

## **Abstract of the Panel**

### **Panel Title: Environmental Change, Resource Management, and Community in the Age of Neoliberal Governmentality: A Case from the Philippine Localities**

The current resource management regime, in general, is increasingly taking on a neoliberal characteristic; that is, zoning, enclosing, and classifying nature according to its market value and treating it as capital that will continue to produce profits in the future. The regime at the same time produces eco-rational subjects who internalize such values as sustainability, conservation and stewardship. However, such neoliberal environmental governance is quite often being carried out through, on one hand, entitling some portion of the resource users in the community while, on the other hand, excluding others from accessing the resources. In such a way, differentiation and inequality are (re)created in the community of resource users through conservation interventions.

This panel emphasizes the need for greater ethnographic focus on the everyday practices of the resource users in communities, and their interaction and negotiation with the institutions and regimes of current neoliberal environmental governance. Against this background, this panel will discuss the following issues through local case studies in the Philippines.

- What is the current situation of environmental change, resource management, and resultant transformation of the communities in the Philippines?
- What is the effect of a neoliberalistic environmental governance and resource management regime on the people (fishers, farmers, and indigenous people) and their communities?
- What is the role of the state (central and local government), NGOs, civil society, and community, and their interrelationship under the current resource management regime?

### **Presentation 1: After the “Closing of the Frontier”: Governmentality and Creation of Eco-rational Subjects**

**Koki Seki**

**Associate Professor, Anthropology**

**Graduate School of International Development and Cooperation**

**Hiroshima University**

Environmental governance and resource management regimes can be considered a modern apparatus of power and knowledge which moulds human subjects according to a specific rationality as to “how nature should be dealt with”. Current research on the political ecology of resource management discusses neoliberal environmental governance and its hegemonic power penetrating into the local community. The first part of this paper reviews such literature mainly by anthropologists and human geographers, and tries to clarify the theoretical implication of the cases presented in the panel in the broader context of the discussion on neoliberalism and governmentality.

The latter half of this paper deals with the case of a Palawan coastal community. Traditionally, an itinerant and migratory way of life has characterized the livelihood strategy of the small and medium scale fisherfolk in the Philippines. Through a continuous inter-islands

migration, those fisherfolk have been seeking untapped marine resources and settled in frontiers such as the coastal areas of Palawan. However, the current trend of coastal resource management that encourages the enclosure of formerly open-access resources increasingly makes such mobile way of life difficult to maintain and compels the fisherfolk to settle and utilize resources lying only within a designated zone. This paper further maintains that, in the local communities of today's Philippines, where the former frontiers are being gradually closed, nature is increasingly managed through privatization, commodification, and marketization.

### **Presentation 2: Contextualizing Marine Protected Areas: A Case Study from Southeast Cebu, Philippines**

**Shio Segi**

**PhD candidate**

**School of Archaeology and Anthropology, CASS**

**Australian National University**

This paper examines the negotiations among stakeholders at the village, NGO, and local government levels on control over the management of a marine protected area (MPA), which is a commonly employed conservation measure in the Philippines. Based on a case study from southeastern Cebu, the paper examines 'no-take' MPA management practices from two perspectives: annual monitoring and everyday interaction. The annual biophysical MPA monitoring activity is used by the state and the local NGO as an opportunity to present green-neoliberal ideology backed by favourable scientific data to a wide range of local resource users. Meanwhile, in the everyday practice of MPA management, resource users have to contend with the state's views. They do this by boycotting surveillance activities and bending the regulations on the grounds that it endangers their livelihood. The paper argues that the management of the MPA is manipulated by each stakeholder group through negotiations to adjust it to reflect their own interests, with the mutual understanding that the MPA may be beneficial in various ways. This paper describes the adaptation of agentive stakeholders to local conditions, which maintains the MPA while achieving stakeholders' diverse objectives.

### **Presentation 3: Zoning Resources, Zoning People: Ecogovernmentality and Non-timber Forest Products Collection in the Philippines**

**James F. Eder**

**Professor, Anthropology**

**School of Human Evolution & Social Change**

**Arizona State University**

This paper explores how neoliberal environmental governance and associated forest management policies unfold in the lives of indigenous and other local peoples who collect and sell non-timber forest products in the Philippines. With particular attention to three such products (rattan,

*almaciga* tree resin and honey) and to two geographical locales (Palawan Island and the Northern Sierra Madre National Park) the paper draws on research among the Batak, the Tagbanua and the Agta, by the author and by others, to examine two ecogovernmentality-related processes. First is the process whereby particular regimes of forest products management become institutionalized through: (1) resource zoning projects and associated specification of the rights, restrictions, and responsibilities of different categories of resource users; and (2) state and NGO-administered “capacity-building” and related social engineering projects. Second is the process whereby ecogovernance policies and projects reverberate through the lives of indigenous peoples to reconfigure subsistence economies, introduce new social divisions and identities, change political relationships with outside peoples, and create new cultural aspirations. These latter developments unfold on local social fields where individual responses to the new management regimes range from disobedience and other forms of resistance to passive acceptance and even confusion, with a complex of space-creating agentive practices in between that sometimes result in more favorable local outcomes.

**Presentation 4: Swidden Governmentality and Manifest Destinies on Palawan Island, the Philippines.**

**Wolfram Dressler**

**Senior Lecturer, Anthropology**

**School of Social Science**

**The University of Queensland**

Western notions of how to ‘properly’ govern people and nature have gone global. Multilateral donors, developing nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have adopted, circulated and devolved governance discourse centering on eco-sustainability that manifests locally to affect how indigenous peoples ought to use and manage forest resources. Drawing on Foucault, in particular, much literature further shows how such discourses create ‘truth regimes’ that local users bridge with their own to govern their behavior and actions in line with external conservation

ideals (Bryant, 2001; Goldman, 2004). This paper similarly seeks to trace emerging forms of eco-governmentality in the forest villages of central Palawan, where indigenous harvesters have adopted and enacted government and NGO rules to regulate resource use behaviour through social and political institutions. Drawing on a case study, it focuses on how certain ideas of swidden and related policies that favor 1) full eradication (zero clearing-burning) and 2) maintaining small, 'sustainable', and traditional swiddens in second growth are crafted, circulated and delivered through state, NGO and local institutions. By partly internalizing and enacting such governance discourse, local users now have greater political fear of clearing and burning forest for swidden and, combined with other constraints, move to permanent agriculture or abandon the practice altogether. The conclusion asserts that in generating new sensibilities of what constitutes 'pristine' forest and 'appropriate' agriculture, the state and civil society have partly succeeded in controlling local peoples' livelihoods and destinies, even if local agency often dictates otherwise (such as by resisting coercive policies).