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Societies without a State in Sumatra and their Relationship to Nature

Friday, 21 November 2025, 15:30

Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna

Universitätsstraße 7 (NIG), 1010 Vienna, 4th floor, Lecture room A (Hörsaal A)

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Johann Angerler (PhD, Leiden University) is an independent researcher, affiliated with KITLV Leiden. Previously, he worked at the Leiden Ethno-systems and Development Programme (LEAD) at the

Faculty of Science at Leiden University. He is the author of "Bius, Parbaringin und Paniaran. Über Demokratie und Religion bei den Toba Batak Nordsumatras" and "A World People's Representation for a United Humanity. A Thought Experiment". His research interests include the cultures of Sumatra, in particular traditional political and religious institutions, as well as the foundations of co-operation in various contexts. He can be contacted via his website:

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Societies without a state in Sumatra, i.e. societies that organize themselves without needing distinct structures of dominance, all have a certain worldview in common, within which wild, uncultivated nature represents for them a numinous "source of blessing" (Reimar Schefold). On closer inspection, it becomes apparent that this wilderness-related worldview can in turn be regarded as the basis of their ability to self-organize. In the planned lecture, this phenomenon will be described using the example of five Sumatran societies, all of which are organized in different ways, but share both the above-mentioned worldview regarding nature and the ability to self-organize, or have done so in the past.



Hybrid event: join via **Zoom**

<https://univiennea.zoom.us/j/67699662982?pwd=ObG5K8mDU7KkXqWojb5e6wmvbh6RTA.1>

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