

## The Joint Thematic Coordination Programme “Governance, markets and citizens” of the three Social and Economic Development Joint Research Projects under SPIN

The overarching program ‘Governance, Markets and Citizens’ (GMC) aims to identify and analyse key aspects of socio-economic and political developments in contemporary Indonesia. After three research projects (JRPs) had been independently selected for funding (see links below), their researchers became the participants of the overarching GMC project.

**The objectives** of the coordination activities of GMC are:

- a) To find a common theme for discussion and collaboration between the three JRPs. Through the focus on governance (explained below) the three projects together aim to increase knowledge about the on-going democratization process in Indonesia and, in a broader sense, contribute to better understanding ‘how Indonesia works’
- b) To facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and communication between the projects
- c) To present results of the three projects and discuss differences and coherence in a joint final Conference (in 2016), and
- d) produce a joint end publication

**Three shared themes** were identified during the second GMC workshop in Utrecht on 25 April 2014:

1. **Governance:** All three JRPs address questions of governance. The VU/Twente-UI/ITB project proposal aims to investigate “how the national reform of decentralization and local democratization will influence local governance”, whereas the Leiden-UGM proposal aims at “improving our understanding of the processes favouring or curtailing clientelistic practices, because clientelism is associated with various societal ills – from low economic growth, inefficient governance to a weak rule of law”. The Maastricht-Lampung project focuses on “the governance problem that is manifest in the difficulty to create meaningful interactions among stakeholders from business, civil society (including representatives of smallholders), and governments that result in positive social and economic effects for (smallholder) producers in the South”. These three fragments of the research proposals indicate a wide variety of (implicit) definitions of the concept governance. However, shared is the concern for and curiosity about ways in which ordinary people in Indonesia – small holders, citizens, and the constituencies of local governments – have benefitted from Indonesia’s democratization process
2. **Decentralization.** From the disciplinary focus of the economists Indonesia is a wonderful case to study decentralization’s impact, because “there is a moment in time when it all started, a period before and a period after (methodological advantage)”. From a perspective of reality in Indonesia decentralization is ‘the game changer’. There were high expectations, but observations point at ‘more of negative things’. For example, the proliferation of corruption to lower levels of government, which has done more damage to the country. How can we explain that?
3. **Macro-micro links** is a methodological issue of common concern. How to integrate or compare findings from macro and micro research? For example: how to connect findings about small farmers, or citizens in search of health care to macro processes of decentralization? The macro-micro distinction is not similar to quantitative versus qualitative research (or economists versus social scientists).

“**Governance**” was chosen as the **main theme** for his collaborative project. The demise of authoritarian governments and waves of decentralization and democratization combined with the impact of globalization and new neo-liberal economic policies, have changed structures and processes of governance fundamentally. Governance should not be understood as a one-sided and top-down process exclusively dominated by government institutions. Instead, it concerns a complex set of decision making processes and trajectories of implementation in which a variety of (trans-)national government and non-government institutions and actors, formal and informal, participate (Leach et al., 2007; Steurer, 2013; Swyngedouw, 2005). This is how most, if not all, important decisions are made and implemented that

affect the lives of the 253 million people in Indonesia. A focus on governance covers questions concerning citizenship, social justice as well as clientelism and inequality; it also includes regional variations in outcomes of national policies, and new initiatives for multi-stakeholder collaboration. Our knowledge about these processes is partial and fragmented. A combined, interdisciplinary and comparative approach can offer a better understanding of this broad but highly relevant topic (Chhotray & Stoker, 2009). The variety of approaches within the three JRPs includes linking governance to decentralization and democratization (Antlöv & Eko, 2012; Choi & Fukuoka, 2014), emphasizing the role of clientelism in decision making processes (Hickey, 2012), and looking at outcomes of governance processes in terms on impacts on inequality, exclusion, winners and losers (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2009). The JRPs provide windows to address these issues, leading to insights about “how Indonesia works”.

In November 2014 the discussion on further collaboration continued in Yogyakarta, where the JRP's presented proposals for scientific articles for a joint end publication. The aim is a special issue on “Tracing governance in Indonesia” in a scientific journal. Part of the discussion centred on a definition of the concept 'governance'. The preliminary outcome is that *governance is about the processes of collective decision-making in settings where there is a plurality of actors or organisations and where not necessarily a formal control system can dictate the terms of the relationship between these actors and organisations* (adapted from Chhotray and Stoker 2009). The workshop resulted in a list of 9 titles and abstracts of co-authored papers on which we promised to work for the next meeting in 2015.

A new subject that came up during the workshop was about ‘measuring governance’ or ‘measurement and governance’. The focus for papers on this subject is on how the two types of research – by economists and political anthropologists – can benefit from each other in understanding (regional variation in) the impact of governance dynamics in Indonesia on socio-economic development and vice versa. Synergy will arise if quantitative data not just confirm what we already know, but lead to new research questions; and if qualitative research results provide explanations for the patterns identified by quantitative research, or question them. In these papers intimate knowledge of social and political processes in Indonesia can be combined with disciplinary debates.

**The time line** for the joint GMC programme for the coming period includes the following events:

24 June 2015 One-day work in progress workshop at the VU in Amsterdam to discuss the first part of draft papers for the joint special issue “Tracing governance in Indonesia” Most of the papers are co-authored across the JRPs.

9 December 2015. One-day work in progress workshop at the KITLV in Leiden to discuss the second part of draft papers for the joint special issue “Tracing governance in Indonesia” Most of the papers are co-authored across the JRPs.

September 2016. Final Conference of SPIN GMC in Amsterdam. Presentation of main results of the three JRPs and the Joint Program.

April 2017: Final seminar and Launch of the SPIN GMC special issue “Tracing Governance in Indonesia” in Indonesia.

**Coordination and contact:**

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## References

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- Choi, I., & Fukuoka, Y. (2014). Co-opting Good Governance Reform: The Rise of a Not-so-Reformist Leader in Kebumen, Central Java. *Asian Journal of Political Science*(ahead-of-print), 1-19.
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- Steurer, R. (2013). Disentangling governance: a synoptic view of regulation by government, business and civil society. *Policy Sciences*, 46(4), 387-410.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2005). Governance innovation and the citizen: the Janus face of governance-beyond-the-state. *Urban studies*, 42(11), 1991-2006.

### The three JRPs:

#### [Social and economic effects of partnering for sustainable change in agricultural commodity chains](#)

Indonesian project leader: Prof. Bustanul Arifin, Agribusiness University of Lampung Dutch project leader: Prof. Pieter Glasbergen, Maastricht University

#### [Local and regional dimensions in Indonesia's social and economic development](#)

Indonesian project leader: Prof. Ari Kuncoro, University of Indonesia Dutch project leader: Prof. Henri de Groot, VU University Amsterdam

#### [From clients to citizens? Emerging citizenship in democratizing Indonesia](#)

Indonesian project leader: Prof. Bambang Purwanto, Gadjah Mada University Dutch project leader: Prof. Henk Schulte Nordholt, Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies

Leiden, KITLV, 24 March 2015.