

## **7 PhD vacancies in the social sciences, social geography, law and/or environmental studies for Indonesians at Radboud University in the Netherlands.**

### **Description of Research Programme: *New Indonesian Frontiers. Stuck between market, state, civil society and the contest over natural resources***

The radical institutional reforms of 1999 generated hope of fairer governance and equity and more sustainable ways of natural resource management. However, in some cases, developments have clearly gone in the opposite direction and the exploitation of natural resources has intensified: huge tracts of forest, land and water have been assigned to national and international logging, mining and oil palm companies.

The notion of *new frontiers* refers to these natural resource rich-regions. These new frontiers differ in many aspects from the so-called classical frontiers. Classical frontiers are areas near or just beyond a boundary of already settled areas or a developed territory, beyond the edge of 'civilization' and state control, i.e. transition zones. The term 'new frontier', by contrast, does not refer to 'unmapped' areas, never before 'civilized' or subjected to state control. New frontiers are regions that have recently witnessed a considerable decrease of state control, accompanied by an increase of lawlessness and resource and land grabbing. New frontiers are in short, regions that have undergone 'decivilization' processes because of political dissolution processes and the arrival of natural resource-oriented 'wild-west capitalism', with often-destructive consequences, socially, culturally and ecologically.

Given the unique historical conditions and strong political-economic dynamics in Indonesia, the notion of new frontiers provides a distinctive way to examine and unpack the political paradoxes surrounding resource extraction. By aiming to understand what these new frontiers and paradoxes are: (a) their causes and conditions; (b) the assemblage of actors involved; (c) the mechanisms and instruments that regulate resource control; and (d) the societal and ecological effects of the frontier mentality, this Joint Research Programme should provide insight into the question as to *why the degradation and depletion of similar natural resources continues in certain regions whereas this process slows down or is curbed in others.*

*New Indonesian Frontiers* is funded by Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW) and the Indonesian Ministry of Research and Technology and the Ministry of Education and Culture. It is jointly and led by Prof. dr. Muhadjir Darwin (UGM) and Dr. Edwin de Jong (Radboud University Nijmegen). This programme's sub-projects offer perspectives on various locations and from various angles and provide a framework for understanding 'new Indonesian frontiers'. The main

focus of the research will be on Kalimantan. Several regions will be selected, that are ecologically, historically, ethnically, politically and socio-culturally different, yet connected by comparable processes of resource use and ecosystem services, habitation, foreign influxes and local initiatives for and against change.

Under this program, seven PhD scholarships at the Radboud University Nijmegen (the Netherlands) are available for the study of seven key *New Frontiers* issues in contemporary Indonesia. These scholarships are only available for Indonesian citizens.

1. *The Making and Remaking of Indonesian Frontiers: a historical and comparative perspective on frontiers regions*

Most of the international concerns about ecological damage, marginalisation of indigenous peoples, deep-seated ethnic conflict, and bureaucratic corruption in Indonesia actually concern certain frontier regions. The local abundance of globally scarce resources that characterises these regions, their inadequate infrastructure, their remoteness from the metropolis and proximity to borders, and the sudden assault on indigenous peoples living there combine to produce enormous governance problems. Contrary to the perception that these frontiers are “natural”, they are in fact made. Frontiers pass through a lifecycle that begins with opening, passes through an expansionary phase, and ends with closure. This project aims to understand key questions about the lifecycle of the frontier. For example: By what historical processes is a Southeast Asian frontier made, and how does a frontier close? What distinguishes frontier society from “normal” society? How does the frontier’s expansion and its closure affect the nation as a whole? How do different types of resources affect governance? Why is it so difficult to “tame” a frontier? It will do this comparatively, namely by studying various frontiers in Kalimantan that are at different stages in their lifecycle.

2. *New frontiers in-between market and state: Understanding the social forces, interests and mechanisms in the new frontier region of Kalimantan*

New frontier regions comprise a number of actors that try to use and control natural resources. The assemblage of actors is diverse and opaque including state and non-state actors, some of them new, such as new kinds of globally operating NGOs and firms. Some actors play a dual role as regulators and rent seekers. These actors share one characteristic, the fact that they act as interface between diverging interests, all kinds of people, groups or organizations competing about the use or exploitation of natural resources. These actors are the driving force behind these new frontiers, the glue connecting competitors by offering money, security, support and legitimacy, depending on the context. This research

project aims therefore at identifying the kinds of social forces, interests and mechanisms that affect the dynamics of resource use and control in West and East Kalimantan.

### *3. National Law and Regional Riches. Contesting Natural Resource Management in East Kalimantan*

This research project is a study of the relation between official law in relation to natural resources management and exploitation in East Kalimantan. Whereas Indonesia strives to develop a clear and consistent legal system to govern its society and resources, the present laws on natural resources and the division of profits emanating from their exploitation contain overlaps, inconsistencies and ambiguities. Moreover, their authority is appropriated by central government agencies in the national capital of Jakarta and removed from such provincial or regional government authorities as are actually responsible for resource management and the implementation of the laws. At these lower levels of government social, political and power relations make that the letter of the law and actual practice may differ considerably from one another. Here lies the double focus of this project which asks, first, where and how inconsistencies and ambiguities in laws and competition between authorities give rise to problems of interpretation and second, how these legal shortcomings are employed locally to authorize specific constellations of control over resources and the profits they generate.

### *4. Unbounding migration at the frontiers*

This subproject reflects critically on territorial boundaries by exploring various 'hidden' borders that reflect frictions and discourses of practice that arise out of migration and human mobility, rather than formal boundaries. These hidden borders will, in many cases, not correspond to nation-state sovereignty (or similarly defined territories), but rather reflect alternative forms of governance of access to particular places and spaces with their corresponding resources. In this subproject, particular attention will be given to migration as one of the ways in which discourses on local livelihood practices are influenced. This will necessitate new models of livelihood governance that reflect these practices and understand the importance of certain levels of contestation and negotiation in ensuring these remain sustainable in the long run within a local environment, whether rural or urban, in Kalimantan.

### *5. Expanding markets shrinking borders, new frontiers*

This subproject will reflect critically on territorial boundaries by exploring various 'hidden' borders that reflect frictions and discourses of practice that arise out of the particular role of commercial activities taking place in present-day Kalimantan, rather than formal boundaries. Explicitly it seeks to understand the influence of multinational actors, and this

requires taking stock of the roles of global and local counterparts of these multinationals and the roles they play as a consortium in shaping multidimensional relationships with the local environment. The concrete objectives of this subproject are to:

6. *NGOs at the frontier: Conflicts over natural resources and the role of Non-governmental organizations in new frontier regions*

This multiple case study examines the role of NGOs in the conflicts over resources in New Frontier Areas in Indonesia. Using a mixed methodology it seeks to clarify what kind of NGOs are involved in such conflicts, what their goals and interests are, what strategies they use to pursue their goals and how their activities affect, either positively or negatively, the conflict at stake. Empirically, this study draws upon various different conflict areas in Kalimantan. While there is no generally agreed upon definition of the term NGO (Lewis & Kanji, 2009), NGOs in this project are defined as 'self-governing, non-market organizations, operating independent from the government, at least formally'.

7. *Deliberative valuation of wetland ecosystem meanings and functions in New Frontier Areas, on Kalimantan, Indonesia, to enhance the sustainable and fair use of its services*  
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The greatest economic benefits from the exploitation of natural resources typically flow to investors and the government, and often through processes that lack equity and fairness, especially by removing local people from their lands without proper restitution. There is an urgent need for ideas and methods on controlling these processes. Nowadays, an often embraced method used to value natural resources and motivate people, governments and firms to act according to these values is economic ecosystem services valuation. Calculating the total economic value (TEV) of ecosystems and their services is widely seen as an appropriate method for visualising, preserving and improving the contribution of natural resources to human wellbeing. The underlying assumption is that actors such as governments, firms and the public will be more motivated to protect ecosystems and their services if these have a proven economic value. We argue, however, that a unilateral focus on economic ecosystem services validation will not do the job and may even be counterproductive. We plead for a more all-encompassing method known as narratively embedded ecosystem valuation (NEEV). In this subproject, we will investigate and test whether our supposition is true. This will involve several steps and use several methods, and focus on the Mahakam, the longest river in East Kalimantan.

The PhD candidates are expected to do research and publish on the basis of the research, culminating in a PhD dissertation.

## **Requirements**

The PhD candidate should:

- Hold a recent Master's degree in the social sciences or humanities (anthropology, political science, social geography, sociology, history, law, environmental studies). A master thesis on a topic related to New Indonesian Frontiers and above-mentioned themes is an advantage;
- Excel academically, as shown in the grade transcripts and curriculum vitae;
- Have an excellent written and spoken command of English, evidenced by a recent TOEFL, IELTS proficiency test
- Have knowledge and interest in field research;
- Have the ability and interest to work in a team of academics and practitioners.
- Be an Indonesian citizen

## **Selection Process**

The selection of the PhD candidates will take place in two stages:

Firstly, promising candidates will be invited to participate in a short intensive course about researching New Frontiers and writing research proposals. This will be held from 4 November to 9 November 2012 at UGM in Yogyakarta. Travel costs and accommodation will be funded for selected candidates.

Secondly, during and after this intensive course the candidates will write a research proposal, to be submitted by 17 December 2013. The final selection will take place on the basis of this research proposal.

## **Scholarship**

The PhD students will receive a Dikti scholarship of approx. €1000 per month plus various benefits. The position starts 1 April 2013, and is initially for 1 year. Extension of the contract after the first year to a total of four years is subject to satisfactory performance. During the four years the PhD candidate will conduct fieldwork in Indonesia (mainly Kalimantan), while also spending approx. 2 ½ years in the Netherlands at Radboud University Nijmegen.

## **Organisation**

*New Indonesian Frontiers* is funded by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW) and the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture under the Scientific Program DIKTI-SPIN PhD Projects 2012-2017. Institutes participating in the research program include the Radboud University Nijmegen, Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Gadjah Mada University, Mulawarman University, University of Balikpapan, Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). Coordination takes place through Radboud University Nijmegen ([www.ru.nl](http://www.ru.nl)).

## **Additional information**

A detailed description of the research program and the above-mentioned subprojects may be obtained at the project's website: [http://cpasru.nl/research/research\\_projects\\_cpas](http://cpasru.nl/research/research_projects_cpas)

For further information about the project and the application procedure please refer to the website or contact the program coordinator Dr. Edwin de Jong (e.dejong@maw.ru.nl).

Applications with motivation letter, curriculum vitae, grade transcripts and evidence of English proficiency test score are to be addressed electronically to

**newindonesianfrontiers@gmail.com**. The deadline for applications is 15 October 2012.

Positions may remain open beyond that date until filled.