

Einladung zum Vortrag

am Mittwoch, 21.11.2018, 16 Uhr

Institut für Geographie und Regionalforschung
Universität Wien • Universitätsstr. 7/5 • 1010 Wien
KONFERENZRAUM



Dr. Antje MISSBACH

Monash University, Melbourne

State-sanctioned smuggling of asylum seekers back to Indonesia?

Illegality within Australia's border protection and deterrence strategies

As in combatting other forms of transnational crime, for anti-people-smuggling law to be effective it ideally needs to be enforced in countries of destination as well as in countries of transit and origin. The decline in the smuggling of people from Indonesia to Australia since late 2013 is, however, primarily attributable to unilateral deterrence policies under Australia's Operation Sovereign Borders, including tow-backs and turn-backs of asylum seekers boats to Indonesia (and to Sri Lanka and Vietnam), rather than to bilateral or multilateral cooperation in enforcing anti-people smuggling laws in the region. Despite the Australian government's draconian policies, more than 30 boats have departed from Indonesia since 2013. One particular case stands out because of the media attention it attracted and, more importantly, because the Australian government has been criticised for engaging in a form of "state-sanctioned" or "state-commissioned" reversed people smuggling. In May 2015, members of the Australian Navy and Border Force intercepted an Indonesian boat with 65 asylum seekers on board and allegedly paid the crew US\$32,000 to take the asylum seekers back to Indonesia. In this paper, I reconstruct what happened at sea in this case and the consequences for the Indonesian boat crew, who were arrested, charged and sentenced to five years imprisonment and heavily fined for people smuggling in Indonesia. Moreover, I analyse this event within the larger context of Australia's anti-people-smuggling policies to explain the absence of any meaningful legal scrutiny of the alleged bribery and corruption perpetrated by Australian government officials. I hope to contribute to ongoing debates within the anthropology of the state and illegalised migrations.

Antje Missbach is a senior research fellow and lecturer at the School of Social Sciences at Monash University in Melbourne. Her research interests include the socio-legal dimensions of forced migration in Southeast Asia, border regimes, asylum policies and refugee protection in the Asia-Pacific, as well as diaspora politics and long-distance nationalism. Before moving to Monash, she was a McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellow at the Melbourne Law School (2011-2014) and she also held positions as post-doctoral fellow at the Berlin Graduate School for Muslim Cultures and Societies and as lecturer at the Ruprecht-Karls University in Heidelberg. Antje studied Southeast Asian Studies and European Ethnology at Humboldt University in Berlin and obtained her PhD from the Australian National University, Canberra in 2010. She is the author of *Troubled Transit: Asylum seekers stuck in Indonesia* (ISEAS, 2015) and *Politics and Conflict in Indonesia: The Role of the Acehnese Diaspora* (Routledge, 2011) as well as the co-editor, with Jemma Purdey, of *Linking people: Connections and encounters between Australians and Indonesians* (Berlin: Regiospectra, 2015).

Organized by:

Research Group Population • Environment • Development

Department of Geography and Regional Research
University of Vienna