

## **Konflikte um biokulturelle Diversität in Thailand: Moderne Herausforderungen an Karen- Gemeinschaften im Weltnaturerbe Thung Yai**

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### **Summary**

Biological diversity as well as cultural diversity are prominent concepts in the discourses on environmentalism, development, indigenous rights and globalization. Since the late 1980s, interrelations between biological and cultural diversity came increasingly into the focus of academic, political, and economic interests and discourses.

This paper first reviews very broadly the development of the conceptualization of such interrelations in different discourses, and points to a specific type of conflicts labeled „conflicts about biocultural diversity“ as a common empirical core issue of these discourses.

As an example for such conflicts, the case of Karen ethnic minority groups in the Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary and World Heritage Site in Thailand is analyzed, based on extensive field research. Focusing on interdependent changes on the local, national, and international level over the last century in the context of modernization processes in Thailand, the paper identifies major re-framings of the conflict related to the development and expansion of modernity.

Conclusions refer to the argument on the Karen communities in Thung Yai and the status of the sanctuary, the community forests debate, and the problem of „hill tribes“ in Thailand. Referring to ongoing disputes about „modernity“ and „cultural diversity“, the paper finally argues for a particularistic conceptualization of modernity and advocates an alterity-oriented concept of cultural diversity in the context of a self-reflexive culture of modernity.

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### **1 Kulturelle Vielfalt und Biodiversitätsschutz**

Biodiversität und kulturelle Vielfalt sind zentrale Konzepte in den Diskursen um die Bestimmung und Regulierung der globalen Umwelt- und Entwicklungskrise. Der Schutz biologischer Vielfalt gilt als Voraussetzung eines nachhaltigen Mensch-Umwelt-Verhältnisses, während kulturelle Vielfalt als wichtiger Aspekt der Koexistenz und umweltverträglichen Entwicklung menschlicher Gemeinschaften konzipiert wird. Seit den späten 1980er-Jahren werden vermehrt auch Zusammenhänge zwischen biologischer und kultureller Vielfalt diskutiert, für die der Begriff „biocultural diversi-