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Session Chair		
Presentations	Session 7.3	<i>Illegal Use of Natural Resource Activities.</i>

Abstract Session 7.3 – Illicit Flows: The (inter)national business with sand in Cambodia.

The focus on (il)legality, as demarcation criteria for socially (un)acceptable practises is misleading/inadequate. The paper will show that there is not always an objective way to know the distinction and/or boundaries between legal and illegal, especially in time of global movement and trade, crossing borders, diverse cultures and actors. In order to analyse activities of resource extraction and exchange one has to look beyond the world of the state and avoid reproducing its dominant categories of (il)legality. This is for several reasons, (1) as there is no universally shared definition of (il)licitness or legality; (2) states not always upholds or draft just laws. The flows of goods instead often weave in and out of legality, in and out of states depending on the power configurations and regulatory spaces the pass through. (Il)licitness instead of focusing on the law, allows to capture the social perception of activities and look beyond the state (Schendel and Abraham, 2005).

The paper will present the case of domestic sand trade and land filling in Cambodia's kleptocracy, as a case of a formally legal, but socially illicit practises; as well as the cross-border trade with Singapore – highlighting contradictory state laws. Overall it raises awareness for the different scales and limits of the concept and discourse around illegal flows.