produce mutually inclusive understandings.

¹ This quotation actually was derived from various social discourses. However, for theoretical engagement and development encounters’ prominences, it is important to refer to Ferguson’s work (2005: 140-153) among other references. For details, see: James Ferguson, ‘Anthropology and Its Evil Twin: “Development” in the Constitution of a Discipline’ in Edelman and Haugerud (2005) *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization from Classical Political Economy to Contemporary Neoliberalism*, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

The aim of the conference is to throwing down a gauntlet to ethnographic research in order to foster original ideas, new narratives and alternative ways of thinking about the central concepts in the ethnography of Indonesia. The enmeshing of intellectual and activist concerns can be seen to produce certain 'sociocultural knots', quandaries of analysis in dealing with the local manifestations of capital formations, power and resilience spheres, regarded in the larger context of changes in the regional, national and global discourses and policies guiding historical trajectories and the dynamics of contemporary realms. Those questions are aimed at thinking about an inclusive engagement within the world of which they are part of it as a whole—in terms of both activism of particular intellectual and political implications of different ways of social and cultural exegesis. Setting up the debate in this way is intended to ensure a mutually constitutive, entanglement amongst scholars of various orientations, as they reflect upon the historical dynamics which simultaneously which have created not only the situations they study, but also their own positions.

Underpinning the conference's aim above, three themes that possibly could be explored are: 1) Tracing Value and Agency: Capital Formations in Indonesia's Historical Trajectories; 2) Recycling Values: Ideological and Power Metaphors on Contemporary Capital Expansions in Indonesia; 3) Interlocking Imagined Values: Encounters and Asymmetries in the Age of Cultural Capitalism; and 4) The Naked Face of the Clash of Values: Conflicts and Insecurity in the Age of Capital Hybrid. Together these four themes present a context for dialogue between academic self-reflection and an outward looking applied practice in contemporary society that is endemic to contemporary sociocultural research. While some of the thematic topics focus on the changing conditions for knowledge and practice productions in general and the transformation of the field of anthropological or ethnographical research, others topical discussions will exemplify how anthropological frameworks can be applied in new ways, approaching new kinds of materials from different perspectives. The themes all point toward the crucial interaction between the conditions for knowledge production and the applications of that research, where changes in the economic and political context within which research is undertaken are important not only for the researchers themselves, but also for what cross-disciplinary researches can hope to achieve and what role it can play in society.

The conference will involve presentations from a number of prominent speakers who have worked in and on Indonesia, including not just anthropologists, but scholars from the social sciences and humanities more generally, all of whom have, in some way or the other, conducted research and/or formulated conceptual models that articulate the urge for new discourses on values and capital, and their wider implications in policy domains. Foci of discussion will include attention to the implications of the 'ontological and ethical turn' for research beyond localities, as well as other perspectives that seek to bring a more rigorous and historically grounded consideration of values into analysis. Papers will engage not only with the fundamental philosophical and ethical stances sociocultural and political economy perspectives, especially as these have engaged with key terms such as 'capital', 'value' and other, but also with unpacking the notion of local within human and non-human interface systems. The conference framework thus seeks to place analysis of the specificities of historical emergence in Indonesia within more encompassing views of the process of transformation of capital forms in the contexts of global markets, human-technology interfaces, law and governance, economic and environmental crises,

and the developmental and conservation initiatives being formulated and implemented to confront them.

Methodologically, this event is also intended to reveal how the reflexive turn in sociocultural discourses and development research of capital and value interfaces can reshape and deepen our understandings. Consequently, this activity also gives special attention to the importance of the young scholar and activist generations in constructing and even disentangling our sociocultural knots. Young scholars and activists, wherever they have been engaged themselves, despite actually having tremendous potential in reshaping theoretical ideas and methodologies for formulating and answering relevant questions seem not to have received adequate attention in many social research agendas. Moreover, the event will valorize the spirit of young scholars in Indonesia and developing countries in their endeavors to configure alternative modes of scholarship, endeavors and communication strengthening. For this concern, the event will specifically design a collaborative workshop for the young scholars prior to and in parallel with the conference sessions.

B. Tropical Lecture by Professor Bruno Latour: Professeur des Universités, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po)

C. Themes, Topics and Key People

- **Theme 1**

Tracing Value and Agency: Capital Formations in The Nation's Historical Trajectories

Chair: **David Henley**, Professor in Indonesia Studies, Southeast Asian History and Southeast Asian Politics at Leiden University the Netherlands

Refers to the term of 'value' as a meaning something more like 'importance', this panel's theme would explore the manifestations of value throughout the culture of gift and exchange as well as money, debt and financial institutions in both the historical sociocultural realms and colonial encounter periods. The significance of this issue will contribute to comprehension of the flows and formations of the values of capital and human sociality, and the role of agency in form of either the dialectical juncture or disjuncture between human and non-human being within various ideas and practices which in many cases tend to be silent in more comprehensive accounts of the contemporary economic history or even the current global capital market.

The discourse and debates in this issue will offer enormous potential for reconfiguring existing study results into insightful ramifications and then may paving the way of its continuity and change along historical timelines. The topics under this theme possibly will explore a range of key focuses on the pre-colonial and colonial periods and its interconnectedness such as:

- Gifts, Exchanges and Markets
- Kinships and Socialites

- Credits and Debts
 - Money and Financial Institutions
 - Commodities and Non-Commodities
 - Land, Labor and Divisions
 - Power and Structure Configurations
 - Warfare and Conquests
 - Livelihood and Well-Being
 - The Origin of Law and Proprietary
- **Theme 2**
Recycling Values: Ideological and Power Metaphors on Contemporary Capital Expansions

Chair: **Tania Murray Li**, Professor of Anthropology, Canada Research Chair and Tier One at the Department of Anthropology University of Toronto Canada and the Director of Centre for Southeast Asian Studies

In many ethnographical exemplifications, social formation manifests the idea that the structure is an utmost value that encompasses the ideological and political power as well as how social life is molded by the contention that power is universal and the source of all structure which particularly related to the capital maneuvers. Thus, both of these ideas were idiosyncratic and provoking our curiosity for a new intellectual journey on the capital-ties of values from comparative perspectives. Dispatched from a set of existing results in ethnographic studies insofar, this theme will explore the multiplicities notion of values within capital reservoirs across its both symbolic and real manifestations and descriptive and artifacts dimensions as well.

The discourse over values in this scene is very crucial and even critical in corresponding to the recent anthropological engagements inspired both by the ‘ontological turn’ and ethical reexamination dealing with such issues as the impact of the transformation of capital. Furthermore, this debate might be a very provocative starting point, because it has a potential in dismantling all assumptions about the nature-culture or idea-representation among other dichotomies, binaries or contradictions. Meanwhile, from ethical standpoint, this engagement will challenge and probably reshaping our moral obligations along the “objective” and “subjective” lines and the good and bad counter-value over the capital existences. The classic of anthropological theory that is still stuck in this kind of dualism challenged to find the new bases that is able to talk about the relationship without getting caught in the duality over simplifications, which possibly could be called as “the struggle for new ontologies and ethics’.

The subsequent cross-topical issues under this theme might be interested for further critical discussions are:

- Narrating Capitalism, Socialism and Nationalism in Rural-Urban Arenas
- Liberalism and Neoliberalism Fragments in Everyday Lives

- Locating the Working Class Compositions
- Rethinking the Cooperative as a Capital for the Nation Economic Building
- Ideological Battlefields in Education Sectors
- Sociocultural Narratives of Poverty and Inequality
- Post Colonial Capitalism Discourses
- Post-Humanity of Human and Non-Human Dialectical Encounters
- Democracy and Decentralization in Contemporary Political Cultures
- Religiosity and Capital Life

- **Theme 3**

Interlocking Imagined Values: Encounters and Asymmetries in the Age of Cultural Capitalism

Chair: **Gregory Lawrence Acciaioli**, Professor and senior lecturer at the Department of Anthropology and Sociology Discipline Group and Asian Studies Discipline Group, School of Social and Cultural Studies, The University of Western Australia.

In the twenty-first century, as capitalism and its derivatives such as neoliberalism par excellence, continues to consolidate power at the global level, culture in its old fashions has lost most relics of encircled autonomy and almost entirely characterized as immaterial extensions of capital, simultaneously ideology, commodification, and all of “post-ism” including in the religion worlds. Trajectories toward modernity are thus better conceptualized in terms of the encounters of various groups in the context of shifting social formations.. In other words, such processes involve untamed new modes of value extraction in these encounters and the fashioning of various types of of frontiers. Ironically, it leaves life with a double bind burdens: no one has responsibility or everyone’s obligation regardless any social-ties. Either of such extreme ridiculousness has leaving the room in uncertainties or simply triggering a new resistance and redefining commonalities.

Meanwhile, despite the major problems were already been addressed, much of them are still persisting. Surely, the significance of encounters and frontiers to historic and contemporary capitalism has not gone unnoticed in social theory. A myriad of perspectives and methodological pervasiveness have been proliferated within and across anthropological, humanities, and social disciplines. This theme intended to catch up the major issues regarding the encounters, confrontations, assimilations and other modes of encounters among groups, their paradoxical intentionalities and social and cultural methods as a “modus operandi” in facing contemporary problem complexities.

Most cases that possible to be elaborated within this theme may include but not exclusively limited to:

- Contemporary Cultural Commodities
- Contemporary Financial Cultures
- Social and Cultural Entrepreneurships

- Multinational Extractive Capitalist Institutions
- Global-Local Law, Regulations, Treaty and Agreement Interfaces
- Contemporary Debates and Policies on Land Reforms
- Techno-scape and the Rise of Hybrid Identities
- Bioethics and Food Sovereignty
- Health and Digital Culture
- Energy and Infrastructure as Political Culture Policies
- People's Diaspora and Mobility

Theme 4

The Naked Face of the Clash of Values: Conflicts and Insecurity in the Age of Capital Hybrid

Chair: **David McRae**, Senior research fellow at the University of Melbourne's Asia Institute and an associate in the Centre for Indonesian Law, Islam and Society.

The history of modern Indonesia is replenished with stories of rebellions, discords, riots, unrest and confrontations. Indonesia is often characterized as a country that is too difficult to achieve a common consensus on how best to construct and manage a life together with very diverse social setting without violence. More than that, Indonesia also has seemed not been able to come to terms with its dark and bloody histories. Once plagued by a series of violent communal conflict in the past, more rage faces appeared in intricate forms. Terrors, intolerance and also which has arisen recently, gender bigotry, tend to make the situation becomes more precarious and insecure.

How can violence be transformed into the new violence? How do to explain the nexus of conflict and terror? How do to bridge amicably between individual or communal beliefs and its social-ties? These are some of the questions, among others, that are consequential to be approached throughout this foci. The study of conflicts and insecurities, of course, allows for a broader and more open-ended discussion of widespread and diverse emerging security issues, and the discussions within this concern challenges our intellectual peculiarity that pervades both conventional and critical security studies.

This theme will facilitate interaction between scholars, students, career academics and those within the policy and advocacy spheres, with the aim of encouraging the formation of a fresh and exciting reflections' stream on conflicts and insecurities. The range of issues, among others, that might be possible to be discussed under this theme will be:

- Conflicts, Communalities and Transformations
- Conflicts and Terrorism
- Terrorism, Radicalism and State Interventions
- Religious Intolerances
- Violence and Human Rights
- Social Movements
- Peacebuilding and Development Interventions
- Historic Violences and Reconciliation
- Gender and Sexuality Based Violences
- Urban Riots

D. Event Formats

- **Conference:** the event committee will design a series of topical panel discussion that presents coherence issues which strongly related to the conference themes. Thematic panel discussions will be managed by a chair and moderator.
- **Young Scholars and Activists Workshop:** The workshop will consist of mini-courses that cover specific topics and methods overlooked in the conference's themes. It will also featured by student presentation sessions, giving the young anthropologist and other social sciences young scholars as well as the activists, the opportunity to present and discuss their research and engagements in a collaborative environment. As a part of the conference, during the conference sessions the workshop committee will initiate an additional session which intended to provide a room for dialogue and learning between some outstanding scholars or prominent guests and the young Indonesian scholars. The workshop will be divided into three subsequent activities:
 - **Mini-Courses/Lectures:**
This course consists of a series of topical lectures on sociocultural theory and methodology. The chosen topics and lecturers will be based on the conference's theme. The lectures are scheduled in the morning sessions and will take place close to the conference venue.
 - **Student Presentations:**
The primary aim of the student presentations, which take place in the same venue of the mini-courses and scheduled in afternoon, is to give the students an opportunity to present and discuss their research works and broad range of both intellectual and practical engagements in a collaborative environment. The workshop committee will allocate about 40 minutes to each paper and presentations (15 minutes for presentation, 5 minutes for comments by a respondent and 20 minutes for general discussions). The workshop program will be based on the young scholars' paper submissions. The committee will collect the student papers and manage them into sessions that will make it sensible and systematic.
 - **Dialogues and Lesson Learnings:** presenting a serial of renowned speakers who will story of his or her life and experiences narratively as well as their suggestions and advice in a collaborative dialogue.

E. Important Dates

- Event Publications : early 2016
- Panelist and Participant Invitations: March-April 2016
- Open Call of Papers: May-June 2016
- Abstracts of Paper Submissions for the Panelist: June-July 2016
- Abstract of Paper Submissions for the Open Participants: July-August 2016
- Full Paper Submissions for the Panelist: August-October 2016

- Full Paper Submissions for the Open Participants: September-October 2016
- The Young Scholars and Activists Workshop: Mid December 2016
- The Conference: Mid December 2016

F. Event Venue

The venue of this event will be held in the IT Center Building, Campus of Tadulako University, Palu, Central Sulawesi Indonesia.