

DARMANTO

Postdoctoral Researcher, The Institute of Social Anthropology,
Austrian Academy of Sciences

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RESEARCH INTEREST AND EXPERTISE

Anthropology of mining, food anthropology, agrarian change, environmental anthropology, indigeneity, political ecology, critical development, anthropological theory of value, Southeast Asia, Indonesia.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University. Dissertation: Good to Produce, Good to Share: Food, Hunger and Social Values in a Contemporary Mentawai Society, Indonesia.	2016 - 2020
M.Phil. in Environmental Anthropology, Murdoch University. Thesis: Maintaining Fluidity, Demanding Clarity: The Dynamics of Customary Land Relations Among Indigenous People of Siberut Island (Indonesia).	2015 - 2016
Graduate Certificate in Asian Studies, Murdoch University.	2014 - 2015
B.Sc. in Biology, Gadjah Mada University. Thesis: Ecological Succession and Structure of Vegetation of Traditional Swidden Agriculture on Siberut Island, West Sumatra, Indonesia.	1998 - 2005

EMPLOYMENT

Academic Position

Postdoctoral Fellow, the Institute of Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences	2026-2029
Research Fellow, The Oriental Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS).	2022-now
Research Consultant, The Australian National University (ANU).	2021 (4 months)
Lecturer/Teaching Assistant, Wageningen University and Research (WUR).	2020
Teaching Assistant, Leiden University.	2018

Non-Academic Position

Lead Anthropologist, Sumatran Orangutan Society (SOS).	2021-2024
Research Consultant, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).	2013 (4 months)
Research Consultant, Survey Meter, Yogyakarta.	2013 (6 months)
Research Fellow, Sajogyo Institute, Bogor.	2012-2013
Program Manager of the Indonesia Biosphere Reserve Project, UNESCO-Jakarta Office.	2008-2012
Director, Perkumpulan Siberut Hijau (PASIH).	2006-2008
Field Manager, Collaborative Forest Management Siberut Biosphere Reserve	2004-2005

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Lubabun Niam and **Darmanto**. 2025. *Menerapkan Antropologi dalam Konservasi Orangutan: Refleksi dan Panduan* [Integrating Anthropology in Orangutan Conservation: A Reflection and Guidance]. Medan: TAHUKAH and Sumatran Orangutan Society.

Lubabun Niam and **Darmanto**. 2025. *Buku Saku Konservasi* [Conservation Pocket Book]. Medan: TAHUKAH dan Sumatran Orangutan Society.

Darmanto and Setyowati. A. B. 2012. *Berebut Hutan Siberut: Orang Mentawai, Kekuasaan dan Politik Ekologi* (*Contested Terrains: The Political Ecology of Siberut Rain Forest*). Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Darmanto. 2025. "'Festivity Without Feast': Autonomy, Prosperity, Mutuality, and Inequality in a Mentawai Village." *Antropologi Indonesia*, 46 (2), Article 1 (Special Issue: Value and Others.). <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/jai/vol46/iss2/1>.

Astuti, R., Haug, M. McCarthy, J. **Darmanto**, Semedi, P., Siscawati, M. 2025. Envisioning Climate Politics From Below: Rural Indonesia in the Shadow of Climate Change." *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 0:1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apv.70025>.

Darmanto. 2025. "Eating, Sharing, and Mutuality of Being Among the Mentawai on Siberut Island, Indonesia." *Food, Culture & Society*, 28(3): 546-572. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2024.2359773>.

Darmanto and Koen Meyers. 2024. "Producing Human or Protecting Wildlife? People, Park, and Space on Siberut Island, Indonesia." *Suomen, Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* 48 (3): 4-30. <https://doi.org/10.30676/jfas.129520>.

Darmanto. 2023. "Rice and the Taste of Modernity in Siberut Island". *The Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 54 (1): 64-88. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463423000188>.

Darmanto. 2022. "Good to Produce: Food, Gardening, and Valued Persons in Contemporary Mentawai Society, Indonesia." *Indonesia and Malay World*, 50 (148): 289-312. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2022.2089479>.

Darmanto. 2012. "Global Conservation, National Park and Local Practices in Siberut Island, West Sumatra." *Journal of Forestry Science*, 1 (7): 51-67.

Darmanto. 2011. "Penataan Ruang, Penciptaan Subjek, dan Penerapan Kekuasaan di Pulau Siberut 1969-1998 [Space, Subject and Power in Siberut Island 1969-1998]." *Wacana*, 12 (26): 89-124.

Darmanto. 2006. "Krisis Klaim Kepemilikan Hutan di Pulau Siberut [Contested Claims Over Forest on Siberut Island]." *Wacana*, 6 (20): 157-182.

Peer-Reviewed Edited Volumes

Darmanto and Gerard Persoon. 2026. "Crocodiles Are Watching: Spirits, Social Order, and Ecological Transformation on Siberut Island, Indonesia." In *Water Powers: Sacred Animals of the Asia-Pacific*, edited by Aike P. Rots, Florence Durney, Lindsey DeWitt Prat, and Sonja Åman, 254-279. Manoa: University of Hawai'i Press. <https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/9798880703142-013/html>

Gerard Persoon and **Darmanto.** 2026. "Home Gardens on Siberut: The Transition Zone From Settlement to Agroforest." In *Isolation and Imagination: the Pleasures and Perils of Island Gardening*, edited by Jennie Teasdale, 26-31. Kingscote, Kangaroo Island: Big Quince Print.

Darmanto and Gerard Persoon. 2024. "Without Forest: Turning Forests into Agroforests on Siberut, Indonesia." In *Farmer Innovations and Best Practices by Shifting Cultivators in Asia-Pacific*, edited by Malcolm Cairns, pp. 200-225. London: Routledge and CABI Publishing.

Darmanto and Irina Rafliana. 2023. "The Real Tsunami: Indigenous Survivors Living Between Old and New Settlements After the 2010 Mentawai Disaster." In *Community Responses to Disasters in the Pacific Rim: Placemaking in Displacement*, edited by Liz Maly and Shu-mei Huang, pp. 167-199. Singapore: Routledge.

Darmanto. 2009. "Pandangan Tentang Hutan, Tempat Keramat dan Perubahan Sosial di Pulau Siberut, Sumatra Barat (Knowledge of Forest, Sacred Site, and Social Transformation in Siberut Island, West Sumatra)". In *Situs Keramat Alami: Peran Budaya dalam Konservasi Keanekaragaman Hayati* (Natural Sacred Site: The Role of Culture in Biodiversity Conservation), edited by H. Y. Soedjito, Purwanto, and E. Sukara, pp. 130-164. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor.

Book Reviews

Darmanto. 2025. "The Story of Abu-abu and the Theory of Dispossession from Below." Review of Sophie Chao's in the Shadow of the Palm: More-than-Human Becoming in West Papua (Duke University Press, 2022). *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*: 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2025.2509373>.

Darmanto. 2014. "Environmental Crises, Capitalism, and the Challenge of Political Ecology: A Review Essay". Review of Richard Peets, Paul Robbins, and Michael Watts's (eds) *Global Political Ecology*. *Wacana*, 15 (30): 165-182.

RESEARCH GRANTS

Beyond Insecurity: Changing Indigenous People's Foodways in Time of Climate Change in Indonesia (BICOFID). The Czech Science Foundation (GAČR). Grant No. 24-13058S: € 140,000. P-I.	2024-2026
Pluralising Value of Things: Network of Anthropological Value Scholars in Europe, Southeast Asia, and South America. Die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). Grant No. BE 6942/2-1: € 16,000. Co-I.	2023-2025
Environmental Anthropology for a Resilient Society. Strategy AV-21 Czech Academy of Sciences: € 7,800. P-I.	2023-2024
The Indonesian Food Estate and Local Responses in North Sumatra. Land Deal Politics Initiative (LDPI), The Institute of Social Sciences, Erasmus University: € 3,000. Co-I.	2023
Food Security, Climate Change, and Community Resilience: A Critical Analysis of Indonesia's Food Estate Program. Research and Innovation Agency of Indonesia (BRIN): € 12,200. Co-I.	2022-2024

SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARDS

Travel grant, St Catherine's College, Cambridge University, € 1,000.	2023
Anthropologist-in-Residence Award, Sumatran Orang-utans Society (SOS) and Darwin Initiative.	2022
Travel and Conference grant, Nordic Geographical Society, € 800.	2019
Louwes Fellowship Award for Research of Food and Water in Asia and Africa, Ph.D. Studentship, Leiden University, € 80,000.	2016-2020
Fieldwork and Travel Grant, Australia Award Scholarship (AAS), € 3,100.	2014
Australia Award Scholarship (AAS), M. Phil Studentship, € 63,000.	2014-2016
Individual Excellent Award for Conservation Project "Developing Collaborative Actions for Siberut Island Conservation", Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), € 45,000.	2006
Man and Biosphere (MaB) Award for Young Scientist and Environmentalist, UNESCO Jakarta and Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI).	2005

INVITED TALKS AND GUEST LECTURES

22 April 2026 (online). Keynote Lecture, "Environmental Anthropology: History, Key Concepts, and Special Reference to Indonesia", delivered at the stadium generale of Anthropology Students, **Faculty of Social and Politics, Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia.**

12 May 2026 (online). Guest Lecture, "Living with Mining in North Maluku", delivered for the course, Environmental Anthropology in Indonesia, **Department of Anthropology, Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia.**

27 June 2025. "Animist Sensibility and Power Sensitivities: The Mentawai Ontology and Forest Extractivism on Siberut Island." Invited talk for the workshop "Environmentalism Across Social and Cultural Contexts". **Department of Middle Eastern Studies, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague.**

02 December 2024. "More than Journalism: Local Media, Mining, and Environmental Politics in North Moluccas. Guest Lecture for "Media Monday" Course for Erasmus Students Program. **Department of Media and Journalism, Charles University, Prague.**

29 November 2024. "Climate Politics From Below: Rethinking Indigenous People's Resilience in the Shadow of Climate Change and Decarbonisation Projects in Indonesia". Invited talk for "Seminar Rethinking Resilience, Climate Justice and Decolonial Perspectives." **Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague.**

13 October 2024. "The Boom and Boost of Commercial Crops and Agrarian Transition in Upland Indonesia". Invited talk for the Monthly Seminar 'Society, Economy and Ecology'. **Centre of Demography and Population. Indonesia Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Jakarta.**

17 September 2024. "Crocodiles Are Watching: The Water Spirit, Rampant Development, and Ecological Transformation on Siberut Island (Indonesia)". Invited talk for "Environmental Anthropology Seminars Series". The Institute of Ethnology, **Czech Academy of Sciences.**

03 June 2024. "Values, Social Totality/Integration, and the Other: A Turnerian Perspective and Southeast Asia Ethnography." Invited talk for Workshop on "Value, Focus on Amazonian Society". **Berlin Forum and Museum, Berlin.**

09 January 2024. "Embedding Ethnography for Conservation: Lessons Learn from Orangutan Conservation in Sumatra and Borneo". Invited talk for the Workshop for Environmental Funders on Embedding Anthropology in Conservation, **Sumatran Orangutan Society, London.**

02 October 2023. "Uplands or Hinterland: Some Notes On Out-of-the-Way-Place in Indonesia Ethnography". Invited discussant for the Monthly Seminar "Key Anthropology Concepts on Indonesia and Southeast Asia Research ". **Indonesia Research and Innovation Agencies (BRIN), Jakarta.**

05 September 2023. "Mainstreaming Indigenous Voices and Values in Biodiversity Conservation, International". Keynote speaker of "the Symposium on Wildlife Biodiversity Conservation: Planet, People, and Biodiversity Towards a Prosperous Future of Humanity". **Department of Conservation and Ecotourism, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta.**

24 October 2023. "Environmental Governance in Indonesia Frontier Zones". Guest lecturer, **The Institute of Village Development, Yogyakarta.**

08 December 2022. "Source of Food, Spirit's Livestock or Protected Animal? Multi-modality of Human-Primate Relationship on Siberut Island". Keynote speaker for "the 2nd Symposium of Primate Studies", **Association of Primate Studies Indonesia, Jakarta.**

PEER-REVIEW CONFERENCES

2026

The Institute of Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences' thematic workshop "Destruction Conceptual Approaches and Ethnographic Explorations, Vienna, 18-20 May 2026. Paper presented: Power and the Ambiguity of Destruction in the Halmahera Nickel Industry.

2025

Pluralising the Value of Things Workshop, Cambridge 16-18 July, 2025. Paper presented: Valuing the Dwarf Gibbon: the Conflicting and Co-existence of Care and Preservation on Siberut Island.

2024

The 9th Asian Primate Symposium. Paper presented: Integrating Anthropology in Orangutan Conservation Programs in North Sumatra, 21-26 November 2024. Paper presented: Integrating Anthropology in Tapanuli Orangutan Conservation.

The American Association of Asian Studies (AAS-in-Asia Conference), 9-12 July 2024. Paper presented: The Performative Development and Agrarian Nightmare in the (Re)making of Mentawai Paradise.

The International Conference on Global Land Grabbing, Bogota, 19-21 March. Paper presented: Is It Just a "Project"? Indonesia Food Estate and Its Effect in North Sumatra.

2023

The 16th International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) Conference, Brno, 7-10 June 2023. Paper presented: The Ancestors Are Watching: Crocodiles, Social Order and Environmental Transformation on Siberut Island, Indonesia.

The Global Lives of Orangutans Conference, Grassroots Political Responses to Agrarian Conflicts and Environmental Degradation in the Southeast Asian Anthropocene, Cambridge, 7-20 April, 2023. Paper presented: Beyond Failure Narratives: Contingent Articulations and Diversity of Actors' Responses to Large Scale Provisioning Programme in Indonesia.

Finnish Anthropological Society, Rovaniemi, 21-25 March 2023. Paper presented: Whose Domesticated: Change and Continuity of Pigs-Human Relations in Siberut Island, Indonesia.

2022

Climate Change and Agrarian Justice (online), Capetown 26 – 29 September 2022. Paper presented: Rural Indonesia in the Shadow of Climate Change: Envisioning Rural Climate Politics from Below.

The 12th European Association of South-east Asian Studies (EUROSEAS), Paris, 27 June-01 July. Co-chair of Panel, Disaster and Dispossession in Southeast Asia and Beyond. Paper presented: The Bad, the Ugly and the Worst Disaster on Mentawai Island.

The 12th European Association of South-east Asian Studies (EUROSEAS), Paris, 27 June-01 July. Paper presented: Renegotiating Extractive Cosmology: Mentawaian Animism, Logging Operation and the Politics of Redistribution on Siberut Island, Indonesia.

The Conference “Aquatic Powers: Divine Animals of the Asia-Pacific”, University of Oslo, June 01-03.
Paper presented: Watching from Deep Water: Crocodiles, Social Order, and Environmental Transformation on Siberut Island.

2021

The 11th European Association of Southeast Asian Studies (EUROSEAS). Olomouc, September, 07-09. Paper presented: Conflicted Resources Governance in Making an Indonesia Frontier.

The 11th European Association of Southeast Asian Studies (EUROSEAS). Olomouc, September, 07-09. Paper presented: Resisting the Oil Palm: Why Siberut has not been turned into an oil palm plantation.

The Royal Anthropological Institute, “Anthropology and Conservation Virtual Conference”, 15-29 October.
Paper presented: Transforming Forest, Producing Humans: Why the Indigenous Mentawaians Have Resisted Protected Area.

2020

The 2nd AIFIS conference on Indonesia Studies, Jakarta and Michigan, 16-20 June. “Food, Foodways and the Culture of Relatedness in Indonesia”. Paper presented: Pig Haters and Pig Lovers: Food and Social Difference Among Mentawaians and Minangkabau People.

2019

The 10th European Association of Southeast Asian Studies (EUROSEAS). Berlin, Germany, September, 11-13.
Panel: Grounding “Alternative Ontologies”: Towards a Political Ecology of Animism. Paper presented: ‘Egalitarian Turn: Animism, Extraction and Political Ecology of Siberut Island Rain Forest, West Sumatra’.

The 11th International Convention of Asian Scholars (ICAS). Leiden, July, 15-19. Paper presented: Good to Produce: Food and the Construction of Persons among the Mentawaians in Siberut Island, West Sumatra.

The 8th Nordic Geographers Meeting (NGM). Trondheim, Norway, 16-19, June. Paper presented: Cultivating Forest, Producing Food and the Practices of Sustainability in Siberut Island, West Sumatra.

EVENT ORGANISATIONS

Chair and co-organisers of the panel “Changing Foodways in the Time of Climate Change”, The 5th ISA Forum of Sociology, Rabat, 6-11 July 2025.

Pluralising the Value of Things Workshop in Hamburg (Focus: Andes), 09-11 October 2024.

Masterclass of “Environmental Humanities Masterclass: Doing Research in an Epoch of Ecological Unravelling,” The Oriental Institute, The Institute of Ethnology and the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague, 22 May 2024.

Land Deals Political Initiative Mini-workshop, 11 March 2024.

Chair Panel, “Disaster and Dispossession in Southeast Asia and Beyond”. The 12th European Association of Southeast Asian Studies (EUROSEAS). Paris, 27 June-01 July 2022.

Roundtable discussion, “Food, Foodways, and the Culture of Relatedness in Indonesia“. The 2nd AIFIS conference on Indonesia Studies, Jakarta and Michigan, 16-20 June 2020.

SUPERVISION

Adjunct Supervisor (with Robbie Peters and Sophie Chao), Kevin Abimanyu Jatmiko, PhD, “Building Sovereign Food and Nutrition Resilience through Indigenous Knowledge in the Midst of the Global Pandemic: Experiences of Boti Indigenous Communities in South-Central Timor, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia,” Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney (2024–)

Associate Supervisor (with Annette Hornbarcher), Lubabun Niam, “Multispecies Relations and Conservation Projects in North Sumatra Upland”, Department of Anthropology, Heidelberg University (2023–)

Associate Supervisor (with Nico Carpentier), Minanto Ali, “Art and Urban Politics in Yogyakarta City, Indonesia”, Department of Media and Journalism, Charles University (2023–)

REVIEWERS

Grassroots, Journal of Political Ecology
ASEAS (Advances in Southeast Asian Studies)
Anthropological forum
The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology
Suomen: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society
Indigenous Southeast Asian and Ethnic Studies
Jurnal Kajian Agraria dan Kedaulatan Pangan
Antropologi Indonesia
Asian and African Studies, Slovak Academy of Sciences

MEMBERSHIP OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES

Muslim Foodways Network
The Association of Southeast Asian Studies (ASEAS)
Anthropology of Food Network, European Association of Social Anthropology
Food Studies Research Network (FSRN)
International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF)
Australian Food, Society and Culture Network (AFSCN)
European Association of Southeast Asian Studies (EUROSEAS)
American Anthropological Association (AAA)
Australian Anthropological Association (AAS)
Australian Association of Asian Studies (ASAA)
Sydney Food and Nutrition Network (SFNN), University of Sydney
Association of Asian Studies (AAS)

LANGUAGES

Native : Indonesian; Javanese
Fluent : English, Mentawaiian; Minangkabau, Sumatran-Malay, Papuan-Malay
Basic : Dutch, Czech