

MICHIEL KÖHNE

My main theme is the role of law in the production and reproduction of power inequalities. I look at how people use and produce law, among other sources of power to negotiate these power inequalities. This includes an analysis of how uses of law are related to uses of other resources like knowledge, discourses, economic power and alliances. Use of law is about the use and reproduction of both state law and non-state law and about both state and non-state authorities.



A more specific theme in my work is the relationship between on the one hand the relative anonymous actors of a globalising market and its related scramble for resources and on the other hand concrete communities that negotiate their relatively local autonomous lifestyles, interests and dwellings. In Bolivia I have analysed how an indigenous community used a combination of state law and authorities and indigenous law and authorities to strive for autonomy against logging companies. In Indonesia my research focussed on how villagers use different kinds of law, among which RSPO, and fight over the legitimacy of their village head in order to safeguard their access to land vis-à-vis oil palm plantation companies. In the Noordoostpolder I focus on how inhabitants react to the announcement of shale gas extraction, on how they perceive their expected wins and losses and how they relate this to larger discourse and produce alliances to organize their resistance, all within a normative context which includes images of state and law.

BSC AND MSc: THEMES FOR THESES

I like to supervise BSc theses on topics related to negotiations over natural resources, local resistance to state intervention, governance, citizenship, brokerage, social movements, land grabbing and certification.

Concrete examples:

- Oil palm related land conflict
- Shale gas and citizenship/resistance
- Indigenous governance in Bolivia
- Indigenous land and territorial claims
- The role of certification schemes in policy making
- Practices of certification around the world

- Conflict around access to resources

DEMAND FOR MSc RESEARCH

At the moment I especially welcome the following MSc students:

- Students who like to do a case study on how citizenship is negotiated around decision making on shale gas.
- Students who like to do a case study on how citizenship is negotiated around decision making on oil palm plantations.
- Students who like to study the negotiations of the policy making of certification regimes.
- Students who like to study local governance in Bolivia: indigenous rights, land issues.

