



## The Sixth Cornell Modern Indonesia Project Conference on Languages and Linguistics Held in Indonesia



by Ava White, SEAP programming assistant

*Above (left to right):*  
Q&A with audience.

Abby Cohn (SEAP director and InLaLi co-organizer), conference opening remarks.

Sign interpreter, Emma Llewellyn with presenter Nick Palfreyman.

Presenter Dwi Noverini Djenar.

Audience during presentation including presenter Antonia Soriente on left and SEAP alum Okki Kurniawan on right.

The study of Indonesia has been an integral part of the Southeast Asia Program (SEAP) since its founding in 1950. That year, the Ford Foundation awarded SEAP a grant to build US scholarly expertise on Indonesia, and the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project (CMIP) was born. Under the directorship of George Kahin and associate director John Echols, CMIP supported a wide range of studies on Indonesian politics and government in the rapidly changing context of the post-independence years. In later years CMIP expanded its focus to include Indonesian culture, history, and international relations, launching the journal *Indonesia* in 1966. The project also supported the translation of critical monographs and reports from Indonesian and Dutch into English. This collection is freely available on [Hathi Trust \(http://collections.library.cornell.edu/cmip/browse.html\)](http://collections.library.cornell.edu/cmip/browse.html).

In 2011 CMIP held the “State of Indonesian Studies Conference,” its first conference and an opportunity to revitalize the project in a new millennium. The conference brought eighteen scholars from around the world to Cornell to participate in six panel discussions on Indonesian anthropology, art history, history, language and literature, government and political science, and ethnomusicology. In the years that followed, SEAP faculty organized a series of conferences stemming from each of those six panels to explore Indonesian studies across a variety of disciplines.

Building on this legacy of scholarship, the sixth conference of CMIP entitled “[Indonesian Languages and Linguistics: State of the Field](https://indoling.com/inlali/)” (<https://indoling.com/inlali/>) convened in Jakarta February 16-18, 2020. The conference was organized by SEAP Director Abby Cohn and co-hosted by Atma Jaya Catholic University, making this the first conference of CMIP to be held in Indonesia – a critical step to ensure extensive participation by Indonesian scholars, and harkening back to the roots of CMIP as a project to both develop scholarship on Indonesia and to expand access to such scholarship. Generous contributions from the [Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies \(https://einaudi.cornell.edu/\)](https://einaudi.cornell.edu/) and from the [American Institute for Indonesian Studies \(AIFIS, https://www.aifis.org/\)](https://www.aifis.org/) helped facilitate travel to

the conference for Indonesian participants. It also drew participants from Japan, Europe, and the UK to Jakarta, making this a truly international affair built on a strong tradition of the annual International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics (ISMIL) and the biennial International Symposium on the Languages of Java (ISLOJ). The conference also received generous support from a Wenner-Gren Foundation grant through the University of Maryland.

This dynamic scholarly event highlighted the various fields of Indonesian language studies by bringing into conversation scholars focusing on description analysis and documentation (describing how language is used by a speech community), language endangerment, and sociolinguistics (language in relation to social factors). By incorporating these subfields into a single event, the conference offered an opportunity to address intersecting issues. Linguistics is a key field in the broader context of Indonesia studies given the incredible language diversity of the country along with the complex



national trends of multilingualism, language shift, and widespread language endangerment.

Bambang Kaswanti Purwo (Atma Jaya Catholic University), who also presented at the first CMIP “State of Indonesia Studies Conference” in 2011, delivered the Sunday opening lecture entitled “Playing with Words and Characters to Communicate in the Cyber World.” The lecture focused on youth language and highlighted its central role in how language changes and develops. The following panel focused on language documentation, description, and analysis, with presentations by Sonja Riesberg (University of Cologne), Jermy I. Balukh (STIBA Cakrawala Nusantara Kupang), and Antonia Soriente (University of Naples ‘L’Orientale), with Thomas Connors

(University of Maryland) serving as a discussant. The panel covered three different geographic regions of Indonesia, and demonstrated how linguists can document and support various communities in engaging with their languages. Soriente’s work was particularly novel, collaborating with an interdisciplinary team to document language as cultural heritage among a community of boat builders.

Monday morning’s panel on language use in multilingual contexts featured presentations from Kristian Tantomio (Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta), Nick Palfreyman (University of Central Lancashire), and Bradley McDonnell (University of Hawai’i at Mānoa), with J. Joseph Errington (Yale University) serving as a discussant. Panelists considered youth language





All conference photo at conference closing.

use in vocational secondary schools, research on sign language in Indonesia, and multilingualism in Southwest Sumatra. This panel connected back to the theme of Bambang Kaswanti Purwo's opening lecture, emphasizing the different repertoires of language people use (formal language and informal language) as different varieties of language.

After parallel sessions on the description, analysis, and documentation of languages in Indonesia, Multamia RMT Lauder and Allan F. Lauder (Universitas Indonesia), Eri Kurniawan (Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia), presented on the third panel on language endangerment and language vitality,

with Marian Klamer (Leiden University) serving as a discussant. This panel offered an examination of endangered languages from East Nusa Tenggara to Moluccas, and offered a hopeful perspective on the vitality of endangered languages, along with a call to action to create an endangered language fund for Indonesia by Joseph Lovestrand (Yayasan Suluh Insan Lestari).

The Tuesday morning panel deliberated emerging varieties of spoken Indonesian, with presentations from Asako Shiohara (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) and Yanti (Atma Jaya Catholic University), and Dwi Noverini Djenar (University of Sydney), with Michael Ewing serving as a discussant.

The panel similarly offered a hopeful outlook, building on the opening lecture to discuss the new and innovative twists and turns in Indonesian languages. After parallel sessions on a variety of case studies, David Gil (Max Planck Institute) offered words as a final discussant.

As with previous conferences, Abby Cohn and Yanti together with Tom Connors are working on the production of an edited volume stemming from this event. They are also working on a repository of online resources to facilitate increased scholarship on Indonesian linguistics, which will be hosted on the [Indoling website \(https://indoling.com/homepage/resources/\)](https://indoling.com/homepage/resources/).

There has now been a separate conference as an extension of four of the six panels of the first 2011 "State of Indonesia Studies Conference." Art history, language and literature, government and political science, and ethnomusicology have all been represented, and anthropology and history may be pursued at a later date. CMIP continues to expand through outreach to Cornell faculty in the sciences conducting research in Indonesia on coral reefs, biodiversity, and soil erosion specifically. CMIP hopes to expand this outreach, and to foster close connections between faculty in the sciences and other faculty members who work on Indonesia. ✨

## TIMELINE

- 1954 Ford Foundation grant establishes CMIP, George Kahin as director
- 1966 The journal "Indonesia" launches
- 1974 Research funds expire, CMIP focuses on its publications
- 1974 The journal "Indonesia" moves publication to SEAP
- 1988 Ben Anderson becomes director
- 2009 Eric Tagliacozzo becomes director
- 2011 State of Indonesia Studies Conference (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt20d87jt>), organized by Eric Tagliacozzo
- 2012 Wealth and Power in Indonesian Politics, organized by Tom Pepinsky
- 2017 'Still in the Game': The State of Indonesian Art History in the 21st Century, organized by Kaja McGowan ([https://events.cornell.edu/event/seap\\_cmip\\_johnson\\_museum\\_still\\_in\\_the\\_game\\_the\\_state\\_of\\_indonesian\\_art\\_history\\_in\\_the\\_21st\\_century](https://events.cornell.edu/event/seap_cmip_johnson_museum_still_in_the_game_the_state_of_indonesian_art_history_in_the_21st_century))
- 2018 Sounding Out the State of Indonesian Music (<https://blogs.cornell.edu/soundingoutindonesianmusic/schedule/>), organized by Chris Miller
- 2019 The State of Religious Pluralism in Indonesia (<https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/64576/SE%20Asia%20Bulletin%20spring%202019%20TRUE%20FINAL.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>), organized by Chiara Formichi
- 2020 Indonesian Languages and Linguistics: State of the Field (<https://indoling.com/inlali/>), organized by Abby Cohn

# Ronald and Janette GATTY LECTURE SERIES

Talks marked ☉ will begin at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time Zone. All other talks will begin at 12:40 p.m. Eastern Time Zone. All talks will take place over Zoom — click the speaker's name or contact [seapgatty@cornell.edu](mailto:seapgatty@cornell.edu) to register.

## September

- 17 ☉ Tom Pepinsky, Cornell//Department of Government  
**Pandemic Politics in Southeast Asia: Society, Governance, and the State**
- 24 ☉ Sopheak Chann, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia//Department of Natural Resource Management  
**Frontier Construction and Place-Making in Cambodia Post-Conflict Resource Landscapes**

## October

- 1 Darin Sanders Self, Cornell//Department of Government  
**Binding Contestation: How Party-Military Relations Influenced Democratization in Indonesia and Paraguay**
- 8 ☉ Patrick Jory, University of Queensland, Australia//School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry  
**A History of Manners and Civility in Thailand: The Civilizing Process in a Southeast Asian Society**
- 15 Megan Sinnott, Georgia State University//Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
**Ghostly Meanings, Spectral Affects: Market Transformations and Possibilities in the Thai Spirit World**
- 22 ☉ Sharyn Graham Davies, Monash University//Herb Feith Indonesian Engagement Centre  
**Indonesia's Im/moral Turn: Drivers and Consequences, Especially in a Covid-19 World**
- 29 Genevieve Clutario, Wellesley College//Department of American Studies  
**Beauty Regimens: Disciplining Filipina Labor Under U.S. Empire**

## November

- 5 ☉ Kathryn Sweet, Social Development Advisor and Independent Scholar//Vientiane, Lao PDR  
**Health Sector Contestation in Cold War Laos, 1950-1975**
- 12 Sarah Grant, California State University//Department of Anthropology  
**Dirty Coffee: Scandal, Scrutiny, and Food Safety in Vietnam**
- 19 ☉ Sittithep Eaksittipong, Chiang Mai University//Department of History  
**The Social and Political Lives of G. William Skinner and Chinese Society in Thailand**

## December

- 3 Anissa Rahadiningtyas, Cornell//History of Art and Visual Studies Department  
**Tulisan Jawi: Decolonizing the 'Modern' and the 'Islamic' in Indonesian Art**
- 10 ☉ Roger Nelson, National Gallery Singapore  
**Realism as an Attitude as an Attitude**

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Accommodation requests:  
[seap@cornell.edu](mailto:seap@cornell.edu)



<http://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/>