

# CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND SEMINARS

## **Discussion on Segita Pertumbuhan SIJORI/JSR Growth Triangle, 12 April 1993, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore**

On 12 April 1993, the Institute of Southeast East Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, held a discussion on the SIJORI/JSR Growth Triangle. SIJORI has interested an expanding number of scholars, who have produced a steadily growing list of publications. While economists thus far have contributed the majority of publications, geographers, political scientists, anthropologists, and sociologists have also begun constructing discipline-oriented research agendas. The aim of the discussion was to conduct a serious assessment of ongoing work, and ongoing agendas with regard to unfolding events in Johor, Riau, and Singapore.

The discussion was organized around a series of short papers reporting on specific aspects of SIJORI research, hypothesizing on where this research work is heading, highlighting topics which appear to be neglected and proposing areas for comparative/co-operative research. A wide variety of queries and issues were raised during the course of the day's discussions, including the importance of divergent national and regional perspectives for the JSR Growth Triangle, the prospects for continued political support of the JSR Growth Triangle, and the nature of the relationship between culture, economic development, and political imperatives within the context of the JSR Growth Triangle.

Participants noted that analysing the Indonesian perspective on SIJORI through a core-periphery paradigm, and the Malaysian perspective on Nusa Selatan through a federal-state paradigm appeared to be quite fruitful. However, it was also pointed out that the situation in SIJORI could not be fully understood by assuming Jakarta to be the core

and Riau the periphery; the situation is more complicated than that. For example, although Batam is geographically distant from Jakarta, it is administered directly from Jakarta. The “core” in this case has, to a certain extent, located itself directly on the periphery. Thus it could be argued that the existence of the Batam Industrial Development Authority (BIDA) promotes centralization, and not decentralization. Batam, in other words, may be geographically peripheral but politically central.

This discussion led to a discussion of the relative merit of promoting economic development from the core to the periphery, or allowing the periphery to establish its own development agenda with assistance from the core; of the concerns about the marginalization of indigenous people in the establishment of development priorities; the tensions between the private sector, the government, and the society; and of the likelihood that a leadership change could bring about a change in the political commitment to the economic success of SIJORI.

Attempts to understand the Malaysian perspective, in turn, were taken up with a discussion of the tensions between federal and state levels in Malaysia, the implications of state UMNO (United Malays National Organisation) leaders’ influence within the national UMNO hierarchy for the promotion of Johor’s development plans, and the importance of politics within Johor as a factor in determining national/state attitudes towards the promotion of Nusa Selatan, and the felt need to balance off Nusa Selantan with Nusa Utara.

Participants also noted that Singapore appears to conceptualize the Growth Triangle within the context of larger global and regional concerns. Global imperatives are fuelling the need to think regionally, largely because regional packaging in terms of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) appears to be an effective way of competing for a regional share of the total FDI available. It was pointed out that ASEAN has accepted the need to attract FDI. SIJORI is part of this regional effort, and from this larger perspective, which country enjoys the most immediate benefits, and which country benefits less initially is not as critical. Of course, all must ultimately benefit. This regional imperative is less of a central concern in Malaysia and Indonesia, where national priorities appear to be more important.

Finally, participants highlighted the absence of discussions of socio-cultural and historical issues generally, and noted that with reference to Riau, there has been a marginalization not only of Malay culture, but also of indigenous economic capabilities. It was also suggested that tourism might ultimately serve as a vehicle for a regional revival of Malay culture in a commoditized form. Indeed, it was observed that Johor appears to be the centre for a regional revival of Malay language and literature. Much of the discussion was also taken up with questions regarding the continued political importance of the role of the indigenous population in national development policies, and the problems presented by the use of the concept “Malay” itself.

The programme of the workshop was as follows:

*Opening Remarks*

Professor Chan Heng Chee  
Director

SESSION I

“The JSR Growth Triangle: Si Jori, Si Siapa?”

Sharon Siddique  
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

“Singapore, Johor, Riau: Co-operating in the Malay World”

Alfitra Salamm  
LIPI, Jakarta

*Discussion*

SESSION II

“The JSR Growth Triangle A New View”

Sree Kumar  
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

“SIJORI: Between Myth and Reality”

Sritua Arief  
Sumatera Barat

*Discussion*

SESSION III

Presentation of short research overviews; introductions to ongoing research projects, avenues for co-operative research; etc.

*Concluding Remarks*

Sharon Siddique

Sree Kumar

List of Participants

MALAYSIA

Prof. Azman Awang

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Mr Dawam Rahardjo  
Yayasan Agribisnis  
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Center for Policy and Implementation Studies (CPIS), Jakarta

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Sumatera Barat

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Ms Maria Seda  
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Dr Sharon Siddique  
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

Dr Wong Poh Kam  
Centre for Management of Technology, Faculty of Business Administration  
National University of Singapore

Dr Yao Souchou  
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

### **International Conference on Design and Development for a Sustainable Future, 3–4 June 1993, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

The conference, organized by PAM (Malaysian Institute of Architects) and CAA (Commonwealth Association of Architects), was held in the the luxurious Shangri-La Hotel and attracted building and design professionals from Southeast Asian and the Commonwealth countries. Under the general theme of “design and development for a sustainable future particularly from the Third World perspective” the conference addressed a wide set of issues ranging from the Malaysian reponse to the Rio Summit, the recycling of building materials, and the concept of sustainable development itself.

The conference culminated in a series of resolutions regarding Malaysia’s position on sustainable development.

The two-day programme included the following addresses/papers:

“Post-Rio Summit: Challenges for Malaysia”

Tan Sri Datuk Ahmad Kami Jaafar  
Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia

“Forest Management in Relation to the Construction Industry”

Dr Abdul Razak Mohd Ali  
Deputy Director General, Forest Research Institute Malaysia

“Sustainable Development: What, For Whom, and For How Long?  
An Anthropological Perspective”

Dr Yao Souchou  
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

“Towards a Sustainable Architecture: An Asian Overview”

Brian Brace Taylor

ex-Editor of MIMAR, Paris, France

“The Environmental Quality Act 1974: Impact on Design and Development”

Dr Abu Bakar Jaafar

Director General, Department of Environment, Malaysia

“The Use of Timer in Buildings”

Jimmy C.S. Lim

President, PAM (Malaysian Institute of Architects), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

“Development and Environmental Responsibility:

The Australian Experience”

David Jackson

President of CAA (Commonwealth Association of Architects), Sydney, Australia

“Planning for the Sustainable Use of Energy”

P. Kasi

Honorary Secretary of PAM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

“Architect Led Environment Impact Assessment”

John Wells-Thorpe

Principal of Wells-Thorpe & Supple, England